



Special City Council Worksession Regarding Charter Changes, Monday, November 26, 2018, 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm, Conference Room 12, City Hall 11/26/2018

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

CONTOIS AUDITORIUM, CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF WORK SESSION

November 26, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kurt Wright (Council President) – Ward 4

Jane Knodell – Central District [arrived 6:07 PM]

David Hartnett – North District

Joan Shannon – South District

Richard Deane – East District

Sharon Bushor – Ward 1

Max Tracy – Ward 2 [arrived 5 PM]

Brian Pine – Ward 3 [arrived 4:37 PM]

William “Chip” Mason – Ward 5

Karen Paul – Ward 6 [arrived 6:14 PM]

Ali Dieng – Ward 7

Adam Roof – Ward 8

ADMINISTRATION: Miro Weinberger, Mayor

Beth Anderson, CAO

Rich Goodwin, DFO

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney

Kim Sturtevant, Assistant City Attorney

Jordan Redell, Mayor’s Office

Olivia LaVecchia, Mayor’s Office



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Brian Lowe, Innovation Officer

Lori Olberg, C/T

Amy Bovee, C/T

Neale Lunderville, CEDO

Chapin Spencer, DPW

David White, Planning & Zoning

Bill Ward, Code Enforcement

Ron Redmond, Church Street Marketplace

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

City Council President Wright opened the work session at 4:33 PM.

1.0 AGENDA

MOTION by Councilor Shannon, SECOND by Councilor Dieng, to approve the agenda as amended to discuss charter changes for business personal property tax, Downtown Improvement District, and then permit reform/CEDO reorganization. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

2.0 DISCUSSION OF CHARTER CHANGES

2.01 Business Personal Property Tax

It was noted five options for phasing out the business personal property tax were discussed with the Board of Finance and winnowed to one proposal. The goal is to finalize the charter change by December 17, 2018 and warn a public hearing. CAO Anderson stated the recommendation is in FY20 to make the \$45,000 exemption for all businesses and do a reappraisal in FY22. By FY26 the tax will be fully eliminated (this will coincide with the Waterfront TIF district expiration).

Councilor Bushor expressed concern about the impact on residential taxpayers with the bonds that have passed and the associated increase in taxes.

Councilor Shannon asked the difference between "assessed" and "taxed".

There was discussion of businesses not locating in Burlington due to the business personal property tax.





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2.02 Downtown Improvement District (DID)

City Attorney Blackwood said items for consideration include:

- Authorization for just the DID or for other parts of the city
- Adopting the DID boundaries as shown
- Funding the DID with a fee and who should be assessed
- Governing the DID via a 501(C)(6) non-profit organization and who would serve on the board of directors and how would the board operate
- How are assessments made (square footage or assessed value)
- Annual rate setting
- Appeals
- Collection and enforcement
- Who pays for capital improvements for Church Street Marketplace operations
- Other funds
- Additional provisions to be included in the charter
- General authorization for other improvement districts

There was discussion of involving the Board of Finance in discussions and whether residential membership should be included in the DID governance. There was also discussion of where money for the DID will come from and creating other improvement districts in the city.

2.03 Permit Reform/CEDO Reorganization

It was noted the proposal is to integrate the departments, clarify the permit process, and streamline the rules and regulations. CEDO Director Lunderville and Planning & Zoning Director White explained the proposal for "one-stop-shop" for permitting by merging Planning into CEDO. This will create efficiencies, integrate plans and good planning, and work within a common framework and objectives. The statutory role of the Planning Commission will not change, but the advisory role will. Next steps include having the Charter Change Committee review the proposed changes.

Councilor Bushor expressed concern about the merger, noting that the Planning Commission is staffed by the Planning Department and CEDO is there to move the Mayor's plans forward. Councilor Tracy echoed the concern about the merger. Councilor Pine pointed out planning is a long term vision and CEDO implements plans. Councilor Dieng suggested merging Planning with DPW and Parks & Rec. Planning & Zoning Director White said CEDO is a more logical partnership for a long term vision with direct implementation.

Mayor Weinberger said there are three scenarios:

- Move zoning out of the Planning & Zoning Department and maintain a small Planning Department.
- Move Planning & Zoning to the Permit Inspection Office.
- Merge Planning with CEDO and have a unified Permit Inspections Department. There would be a CEDO Director,



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CEDO Deputy Director/Planning Director, and Permit Inspection Director.

Councilor Knodell said it is a mistake to have the Planning Commission oversee CEDO. Planning should be independent. There is concern for different parts of government working against each other. Innovation Officer Lowe said the Planning Commission would focus on land use planning, not CEDO. Councilor Pine urged looking at the city charter and the CEDO charter. Mayor Weinberger explained the Planning Department does zoning changes with long term impact. CEDO was created to have a vehicle for short and long term roles, and for the Mayor and City Council to have input into planning.

The Charter Change Committee will look at merging the three departments to create a "one-stop-shop" arrangement.

3.0 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no comments from the public

4.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Councilor Bushor, SECOND by Councilor Deane, to adjourn the work session. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The work session ended at 6:35 PM.

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