

Kelsey Peterson

From: Penne Tompkins <penarts.tompkins@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 2, 2023 10:17 AM
To: Kelsey Peterson; Jessica Louisos
Cc: Ilona Blanchard; Amanda (akholland@yahoo.com); Jean Sebastian Chaulot (chaulot@gmail.com); John Killacky; S BABBITT; Sebastian Ryder; Michele Bailey
Subject: 'EXTERNAL'Public Art Committee Feedback on the July 6 City Plan Draft
Attachments: PublicArt Comte Comments Aug2.2023CityPlanDraft.docx

This message has originated from an External Source. Please use proper judgment and caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to this email.

Good morning Kelsey,
Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this draft. Our committee reviewed the Community History and Culture chapter at our July 18 meeting. We have extensive comments which are provided on the attached document.

Overall, our Committee found this draft changed the goals and objectives (the intentions) of what had been previously submitted in May or had revised the wording in such a way that the meaning became lost or confused. We feel strongly that the City needs to be clear and committed to leveraging the transformative power of art and culture to unite and empower our community. With this in mind, you will also see that we are recommending that the chapter heading be renamed to Arts, Culture and History.

We know this is a huge undertaking for the City and appreciate all the work that is going into the 2024 City Plan. If you would like clarification on any of our feedback, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Regards,
Penne Tompkins
Chair, Public Art Committee

Penne Tompkins
(she/her/hers)
PenArts Communications LLC
802 373-2787

Feedback from the Public Art Committee on the City Plan 2024 July 6, 2023 DRAFT

summary of comments from the July 18, 2023 Committee meeting

The Committee greatly appreciates the undertaking that this document represents. We also understand that goals and objectives related to the arts and culture resources have not been specifically addressed in previous City Comprehensive plans.

Since the current plan was completed, the Public Art Committee was formed (2016) and has actively been engaged in developing public art projects for the city center (TIF district) and more recently an inventory of the city's arts and culture organizations and individuals was conducted with help from an intern. This has revealed significant resources and opportunities to strengthen our arts and culture presence (in addition to the ongoing activities of the Committee). The State of Vermont has also recognized the keystone function of art in the development and evolution of strong, healthy and resilient communities.

In reviewing this document with respect to the Committee's previous recommendation (May 2023) our Committee found this draft changed the goals and objectives (the intentions) of what had been submitted or had revised the wording in such a way that the meaning became lost or confused. We feel strongly that the City needs to be clear and committed to leveraging the transformative power of art and culture to unite and empower our community.

Finally, we recommend renaming the chapter to Arts, Culture and History. Community is an underlying theme throughout the plan and does not need to be restated in the chapter title.

1. General comment that applies to the full document.

- Strongly recommend that Planning Zoning consult with Abenaki representatives in Vermont regarding how to refer to the Abenaki, their historic lands and resources. In this small section on Community, Culture and History, the plan refers to these groups in three different ways: Abenaki, indigenous, and Native Americans. We recommend that following this consultation, the department adopt a sensitive and consistent way to refer to the peoples and the lands they have inhabited in South Burlington.
- There seems to be a stripping out of recommendations relating to investing in and supporting Arts. We strongly recommend these be reincorporated.
- The Committee was asked to provide measurable objectives, but the committee's measurable objectives have been removed from this July 6 draft. We realized that the goals were supposed to be measurable, but the actions were not, while the committee generally provided measurable objectives. Perhaps because we placed the measurable items in the second set of bullets these were removed in the revised version? How can we work to put these back in the plan, even if in a different location?

2. Specific Recommendations:

- P48, para2, we recommend leading with "Investment in the broad artistic community including artists and the groups that support artists is needed to build vibrancy and

sense of belonging” rather than “Building community through... will” as a stronger and more powerful sentence.

- P48, para2, For the last sentence, instead of: Alongside parks, libraries, and schools, the arts contribute to a sense of place and community identity and raise the quality of life. **Restore the previous PAC wording: Along with parks, libraries, and schools, the arts build a sense of place, well-being, and belonging, all of which contribute to building community and creating identity for South Burlington.**

The July 6 revised wording in this second paragraph lacks the strength, warmth and clarity of the Committee’s intention.

3. Comments on **Community, History and Culture Goals:**

- Bullet 2: Remove the reference to *vistas and viewsheds* as Scenic Quality was moved from this section. Protect important *vistas and viewsheds, as viewed from public vantage points (public roads, paths, land)*; and designated landscapes, sites and structures of historic and cultural significance.

We believe since the other paragraphs referring to vistas and viewshed were moved this is a stray description that was left in the sentence.

4. Comments on **Community History and Culture Actions:**

- a) At the moment, the action bullets are unbalanced with reference to the action steps related to history versus art and culture. Historic steps are very specific and read as overly prescriptive compared to the arts and culture ones.
- b) We generally support Action Item bullets 1, 3, 4, 5.
- c) Bullet 2 is confusing.
 - It has so many actions that it is difficult to decipher.
 - The context does not provide sufficient information to understand what the word diverse means.
 - We recommend replacing this bullet with three of our recommended actions:
 1. Invest in projects which support access to art through facilities, classes and installations;
 2. Sponsor or organize events which feature arts and arts engagement prominently;
 3. Organize and support events that celebrate and support diverse cultural backgrounds).
- d) Recommend deleting the word *available* from the third bullet.

- e) Bullet 6: Remove action bullet to partner with the historic society. This is covered in the action item for an inventory.
- f) Amend Bullet 4 to add mapping and interpretation as appropriate of cultural sites and remove Remove Bullet 7:

Update the inventory of the City's historic resources, assess the significance of identified buildings, structures and landscapes, and map and interpret cultural sites as appropriate.

- g) Previous suggested strategies (actions) were deleted and should be reintroduced in the draft actions as noted above under item c.

5. Page 49, in the Inventory, Analysis and Challenges section: **Community**

- **suggest delete "in their community" from the second sentence, redundant.**

6. Page 49, in the Inventory, Analysis and Challenges section: **Cultural Facilities and Organization:**

- Overall, our committee struggled with the revisions in this section, especially in the first three paragraphs.
- P49, para 1: the phrase "Cultural resources both need and attract population density" is confusing. We suggest an alternate wording as follows: "By integrating the arts into the fabric of our growing community we will reinforce our housing goals, climate resilience goals and bike and pedestrian friendly built environment."
- P49, para 2: Delete the last sentence about "further community center space" as it is covered in the last paragraph in this subsection which specifically mentions investments in public infrastructure.
- P49, para 3: Sentences two and three specifically highlighting two of the local religious institutions is highly problematic: there are many different religious faiths represented in our community and it is "othering" or "exoticizing" to highlight just these two minority religious organizations and thus feels not inclusive and not what the intention is.

This Cultural Resources paragraph as originally drafted by PAC for inclusion in this section was a balanced description of institutions as large and small, niche and universal throughout and beyond the community. This revised paragraph now feels dominated by and about religious institutions. We were also surprised that schools were omitted from this paragraph, especially as there are several prominent arts schools in South Burlington, as well as traditional and non-traditional elementary and secondary schools, and institutions which offer classes.

We recommend replacing the July 6 paragraph with the broader more inclusive description of cultural resources as edited and consistent to our previous recommendation.

Cultural resources in the City include places of worship, libraries, public and private schools, studios, arts and service organizations, and community groups which attract South Burlington residents, neighboring residents and regional visitors. Several businesses and non-profits directly support the arts through classes, performances, showings and production. Collaboration with these regional organizations and religious communities can help build community in South Burlington and connect us to our neighbors and region.

- P49, para 3: The last sentence “ *The City needs to seek community partnerships in the Shelburne Road area as we prioritize additional housing and community-building in the southwest part of the city.*” is a separate idea that fits more logically as part of the last para in this section which refers to overall building of the community.
- P49, para 4: 2nd sentence, delete (and requires) and uncapitalize High-quality.
- P49, para 4: 3rd sentence: amend “the city will consider” to “the city will have the opportunity to consider”. 4th sentence, grammar? remove preposition “with”

7. Page 49, in the Inventory, Analysis and Challenges section: **Cross Cultural Activities**

- The last sentence references “including New American and Native American community members” please see our opening note. Further, this portion of the sentence could simply be removed as the entire paragraph addresses involvement of multiple cultures.

8. Page 50, in the Inventory, Analysis and Challenges section: Historic Sites and Structures

- Para 3: As noted previously in our overall comments, we strongly recommend that Planning Zoning consult with Abenaki representatives in Vermont regarding how to refer to the Abenaki, their historic lands and resources.