



SOUTH BURLINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION

14 JULY 2026

The South Burlington Planning Commission held a regular meeting on Tuesday, 14 July 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 301, City Hall, 180 Market Street, and via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Louisos, Chair; M. Mittag, J. Moscatelli, D. Leban, C. Lawrence, M. Emery

ALSO PRESENT: P. Conner, Director of Planning and Zoning; K. Peterson, City Planner; R. Doyle, J. Davis, T. Burke, M. Buckley, T. Barritt, E. Fitzgerald

1. Instructions on exiting the building in case of an emergency:

Ms. Louisos provided instructions on emergency exit from the building.

2. Agenda: Additions, deletions or changes in order of agenda items:

Mr. Conner asked to add to Other Business an update on non-substantive changes to the LDRs. Members agreed.

3. Open to the public for items not related to the Agenda:

Mr. Barritt noted that gravel is being laid out for the Hubbard Park rec path. It can be walked on, and paving will happen soon as well as landscaping.

4. Planning Commissioner announcements and staff report:

Ms. Louisos welcomed Ms. Emery to the Commission. Ms. Emery reviewed her background and previous service to the City.

Mr. Conner said that when there is a full Commission, members can vote on officers for the coming year.

5. LDR Amendments: Update to Planning Commission reports:

Ms. Peterson noted the amendments have already been approved. They just did not make it into the reports.

Mr. Mittag moved to approve LDR Amendments LDR-26-03 and LDR-26-08 as amended and include them in the Commission's Reports. Ms. Leban seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

Ms. Emery said it was wonderful to see the focus on housing and affordable housing.

6. Long-term Care Facilities, Tweaks to Commercial Use Scales, and mix of housing types: project charge

Ms. Peterson stressed that this was not to be a discussion of the merits of the request. Discussion should focus on what is being proposed, the scope, and what the end result could be.

Mr. Mittag said that there should be a requirement for a variety of building types. He also felt this use should be allowed in the transit overlay district.

Mr. Laurence liked the project charge as drafted.

Ms. Leban said that if the use is not in the transit overlay district, it should be clear what needs to be emphasized as there are options within a mile of the transit overlay district. Mr. Conner asked if "under what circumstances" would cover that. Ms. Leban said it would. Ms. Emery suggested "car share" as residents can do this on their own.

Mr. Burke said that their firm was hired by Wake Robin to find a second campus. He reviewed what services are offered in the Shelburne facility. He stressed that there are numerous building designs. It is their intention to duplicate what existing in Shelburne where there is a 10-15 year waiting list to get in. They have spoken with planning people in several municipalities, but they do not offer the open space feeling that the Hill Farm in South Burlington offers. They feel they could create walking paths, an administrative building, cottages, etc., on that site. They were surprised that this use could be denied because it is not in the traffic overlay district. Mr. Burke noted they are Shelburne's biggest tax payer.

Ms. Buckley said the City's definition of a "long term care facility" is exactly what they would propose. They provide support services and transportation for their

residents. They also meet all the wonderful objectives of the City Plan. Ms. Buckley said she would be willing to write a letter to the City outlining all of this.

Ms. Emery asked their time-line, and Ms. Louisos noted the Commission doesn't work "fast." Ms. Peterson said a final amendment would probably not be achieved until early in 2027.

Mr. Davis, owner of the Hill Farm property, said he fully supports this effort.

Mr. Moscatelli said transit concerns also involve people going to the facility (e.g., visitors). Ms. Buckley said they have creative ways to address this.

Mr. Conner noted that the discussion would involve all long-term care facilities, not only Wake Robin's model. Anything to address that would be helpful.

Ms. Leban noted that the Beta situation happened quickly and asked how that happened. Mr. Conner said it could happen within 3 months with public outreach prior to that. The timing with Beta happened because it was "wrapped around" other amendments being discussed at the time.

Mr. Mittag moved to approve the Long-term Care Facilities project charge as presented. Ms. Leban seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

7. Landscaping Update: Project Charge:

Ms. Peterson noted that the current landscaping requirements have been in effect for decades. The city is now directing and re-directing development away from undeveloped areas to more redevelopment and infill. Since landscaping requirements are based on a percentage of a project cost, this creates the problem of not having room for required landscaping and/or requiring more expensive species, etc. It is possible to have a building that is being re-used already having sufficient landscaping to the level of approval. Civic spaces and amenities are also required, and there is a need to ensure that they all work together to get really good civic spaces. Mr. Conner added that this is what comes up most often at the DRB where professional arborists don't want to have to plant 8 trees so close together.

Mr. Moscatelli asked if the City could set up a fund for developers to pay into when they can't fit the required amount of landscaping. This money could be used to plant trees elsewhere in the city. Mr. Moscatelli also noted there is a

question of existing shade trees blocking the potential location of solar panels and whether people should be required to cut those trees down.

Mr. Conner noted that in City Center's Form Based Code areas, a portion of the landscaping budget can be used for an art project.

Ms. Leban noted that vegetative landscaping has an impact on climate and can reduce temperatures on a site. There must also be the right kinds of trees that can survive higher temperatures.

Mr. Laurence asked if there is an appetite for moving away from the percentage of a project cost to be the landscaping requirement. Rather than focusing on a dollar amount, the intent should be to ensure that the site is well-landscaped. He noted that some beneficial things may cost next to nothing.

Ms. Emery raised the possibility of "green roofs" which could be an option for existing buildings. She favored being "nimble" and recommended having a list of options for developers to work with.

Ms. Leban cited the need to address climate issues and make a space much more tolerable. She noted that green roofs are good for preventing flooding and suggested a developer could do less of something else if they do a green roof.

Mr. Conner cited the competing interests with solar ready roofs, green roofs, etc. He suggested that if you do a green roof, you wouldn't need to be solar ready. He also noted that the current regulations pre-date anything that is being suggested.

Mr. Mittag noted that on a recent hot day, the temperature as he drove down Swift Street was 95 degrees while the temperature in downtown Burlington was 100 degrees. He attributed this to the Veterans Memorial Park, Wheeler Nature Park, and Vermont National Country Club.

Mr. Mittag asked about possibly requiring outside parking to be covered. Mr. Laurence said that is very expensive and could be detrimental to affordable housing. Mr. Mittag said that solar on covered parking would address the City Plan.

Ms. Peterson then raised the question of maintenance of planted trees and questioned whether a percentage of the landscape bond should be retained for this purpose.

Mr. Doyle said he liked the idea of getting away from percentages and going with standards and ecological value. He said you can do things with landscaping that are good for the climate but are also bad for ecology. He asked the Commission to keep that in mind.

Ms. Leban raised the possibility of doing something about large “monoculture lawns.” Mr. Conner said reducing setbacks helps with that. Mr. Laurence said that is particularly the case in industrial/commercial areas.

Ms. Peterson suggested adding “and the Stormwater Ordinance” to the proposed language.

Mr. Mittag asked if the Commission will get input from the City Arborist regarding specimen trees. Ms. Peterson said they can ask him about standards for specimen trees. She also cited the need to align the LDRs with DPW specifications.

Ms. Leban moved to approve the Landscaping project charge with the additions made at this meeting. Mr. Mittag seconded. Motion passed 6-0.

8. Tier 1A Update: Historic Sites:

Ms. Peterson reviewed the history for the benefit of the new Commission members. She noted that the City does not need an historic preservation ordinance/regulation; what it does need is more “tricky” than anticipated and has a lot of complexity.

Mr. Conner said there must be a map of the historic area, and there must be “thoughtful regulations.” He added that the map is the difficult thing.

Ms. Peterson showed a map that indicates the structures that are in the data base. The map was done at a regional level and includes building outside of but adjacent to the Tier1A area. She noted that some things have been demolished in the past 50 years and there are some where property owners have not applied for an “historical” designation (e.g., Rice High School). Ms. Peterson noted there are 2 historic districts in the city.

Mr. Conner said one issue is that there can be more than one building on a property. He said the map has been submitted to the data base. He said it is not necessarily a compilation of everything in the City that could be called “historic.”

It is a reasonably good compilation of historic things prior to 1940. Nothing has been done regarding post-World War II neighborhoods, and that would be a very big project. Mr. Conner noted one building on Springhouse Road that qualifies as the oldest building in Vermont, but it has not been in Vermont all of that time. It came from another state in the '40s and was rebuilt here.

Ms. Peterson said the first criteria for a building to be historic is that it must be at least 50 years old. She added that there are many such buildings in South Burlington, many of which have been renovated.

9. Other Business:

Mr. Conner noted one technical change made to the LDRs: regarding single user complexes to have multiple buildings on a lot (e.g., UVM, the Airport), staff noted an ambiguity in the language. He said the City Council can make minor changes to language before the public hearing. If they do this, the Planning Commission will be notified.

Ms. Emery noted that Mr. Laurence is a person she not encountered before and asked if he would "introduce" himself. Mr. Laurence outlined his work as a transportation engineer for the State of Vermont where he designs intersections.

As there was no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned by common consent at 8:49 p.m.

Clerk