

CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
PARKS, ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE
c/o Fletcher Free Library
235 College Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Councilor Dave Hartnett, Chair, North District
Councilor Selene Colburn, East District
Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

Staff: Kath Laing, Development Manager
Fletcher Free Library
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DRAFT MINUTES

Park, Arts & Culture Committee Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 4:00pm
Local History Room, Fletcher Free Library

Participants

Committee Members:

Councilor Dave Hartnett, North District (Chair)
Councilor Selene Colburn, East District

Staff:

Meagan Tuttle, Principal Planning, Department of Planning and Zoning
Laura Wheelock, Public Works Engineer, Department of Public Works
Kirsten Merriman Shapiro, Senior Projects and Policy Specialist, SHED, CEDO
Nina Safavi, Parks Planner, Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront
Abbie Tykocki, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Burlington Telecom
Doreen Kraft, Director, Burlington City Arts
Kath Laing, Development Manager, Fletcher Free Library

Others:

Carolyn Bates
Milton Rosa-Ortiz
Paul Wiczoreck
James Lockridge
Charles Messing
Bryan Parmelee
Bill Keogh
Kelly Devine

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda and the draft minutes from 07/19/16 were approved by the Committee unanimously.

2. Public Forum

James Lockridge shared his perspective on public bulletin boards in City Hall Park (CHP). He would like to see that the public bulletin boards be reinstated in CHP and that they be the traditional bulletin boards where you staple notices. James also encouraged the Committee to

think about what is being done to the community that currently uses the park as the designs are implemented. He also requested City Council refocus their attention on recreating the powerfully positive teen environment that 242 Main (in Memorial Auditorium) has been for the community for decades.

3. CEDO – City Hall Park Concept Plan Presentation / Q&A

Meagan Tuttle presented the City Hall Park portion of the Great Streets presentation. The presentation is attached to these minutes. This presentation has been made over recent days at other City Committees and Boards. Councilor Hartnett has had the opportunity to question and comment in previous forums. Councilor Colburn – who had not yet heard the presentation - had the following comments and questions:

- Overall, this is an exciting opportunity for the Burlington community.
- The new fountain concept is especially exciting. The fountain is a named gift. How can the City balance recognition of private gifts with values of city? Are there other named gifts? Doreen Kraft responded that no other named gifts are currently planned, and that there is a strong desire to balance recognizing donors without creating big design elements related to gifts. The Pomerleau family recognition on the fountain is likely to be an engraving on a nearby seat wall or otherwise expressed as part of the fountain itself. It is expected to be unobtrusive. There have been other gifts from local businesses, where no recognition is being requested. Currently the plan is to seeking another \$100,000 in private donations.
- Will the event space be for closed off / private events or for events that are free to the public? Doreen Kraft responded that the vision is for the events to be largely (90%) for public events, the plans is not for this space to become a rental space.
- Has there been any engagement with historic preservation community? Meagan Tuttle discussed the work that is ongoing with several stakeholders, including the Preservation Trust, Preservation Burlington, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Additionally, the Design Advisory Board has historical criteria. Currently there is a conversation underway to interpret the historic elements of the park - the terrace / patio is a central focal point, and the group is working to understand how to balance fountains, paths, and other upright elements history. In addition, early on in the design process in 2012, the plan was reviewed by a historic preservation consultant, and three defining historic features were identified: that the park continue being a public / civic space, with paths radiating from the center, and with a central focal point with a water feature.
- What about the bulletin boards? Meagan Tuttle replied that concept plans consider locations bulletin boards in the park and on Main Street. Presentation suggested a glass bulletin board, to tape to, with an element of weather protection and lighting. Councilor Colburn supports traditional boards, where staples are used to post notices.
- What is the public art component? Doreen Kraft commented that the designers are still working out where public art can be located, both temporary and outdoor sculptures. Rotating exhibits have been tried, but hard to fund and find artists willing to lease versus sell. Currently looking at flexible space that works art into the paths and vegetation. Part of the reason for the off-center patio is to connect that central element

more with the back of BCA. Also under consideration are opportunities to use architectural lighting to showcase the buildings themselves.

- Councilor Hartnett stated that the renovations of the park are not about removing current users from the park. He would not support this effort if it were. The renovation effort is about bringing more people to the park.
- Charles Messing stated that the presentation shows trees that are 20 feet tall. New trees will look very different. It will take 30-40 years for trees to grow to the size shown in images. He also questioned the coffee kiosk, when you can go 50-100 feet in any direction for coffee. CHP should be a place to rest and commune with nature. Less architecture, more nature. Nina Safavi commented that most of the trees will remain. Inventory was conducted to determine overall tree health, and design around that information as much as possible. Not proposing removing trees just to add infrastructure, but rather on balance. Struggling trees become a hazard as they age. Need to remove poor health, look closely at struggling and invasive species. Meagan Tuttle stated that the images used in the presentation are placeholders for now. The historic photos show a tree canopy that is much taller and the trees are higher branching – it was possible to see all the way through the park. The effort is to currently look at appropriate species and phasing for removal.
- Abbie Tykocki commented that she loves the new fountain, it reminds her of Millennium Park in Chicago. Abbie also stated that she was glad CHP will have electric and ethernet to support events. The Park is already a Burlington Telecom hotspot; and BT would like to turn it into a gigabit hotspot to support City's initiative to become a gigabit city.
- James Lockridge asked if the City firmly committed to not allow bars in the park. He strongly encourages the City not to do this. Councilor Hartnett stated that this is a 15-year debate, includes issues of legality of having bars in parks. If it is something to be considered, there would be a public RFP. Meagan Tuttle commented that all commercial uses being considered are to be temporary. Space outside Rira building contemplated to be flexible space for multiple uses during the week. Kelly Devine commented that there is already lots of commercial activity in the park from the farmer's market, and she does not agree that those types of uses are negative. Commercial activity is ever-present, gives the park another activity.

4. Coalition for a Livable City Presentation / Q&A

Carolyn Bates presented a proposal for redesign of CHP by the Coalition for a Livable City (CLC). Here presentation has also been made to various City Committees and Boards. The CLC design proposal is attached to these minutes. Councilor Colburn made the following comments and questions:

- Lots of thoughtful information and elements that are important in the design of a park. The CLC design has many similarities to City design, why do we need an alternate design? What are the major differences CLC is trying to solve? Carolyn Bates made the following points: CLC does not agree with moving the fountain from the middle of the park, there is a need to keep the historic design the park has always had. CLC additionally want a soft park, a sanctuary - not something that looks like an extension of

Church Street. CLC is opposed to taking out the only spring flowering trees. CLC want to modify lighting by introducing LEDs and they want to see the park decorated with lights during the holiday season. CLC doesn't want commercial elements. Carloyn Bates summarized the key differences between the two designs as: the fountain should be in the center, the radiating paths should be curved, there should be no commercial activity, there should be a sitting wall around all edges, there should be many benches on all paths, the paths should avoid existing trees, CHP should be a sanctuary.

- Carolyn Bates had said the Police want to cut lower branches of the trees, but Councilor Colburn did not hear that in City Plan? Meagan Tuttle commented that the plan suggests some tree removal for a few reasons. The crab apples because of fruit on the sidewalks make them slick, and it requires increased maintenance. These trees also cause some visual obstruction. Historically the trees were higher branching.
- Charles Messing asked about restroom. Carolyn Bates commented that the CLC feels strongly about need for restrooms, mentioning self-cleaning restrooms being used in Paris. Also she commented that a park guide could help monitor the bathrooms.
- Paul Wiczoreck commented that the historic high branching elms should be noted as a snapshot in time. We currently live in a much more urbanized world. If trees are important, then so is the need for a sustainable habitat to allow them to thrive. He stressed the importance to pay attention to soil. Need to be patient when thinking about how trees fit into landscape plan. May be a need to give up some of the uses of the park to have minimal impact on soil which is the best environment for trees. He also stressed the need to be careful of canopy mix, there will be a cost to the City.

5. Next meeting

The next meeting is being scheduled for 2nd or 3rd week of January, and will have a full agenda.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.