



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
802-865-7144 VOX • 802-865-7024 FAX • www.burlingtonvt.gov/cedo

Councilor Carter Neubieser, Chair, Ward 1

Councilor Evan Litwin, Ward 7

Councilor Joe Kane, Ward 3

CDNR Committee Meeting

Wednesday, July 17th, 2024

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Sharon Bushor Conference Room – City Hall

Committee members: Carter Neubieser (CN), Evan Litwin (EL), Joe Kane (JK)

City Staff: Christine Curtis, CEDO

Other Attendees: Bill Ward, Permitting and Inspections

Draft Minutes

Meeting Started at 6:33 PM

1. Approve agenda

MOTION by Councilor Litwin, SECOND by Councilor Kane, to approve the agenda

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. Approve minutes: 6/11/24

MOTION by Councilor Litwin, SECOND by Councilor Kane, to approve the minutes

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

3. Public Forum

- No one spoke at public forum

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities.

For accessibility information, call 865-7144. For questions about the meeting,

contact Christine Curtis at ccurtis@burlingtonvt.gov

4. NPA resolution update

- CN stated that he met with NPA representatives and the CA's office and CEDO
- Drafted some NPA principles
- Meeting again to discuss further at end of August

5. Vacant building fee ordinance

- JK presented on vacant building fees – been working with Bill Ward from permitting and inspections department
- Wants to explore existing fee and discuss potential changes to be presented to ordinance committee and eventually to full City Council
- Bill Ward stated that the draft attached to this agenda will need further refinement - per the Mayor, must include doing research on fee schedules and compare fees to other similar sized Cities; look into applying a percentage formula through the grand list
- Bill Ward shared permit fee schedule – proposed change would result in \$8,000 fee at year 4
- There are vacant building exceptions that includes garages – definition of garages needs further refining
- Appeals go to DPW commission
- JK asked if there are any places that do fees based on assessed value as opposed to flat fees – Bill Ward stated no there are other fees that are based on house value when it comes to property renovation
- Bill Ward does not want to post a list of vacant buildings due to public safety concerns
- JK asked if everyone is paying the fee who should be? – Bill Ward stated quality control efforts are currently being done by his office
- JK asked how effective the current ordinance is in terms of redevelopment and sales – Bill stated cost of construction is too high for redevelopment
- JK stated that the current fees are not high enough and that the cost of financing is increasing faster than the fees therefore, fees should be set much higher
- EL asked about vacant units in newer, larger buildings – will owners of buildings have to disclose vacant unit information? Bill Ward stated that this could be documented in a duplex and it is unknown of why a unit may remain vacant
- EL suggested to look at cities with similar vacancy rates
 - What is the risk of these new policies and fees?

- Is there a lien filing rate? – Bill stated it is rare that there is an immediate response once a lien is filed
- Is there an urgency clause that can be enacted on some of these vacant properties? Could the City seize a property by issuing an urgency clause? – Bill Ward will ask CA – the courts might discourage a clause like this
- CN asked about identifying the buildings and what people should do if they have a question about a building – Bill stated that complaints can be made online and all vacant buildings are listed in a database
 - Most referrals/complaints do not come from citizens
- CN asked about rent prices and vacant buildings – suggested a publicly available and searchable rental unit database showing all rental prices for units
- Last change to the fee structure was in 2023 – there is a separate waiver fee if building is actively for sale/marketed and can only get that waiver fee for two quarters
- Next steps: resolution to City Council then to ordinance committee then a second reading at City Council for final approval

6. Other Committee Business/Updates

- Upcoming agenda items: NPA resolution still in progress, rent stabilization after vacant fees gets wrapped up, notice requirements surrounding rent increases, graffiti ordinance is being worked on by Mayor's office – focus on restorative work at this Committee, impacts on community re: homelessness, substance use and the Elmwood shelter

7. Adjournment

- ADJOURN at 8:16 p.m. by Councilor Neubieser with no objection