

1 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD  
2 BENNINGTON FIRE FACILITY, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR  
3 130 RIVER STREET  
4 BENNINGTON, VERMONT 05201

5 TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2016

6 MINUTES

7 **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles Copp-Chair; Barry Horst-Vice Chair; Bill Barney; Charles Kokoras; Ron  
8 Alderman.

9 **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** Dan Malmborg.

10 **ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Monks-Zoning Administrator; Chris Oldham; Linda Bermudez; Jennifer Krynen; Dain  
11 Krynen; Thomas Outwater; Kiah Morris; Lynn Mazza; Brendan McKenna and Nancy Lively-Secretary.

12 At 6:30 P.M., Charles Copp called the meeting to order.

13 **1. MINUTES OF JUNE 21, 2016**

14 *Charles Kokoras moved and Barry Horst seconded to approve the Minutes of June 21, 2016 as*  
15 *presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

16  
17 **2. INTEREST PERSONS – APPEAL RIGHTS – READING OF WITNESS’ OATH**

18 Dan Monks read the oath.

19  
20 **3. DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

21 None.

22  
23 **4. KNAPP’S, 415 MAIN STREET – SEEKING DESIGN APPROVAL FOR A FAÇADE CHANGE.**

24  
25 Mr. Monks stated that the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the application and  
26 their comments have been given to the Board. Due to the Fourth of July holiday, the Application  
27 Review Panel did not review the application.

28 Mr. Outwater distributed photos to the Board that showed the 7 ½ foot overhead door  
29 recessed into the existing door and replacing the window. There will be no other changes to the  
30 façade of the building. The purpose of the change is to invite people in and improve the arcade  
31 business financially. This side of the store is not insulated, so it is a seasonal business, without enough  
32 revenue generated to insulate the store. We have chosen a solid wall instead of glass because there is  
33 more of an artistic value to the solid door and glass is too expensive. A double door would be too large  
34 and an obstruction to the room inside.

35 *Barry Horst moved and Charles Kokoras seconded to go into Deliberative Session to discuss*  
36 *Knapp’s, 415 Main Street, seeking design approval for a façade change. The motion carried*  
37 *unanimously.*

39 **5. THOMAS & ZACHARIAH BURKE, BENNINGTON COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS, 966 MAIN STREET –**  
40 **SEEKING DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL FOR A SHELTER HOME.**

41  
42 Mr. Oldham explained the following to the Board:

- 43 • Bennington Coalition for the Homeless has been in operation 16 years and give the
- 44 homeless an opportunity to improve their lives.
- 45 • The homeless population in Bennington County is on the rise with 400 presently
- 46 homeless.
- 47 • The Coalition has successfully housed 400 people/200 households.
- 48 • The facility at 966 Main Street is a short term transitional housing program, with 24
- 49 hour supervision, enrichment activities such as gardening, cooking, and budgeting,
- 50 mandated case management, and classrooms for job readiness programs.
- 51 • There are no major changes planned to the outside of the building except for some
- 52 additional shrubbery, 2 raised garden beds, and a 6’ privacy fence.
- 53 • The goal is to be able to accommodate 17-20 individuals and it will be staffed 24/7 with
- 54 2 staff people during the day and 1 staff person in the evening. There are no Bylaws
- 55 that restrict the number of beds that are allowed.
- 56 • “There is no line to get in”. Everyone that is there is referred there with the goal being
- 57 for them to stay 1 to 3 months.
- 58 • There will not be people hanging around smoking or being non-productive.
- 59 • At this time, we don’t have any outdoor activities planned, but, if and when we do, the
- 60 neighborhood will be invited. We have an 8:30pm curfew.
- 61 • We will be using both driveways and will pave as required.
- 62 • There is plenty of parking, however, very few of the clients have cars.
- 63 • We presently have several people living in motels and “couch surfing” from one place to
- 64 the next and the Coalition is working closely with the State to replace the motel voucher
- 65 system. The State had budgeted \$2M for vouchers and spent \$4M.
- 66 • The facility at 250 Main Street can only accommodate 6 people, is not ADA accessible,
- 67 and has no programs to improve in place. To bring this building up to acceptable
- 68 standards would cost \$430K which is out of reach for a small non-profit. If we are
- 69 approved at 966 Main Street, this property will be given up.

70  
71 Jennifer Krynen wants proof that crime will not increase, and Mr. Oldham stated that the  
72 Coalition is extremely sensitive to the neighborhoods – they have been in 3 other neighborhoods. The  
73 966 Main Street facility will be staffed 24/7, there are cameras outside, there is an intake process with  
74 background checks, no sexual predators are admitted, there is a 0 tolerance for drugs and alcohol, and  
75 we have a good relationship with the police. Anyone not obeying the rules is not allowed to stay. Of  
76 course, there is always a possibility, just like there’s a possibility that any neighbor, will commit a  
77 crime.

78 Brendan McKenna expressed the same concerns for crime and neighborhood safety. The  
79 majority of the neighbors in the other Coalition facilities are businesses. “It only takes once” and the 0  
80 tolerance forces individuals to steal from neighbors, which is what happened in December. Mr.  
81 McKenna was also surprised at the number of individuals that could be housed there. Mr. Oldham  
82 agreed that safety is their concern, as well. We have a structured program and a curfew at night. The  
83 North Street facility is surrounded by mostly businesses, however, there are also residences, as well as,

84 a full residential area on Hall Street and, at Pleasant and Park we hosted a cookout/camp for around 20  
85 surrounding households.

86 Linda Bermudez noted that with 17-20 individuals that there would be a lot of foot traffic and  
87 that 1 staff person in the evening doesn't seem sufficient, especially if there are both male and female  
88 clients – seems like there should be at least 2 staff. And, with a motel 6 buildings away that currently  
89 take the state vouchers, it seems that there is the “clustering” of the homeless in the neighborhood.  
90 Also, is there an alarm system in place to enforce the curfew? Mr. Oldham stated that if there are 10  
91 or under in the shelter, only 1 staff person is required. When there are more than 10, another person  
92 would be required. We will be hiring an additional 3 ½ positions. Also, the State is working toward  
93 replacing the voucher system with more productive, long term arrangements like the one proposed at  
94 966 Main Street.

95 Kiah Morris stated that not all homeless are “thugs or drug addicts” and are often those that  
96 have fallen on hard times. She also noted that the State has made a major investment in this type of  
97 project, and she strongly supports this facility.

98 Lynn Mazza from the Vermont Center for Independent Living supports this project because  
99 many homeless are also disabled and the present homeless facilities are not ADA Accessible whereas  
100 the 966 Main Street one will be.

101 Dian Krynen wanted to be sure that his bakery would be able to keep the three parking spaces  
102 in front of the bakery, and Mr. Oldham stated that these will not be used by the Coalition and offered  
103 the bakery use of some of the spaces at 966 Main Street.

104 The Board asked Mr. Oldham to produce the following items for the next Hearing:

- 105 1. Setback information,
- 106 2. Square footage of Plan.
- 107 3. Handicapped access.
- 108 4. Paving of parking.

109 ***Barry Horst moved and Bill Barney seconded to close the Open Session and to go into***  
110 ***Deliberative Session to discuss Thomas & Zachariah Burke, Bennington Coalition for the Homeless,***  
111 ***966 Main Street seeking development plan approval for a Shelter Home. The motion carried***  
112 ***unanimously.***

## 113 **6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

114 ***Ron Alderman moved and Charles Kokoras seconded to nominate Charles Copp for President***  
115 ***and Barry Horst for Vice President. The motion carried unanimously.***

## 116 **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

117 None.

118  
119 ***At 7:30 P.M., the meeting was adjourned into Deliberative Session.***  
120

121 Nancy H. Lively

122 Secretary