

Burlington Planning Commission

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*Andy Montroll, Chair
Bruce Baker, Vice-Chair
Yves Bradley
Alexander Friend
Emily Lee
Harris Roen
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur*



Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday, November 20, 2018, 6:30 P.M.

Conference Room 17 (Planning & Zoning)

City Hall, 149 Church Street

Special Meeting AGENDA

I. Agenda

II. Public Forum- Time Certain 6:30 p.m.

I. Permit Reform

The Planning Commission will continue to discuss the proposed reorganization of City Departments based on the Permit Reform Initiative. Information related to this item will be posted online in advance of the meeting.

Staff Recommendation: No action is needed. The Commission is invited to ask question and provide feedback.

II. Commissioner Items

- a. The next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at 6:30pm.

III. Adjourn

This agenda is available in alternative media forms for people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate in programs and activities of the Dept. of Planning & Zoning are encouraged to contact the Dept. at least 72 hours in advance so that proper accommodations can be arranged. For information, call 865-7188 (865-7144 TTY). Written comments may be directed to the Planning Commission at 149 Church Street, Burlington, VT 05401.

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Tuesday, November 20, 2018, 6:30 P.M.

Conference Room 12, City Hall, 149 Church Street

Minutes

Members Present	A Montroll, B Baker, A Friend, E Lee, H Roen, J Wallace-Brodeur
Members Absent	Y Bradley
Staff Present	M Tuttle, D White, S Draper, B Lowe, W Ward

I. Agenda

Call to Order	Time: 6:33pm
Agenda	Approved As Is

II. Public Forum

Name	Comment	Commission Action?
Celia Daly	Member of the Permit Reform Advisory Committee, wanting to learn more about how the reorganization will be effecting Planning.	

III. Permit Reform

Action: No Action Required		
Motion by:	Second by:	Vote:
Type: Presentation & Discussion		Presented by: D White, B Lowe, W Ward
Discussion/Notes: - At the last Planning Commission meeting, commissioners asked staff to present a more detailed explanation of the plan for the permit reform and department reorganization. Specifically, to provide an outline of the problems that the reform is trying to solve, and what is driving this change. - Primary concerns driving the permit reform is to improve customer service, consistency, accountability, and increase collaboration across departments. The current process is convoluted and difficult for average home owners to navigate from start to finish. - The new permitting system will create a "one-stop shop" for permitting to create a more convenient system for the public. The reorganization will merge the zoning function with trades and inspections into a new department under a single department head. - William Ward, the current director of Code Enforcement, has been asked by the Mayor to become the director of the Department of Permitting and Inspections. - Planning function will merge with CEDO into a new department focused on planning, policy, and other implementation functions.		

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Three main concerns were raised by commissioners at the last meeting include:

Digitizing records-

- The City is in the process of starting this work. A formal inventory of the records has been done, and are now waiting for a final approval to start the work.

Keeping the Planning Commission integrated with Zoning-

- Currently, the Planning Commission is the advisory body that develops the ordinance and advises on administration of the ordinance.
- Through internal meeting structures, and job descriptions, the intention is to keep PC central to these processes.

Planning Commission Oversight-

- Commission oversight should remain the same as it is today. The Planning Commission should remain the body for discussion of zoning development and administration.
 - Appeals will continue to go to the DRB.
 - Additional commissions would create conflict over which commission makes decisions
- Commissioners question the reasoning for separating Planning and Zoning, and creating two new departments instead of other possibilities. There are concerns that separating Planning from Zoning will create more problems, and strain relationships that need to be maintained. It is suggested to make one large department encompassing all the departments under one, to avoid risk of losing the collaboration between the departments.
 - A Montroll gives the example from the Regional Planning Commission. There are sub departments under the one commission that work together more efficiently than before being separate. One large department may make more sense than separating two functions that should continue to work together.
 - W Ward agrees that would be an interesting concept, but there is a physical constraint for the ability to make one department in one space. The reorganization may make staff collaboration more difficult, but to the primary purpose of the reform, it is about the customer and making the process easier for them. Having all the permitting functions in one building will help achieve that goal.
 - B Lowe explains that moving Planning and Zoning will come with risk, but the intention is to mitigate that risk, and the benefits will outweigh those risks. They see and acknowledge those concerns, but think it is possible to build institutional ties to reduce the risks. Making one massive department can lose the core missions to those individual departments.
 - Regarding concern for the possible lack of communication between zoning staff and the Planning Commission, if the problem goes beyond a staff level, it would go to the department director, and then to the Planning Commission.
 - Currently, the Planning Commission nominates the Zoning Administrative Officer for approval by the City Council. The Mayor nominates a department head for approval by City Council. This could create problems down the road where a Department Head has a Zoning Administrative Officer that is not responsive to the Department Head's requests. So a change to the appointment process feels necessary to avoid future conflict. The Mayor would nominate both the Zoning Administrative Officer and the Department Head for approval by the City Council.
 - Currently, Planning and CEDO's relationship is erratic. Depending on who is doing what project, there may or may not be consultation or participation by the other department. The Planning Commission's engagement in policy and planning work that CEDO does is largely non-existent.
 - Combining Planning and CEDO will increase the ability for Planning to be involved in the implementation of the City's Land Use and Development plans.

- Planning writes planBTV, but then hands off the baton to other departments and commissions to actually implement the plan, and hope that it is done the way they intend. Currently, Planning does not have very much input on implementation of their plans and policies.
- Merging the two departments will substantially expand the ability to do the work of both departments under one, collaboratively. This will also increase Planning Commission involvement, advisement, etc.
- Concerns are raised of the funding for Planning if merged with CEDO. Staff does not foresee Planning having issues with funding. It is currently funded by the General Fund, and that will continue to be the case.
- Commissioners agree combining Planning and CEDO makes sense, but separating those two from the permitting functions may cause unanticipated problems.
- The Commissioners would like to have feedback from the Permit Reform Advisory Committee, either through periodic reports, or through a commissioner joining the committee.

IV. Commissioner Items

Next Meeting	November 27, 2018 @ 6:30pm in Conference Room 12, City Hall
H Roen	Encourages other commissioners to help spread the word about the update to planBTV using tools shared by M Tuttle.

V. Adjourn

Adjournment	Time: 8:15pm
	Adjourned without objection



Signed: November 29, 2018

Andy Montroll, Chair



Shaleigh Draper, Planning and Zoning Clerk