



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Councilors  
**From:** Mayor Miro Weinberger  
**Date:** October 16, 2013  
**Re:** Proposed Maker Space in Memorial Auditorium

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I am writing to brief you on an exciting conversation underway about using the Annex at Memorial Auditorium as a Maker Space, called Generator. The attached materials describe what is being considered. I thought it was important that you be aware of this effort, as there will be much public conversation about a potential Maker Space in the coming weeks, including an announcement on Friday at Tech Jam of the proposed Generator Space in Memorial.

As some of you know, a supporting zoning amendment enabling this use at Memorial has made its way through the Planning Commission and the Ordinance Committee. While the amendment currently is the law, final approval of the amendment will come before the Council at your November 4 meeting.

We are well advanced in lease discussions and are close to signing a Letter of Intent that will be the basis of a lease between the City and Generator. It is important to note that any lease would be structured so as not to interfere with possible redevelopment plans for Memorial, which have been discussed for many years and which we are continuing to explore. There are, however, numerous details that need to be resolved before a lease is ready for Council action. In the meantime, it would be helpful to hear any concerns or questions you have about this potential use of Memorial.

Thank you.



October 16, 2013

Dear Burlington City Council Members,

I am writing you on behalf of community leaders who have banded together as volunteers to establish GENERATOR, a non-profit community maker space. We hope to make the Annex of Memorial Auditorium our first home, a plan endorsed by CEDO, Parks & Recreation, and BCA.

In order to do this, a zoning change is required for Memorial Auditorium to allow for the type of activities we contemplate. We have shepherded this zoning change through two regular Planning Commission meetings where it has been unanimously endorsed and warmly received during public comment by at least a half dozen participants. There were no negative comments. The proposal was subsequently heard by the Ordinance Committee in early October. While the amendment currently is the law, final approval of the amendment will come before the Council at your November 4 meeting. A copy of the original zoning change request is included with this communication.

## **What's a maker space? What kinds of activities go on?**

The attachments below provide a short answer and will be included in your printed packet, but for your convenience, we refer you as well to online sources that discuss the highly successful Artisan's Asylum, a maker space in Somerville, Mass and the model early on for our own efforts. We have made numerous site visits, and brought the founder to Burlington to consult. In a day-long exchange, he toured potential locations and addressed representatives from CEDO, UVM, IBM, BCA, Champlain College, state economic development and education folks, community leaders, and local philanthropists.

Here's a short video from The Economist on economic development that features Artisan.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/babbage/2013/08/community-start-ups>

Their website shows an emphasis on education: [http://artisansasylum.com/?page\\_id=215](http://artisansasylum.com/?page_id=215)

We are working on our business plan based on a careful study of the demographics in Burlington and the specific needs of our maker community. Our goal is to operate off of earned income and to use our fundraising efforts for scholarship, capital improvements, and expansion. As for our partners, UVM, Champlain College, Burlington College, BCA, Parks and Recreation, and Burlington Telecom have joined our effort and made verbal commitments to provide funding, technical assistance, and/or community education through Generator.

Attached is a thumbnail look at Generator and its governing team, a blueprint in progress for our layout of the Annex space, and a copy of the zoning request that will come before the commission.

Thanks for your time on this and, we hope, your enthusiasm! We think it's a great thing for Burlington and we're committed to doing it right. If you have any questions, please be in touch now or later, and look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Michael Metz,  
on behalf of The Generator Team  
802 598 6982

Incase you did not know, Generator—Burlington's new Makerspace—is a combination of artist studio, classroom, and business incubator focused on the act of making things. If all goes according to plan, Generator will open its doors spring 2014 in the Annex of Memorial Auditorium.

Makers of all kinds— artists, artisans, entrepreneurs, and weekend tinkerers — are invited to sign-up for membership, rent a studio space, or take a class.

>> ***Makerspaces are . . .***

A unique combination of artist studio, shop class and business incubator focused on the act of making things. Evolved from the DIY culture and fueled by the free flow of information in the digital age, the maker movement has blossomed with makerspaces being increasingly in demand.

>> ***Hotbeds of Innovation***

Makerspaces exist at the intersection of art, science and technology and as such create communities of collaboration between artists, engineers, entrepreneurs and artisans. This hybrid hive of activity creates a fertile environment for innovation, creativity and idea fulfillment.

>> ***Emphasis on Education***

Makerspaces offer a diverse range of classes to both members and the community-at-large. In addition they foster the informal sharing of expertise on both individual and collaborative projects.

>> ***Tools, Studios, Classes and Cultural Programming***

In addition to classes, makerspaces offer: small inexpensive studios for rent; a range of shared tools from 3D printers and electronics fabrication, to traditional metal and wood shop tools; as well as technology and innovation-focused cultural programming

>> ***Based Upon Successful Model***

Generator's concept is based upon the highly successful Somerville, MA makerspace, Artisan's Asylum. After two expansions it now occupies 45,000 sq ft, has 250+ members and offers 20+ classes per month. Founder Gui Cavalcanti is consulting on Generator's project plan.

>> ***New Business Creation***

Somerville's local government credits Artisan's Asylum with doubling the city's number of light fabrication companies within its three years of operation at its current location. Artisan's Asylum is also home to millions in Kickstarter dollars including a \$1.8 million investment in a 3D pen.

>> ***Downtown Location***

The central location of Memorial's Annex is ideally suited to Generator's goals of community outreach and accessibility for classes. Its proximity to the Fletcher Free Library is also ideal; as many libraries nationwide seek to establish makerspaces as extensions of their educational missions. Finally, thanks to Burlington Telecom's investment in improved Internet delivery, the Annex space will allow Generator to provide its patrons with highly desirable and unparalleled computing power— exciting news for makers in the digital arts.

Generator will be a bustling hotbed of community activity and innovation. Launching and supporting this space requires investment – both in dollars and in effort. We are looking to you to help us spread the word and send interested parties our way! In addition, we are seeking grant funding and would welcome any help in identifying grants that might fit our mission. If you or someone you know may be interested in this opportunity, please contact [generatorvermont@gmail.com](mailto:generatorvermont@gmail.com).

Thank you for helping lead the way in this promising new venture! Stay tuned for more updates! For more information about Generator please visit: [www.generatorvermont.com](http://www.generatorvermont.com)



## >> Generator Team

*John Cohn* is a fellow at IBM, Essex Junction, a founding member of the Vermont Makers, on the Board of Directors at the Echo Center, and all-around mad scientist, self-described but only because he beat us to it.

*Dan Harvey* is the Assistant Dean at the University of Vermont's Graduate College as well as Business Operations Manager for the Office of the Vice President for Research. Prior to arriving at UVM in 2005, Dan was the General Manager of VPT, Vermont's public television network. He has been on the Burlington City Arts advisory board for eleven years, serving as president from 2004-2013.

*Ken Howell* is a professor in Champlain College's Division of Communication & Creative Media, a founding member of the Vermont Makers, an organizer of the Champlain Maker Faire, and artist. His longstanding interest in work that happens at the intersection of art, technology, and communication has informed most of his activities including the recent genesis and launch of maker space at Champlain College's Miller Center building.

*Doreen Kraft* is the long-time Executive Director of Burlington City Arts and has overseen its impressive growth over the last xx years. Doreen's ability to shepherd projects through City process has resulted in increases in programs, staff, budget, and in the creation of studio and gallery space including the nationally-recognized, historically-preserved BCA Center.

*Michael Metz* is a materials scientist, a business consultant in precious metals technology, a photographer, and an active board member of BCA, The BCA Foundation, Champlain College, and the Vermont Community Foundation. He has extensive non-profit development experience, served as the chair of two successful multimillion-dollar capital campaigns, and has a long-standing interest in art, education and technology.

*Christy Mitchell* is an entrepreneur with over ten years of creative facilitation and arts management experience. She has reclaimed four industrial spaces in Burlington for working artists, and oversees, at present, over thirty studios with another eight in development, and two galleries including S.P.A.C.E. She also serves as associate director of the South End Arts and Business Association.

*Denise Shekerjian* is an attorney and writer with a long-time interest in the creative process. She is the author of *Uncommon Genius*, a look at creativity based on a group of MacArthur Prize winners. She is also the author of literary essays and a blog, and has experimental work in progress. She is a longtime supporter of arts and education, and has longstanding friendships with BCA and Champlain College.

*Chris Thompson* is an artist and maker focused on art and technology with 20 years of experience in corporate technology management, and four years as the curator at the BCA center where he organized over 30 exhibitions. Chris is also a member of Vermont Makers and is involved in the creation of maker space at Champlain College including the development of curriculum.

*Doug Webster* is the Career and Technical Education Coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Education as well as an active participant of CMF Innovations, which promotes maker activities nationally. He has also produced and hosted an educational show on the culture of innovation, and is President of the National Association for Workforce Improvement, which focuses on innovation education.

## >> Key Employees:

*Jen Adrian* is a graphic designer with close to twenty years in the field of design and marketing. She splits her time between the Emergent Media Center at Champlain College as a Creative Project Manager and principal of Jen Adrian Design. A recent groupie to the local Vermont Maker scene and one of the facilitators of the Champlain College Makers Lab.

*Rob Rock-TBD*



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July 23, 2013

Burlington Planning Commission  
149 Church St.  
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

Please accept this letter as a request for a zoning amendment to expand industrial uses in the following zones: Downtown, Downtown Transition, Neighborhood Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Activity Centers. Industrial uses are being more and more integrated into the community. For example, the group of "Makers" in Burlington hope to provide a small-scale manufacturing facility that would be open to the community for classes and equipment rental that would allow people to do welding, woodworking, fiber arts, robotics, 3D printing, electrical fabrication, and a host of other activities. A food processing facility would be similarly community-driven, offering classes, training, and preparation space for startup businesses. CEDO talks with business owners weekly who are very much in need of a commercial kitchen space, and there is nothing that can meet that need in Burlington. As such, they take their businesses elsewhere or pay for rental kitchen space outside of our community.

Two locations that have come up as good potential spaces for these uses include the old cinema space at the Ethan Allen Shopping Center in the New North End, and Memorial Auditorium in the downtown. Both spaces have between 4,000 and 7,000 square feet of space available, making them ideal for small-scale industrial uses. It is our observation that the two enterprise zones in the city are not adequate to meet the demands for this type of use, and we believe these zones should be expanded. We want to be clear that the use of Memorial Auditorium in this capacity would be temporary, until such time as the city has a plan for the building. For now, it would allow us to turn a building that costs \$150,000 a year to manage into a revenue-generating asset that would bring vitality to the community.

Situating these hubs of creative energy in the midst of the community rather than relegating them to the outskirts would have a great benefit to the community and business owners, while increasing the city's revenue. People want to stay in Burlington with these types of businesses, but as the current development ordinance is structured, they are finding it hard to do so. We understand that there might be concerns about various nuisances arising from industrial use, so we believe that making these uses Conditional Uses would allow the Commission a great deal of control over these activities in the future.

We look forward to discussing this issue with you, and thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Peter Owens, CEDO

Jesse Bridges, Parks and Recreation



