

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
645 PINE STREET
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05401
COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
DRAFT MINUTES

For video of the meeting, please visit Town Meeting TV's YouTube Channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0r9VW6DgXY&t=978s>

Commissioners Present: Vice Chair Fox, Chair Damiani, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco, Commissioner Sears, Commissioner Munteanu (via zoom)

Commissioner Absent: Commissioner Barr

ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Chair Damiani called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ITEM 2 – AGENDA

Chair Damiani make change to split the Consent Agenda into two separate items separating out the South Winooski bus stop item as its own item and the Draft Minutes of 7-17-24, North Street Parking Chicane and Establishing a School Zone on North Ave as the items for the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Munteanu made a motion to accept the agenda as presented with the changes above.

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 3 – PUBLIC FORUM

Jack Evans (in person) on behalf of Local Motion – Submitting comment on 3 items. 1- Downtown 20 mph Speed Limit – Fully supports implementation. Reduction could reduce crash rates, severe injuries and fatalities with pedestrians. 2- Pilot project on North Ave & Plattsburg Ave – focus conversation on changes that will protect pedestrian and Bicyclist safety. 3-North St Parking Chicane – fully supports changes for school children walking, biking and rolling to school as well as children being dropped off to school.

Meg Lenti (via zoom) – Resident of Old North End and Employee of the Sustainable Academy - highly in favor of proposed changes to traffic in front of Sustainable Academy on North St. Rose St & Rose St crosswalk super dangerous. Super tricky to cross at the end of the day. Cars don't stop.

Nina Oropeza (via zoom) – Principal of the Sustainable Academy on North St, Mom and Burlingtonian– Echo Support & Gratitude for change to make it safer and Accessible for children and families to go to and walk to school.

Erin Malone (in person) – Resident of Hyde St – Change of Direction of parking on North St. Walks to school every day. Busy with buses, commuters & delivery trucks. Loves that it is a low cost solution to the City. Speed limit shifting to 20 mph is fine but encouraging City Employees to slow down and partners of the City – Buses to slow down.

ITEM 4 – CONSENT AGENDDA

- 4.1 Approval of Draft Minutes 7-17-24
- 4.3 North Street Parking Chicane
- 4.4 Establishing School Zones on North Avenue

Commissioner Munteanu made a motion to adopt the consent agenda as revised.

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco seconded

Unanimous approval

- 4.2 South Winooski Bus Stop Location

Vice Chair Fox made a motion to adopt as a second consent agenda item.

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco seconded

Commissioner Munteanu asked why this had to be a separate item.

Chair Damiani stated that he is abstaining from the vote due to his professional background on this particular item.

Vice Chair Fox – Aye

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco, Davis, Sears, Munteanu – Aye

Chair Damiani – Abstains

Ayes approved

ITEM 5 – DOWNTOWN 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

Phillip Peterson, Senior Transportation Planner gave a brief presentation about the lowering of the Downtown speed limit to 20 mph. The proposal to lower speed limits in the downtown district has been a key part of the City’s ongoing strategy to create safer, more pedestrian- friendly streets. The proposal to establish a 20 MPH speed limit directly supports the vision by addressing speed as a critical factor in urban street safety.

Director Spencer – Concerns about Battery Street going to 20 mph. Safe slower driving will help with grant funding.

Commissioner Munteanu – In total agreement for the slower streets downtown. Encourages Department to hold fast to vision and bring projects to next steps. How many signs are currently in area and will they all be replaced and how will we communicate to city residents?

P. Peterson, Senior Transportation Planner – we are in the process of redesign on Battery St but will take time and a lot of money. We are communicating through the NPA's.

Director Spencer stated that updates are posted on Front Porch Forum & Social Media.

Commissioner Sears asked about the timeline of the Battery St redesign.

P. Peterson, Senior Transportation Planner- probably 2028.

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco has concerns about the transitions from 4 lane highway that is used as a connector. What are the costs and timeline strategies? Enforcement?

Vice Chair Fox feels outreach has been really good.

Public Forum – Gordon Webb – Longtime resident of Burlington – We need a main artery to get from one end of town to the other. Inconvenience to spend extra time as roads get slower every year.

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco made a motion to approve staff recommendation to reduce downtown speed limit to 20 mph

Vice Chair Fox seconded

Unanimous approval

ITEM 6 – WATER RESOURCES UPCOMING CAPITAL PROJECTS

Megan Moir –Division Director Water & Wastewater and Martin Lee – Engineering Manager gave a presentation about the upcoming funding needed for upgrades and repairs to the plants, pump stations and Infrastructures to maintain continued Water, Wastewater and Storm Water service to the residents of Burlington.

Commissioner Sears – hadn't heard of preventable closures of beaches. Doesn't think Burlington is alone in facing enormous infrastructure needs for drinking water.

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco – Appreciates comments of employee retention. What are the real costs of not doing anything needs to be communicated out. Are we looking at the best possible improvements for what we have? Images of not having clean water to show impact.

Commissioner Davis – Will the bond Questions split on Ballot? Is there a backup plan if this doesn't pass? Drinking water issue be tackled by users? Low flow shower head and toilets.

Commissioner Munteanu - Critical part is moving forward – highlighting the urgency of starting these projects. As much outreach is possible to avoid sticker shock.

Vice Chair Fox – Appreciated the foresight and explanation of items.

Chair Damiani - Affordability piece will be key. Planning folks do a joint presentation to help this process.

ITEM 7 – NORTH AVE/PLATTSBURG AVE INTERSECTION BIKE LANE

Director Chapin Spencer, Phillip Peterson, Senior Transportation Planner & Julia Ursaki, Public Works Engineer presented the pilot project for North Ave & Plattsburg Ave. As a Pilot project- staff evaluated removing the right turn lane on North Ave to add a buffered bike lane to close the small gap in the bicycling network. This will take place between September 16 – October 16, 2024 as an evaluation period to collect traffic counts and public input.

Commissioner Davis – Seems like a good idea. Supportive of it and pilot projects.

Commissioner Sears – Doesn't have a strong feelings as she doesn't go there.

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco – Being able to move forward on implementation is great. Interested to see how this turns out.

Commissioner Munteanu – Pay attention to people's opinions before paving goes on and follow up with people who have concerns. Feels communication with residents and Ward 4/7 is needed by listening to residents.

Director Spencer will be going to the Ward 4/7 NPA meeting to have a conversation with the neighborhood.

Vice Chair Fox – highlight the level of service for people who bike and walk and not a substantial change for drivers.

Chair Damiani – Fully supports this pilot.

Public Comments:

Gordon Webb (in person)–Works for Domino's believes it will cause problems for business in the area due to more traffic backed up by the light. Extra turn lane helps alleviate the traffic problems. Not in Support of this change.

Jack Evans (via Zoom) – feels we are looking at a level of traffic service for vehicular traffic and we currently don't have a good metric to do so for pedestrians & bicyclists for using this route.

Deb Boutin (via Zoom) – Is in favor of change - Lives at far end of North Ave past the intersection. Wonders if there will be time for people to comment with only 30 days. Not enough communication for people living further out on the Avenue. Consider a stop light change heading south to alleviate the back up of people turning left.

ITEM 8 - DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Spencer left the proposed FY'25 Goals & Objectives information out of the packet. Will discuss at next month meeting.

We are going to Council Monday night seeking to purchase 201 Flynn Ave to give the City property on which we can manage soils due to increasing regulations. Currently using Intervale which is in a flood plain and 339 Pine which is part of the Railyard Enterprise project.

Exploring new parking concept for Lakeside Neighborhood due to an increased parking demand. Neighbors proposing Metered Parking and Residential Parking.

Two items in que that we haven't been able to get to yet - On-Street Parking Rate Review would look at an inflation only increase and DPW Public Engagement Plan Review

Commissioner Sears asked about the giant parking lot on Lakeside Ave.

Director Spencer explained that the City, Hula and Champlain College are exploring a coordinated development of that area. All parties are exploring a coordinated development of that area, a large mixed used development up to 1400 living units, commercial/retail development.

Commissioner Davis - On Street Parking item – think about congestion pricing and not only a flat rate increase.

ITEM 9 – COMMISSIONER ITEMS

Chair Damiani – Strategic planning - figure out where items fall at regular meeting. BED got grant for EV Parking – is that something that will come to DPW Commission. Data on existing chargers to be included in presentation. Champlain Parkway – data back on open portion of Parkway. Asked for Sign to distinguish straight and turn lanes and noticed. Appreciate it. School Zones – will it allow us to do additional things around school zones.

Commission O'Neill-Vivanco – Noticed sidewalk replacement taking place on Overlake & Deforest, would be grateful to see if sidewalk near her be replaced before snow flies. Champlain Parkway near City Market notice a no turn on red light and thinks it would look great on South Union & Main St by Edmunds Schools for children's safety. Priority should be around all of our schools to protect our children and keep them safe.

Commissioner Sears – Manhattan Drive and RT 127. – High speeds, run red lights.

Commissioner Davis – What is the issue with Manhattan and Rt 127? Champlain Parkway – one time signals were not in sink going the same way. City Market – people go too far and don't stop where they are supposed to causing back up. Pine Place has giant holes in the dirt. Vegetation on sidewalks is often annoying.

Director Spencer – Pine Place dirt section is Not City owned. Report vegetation issues to See Click Fix.

Commissioner Munteanu -We are all headed in the right direction. Excited about all of the projects. Thank you to all of the Departments.

Vice Chair Fox – 2017 Plan BTV Bike/Walk will be updated at an October 21st meeting.

ITEM 10 – ADJOURNMENT & NEXT MEETING DATE - OCTOBER 16, 2024

Chair Damiani made a motion to adjourn

Commissioner O'Neill-Vivanco seconded

Unanimous approval

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.