



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT  
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &  
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE  
c/o Community & Economic Development Office  
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401  
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**Councilor Selene Colburn, Chair**, East District  
**Councilor Tom Ayres**, Ward 7  
**Councilor Adam Roof**, Ward 8

Monday, November 2, 2015  
6:00 – 8:00 PM  
Robert Miller Center  
130 Gosse Ct, Burlington

**Draft Minutes 11.2.15**

1. Review Agenda

*The meeting began at 6:15 PM with introductory comments from Chairman Colburn on the agenda and how the meeting is structured. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Councilor Ayres and seconded by Councilor Roof. Motion approved.*

2. Public Forum (25 minutes) – The Public was invited to offer comment to the Committee.

*Charles Simpson Ward 6 – recommended all to watch the show on Channel 17 that was moderated by Charlie Gianonni on the NPA's. He thought it might be time to look to reboot the NPAs. He mentioned that NPAs can be used for initiatives to get started and mentioned the proposal to have paid administrators in each ward. Simpson talked about having advisory votes in each NPA and themed meetings.*

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*Councilor Sharon Bushor – complimented the minutes of the past two meetings and felt they captured most of the sentiments. She noted that although the housing replacement ordinance did not make the Housing Action Plan, she hopes that the CDNR committee will review it. Bushor added a correction to the July minutes should be charter change. Bushor expressed concern on the sale of City assets, expressly in regards to the Memorial RFP. She is on the record as being opposed to a sale of Memorial but suggests leasing the property instead. She is concerned about existing 40 spaces of parking as a lifeline to Flynn and downtown; housing encouraged in the RFP but she wouldn't like to see more than 50%. Bushor also mentioned that she doesn't want to block the visual corridor by height; but she does like the 15 foot sidewalk. She would like public involved in this proposal – ie. A charrette, to ensure the public is heard and knows they are listened.*

*Councilor Sara Giannoni – speaking on behalf of Wards 2/3 and her husband who had to leave the meeting. She noted that the NPA has been struggling to pull off a meeting; they would support someone paid to do that. She believed this sort of model would build leadership in the NPA. In regards to the Memorial RFP, Giannoni remarked on the Miller Community Center an positive example of the public process; the public was heard on what was needed.*

3. Approval of Minutes – 7/14 and 9/ 14 (5 minutes)

*A motion to approve the minutes from July and September with the Bushor correction was made by Councilor Roof and seconded by Councilor Ayres.*

4. NPAs – Steering Committee Members (45 minutes)

**Matt Cropp** –started the discussion on staffing for the NPAs. He said that steering committee members engaged in conversation on this topic and thought it would be useful for each ward/NPA some person would be selected

*to be a clerk and receive a stipend. Some of the responsibilities for this clerk would include: filming of meetings; follow open meeting law, taking and posting minutes; city hall connection; organize the meetings and invite speakers. The suggestion was it should be someone embedded in the community for a few hours a month and they will be the first contact with city government*

**Richard Hillyard** – *asked to hear what are the City's plan with Kesha leaving? Each NPA is different. In Wards 1/8 they work together to put together an agenda. His personal perspective on city support included the importance of current partnerships with elected officials and city partners/institutions and noted that they are very supportive of the NPA. Hillyard felt that the NPA often had a seat at the table or next door. Partnerships include institutions, Fire and PD. Sometimes attendance is single digits and sometimes 30+; some themed meetings; some successes and some failures. Hillyard mentioned that Brian Pine and Bruce Seifer presented a video several years ago about CEDO and its work and there was nothing in it about Ward 1. He noted that conforming with Open Meeting Law is difficult and their NPA doesn't have the administrative support needed but it varies between Wards; he is never sure what kind of support he will get from Kesha or interns. Go back to supporting the NPAs – the CES should be neutral and not political.*

**Charles Simpson**– *spoke of a recent issue regarding how many copies of the minutes can they get? NPAs should be on all City initiatives like Fletcher Free Library Board and Go Burlington.*

**Councilor Dave Hartnett** – *With new wards and new districts, he wished all the wards would join together – specifically Wards 5 and 6 since the others are already meeting jointly. When the steering committees meet to plan agendas and meetings, there is no input from council and what is going on. Hartnett*

*feels some things fall through the cracks. The role of the Community Engagement Specialist should be defined and consistent for all the wards. Also the role of CEDO should be defined because sometimes CEDO is characterized as too intrusive and other times too distant.*

**Councilor Sharon Bushor** – *remembered that Herb Blumenthal said councilors should not be involved in NPAs in a controlling way; people should be able to share concerns and it be grassroots; especially when time is limited. Clerk from CEDO is the model that worked best and generated minutes; if the proposal of 4 clerks passes she noted that we need to have the same relationship and support from CEDO; support but no control.*

**Matt Cropp** – *spoke about the limited nature of current support; filming for their Wards 4/7 NPA doesn't always go well. Cropp emphasized that the NPAs ability to make small community grants was a significant motivator to be involved, to say - here is a small community need to get a bigger community impact.*

**Ann B** – *explains that she is in Ward 8 and that they have a challenge of participation. She does appreciate City Council support and agree with the principle that NPAs are a grassroot movement. She noted a lot of changes going on right now with construction etc and a good time to be involved in the City.*

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – *asked what is the history of the position and where do we expect it to go?*

**Peter Owens, Director of CEDO** – *noted that he has no experience with other CES positions and would like some consistent between 4/7 projects;*

**Councilor Sharon Bushor** – *mentioned that CEDO used to help write grants and support what was needed. Interest in the NPAs waned with no funding.*

**Marcy Esbjerg** – *provided a bit of history on the position. She explained that both Peter and her came in to the position as it exists today. The job*

*description was changed with Mayor Weinberger with a broadened focus on public engagement to include populations underserved and not connected to city government including New Americans, people with disabilities and youth. As an entry level position, there seems to be a lot of turnover and it is a front line position dealing directly with the public. Going forward in our plans to replace Kesha, we are following standard protocol – reviewing the current job description, getting input from the NPAs and this committee, meeting with HR, Kesha and the Mayor to refine the job description and then advertise the position. There will be involvement from the NPAs in the interview process as before. Currently, the job is broken down into 4 areas: NPA support, Diversity and Equity; community outreach and general engagement and the internship program.*

**Councilor Adam Roof** – *said that his perception and experience was just of 1/8 and it was good to hear different viewpoints. Roof thought it was important to **define roles of CEDO**, steering committee members, who is voting and what do the votes mean; articulation of authority. He wondered how we could manage/deliver a program to satisfy different needs. Would changing the way NPAs do business involve a charter change? Where does their authority come from.*

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – *asked if we can agree on some uniformity like how decisions are made; how to convey our decisions to the assembly; did we use Robert’s Rule or correct procedures with the suggestion of uniform bylaws.*

**Councilor David Hartnett** – *questioned if it fair to hire someone to manage the NPAs 4 different ways. Can All Wards Steering Committee give CEDO some direction in working it out?*

**Councilor Adam Roof** – *referred to the proposal to hire a volunteer get \$100/stipend as a good possibility.*

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – regarding the CES position and the groups served by this position. The NPAs should understand they are not the only game in town; he has worked with the CES on accessibility needs in the City. NPAs are not all things to all people; other groups deserve the CES as well to engage and have access to City government.

**Councilor Selene Colburn** – wondered if we dedicate full funding for this position and was there other funding in the past. She noted that we seem to be asking to do more with less. Colburn thought it was important to get clarity of practice and what can be uniform across the board. This year there was a new Councilor budget line item and Colburn suggested that the NPAs can make suggested grants for community needs from councilor funds. She also suggested that some councilors try to work in FY 17 budget to advocate now for more funds. She would support a formal proposal from each ward to hire someone to then work closely with CES; interns don't work as a staffing for NPAs. She wanted to follow up on how to give NPAs more representation on new initiatives and this should be more consistent – when and how they can play that advisory role and purpose.

**Action item - Hear back from the City and CEDO and how to define this role going forward. Bring it back as an agenda item.**

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – Can all wards have some agreement?

**Councilor Selene Colburn**– What do we want to do as councilors to bring up funding?

## **5. Memorial Auditorium RFP - Peter Owens –**

The condition and needs for Memorial Auditorium have been thought about for a long time. During a presentation at Council photos were presented. In light of the 10 year Capital Plan to systematically take care of all our capital

assets, Memorial Auditorium has become an urgent issue. The question is - do we want to spend \$4million to make repairs? Key principles in the RFP to elicit a broad response; have a good community conversation. The block is located in the downtown TIF district and is also discussed in planBTV. The Mayor is looking for any number of proposals including public or public/private partners.

Several people, including Councilors Bushor and Colburn provided feedback that the proposal seemed to negate the choice of repairing the building. They encouraged transparency with purpose and process.

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – expressed the thought that to him the building is functionally a dinosaur as a performing arts space and it will take a lot of convincing to invest to repair it. In his professional life, he has used it a lot and is very familiar with it.

**Councilor Selene Colburn** – if we have all decided it then we need to be transparency about that.

**Councilor Sharon Bushor** – one option is to bring the building back to the full functions; Center City has needs and the City hasn't given Memorial attention. The City hasn't been a good steward of this building; should we invest to bring it as a community resource in the RFP should be communicated more clearly.

**Peter Owens**– explained the timeline. He discussed the possibility of bringing in a consultant due to the diminished capacity of CEDO. He expects to have the RFP out by Thanksgiving with responses before the end of the year. Discuss the proposals with the public via a public process and bring then bring it to the Council by March.

**Councilor Tom Ayres**– *asked where do the abutting properties fit in?*

**Peter Owens** – *mentioned the potential to assemble properties together*

**Councilor Selene Colburn** – offered additional feedback. She supports the

process of generating ideas for the next life of Memorial Auditorium. She suggested that the bullet point on housing and its emphasis detracts from focus on public space; She noted that even in its bad condition, the auditorium is great indoor public space and the RFP should be more balanced on public space;. Colburn questioned the comments on generating positive cash flow and wondered if the emphasis should be on on-going public good.

**Charles Simpson**– noted that rehearsal space is hard to come by and Memorial serves that function. He questioned if the City can invest in a new performance space – music/dance/performance... perhaps in the block of land by DPW on Pine.

**Councilor Tom Ayres** – mentioned another unrecognized gem, St Joseph's school as a potential for public space.

**Matt Cropp** – cited the private/public partnership with City Market as a good example of broad public input.

**Councilor Dave Hartnett** – agreed that the City has been a terrible landlord for Memorial Auditorium and has neglected that building. He empathized the importance of looking for partnerships. There are lots of good partners with schools/college/universities, the Boys and Girls Clubs; and diversity groups

6. **CDNR Work Plan** – Chairman Colburn suggested we sit down and plan work strategies. She recommended to map out the things that come through HAP. She proposed that the questions on UVM student housing presentation, ie Shannon's questions on student housing be the next item on the agenda. She will check with Joe Speidel.
7. Next meeting – Chairman Colburn suggested that we look for a common time to have a standing monthly meeting. Councilor Ayres noted that both Ayres and Roof are on License Committee.



*A motion was made to adjourn by Tom Ayres and seconded by Adam Roof at 8:05PM. Motion approved.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Marcy Esbjerg*

*Assistant Director*

*Community, Housing and Opportunity Programs*

*CEDO*