

What Do You Think?

MAY 10, 2012

Thoughts from JB: F-35s in the Chamberlin Neighborhood

Is the entire Chamberlin neighborhood and school considered acceptable collateral damage to the VTANG? According to the USAF's Environmental Impact Statement for the F-35, this entire area will be rendered incompatible with residential use if the F-35 is based here. Is the FAA going to buy all these homes, too? If not, who else will buy them once potential buyers learn they'll be exposed to unhealthy levels of noise? Call your city councilors and ask what the city is doing ensure the protection and compensation of South Burlington homeowners.

Thoughts from RH: Solar Farm on Dubois Drive

The article about the solar farm on Dubois Drive (April 19) is misleading...well some parts are intentionally not given. The article states that the farm can supply power for 450 homes. I use over 1000 kwh per month so a solar farm putting out 2.2 MW per year can only supply power for 183 homes(2200000/(1000x12). A far cry from 450. . . unless these 450 homes use 500 kwh per month, then still the number is 366 homes and not to mention I pay .14/kwh (GMP) verses the .30 kwh of the solar farm. HHMMM. . . something to think about. . . or afford?

FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Doomsday developer predictions are merely self-serving distortions. Whining about lost city fees is a weak argument - the "tail wagging the dog." Interim Zoning, perhaps imperfect, may make sense. It seems a natural reaction to, and likely better than the ridiculous growth rampant here for decades.

Planners' laissez-faire promoted addiction to inflated largess, conditioning developers, brokers, et al to a "high-baseline" revenue stream from the suckers. Why would they want to give it up? The long term quality of the city for those already invested in it however, should be allowed some precedence—let's take a breather.

MA, South Burlington

JANUARY 19, 2012

I support Interim zoning. The city developers need a "time out." Industrial and commercial businesses should not allow themselves to act as "fronts" for the over-building of what is left of our still beautiful, residential and open space areas of the city. Sadly, under current City Zoning, everything gets a green light and the city is being extensively over-built. Under the proposal, a potential economically desirable commercial or industrial project with regional impact can be allowed by the City Council.

WG, South Burlington

JANUARY 5

Adopt Interim Zoning—I believe South Burlington should declare a time out on many of the regular rules for land development in our fair city. We should adopt interim zoning. This would give time to consider housing location, open space and a vibrant city center.

TK, South Burlington

QUESTION—JULY 28

INTERIM ZONING or a freeze on development is being considered by City Council. Are you in favor of INTERIM ZONING, or a moratorium on building?

Thoughts from BH: As a renter who hopes to become a homeowner, I think a building freeze is a very bad idea. Chittenden County has a well-documented housing shortage, rents are high, and 200+ homes have been lost to airport expansion, with another 200 slated to go. The high cost of housing is pushing out families

and young people. A building freeze will only make existing housing more expensive, leading to a further exodus of young people. One stated goal of the building freeze is community preservation; whose community will be preserved?

Thoughts from NV: I am in favor of a development freeze in South Burlington. There needs to be more strategy to any further housing projects with a reflection on integration with existing neighborhoods and open fields.

Thoughts from S.Q.: “Stop and think.” This is what we tell our teenagers to do before making important decisions. Interim Zoning is an effort to stop and carefully think about all of the ramifications of what we are choosing. It is always a good idea to “stop and think”. Bravo to the City Council for asking for this path.

QUESTION—JUNE 30

INTERIM ZONING or a freeze on development is being considered by City Council. Are you in favor of INTERIM ZONING, or a moratorium on building?

THOUGHTS FROM T.R.: Yes. Should be considered to give time to reconsider our development.

THOUGHTS FROM S.G.: While zoning is a concern and rapid development can lead to unforeseen problems, we have many other issues of greater importance to consider.

THOUGHTS FROM S.L.: I think interim zoning is a good idea. South Burlington has been a developers dream for a long time. We need to think about what we are doing and do it wisely and with a good comprehensive plan. The TDR's do not seem to be working as planned, there seem to be too many loopholes. I would also like to see South Burlington enforce the regulations that it has already. It seems to me as if anyone can do anything they want, I have seen it in my own neighborhood.

THOUGHTS FROM E.P.: A big YES on a building moratorium until new sane guidelines are created. I don't know if it is still the case, but having sat on the Natural Resources committee in the past, I was aware that developers were given the green light on anything they wanted to build, including if it encroached on wetlands and/or if it cut off a wildlife corridor. It is way past time to come up with development guidelines before this town becomes another ugly sprawl. It has already gone too far down the “ugly sprawl” road, in my opinion.

THOUGHTS FROM S.D.: I'm in favor.

THOUGHTS FROM R.F.: It is critical that zoning reflect an harmonious perspective on areas and neighborhoods. Developers should not be allowed to put high-density housing into semi-rural/low-density areas. A moratorium on use of TDR's and other developer devices needs to be put in place until all the ramifications can be evaluated. If I understand Interim Zoning correctly, this seems like a good idea.

THOUGHTS FROM E.G.: At this point in time I feel that interim zoning is a very sensible idea. The town can take a pause to recalibrate the vision for the future and make some sense out of the TDR fiasco as it is currently set up.

THOUGHTS FROM H.H.: Yes, I am definitely in favor of Interim Zoning and a total moratorium on building!! And no one should worry much about any changes in the development business in SB as a result of IZ. The construction projects that have already been started, plus those which have been approved and are in the pipeline, will keep the building business booming in SB for AT LEAST two to four more years.

THOUGHTS FROM D.S.: The current development scheme in South Burlington is broken and badly in need of a fix. For example, the Shelburne Road and Williston Road corridors are embarrassing development

disasters that might as well be in suburban New Jersey rather than Vermont. It is high time that the City takes a temporary timeout from development to reassess where it wants to go in the future. Given the Development Review Board's penchant for rubber-stamping seemingly every proposed development it encounters, interim zoning is necessary to preserve what is left of our City's Vermont character.

THOUGHTS FROM K.R.: It seems that every time I turn around a new condo complex is being built in South Burlington. It would be great to stop building for awhile and thoughtfully incorporate the needs for our future- more bike road area carved out for commuting, sidewalks for those who walk, less suburban sprawl (is it already too late?) I grew up in NJ and feel more and more like I am living back there. Connecting as a true community, which would be my goal, means we have to pay more attention to our strategy for doing so. Let's take the time to for it.

THOUGHTS FROM R.C.: I strongly support interim zoning and came away from the last City Council meeting deeply concerned. There was seemingly no awareness of the consequences of over development. The in depth research of one councilor was dismissed. It was painfully evident that three of the councilors had not done comparable research but were depending on the authority of lobbyists with no regard for the environment. The out of town developers won the day by defeating the motion much to my dismay.

THOUGHTS FROM M.L.: I am in favor of a freeze. Development of all kinds is out of control.

THOUGHTS FROM S.P.: The interim zoning freeze is very important to give the people of South Burlington time to develop a sensible and environmentally sound development plan. The present developer and real estate industry controlled "non plan" is promising only continued negative impact on all aspects of our lives here in South Burlington.

THOUGHTS FROM J.L.: I believe that Interim Zoning, the opportunity to take a step back and take some time to decide how we want South Burlington to look in the future, is exactly what is needed now. We must not be dismissive about the future we need to build for future generations. Now is the time for thoughtful planning.

THOUGHTS FROM M.L.: I am not in favor of a moratorium on building or interim zoning. The default should be continuation and encouragement of development while the city looks to adjust regulations and rules that will ensure that development proceeds in a manner acceptable to the community. I am not opposed to the desire to preserve open spaces and to ensure appropriate density of developments, but discouraging or blocking development to meet those goals is not appropriate in the current economic climate.

THOUGHTS FROM L.L.: Any further development in the city should be halted until the following can be addressed by a comprehensive city-wide plan. 1) How does our plan for residential development fit in to a Master County Plan? Is SB taking on a dis-proportionate share of the county's "affordable" housing project needs? 2) What impact does this development have on our schools (i.e. special ed. costs, having to re-district, hiring additional teachers) and on fire and police services? Are the taxpayers willing to pay what it will cost? 3) Are we willing to have high-density projects pop up in our rural spaces?

THOUGHTS FROM J.H.: I applaud the courage of Councilors Greco and Engels in bringing up an issue many residents sympathize with but are afraid to give voice to. For too long S Burlington developers have been allowed to have their way, and what has resulted is a city with no definable center, or community-minded vision. We don't have to curb growth, but we do need to finally take stock of what we want our city to look like and how it will meet the needs of a changing population.

THOUGHTS FROM R.G.: I support comprehensive Interim Zoning for financial reasons. SB residents who want to sell their homes will have a much easier time if developers stop building new houses. And, there is a better chance of renting out empty commercial/retail spaces, if new commercial buildings are not constructed. How do the residents of SB benefit from all the construction when the owners and workers on these projects are not residents; and the supplies they use are not purchased from local SB stores?

QUESTION—JUNE 23

INTERIM ZONING or a freeze on development is being considered by City Council. Are you in favor of INTERIM ZONING, or a moratorium on building?

THOUGHTS FROM C.S.: Our City Manager notes that Interim Zoning will impact tax revenues (meanwhile costs continue to rise). Our police, fire, city and school workers will be affected or lead to higher taxes. Is a 20% population growth (not housing) in a graying state an “emergency” or a baby boom? City Council will subsidize privacy and scenic views for a pack of the monied few who cry loudest, while protecting the plague of cat-eating coyotes that seem to have replaced all the deer and moose. I prefer a community with more neighbors than coyotes or shrub-eating deer, otherwise I’d live in Charlotte.

THOUGHTS FROM R.G.: I support the proposal for interim zoning. If it takes effect I would recommend the conservation committee take another look at open space planning for the city. I would recommend the undeveloped wild area between I-89, Patchen Road and Williston Road, approximately 20 acres, for inclusion in an open space plan. It is a unique mix of forested uplands and interleaved with wetlands. The area supports wildlife such as beaver, fox, deer, mink, otter at one time or another and it is loaded with challenging cross country ski trails. It could be protected as a natural area or as a park.

THOUGHTS FROM V.L.: There should be a freeze on new development until we fill up the current empty buildings throughout South Burlington. Not only is it a waste of money to have all these unused buildings around, it also invites crime. True there is a “right” to develop but at whose expense. Where’s the benefit from empty vacant buildings or to have more empty vacant buildings constructed.

QUESTION—JUNE 16

INTERIM ZONING or a freeze on development is being discussed by City Council. Are you in favor of INTERIM ZONING, or a moratorium on building?

THOUGHTS FROM K.A.: We are very much in favor of the interim zoning process. For far too long this city has gone about its business without sharing the plan with its residents. All too often we see a project under way and ask “Gee what’s going on there?” This “after the fact” mentality must stop.

THOUGHTS FROM B.T.: This is a lot of reorganization needed to straighten out and understand where the city stands. There is nothing wrong with slowing down for a while to figure out what direction to take.

Thoughts from J.R.: With so many discoveries about our finances, looking deeper into all of our policies is a smart idea.

THOUGHTS FROM G.M.: The key word in TDR is the ‘R’, rights. I should have the right to develop wherever and whenever I want as long as I follow the policies and procedures provided by the city.

QUESTION—MAY 26

What are your thoughts about the new I-89 interchange exits, 12B and 13, being considered for South Burlington?

THOUGHTS FROM D.F.: SB needs to relieve the traffic on Williston Road. This is primarily through traffic to Burlington. Efforts on Exit 14, I fear, will only make matters worse. Making a 13N should help by allowing Kennedy Drive to take on a bigger part of the Burlington traffic (but I am concerned about the conflict of vehicle traffic and foot and bicycle traffic at the Dorset–Kennedy intersection). Perhaps a rec path overpass could work. Accepting Burlington as THE Commercial center begs for limited access and egress to Burlington from the South, North, and East.

THOUGHTS FROM M.M.: It is completely unnecessary to add an exit to facilitate access to the airport. Please apply logic. Make sure that you are solving a real problem. People travel for two main reasons—namely business and pleasure. If it is a business trip to Houston, you can’t tell the boss that you cannot go because it is difficult to get to the airport—you will go. If you and the significant other are thinking about that pleasure

trip to the Florida Keys in March because you are tired of the snow, are you really going to forego your trip because it is not 100 percent convenient to get to the airport ?? Again, no. Relating to enhancing Exit 13, if you do this, won't the backups that are currently on the local roads just transfer to the Interstate where more congestion is far more dangerous? A better approach would be to add an Interstate bypass from Exit 11 to Exit 16 (heard of anything like that one before?).