

Brownfields Advisory Committee, Online only

APPROVED Meeting Summary

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Scheduled Time: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Held via Zoom: Various documents referenced below are available for download at:

<http://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/economic-development/brownfields/#advisory-committee>

In Attendance (all virtual unless otherwise noted)	
Committee Members:	
Sam Andersen, Greater Burlington Industrial Corp.	Amanda Froeschle, VT Dept. of Health
Jon Rauscher, City of Winooski	Samantha Dunn, Burlington Community & Economic Development Office
Pablo Bose, University of Vermont	
CCRPC-retained Qualified Environmental Professionals	
Jeremy Roberts, KAS	Haley Grigel, KAS
Guests	
Perry Sporn, Perrywinkle’s Fine Jewelry	Tim Mack, Pearl Street Ventures LLC
	Sally Fleury, Essex landowner
CCRPC Staff	
Dan Albrecht, Senior Planner	Darren Schibler, Senior Planner
EPA and State Staff	
Kassie Kimmey, VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation	Caitylyn Bain, VT Department of Environmental Conservation

1. Call to Order, Introductions and Changes to the Agenda The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. Dan Albrecht provided background on the Committee and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. Public comments on items not on the Agenda
There were no members of the public and no comments provided.

3. Action on Site Nominations/Assistance Requests

a. BURLINGTON: Perrywinkle’s Fine Jewelry, 227-235 Main Street
REQUEST: \$28,270 for preparation of Phase II Environmental Site Assessment by KAS, Inc.

Sporn provided background on Perrywinkle’s, a high-end jewelry manufacturing and sales company, with three retail locations (Burlington, Plattsburgh, and Watertown NY) and an atelier or manufacturing workshop in Montreal. The building at 227-235 Main Street is owned by Perrywinkle’s, but they occupy only half (the rear is leased to Outdoor Gear Exchange for their headquarters office). Due to concerns about downtown security, the company is considering moving this retail location elsewhere, but as an alternative is exploring providing more on-site experiences to its traveling customers, including a 25-room luxury hotel. This would provide 25-50 new full-time jobs

on top of the existing 25 sales staff. The evolving plan also may include a restaurant as well as 25-50 long-term rental units, provided both are economically feasible.

Roberts briefed the Committee on the results of the phase I environmental assessment which identified a long history of uses that involved hazardous substances, including an orchard (involving pesticides), steel mill, welding, and automotive repair. A future phase II assessment will be required, including soil testing, groundwater monitoring, soil gas, and ground radar to confirm removal of underground storage tanks. The property is enrolled in BRELLA.

Schibler reviewed the project against a revised scoring rubric that staff developed to attempt to provide more specificity as requested by the Committee. The project scored highly on criteria related to location, commercial development potential, and somewhat well on economic impact. However, the project did not specifically provide open / civic space or benefit underserved populations; in addition, there was uncertainty about the amount of housing to be included in the project, which is a significant scoring factor. Schibler noted that the project scored over 100 points using the older but more subjective rubric.

Rauscher and Andersen asked for clarification on the criteria related to economic development. Schibler responded that these were based on meeting specific goals, strategies, and actions in the new West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (WCVT CEDS). Schibler reviewed these briefly, but agreed with the suggestion to provide a concise summary of these for use by the Committee in reviewing future projects.

Albrecht provided an overview of the staff recommendation, which is to provide 50-100% of the requested funds with the exact amount to be determined by the Committee. Albrecht noted that historically the Committee has funded commercial projects at 80% of the total cost and housing at 100%. At Froeschle's request, Albrecht reviewed the available funding, which include approximately \$90,000 from the forthcoming state subgrant amendment in the FY2023 Budget Adjustment Act through the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission, as well as another \$90,000 directly from the state in the FY2024 budget. Froeschle wanted to ensure that enough funding was set aside for future housing projects that may request funds, which Albrecht noted typically require around \$30,000 in total (including phase I and II assessments as well as Corrective Action Plans or CAPs).

As the committee began to discuss the request, Roberts and Sporn noted that redevelopment of this property could spur activity on other nearby properties, including Memorial Auditorium, and that the City of Burlington strongly supports the project for this reason. Andersen agreed with this sentiment, noting that the site is part of the gateway to downtown, and suggested funding the project at 75% of the request, which was generally agreed to by the Committee.

Motion made by Dunn, seconded by Andersen, to provide 75% (\$21,202.50) of the requested amount of \$28,270 towards the cost of the Phase II ESA for Perrywinkle's Fine Jewelry, 227-235 Main St. The motion passed 5-0.

Albrecht thanked Sporn and Roberts for their presentation and noted that they may be able to seek funding from the state BRELLA program to close the gap on the remaining costs. Bain confirmed this and noted that the state simply encourages property owners to seek local or regional resources first.

b. ESSEX: Potvin Auto (Pearl Street Ventures, LLC), 104 Center Road
REQUEST: \$13,424.35 for supplemental assessment work by KAS, Inc.

Tim Mack spoke to the Committee about his efforts to redevelop three adjacent properties along Center Road / VT Route 15 in Essex Center near the Price Chopper plaza. His goal is to build 13 single-unit homes to the rear of the site as well as 48 one and two bedroom apartments in a 3-story mixed-use building closer to Center Road. Mack expects some of the housing to be permanently affordable, and hopes that the commercial space could include a business incubator or possibly a cooperative kitchen which provides meals to go. The project will also include a bike path along Route 15, which hopefully will also include some sort of civic space to take advantage of tourism. Mack noted that the Town is very supportive of his vision, which will help provide a greater sense of Essex Town's identity (separate from the City of Essex Junction) in what will become part of the downtown area.

The subject property includes a currently operating automotive repair shop for which he has already complete phase I and II environmental assessments through KAS. Grigel (project manager) noted that this included a range of hazards typical to automotive shops, but also including a drywell which is suspected to be the discharge for a floor drain in the building. Therefore, the state requires supplemental investigation for which the applicant is requesting assistance.

Albrecht briefed the Committee on the project review sheet, noting that the long-term redevelopment plan will require a local zoning change but that some redevelopment is currently possible on site. He and Schibler also noted that the property is not currently in a state-designated center, but that the Town is working to obtain designations. With the exception of the amount of total housing and affordable housing, the remaining criteria are unlikely to change as the project develops; the project currently scores 58 / 100.

Albrecht reviewed the staff recommendation for 100% of the requested \$13,425 (rounded), taking into account the high density of housing and the mixed-use element of the project. This follows the Committee's history of funding housing projects at 100%, and also is a manageable amount considering available funding.

Motion made by Dunn, seconded by Rauscher, to provide 100% of the requested amount of \$13,425 towards the cost of the supplemental assessment work at Potvin Auto, 104 Center Road, Essex by Pearl Street Ventures. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Updates: staff, members, guests

- Albrecht noted that staff would like to schedule a Committee meeting to workshop the site evaluation criteria in consideration of the additional funding becoming available. Dunn requested having a copy of the evaluation form to reference when she scopes out projects with potential applicants.

5. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Darren Schibler and Dan Albrecht.