



Ward 5 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

Date of Assembly: 9/19/2024
Location: 645 Pine Street and Zoom
Start Time: (Commence) 7:00 pm
Finish Time: (Adjourn): 8:50 pm
Note taker: Jason Van Driesche

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Cathy Foley, Lena Greenberg, Joe Dery, FaRied Munarsyah, Jason Van Driesche, Jak Tiano, Maria Mercurio

Public forum

Andy Simon, Locust Street. Two items:

1. Pine Street Barge Canal. Friends of the Barge Canal has been working to clean it up for three years. Doing a cleanup of garbage from encampments on Sunday, October 6 from noon to 2, organized by Ohavi Zedek. Meet in front of Dealer.com. Wear long sleeves and long pants. Info: www.pinestreetbargecanal.org
2. Petition to get an item on the Burlington ballot regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Collected enough signatures last year to make it eligible for the ballot, but City Council declined to place it on the ballot. Invite people to sign.

Bram Kleppner, Howard Street. One of two Democratic nominees to the VT House. Running unopposed, so is likely to be elected in a few months. Hosting a drop-in from 8 AM to 10 AM this Saturday at Speeder and Earl's on Pine Street.

Jak Tiano, Saint Paul Street. Two items:

1. GMT funding. State of VT cut funding for public transit. This will require GMT to cut service this fall, and cut service even farther in winter. This will reduce ridership, which will reduce federal funding, which may lead to a collapse of public transit. Need leadership from city and state officials on this.
2. Neighborhood code. Portion of code that enabled residents to build ADUs on their property has been watered down by Ordinance Committee. Asking people to contact their city councilors to ask them to support the original version.

Ben Traverse, City Council President. In response to Jak Tiano's points about the neighborhood code: will not be advancing the Ordinance Committee's proposed changes to a vote this coming week. Wants to give Planning Commission time to prepare a response.

Ingrid Dery, Ferguson Ave. Here with Dad.

Announcements

Chapin Spencer, Director, Department of Public Works

City has signed an agreement to purchase an acre of land from CSWD located behind Metalworks on Flynn Avenue to use for soil management. This will replace the two current soil management sites (339 Pine Street, next to Curtis Lumber; and down in the Intervale). It may also allow CSWD to offer expanded services at their 339 Pine Street location. Questions to Lee Perry at lperry@burlingtonvt.gov

Zach Nersinger, CEDO

Public Engagement Specialist position (previously held by Fosca) is open, and CEDO is actively searching for candidates.

Community Center update

Jak Tiano gave a presentation. Key points:

- Earlier this year, saw an opportunity to engage with SEID development process to assess whether a community center could be incorporated into the plans
- Since then, a group came together to organize ideas and present options of what a South End community center might look like
- Current status is that the small group of people who have been working on this does not have the capacity to lead this project at scale
- Open to new people coming onboard to help this project continue to move forward
- Three options for getting involved:
 - Research project: learning about existing community centers in Burlington and beyond about what they offer, what has worked, etc.
 - Engagement with BCA: engaging with Burlington City Arts to help guide the development of a community room at BCA Studios on Pine Street
 - YMCA collaboration: exploring possibility of an additional YMCA in the South End

Questions/comments:

- Ruby Perry: there is a tremendous amount of interest in a community center. Will set another meeting date. Need to pressure city leaders to invest in this.
- David Foss: need some sort of gateway for the South End.
- Joe Dery: does zoning provide incentives for something like this? And would a community development block grant be useful?
- Lucia Campriello: could the group share out what was learned from the community center-related survey

Calahan Park improvements

Greg Stefanski gave a presentation. Key points:

- Did a tour of the park a few months back. Also reviewed City plans for the park.

- Questions that arose included:
 - Land acknowledgement at the park
 - Expanded use of the concessions building
 - More places to sit at the park (tables, chairs)
 - Fruit and nut trees – community orchard
 - Access and safety – speeding on Locust
- Interested in looking at improvements that have been made at other city parks

Andy Simon added that there has been some difficulty scheduling meetings. Going to set a monthly meeting date going forward, and invite anyone interested to attend.

Sophie Sauvé (senior parks planner) then gave a presentation about the Calahan Park master plan. Key priorities of the plan:

- Improved connections around and through the park (loop trail, path along Locust, etc.)
- Improved stormwater management
- Multi-use facilities (pavilions, etc.)

Max Madalinski (parks manager) then outlined recent and upcoming projects at Calahan. These included:

- Recent install of new playground; hoping to make surface more accessible with rubber mats
- Design and installation of paved path along Locust Street from Caroline Street to Locust Terrace is funded by state/feds (remainder down to Pine Street will be a later phase)

Jason Van Driesche asked whether it would be cheaper just to build the path entirely with local funds. Max said no; main impact of federal funds is on timeline, not cost.

Joe Dery asked whether a portion of the parking area along Locust could be used for part of the path. Max said that was an interesting idea.

Sophie noted that the City annually allocates \$40,000 towards community requests for improvements to parks. Could request tables and chairs for Calahan through this.

Safe Streets strategies

Lena Greenberg gave a brief recap of the Ward 5 NPA safe streets event at Calahan Park in July.

Philip Peterson (Senior Transportation Planner, DPW) gave a presentation about proposed projects to improve walk and bike safety:

- Currently updating PlanBTV walk-bike action plan. First public meeting is Oct 21 from 6 to 7:30 PM at Contois. Survey is currently active.

- 20 mph speed limit in downtown core was just passed. Now working to redesign streets to enforce that limit.
- Of 56 traffic calming requests, 3 are currently underway: Grove Street, Elmwood Ave, Gosse Court.
- Installing bike lanes on Home Ave next year

Comments/questions:

- Andy Simon: several concerns about Champlain Parkway. There are no speed limit signs, and the street design doesn't inspire confidence about slowing traffic.
- Jason Van Driesche: how does DPW learn from its designs? Speed tables on Pine Street are same design as on Locust, which was a failed design.
- Cathy Foley: how does DPW monitor impacts? Specifically on Gosse Court. And how will the speed bumps work for plowing?
- David Foss: live at Decker Towers. People speed down St. Paul, and don't stop for people at crosswalk.
- Jak Tiano: section of St. Paul right in front of Decker Towers has a ton of issues (sidewalk quality, crosswalk safety, water management, etc.). Where is it on the list for improvements?
- Lena Greenberg: St. Paul Street is really unsafe, despite the Great Streets design. No space for other uses, way too many cars.
- Lucia Campriello: AARP Vermont's Livable Community Program offers winter placemaking grant round. Encourage people to check it out.