

BURLINGTON PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
645 Pine Street
Minutes – November 16, 2011

Commissioners present: Robert Alberry, Margaret Gundersen, Nathan Lavery, Mark Porter, Maxwell Tracy and Jared Wood.

Commissioners absent: Marc Sherman

Commissioner Alberry called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Item 1: AGENDA

Commissioner Alberry asked if there were any changes to the Agenda. Commissioner Wood requested that the language be changed: add "...for relevant issues..." Commissioner Alberry will take this request under advisement.

Item 2: PUBLIC FORUM

- Steve Norman, north end resident on Walk/Bike Council and Marketplace and Alliance Francaise: Met with Director Goodkind and three staff members about the possibility of new bilingual signage; has communicated with Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer, about motorcycle parking and hopes to see the item on the next agenda.
- Jim Langan, North Street resident (between North Prospect Street and Mansfield Avenue): Working with Nicole Losch on traffic calming options for that block (high volume of vehicle traffic supported by traffic study done last summer; no sidewalk on north side of block; drivers rolling through North Street/Mansfield Avenue intersection instead of stopping at the STOP sign). Fourteen of sixteen residents on that block support exploring traffic calming options; Commissioner Wood recommended that the residents bring the issue before the Commission.
- Andrea Racek, neighbor of Mr. Langan: Has tried creative landscaping to deter children from wandering off the sidewalk into the road; supports further traffic calming.
- Conar O'Loughlin, neighbor of Mr. Langan and Ms. Racek: Supports previous comments; added that parking spaces are usually filled on the north side of North Street, and, combined with regularity of vehicle traffic, makes it difficult and dangerous for people/children to cross the street.

Item 3: REMOVAL OF PARKING ALONG THE EDGE OF THE BUMP-OUT ON CONVENT SQUARE (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

Convent Square is a small one-way street; removing parking along the bump-out would allow for safer traffic flow and should not adversely affect parking spaces (residents have off-street parking).

Commissioner Porter moved to accept staff's recommendations; Commissioner Wood seconded. Unanimous approval.

Item 4: REMOVAL OF AN ADDITIONAL 20' OF PARKING WEST TO EDGE OF THE DRIVEWAY TO 295 MAPLE STREET (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

Mr. Fleming received this request from Chris Giard from the School Department; the space is directly across from the Edmunds School entrance and its removal will allow easier maneuvering for trucks entering and exiting the school entrance. Mr. Fleming got the approval of the resident of 295 Maple Street. Commissioner Gundersen expressed concern over losing yet another parking space and requested a list from staff of the number of parking spaces removed this year. Director Goodkind agreed to provide a list and said the removal and addition of parking spaces are all done per ordinance. He offered the possibility of adding a parking space at the other/east end of the current "No Parking" area in front of 305 Maple Street. Assistant Director Norman Baldwin cautioned against interfering with the clearance on either side of the crosswalk in front of said property. Commissioner Wood suggested that the Commission consider in the future, limiting truck deliveries in the city to off hours to avoid congestion.

Commissioner Porter suggested not voting on this issue until Mr. Fleming provides a pros-and-cons list, which will allow the Commission to make a more informed decision.

Item 5: REMOVAL OF PARKING ON THE NORTH SIDE OF ALFRED STREET (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

Continuation of last month's agenda item: Mr. Fleming was asked to return to the Commission after having spoken with the two businesses involved (Associates in Dentistry, located on Alfred Street, and "The Spot" restaurant, located on the corner of Alfred and Shelburne Streets). When contacted by Mr. Fleming, Joseph Kropf, DMD expressed concerns about parking limitation; staff at "The Spot" did not express any concerns. Mr. Fleming gave copies of his November 16th letter, which was addressed to the Burlington Public Works Commission, to Dr. Kropf and staff of "The Spot" and invited both parties to attend tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Alberry invited members of the public to come forward with their comments.

- Jennifer Sumner, Alfred Street resident: Submitted petition to Mr. Fleming in October requesting south-side-only parking to enable residents to enter and exit their driveways more easily and, particularly in winter, create more space for emergency vehicles to pass through.
- Joe Kropf, owner of dental practice on Alfred Street: Provides off-street parking for staff and has an excess of 4 spaces for clients. Had informally attempted to secure a curb cut permit from Zoning to transform his front yard (35' from his sidewalk to the adjoining property and 22' in depth) for 3 head-in parking spaces and was told not to pursue it (during a renovation of his business, Dr. Kropf's architect had approached Ken Lerner at the Planning and Zoning office). Dr. Kropf claims his trash hauler has never complained about the parking issue when backing into and exiting his driveway.

Commissioner Gundersen questioned the thinking in the approved change of use for the new restaurant ("The Spot") around adequate parking and wondered if there would be a variance that would allow Dr. Kropf to be allowed a curb cut to add parking on his property. Director Goodkind advised the Commission to follow up with Mr. Lerner at Planning and Zoning, as this is not a decision of Public Works. Commissioner Gundersen expressed a willingness to write a letter in support of Dr. Kropf's

application for a curb cut. Commissioner Porter verified that the parking difficulties occur when it snows and due to non-resident parking. He asked the commissioners for a more thoughtful approach in reaching a resolution to satisfy the residents and the dental practice (e.g., paying close attention to snow removal). Director Goodkind offered the suggestion of a “No Parking 6 pm – 6 am” ban which is common throughout the city. Commissioner Porter agreed that this ban, for one side of the street, would allow the plow trucks to make a more thorough sweep on the clear side of the street at least during those hours. Commissioner Lavery would not support the proposal recommended by staff, preferring another solution. Commissioner Alberry asked the Commission to consider a compromise: On the north side of Alfred Street, towards Shelburne Street, eliminate 3 parking spots which would allow Dr. Kropf’s patients to park in those spots. Director Goodkind stated that the 3 parking spots could not be designated for Dr. Kropf’s patients. Commissioner Wood would not support a curb cut permit for Dr. Kropf’s practice. Commissioner Porter moved to table this discussion until further investigation by staff into the most appropriate time period for a “no parking” ban on Alfred Street, returning to this item at next month’s Commission meeting. Commissioner Wood seconded. Discussion: Commissioner Wood suggested that Planning and Zoning be approached for their feedback on this item. Director Goodkind offered to contact Mr. Lerner. Unanimous approval.

Item 6. LOWER CHURCH STREET PARKING CHANGES (Joel Fleming, Public Works Engineer)

Mr. Fleming is making a formal request for the Commission’s adoption of traffic amendments to lower Church Street; specifically: Removal of parking on the west side of Church Street extending 300’ south of Main Street, and extending the loading/unloading zone on the west side of Church Street 20’. Commissioner Porter moved to accept staff’s recommendations; Commissioner Lavery seconded. Unanimous approval.

Item 7. MID-BLOCK CROSSWALKS (Nicole Losch, Transportation Planner, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager)

While Ms. Losch was preparing her presentation on the latest concepts on mid-block crossings, much of which was gleaned from a recent webinar, Commissioner Lavery asked for clarification on the regularity of communication from Public Works staff to residents during the fact-finding process (e.g., traffic calming request for upper block of North Street). Ms. Losch said that staff communication was dependent on the complexity of the issue and, after receiving a formal request from a resident, usually occurs only when staff needs clarification or more information from residents. Commissioner Gundersen requested that staff set up a standard practice of communicating with residents on a regular basis with status updates, perhaps via e-mail. Director Goodkind will consider approaching My-Chau Bui, assistant in the Engineering Department, to help with this since her task of sending out regular paving updates via e-mail has come to a close for the year.

Ms. Losch: Vermont is a “yield to pedestrians” state vs. a “stop for pedestrians.” She explained the definition of a crosswalk; considerations in determining placement and type of crosswalks, signalized pedestrian crossings, raised medians or crossing islands, as well as safety tools when creating crossings. Assistant Director Baldwin cautioned the commissioners in their interpretation of data such as that presented in “Table 1 – Proposed DC Uncontrolled Crosswalk Engineering Treatments;” (e.g., at signalized intersections where pedestrians cross, there will obviously be more accidents because it is where a large number of pedestrians and vehicles congregate). The signalized crossing being considered

at Church and Pearl Streets and on Main Street in front of Edmunds School is a rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). Because the RRFB is still in interim approval for a Federal highway, Public Works staff was required to write a letter indicating that they would like to use the RRFB; they did so and were granted approval.

Commissioner Gundersen stated that certain flashing lights exacerbate her astigmatism and may affect others. Commissioner Wood expressed concern over multiple types of signalized crossings being used in the city, possibly causing confusion. Ms. Losch said that each crossing presents its own unique characteristics, calling for a variety of considerations, but that all crossings using the HAWK system would be uniform, as would those where RRFB's are employed.

Ms. Losch referred the commissioners to a list of resources used when evaluating areas for crosswalks:

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
- Safety Effects of Marks vs. Unmarked Crosswalks in Uncontrolled Locations (FHWA)
- Toolbox of Countermeasures and their Potential Effectiveness for Pedestrian Crashes (FHWA)
- Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals
- VT Pedestrian & Bicycle Design Manual
- Pedestrian Facility Guidebook (AASHTO)
- Burlington Transportation Plan
- Institute of Transportation Engineers

Commissioner Gundersen asked if, at the next meeting, Ms. Losch could show brief clips of the different signalized crossings. A member of the audience commented that an RRFB is used on Route 15 in front of the Jericho Elementary School and she took time one day to observe and use the signalized crossing. She was impressed by its effectiveness. Director Goodkind noted that mid-block crossings would not be used at "T" intersections; they are used on long stretches with no side streets (e.g., just south of the newly located Burlington College at the Champlain Farms store).

Commissioner Wood: Concerned about inconsistencies in crossings in the city. Director Goodkind said that all crossings have signs, markings and handicap-accessible ramps leading up to them.

Item 8: PROJECTS UPDATE (Director Steven Goodkind)

Director Goodkind directed the commissioners to their packets for the 6-page Excel spreadsheet, which Ms. Losch built on from Mr. Dan Bradley's previous reports. Director Goodkind invited feedback from the commissioners concerning the presentation and format before it is posted on the Public Works Website. The projects noted on the spreadsheet are active projects that may have some capital involved. Staff has been exploring different software options for the production of future updates but the goal is a universally-used and accessible software program. These updates will be put out periodically.

Item 9: MINUTES OF 10/19/11

Commissioner Gundersen moved to accept the Minutes as recorded; Commissioner Lavery seconded. Unanimous approval.

Item 9: CHAIR'S REPORT (Commissioner Alberry): None.

Item 10: DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Steven Goodkind, P.E., Director of Public Works, City Engineer)

Director Goodkind:

- Wrapping up paving season
- What appears to be a crack in the new pavement on Shelburne Road south of the rotary (State project) is actually an overlap of the pavement from one pass to another. There is always a seam where two courses of pavement come together.
- Numerous small drainage issues (e.g., Starr Farm Road near the dog park; top of Clymer Street; North and Hyde Street triangle) have been or are close to completion.
- City-wide leaf pick-up this week. There is a concern that many of the leaves haven't dropped yet, so staff continues to monitor it.
- Referred commissioners to the *draft* of the Public Works performance report he handed out at the meeting. Director Goodkind will be meeting with Commissioners Porter and Lavery this Friday to review it further. Invites feedback from the commissioners and hope to finalize it at the end of the month. The finalized version will be printed in booklet format and posted electronically. Commissioner Porter suggested adding comparative data revealing advantages and/or disadvantages/cost-savings of those projects listed on the annual report.
- Bilingual signage topic brought up by Steve Norman during the Public Forum item of this meeting: A new way-finding project is underway, exploring more opportunities to integrate French with English language and use of international symbols (e.g., "P" for parking).
- A second traffic signal technician has just been hired. Though Dave Garen does excellent work, the volume of work called for a second technician. Commissioner Gundersen asked if both traffic signal technicians could attend the December Commission meeting to talk about the possibility of extending crossing times for pedestrians in crosswalks. Director Goodkind said that a discussion can be started at the next meeting.
- 25 mph speed limit: Director Goodkind and Ms. Losch have are preparing advertisements to publicize the change with effective date of change being November 30th. Gateway (large) signs will be required but many of the present signs can be removed.
- Airport and its relationship to Public Works (Public Works operates the parking for the airport): The Burlington Free Press reported that a spokesperson from the FAA said that no one from the city had contacted their agency regarding regulations. Director Goodkind followed up with the FAA and confirmed that FAA records show three conversations with Assistant Director Buteau and Director Goodkind during which time no red-flags were raised. One issue concerning operating the parking for the airport: Does the Department of Public Works (DPW) have to competitively bid the operation? The answer is "no." Another issue: The city takes \$200,000 out of parking revenue of the \$5 million gross revenue from the airport parking garage, which is then deposited in a fund out of which expenses for crossing guards, traffic signals, street signs, striping, traffic enforcement, etc. are drawn. In some ways, this could be considered a diversion of revenue, which is why Director Goodkind contacted the FAA. Director Goodkind sent a copy of his Memo to the Mayor's office. Commissioner Gundersen voiced concern over misrepresentation by the press and its effect on the current mayoral campaign, and suggested that Director Goodkind attend an upcoming City Council meeting to push back against the misinformation.

Item 12: COMMISSIONERS' COMMUNICATION

Commissioner Gundersen: 1) Would like to continue discussion on cars not being able to see when pedestrians have the "walk" signal; 2) Pleased that city bus drivers are more polite but still concerned about some drivers running yellow or red lights. Director Goodkind suggested that when Commissioner Gundersen witnesses offenses, she record the location and time of the offense and contact the CCTA office. Commissioner Gundersen is also pleased that buses are no longer idling around Edmunds School. 3) Concerned about difficulty exiting Howard Street onto Pine Street. Director Goodkind and staff are working on a solution, as there are several considerations (don't want Howard Street to become a cut-through). Director Goodkind said that this may be addressed with the Champlain Parkway.

Commissioner Lavery: 1) He and Commissioner Porter will meet with Director Goodkind this Friday to discuss the performance evaluation and invited other commissioners to review the draft before that meeting and forward feedback to any one of them.

Commissioner Tracy: 1) Was unsuccessful in conferencing in on the October Commission meeting and would like to create a workable solution, as he thought it was set up for him to call in. Assistant Director Baldwin suggested that if just one Commissioner will be calling in, they could be directed to call the conference phone number instead of conferencing in (which would then involve working with Burlington Telecom to schedule). He will make sure that one commissioner calling in on the conference phone will work and if it does, that will be the procedure for future meetings. 2) Asked how a street is assessed for future paving; what index is used. Director Goodkind explained that the PCI was developed approximately thirty years ago and since updated. It uses pavement condition criteria (potholes, cracks, etc.) representative of that road. The information is entered into the computer and the software program helps the department analyze and prioritize the data. Director Goodkind will have another report in the next month showing the current status of paving projects and which streets need to be done next year.

Commissioner Porter: 1) Requested that Director Goodkind report on the suggested degree of slope for raised structures in between paving courses and if those standards can be included on future paving projects. 2) Asked Commissioner Alberry to compose a "My Turn" article explaining road uses city-wide (e.g., pedestrians' interpretation of crossing signals, vehicles needing to stop before turning right-on-red, road rules for skateboarders, etc.). Commissioner Alberry will work on it after the holidays.

Jared Wood: 1) Reported that the electric "No Right on Red" sign at the intersection of Winooski Ave. and Pearl (traveling North on Winooski) is still not working. 2) At the same intersection, Commissioner Wood asked Director Goodkind to investigate the synchronization of the pedestrian crossing signals with the traffic signals. 3) Expressed concern about blinking traffic lights at night where tree branches impede visibility for drivers proceeding into the intersections at Flynn Avenue and Pine Street (evergreens on the southeast corner) and at the College and Willard Streets intersection. 4) Concerned with inadequate parking in the DPW visitor parking lot off Lakeside Avenue (few spaces and poorly parked trucks and snowplows). He asked if something could be done about it. Director Goodkind will bring it to the attention of Parks and Recreation Director, Harbormaster and Cemetery Superintendent Mari Steinbach.

Commissioner Lavery: When he and Commissioner Porter meet with Director Goodkind this Friday he will be asking if the commissioners' packets could arrive on the Wednesday prior to the Commission meeting (currently being mailed out the Friday before the meeting).

Item 13: COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

Item 14: POLICY UPDATE: None.

Item 15: ADJOURNMENT: 8:45 pm: Commissioner Gundersen moved to adjourn; Commissioner Wood seconded. Unanimous approval.