

Burlington Planning Commission

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Yves Bradley
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Michael Gaughan
Emily Lee
Julia Randall*

Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 6:30 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and in Contois Auditorium

Draft Minutes

Members Present	A. Montroll, J. Randall, A. Friend, Y. Bradley, M. Gaughan
City Council Present	J. Shannon, Z. Hightower, B. Traverse
Staff Present	M. Tuttle, S. Morgan, C. Dillard
Guest Present	J. Palazzolo (consultant – Utile design, Boston)
Public Attendance	

I. Agenda

Call to Order	Time: 6:30pm
Agenda	No changes.

II. Neighborhood Code: Core Zoning Recommendations & Discussion

Name(s)	Comment
	2.1. Staff and consultant provided a presentation on the proposed Neighborhood Code recommendation.
	2.2. Public Comment on Proposed Recommendations
	S. Bushor: • Doesn't like the idea of form-based code approach • Concerned about the 3,500 sq ft as the minimum lot requirement being too small. Thinks 4,000 would be better. 35-30 ft wide is too narrow • How to address not permeable space having more runoff. How to preserve trees • Small spaces for community gardens G. Dragoon: • Appreciates staff effort put towards the proposal • Likes: removal of the Waterfront housing district; removal of the density breaker limitations; up-zoning areas like North Ave • The story limit for 2.5 feels too low. RM & RH should have 4.5 & 5.5 story limit at minimum to meet housing demand • More density helps the environment, it prevents sprawl, it allows public transit to be economical, it allows for walkable & bikeable neighborhoods • Doesn't agree with Country Club comprising of 165 acres of prime real estate & paying \$274,000 in taxes B. Duncan:

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	• Are you proposing any changes to inclusionary zoning, and the bonuses that are allowed for that? And what that would do to height? • People need to be mindful of the building code implications that will tag on to the zoning changes E. Gould: • Height limit of 3.5 in RL should be maintained • Raising the heights to 4.5 in RM and 5.5 on the corridors • Would like mixed use in residential neighborhoods to be reconsidered as part of the proposal • Agrees with the positives noted earlier but setbacks, side & front should also be altered slightly J. Tiano: • Need to enable a Burlington of 100k people • Eliminate all setbacks, fire safety, ventilation, light • Eliminate lot sizes • Have a single residential zone – one residential neighborhood of mixed use (Urban Village) ○ 40% permeable lot surface requirement ○ 35 ft height limit • Add a transit-oriented development overlay (Urban Corridor) ○ 25% permeable surface requirement • Building footprint maximum as long as separate building are allowed to touch • Simplify permissive zoning to have 100k residents C. Larsson: • Agrees with the other speakers • Minimum lot sizes is redundant • Would like to hear from the committee members about what they think the purpose of the Neighborhood Code process T. Fryer: • Agrees with S. Bushor's concern for the trees • Thinks the proposal is great but doesn't go far enough • Agrees with density concern – would like to see more density • A Pattern Language book by Christopher Alexander • Lowering front setbacks could better define the public space and the negative space R. Thorne: • Be more bold and move quickly • Agrees with all the comments shared previously • Supports mixed use neighborhoods Carlos: • Echoes the previously shared comments • Supports mixed use neighborhoods
	2.3. Committee Discussion on Recommendations Z. Hightower: 1. What is the purpose of keeping the min lot sizes? M. Tuttle:

	• The committee will ultimately decide if that's the direction to go • Lot size is one of the tools to control the pattern of development Potential for subdivision in larger lot neighborhoods but would still maintain the fabric of open space to built area 2. Comparison between current height restrictions and proposed height? M. Tuttle: • Comparison not included in the proposal due to lack of city-wide data set about building height JP: • Looking at the current limit of 35 ft and what that number may want to be. Testing out if you introduce town homes and some of the higher intensity buildings, what those numbers need to be. • The half story (2.5) is not literally half of the floor below it. Either a setback rule or an angled roof combo of controlling the mass of the building at the top 3. For the proposed code, is the RL-RM limited by lot? M. Tuttle: • Right now there are no standards that regulate the overall footprint of buildings other than however much lot coverage you could achieve on a lot • Make more permissive and explicit having buildings up to a certain size, and simultaneously increase the lot coverage to make sure that people can build closer to that allowable footprint JP: • In the studies done – the lots in the intense parts of the city get so small that it doesn't make sense to have a building or a maximum footprint anymore because the setback rules & the lot coverage rules were defining the building more than any footprint rule would have 4. To conserve green spaces – the lot coverage should go up 5. In favor of removing minimum lot size A. Friend: 1. Is 45% lot coverage enough for RL? Should you increase that? JP: • Ran a number of tests - 3D models of various building of 1,800 ft & 1,100 ft to see what size lot is needed to accommodate that building at various coverage requirements resulting in 45% within the RL district 2. Agreed with forum idea of allowing more flexibility instead of establishing footprint sizes for the primary & secondary buildings J. Randall: 1. Is there an 8-12 unit building in the housing type slide of the presentation? M. Tuttle: • Didn't propose specific standards related to that building • The housing types displayed are meant as a guide particularly for consultants • In RH multi-unit buildings will be allowed. No suggestive limit on the number on units within a building itself. Same for the corridors – no limit of units in a building
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	2. Explain 4 unit max per building for RL and RM. Is that a density limit? M. Tuttle: • 4 unit max functions as a maximum. People can choose what to put on the lot within that footprint • Build a building on min lot size 3,500 ft with 1 unit = 12 unit/acre density, 2=24; 4=48. Using the median lot size of today 8,000 ft – 1=5 ½ units, 2=11 units JP: • Max size to make sure it accommodates different types of families 3. The possibility of differing to international building codes 4. Agrees with public comments on height allowances. Upper floor setbacks could be useful in neighborhood setting as opposed to corridor. Heights should be 1 story higher than proposed. 5. Mixed use neighborhoods could be compatible with this proposal. 6. To discuss the impact of economic stratification – to enable more opportunities for renting and home ownership. Create more walkable neighborhoods. 7. The implication of this proposal for the whole state. J. Shannon: 1. To think about Julia’s comment about no other community being able to meet this need of housing. 2. Building taller structure has a higher cost per unit than building lower structure. Increasing cost for building inclusionary units. Increasing the value of the lots for developers making harder to compete as homeowners. Where those affordable units would be built? JP: • When a building gets to a certain height, certain additional regulations are placed on top of it that increase the cost of the building but that’s at 70ft. That shouldn’t be a concern for the neighborhood code M. Tuttle: • Building materials have different costs. Higher building require concrete or steel which are more expensive • More straightforward in the proposal. Avoiding complexities that might cost more. • Inclusionary zoning is a bit out of scope of this code. Looking at how the bonuses and allowances would be translated. Expect a further discussion. 3. Minimum lot sizes. Has there been consideration for storm water management? Have a lot size that makes setbacks work and able to put a building on it. M. Gaughan: 1. What is the thinking around the annex? Explore an additional story on the corridors. 2. 20 ft setback on the corridor – is that from the center line? M. Tuttle: • There’s a couple neighborhoods across the city where we are looking for possible more opportunities. To be discussed at a later time.
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	• To get a modern building in the corridors we're looking at 50 ft height • 20 ft setback corridor is proposed as a maximum setback vs a setback minimum. Measured from the front of the property line JP: • We're continuing to test about 50 ft with a potential mixed use ground floor and 3 stories above. Top floor would be smaller in some form. 3. Rental registry in RM and what that overlay looks like in terms of how many units do we typically have in a building in RM with the existing rental stock. E. Malone: 1. Print the presentation or send it in advance to be reviewed by members. 2. To consider mix use not just in corridors, but how can we encourage that. Interested in hearing more. M. Tuttle: • Currently allow for neighborhood scale commercial like – laundromat, coffee shop, especially in historic building. Incentive to help preserve and reuse historic buildings. Allow the same use in corridors without any restrictions in historic. Up to the committee to express is mixed use should be used in other residential zones. S. Carpenter: 1. Having more height in the corridor. North part of the North Ave corridor different than the South. Similar situation with the Pine St corridor. M. Tuttle: • The proposed corridor zone to go up to the intersection of Plattsburg. To be discussed at a later meeting. B. Traverse: 1. How much further we can go in expanding housing opportunities. Diving into more details in future meetings - lot size, setbacks. 2. Promoting different unit sizes for different type families. Learn more about establishing a 4-unit maximum - what housing opportunities are potentially giving up if you were to build to the maximum size permitted by the proposal. How many units could theoretically be in there? How large would those units be if we keep it to 4 units? How large are those units as compared to others. 3. Height limitations in the corridor - allow at least 1 additional story 4. Understand how we define the proposal as to what would be the so-called corridors - Colchester Ave, Pearl St. Why on the North of Pearl St some of that would be RM as opposed to some of the institutional areas like on the West side of East Ave or North side of Colchester Ave. Whether or not there's opportunities there to classify that area as corridor. Areas not currently labels as a corridor but are currently neighborhood activity centers (Market 32, etc.) would continue to have the same standards apply? Looking at the proposed map - ward 5 - neighborhood of south meadow proposed to be classified as corridor - but not other existing condominium. M. Tuttle:
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	- Corridors – lots that are zoned either RL or RM today that have frontage on the major thoroughfares that were called out in our comprehensive plan. The mentioned neighborhood activity centers allow much greater intensity in terms of housing development than what these standards would allow. A. Montroll: - All the new regulations put restrictions on what's there already. Grandfathering has a lot of limits. Be more specific with pre-existing structures in place. - At the next meeting to go through specific items one at a time (lot sizes, building heights, etc.) - Going into the right direction. - How will the written proposal be? M. Tuttle: - Proposal to be introduced at the next meeting. No red line.
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III. Public Forum

N/A	
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IV. Minutes and Communications

Action: Approve the minutes and accept the communications		
Motion by: J. Randall	Second by: M. Guaghan	Approved: unanimous

V. Adjourn

Adjournment	Time: 8:34	
Motion: E. Malone	Second: J. Randall	Vote: unanimous