

**Burlington Committee on Accessibility
Flynn Elementary School, Burlington
March 12, 2013
6-8pm**

Committee Members Present:

Ardelle Cabre, Ned Holt, Paul Sisson, Ralph Montefusco, Bradley Stephenson, Shelley Waterman, Patrick Standen, Russ Scully

Committee Members Not Present:

Mike Watson, Ron Redmond

Others Present:

Mark Irish, Cleary Buckley, Santina Leporati, Kate Stein

Finalizing of the Plan

Kesha began by explaining how she emailed Sharon Busher and Joan Shannon (who is City Council president) the draft plan to receive their feedback. There was no word back from Sharon. Joan replied by saying that the plan needed to be cut down more. She was happy with the introduction, the mission statement and the quarterly report. However, Joan said that the rest could stir up questions from the city council (i.e. financing). Joan suggested planning a simple version with about 5 points, due tomorrow at noon. Kesha said she could send the revised version to everyone but there would not be enough time for comments.

Ralph asked if the city council was going to act on the presented plan and strategy on the 18th. Kesha said that they would not on the 18th. She said it would take a couple of weeks for the council to create a resolution and move forward.

Patrick commented that changing the strategy was only one council member's perspective. With all due respect to her opinion, Patrick felt that there was no need to simplify the strategy. He suggested keeping the headings and the hollow bullet points. He also suggested taking out "creating affordable housing."

Shelley agreed with Patrick and said that the committee should not take anything out of the plan. She stated that the plan was a great beginning to what can continue to be a really good committee. She said that it was not a good idea to allow the city council to change key points without a permanent committee set.

Brad asked what the worry was for the city council. Paul answered that it was the communication between the council and the committee. Brad added that there was nothing binding about the strategy. Paul stated that there would be a need for another resolution for the committee to move forward. Brad said that this committee was just an advising committee and that the council could choose items

that they want for the future resolution. He suggested giving Joan a similar plan and not to revise the current one too much.

Shelley stated that some of the specifics in the current plan are easier to address in the short term and it would have a negative impact if the committee were to take out some of those points.

Patrick added that the funding and financing aspects of the strategy may worry council members.

Brad commented that the committee did what they were asked to do, which was to make a plan.

Paul suggested keeping the hollow bullets but verbally talk about the specific bullet points because it would remain on the record.

Shelley expressed her feelings on the notion that the council had to have an idea that what would be presented to them was going to need some sort of funding. She was worried about taking something out of the plan that was vital and that the committee worked hard to accomplish. Patrick suggested taking some aspects that would make the council members worry. If what was verbally spoken became part of the record then those items could still move forward along with the committee. The hollow bullet points represent the large themes for the committee.

Kesha had an alternative, which was to separate things that look like process (items that are not about spending money) and action items that the committee would continue when allowed to move forward. She suggested reformatting and rewording anything about "funding."

Ralph spoke towards the important ideas of making sure the committee is permanent and adding new members. When the committee moves forward, then the committee could look at the strategy and plan to move forward. He also stated that some members of the council might not be members in a couple of months.

Cleary stated that the hollow bullet points are the goals and principles that the committee is trying to accomplish. The objective is to get the council to buy into the goals and make the committee permanent; they need to buy into the big picture first. He also stated that funding could be done one step at a time.

Bradley added that everyone should contact his or her particular city councilor.

Kesha stated that they mayor saw the plan. Also, the council needs to be aware that DPW and School Board members were present in previous meetings.

Patrick reasoned that the current committee's life is short. If the committee were to hand in the strategy and plan as is, there might be a chance that it would not be

passed, stopping the future of the committee. If the committee were to hand something that can be sold to the council, there is a better chance of moving forward.

Ralph suggested on giving leeway for reformatting the strategy to be submitted for tomorrow. He also encouraged people to go to the meeting. It will be in Burlington High School at 7pm on Monday, March 18.

Paul added that only 2 out 14 councilors have changed. He expects that Shannon will be reelected. The committee should not worry about dramatic changes in the council

Patrick agreed on allowing Kesha to reformat the strategy and plan. He encouraged taking out of the part on affordable housing. He added that the committee can advocate but to not give the council anything that will allow them to reject the whole proposal.

Cleary suggested talking about how the committee got to these goals and identifying the process and showing the support the committee has received. Kesha said that she could put that into the introduction.

Ralph asked who would want to remain in the committee moving forward (informally). Shelley said that she would want to stay in the committee. Brad was hesitant and explained that he was not comfortable with the process in which the city council was handling the strategy and plan. Patrick stated that he views Brad as an important member in the current committee and the future one.

Shelley added that she shared the same frustrations as Brad, but if it was not for this meeting she probably would not have continued with the committee. She values that hard work that the committee had put into creating the plan and is now driven to see it through. Bradley shared his concerns that this situation is indicative on how the committee would be treated in the future.

Patrick shared from past experience that the committee had complete autonomy. They worked with various departments and made a lot of important changes around the City. It was mostly action oriented and the committee saw results. The work that the committee was doing now is not representative on the type of work they would be doing in the future.

Paul stated that the bullet point saying "identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities in City hiring processes" might imply that the city isn't doing so already. Cleary added that it could be seen as reminding people to continue to do so.

Shelley said that the committee could explain "Community Climate and Awareness" better to the city council so that they could understand what that statement actually means. Paul suggested inviting city council members to future committee meetings.

Kesha asked if the committee should recommend terms for committee members. It was decided on 2 terms.

The idea of adding Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) to the plan was discussed. It was stated that MCS was a controversial diagnosis. Patrick encouraged not putting any language in the strategy for one certain disability. Cleary added that there is no possible way to stop the issue but the committee could bring awareness about this issue and the disabilities that cannot be seen. Santina added that the committee could serve to explain "reasonable accommodation."

The Burlington Accessibility Group was discussed. Joint meeting were recommended. Santina will be staffing the meetings from now on.

There was a motion to accept the revised strategy and plan. (Paul, Mike and Ron were not present.)

Explanation of the Public Investment Action Plan

Nate Wildfire introduced himself to the committee. He is new to Burlington, moved from Pittsburg, PA. He has been a member of CEDO for the past 3 ½ months.

The Public Investment Action Plan calls for public participation and recommendations on how to spend tax dollars for the waterfront area. This the first time the City is using this much public process with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars.

Three important points:

1. Deadline: December 2014
2. The Mayor is sensitive that spending public dollars should go through a public process.
3. There 5-12 million dollars that can be spent. It is a lot of money to spend in one place.

This plan is already evolving. Beginning in February, the 60-day clock started. There have been different ways to tell people to submit concepts. Concepts are not quite ideas. Concepts are rather a beginning of a real project. All concepts have to support plans that have come before. Concepts are open to everyone. Send an email or call Nate. The concepts are posted online and are open to all to view, comment and even collaborate with others.

The next step after submitting and registering a concept is to fill out a 20-question questionnaire that will be sent to the person who submitted a concept. The questionnaire must be done by April 5th.

The PIA team will choose the finalist who will spend their summer making a robust proposal. Then, winners will be chosen and go through various committees and lastly to the city council.

60-day period is right now. Provide multiple points of engagement.

1. All concepts will be posted online, available for comments.
2. At least one public forum if not multiple
3. Anyone can register a concept without doing the questionnaire just to have the name and idea out there.

The PIA team is asking committees like this one to draft a memo. The memo will state what is important for the committee in carrying ideas and concepts. Later, when the finalists have the summer, the memo can be more robust.

Brad asked for a public investment definition. Nate answered that public investment means for public facilities, even those who are not 100% public. It means a public infrastructure (i.e. marina, breakwater, park creation, water and sewer, sidewalk investments, and lighting). They have to be permanent.

Ralph stated that one of the most important problems faced by people with disabilities is connecting Church Street to the Waterfront. Nate said that there were already various concepts for that same issue (i.e. a gondola going through Church St., a series of stairways and elevators connecting Church St. and the Waterfront, a parking garage on the hill with a viewing point at the top)

Patrick stated that the committee would like to be involved in the process to make sure that accessibility criteria is met. He also suggested that the public forum should be completely accessible.

The area for PIA: Maple to the top of the urban reserve and the eastern boundary is Battery St. with the exception of the mall.

Kesha asked about the timeline for the memo. Nate said it was April 5th.

Meeting adjourned.