

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held October 24, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 6:00 PM at, Barre, Vermont. In attendance virtually were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, Assistant Manager Dawn Monahan, Planning Director Janet Shatney, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Others Present:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** The following adjustments were made:

- Added Downtown Vibrancy Fund municipal letter of attestation to the consent agenda.
- Moved Liquor Control/Cannabis Control Board to immediately following adjustments to the agenda.
- Moved North End flood recovery discussion and presentation to the beginning of Visitors and Communications.

**Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –**

Seiji Ohashi, representative for Tally, located at 224 N. Main Street, told the Council about this new establishment, which is set to open shortly. It will feature pool, shuffleboard, and other gaming options. Councilor Lauzon said he is conflicted out of the discussion and decision, as he has a relationship with the establishment. Council approved the new first class liquor license for Tally at 224 N. Main Street on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining and Councilor Lauzon recused.**

**Presentation of 2023 Extra Mile Day Mayoral Proclamation.**

Mayor Hemmerick read the proclamation, honoring Amanda Gustin and Shawn Trader for their service to the community in flood response and recovery efforts. Ms. Trader accepted copies of the proclamation on behalf of herself and Ms. Gustin, and those in attendance gave a standing ovation acknowledging their service.

**Visitors and Communications**

**A) North End flood recovery discussion and presentation from State partners.**

Governor Phil Scott spoke of growing up in Barre, and the concept and vision for the North End that is developing out of the flood recovery efforts. Gov. Scott said he toured the North End in the days immediately following the flood, along with Vermont's congressional delegation, and representatives from FEMA and various state agencies. There are federal emergency disaster funds available to assist in redevelopment of the area, and the aim is protecting and improving the neighborhood.

Chief Recovery Officer Doug Farnham said the goals are to maximize federal funds, build resiliency and reduce risk, respect local visions of growth, co-exist with the river without it being a threat, grow housing units, and ensure home ownership opportunities.

There was discussion on engaging the public and building a public input process.

Keith Robinson and Jim Drummond from Black River Design reviewed the conceptual designs for the North End area. Mr. Drummond said they looked at background data, zoning districts, number of current housing units in the identified area (92), lot divisions, overlays of the area with the flood map, building resilience and reducing future flooding risk, proposed replacement housing outside of the flood zone, raising elevations, and proposing a park/public space that could provide water capacity are part of a regional flood plan.

Mr. Robinson said the draft concept calls for the creation of a connector road between the area near 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Beckley Street, and the plan shows 225 possible dwelling units in a mix of multi-story/multi-unit buildings, duplexes, and single family homes.

It was noted the conceptual plan doesn't include any property on the west side of Route 302, and there was discussion on including river-adjacent property, and possibly including more commercial areas.

Sue Higby said the plan needs to include housing for a mix of income levels.

Danielle Owczarski said the focus should be on a watershed study for the City and upstream areas. We need to look to other areas as pressure relief, and review and replace undersized infrastructure that contributes to flooding. Ms. Owczarski said the equity impact assessment tool should be used throughout the process.

Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore said they will be conducting a study throughout the Winooski watershed area in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers, as the area impacts a number of different projects.

Joellen Calderara said her home is on Beckley Street, and she noted there is conservation property in that area that appears to be included in the development concept. Ms. Calderara said the properties on First, Second, and Third Streets were more seriously damaged during the flood than those on Beckley Street, and the more severely damaged properties might be more suitable for relocating than those in the Beckley Street area.

There was discussion on data gathered and used to build this initial draft concept, getting into the neighborhoods to talk with residents about what they need/want, engaging City leadership, voluntary buyouts, interim housing, and building the public input process.

Shawn Trader said design efforts need to be collaborative, and there should be a set number of affordable housing units.

Interim Commissioner of Housing and Community Development Alex Farrell said setting the number of housing units and mixed income levels would be driven by the community input process.

Ms. Calderara said any plan should include the Vine Street/Scampini Square area, which was heavily damaged in the flood.

Amy Galford said there are a lot of granite sheds, parking lots, and roads in the area, and runoff from those properties needs to be taken into consideration. Ms. Galford said there is state property and railroad property involved, along with the intersection of Routes 302, 14, and 62, where flooding was extensive. She asked if the public works garage can be included, as it was damaged in the flood and needs replacing.

Bernadette Rose said development in Barre Town impacts Barre City as it increases water flowing through the City.

Ms. Higby asked what will make the strongest proposal to the federal government? She said there needs to be a variety of housing and a variety of building styles.

Ellen Kaye said development needs to serve the unhoused population, also. She said there need to be guardrails around any development to ensure the disaster isn't used as an opportunity by developers. The project needs to serve the community.

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Ms. Trader said the same energy being exhibited for redevelopment projects needs to be brought to bear on the current circumstances.

On a different topic, Steven Mudd said a neighbor next to his apartment has kept their trash cans on the sidewalk since April. Mr. Mudd said the trash cans used to be stored behind the neighbor's building, but now they're permanently on the sidewalk. He asked if there are restrictions on such actions. Assistant Manager Monahan took Mr. Mudd's information and will put him in contact with the code enforcement division.

Returning to the North Main Street conceptual plans, there was discussion on next steps, identifying a point of contact in the disaster recovery office, coordinating public events, and coming up with a broad concept to start negotiations with Congress.

Also under Visitors and Communications, Barre Unified Union School District board chair Giuliano Cecchinelli said there is an opening on the board for a Barre City resident. Notification of the opening will be posted for the next two weeks, and anyone interested in being appointed to fill the vacancy until Town Meeting Day should send a letter to Clerk Dawes by noon on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Interviews and appointment will be made at the November 8<sup>th</sup> BUUSD board meeting.

#### **Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

- A. Approval of Minutes:
  - i. Special meeting of October 17, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Approval of Week 2023-43, dated October 25, 2023:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$1,800,534.68
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$162,070.21
- C. 2023 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Accept volunteer resignations:
  - i. David Hough, Ward II, Development Review Board
  - ii. Joanne Reynolds, Transportation & Public Works Committee
  - iii. Ericka Reil, Transportation & Public Works Committee
- E. Modify Jayme Bauer's Development Review Board appointment from an At-large seat to the vacant Ward II seat
- F. Appoint Arthur Young as Deputy Health Officer

Mayor Hemmerick recused himself from the following action due to conflict of interest. Councilor Boutin assumed the chair.

(added under adjustments to the agenda) Council approved the Downtown Vibrancy Fund municipal letter of attestation for the Barre Partnership on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Deering.

**Motion carried with Mayor Hemmerick recused.**

Mayor Hemmerick resumed chairing the meeting.

#### **City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes reported on the following:

- Second quarter tax payments are due by November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Board of Civil Authority and Board of Abatement are meeting tomorrow evening at 6PM.

### **City Manager's Report –**

Manager Storellicastro reported on the following:

- A red tag placed on a property on Kinney Place has been removed after the owner made the necessary modifications to ensure the safety of the structure. Those living in the building have been allowed to return.
- Access to the Barre Town drop off for yard waste runs through the end of October.
- The City is co-hosting a free COVID and flu vaccination clinic at Spaulding High School on November 8<sup>th</sup> from 4-8 PM.

Councilor Lauzon asked that Mr. Farnham provide the City with the list of properties still without operational heating systems so wellness checks can be performed. Ms. Calderara said the state is making those calls on a weekly basis.

Mayor Hemmerick asked for an update on the West Patterson Street landslide situation. Manager Storellicastro said that location is on the list of sites being reviewed by geotechnical engineering firm Sanborn Head. Any planned remediation will be based on their report.

### **New Business –**

#### **A) North End flood recovery discussion and presentation from State partners.**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting under Visitors and Communications.

#### **B) Volunteer appointments:**

##### **i. Chrysta Murray, Ward I, Development Review Board**

Chrysta Murray expressed her interest in serving on the Development Review Board. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

#### **C) Reduce the size of the Parks & Recreation and Transportation & Public Works Committees from 9 members to 5 members.**

Council approved the reduction in committee members on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

### **Upcoming Business –**

The following will be on the 11/7 agenda:

- Review of housing recommendations and ideas from Councilors.
- Second reading of the ADU zoning ordinance revisions.

### **Round Table –**

Councilors thanked those who made the conceptual presentation on redevelopment of the North End, and said they are excited to begin the planning process.

Councilor Waszazak said this is Farm to School Month, and he spent time at the Spaulding High School alternative campus on Allen Street, where students shared their farming and food production projects.

Councilor Boutin said he is talking with North Barre Manor about hosting a Council meeting there in the near future.

Councilor Deering said local football squads are playing in playoff games this weekend.

Mayor Hemmerick said the conversations at last week's VT Council on Rural Development Barre Up community forum were good, with more flood-impacted properties represented. It was noted the FY25 budget process will kick off at the next Council meeting on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

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**Executive Session** – Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of litigation to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussions be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 8:10 PM to discuss litigation under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. Manager Storrellicastro was invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 8:19 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

There was no action taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The open portions of the meeting were recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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