



BLCP CONNECTIONS

*An E-newsletter to keep you connected to
the Burlington Livable Communities Project.*

April 14, 2008

Mayor to Make BLCP Appointments

Mayor Kiss has announced he will appoint one citizen representative from each ward to serve on the Burlington Livable Community Project Stakeholder group. The Stakeholders have been made up primarily of representatives from organizations that work with and for seniors in the community. Several city departments are also represented. The list of stakeholders can be seen at <http://www.aarp.org/sk/blcp/project.html>. A decision was made last fall to expand the group to include Burlington residents. The stakeholders meet quarterly to implement livable community activities identified as priorities in the 2007 livable community report to the city. They are an important policy resource to city leaders and work to influence city policy and budget decisions. If you are interested in being considered as a citizen representative please submit your name, address and contact information to the Mayor at flawes@ci.burlington.vt.us, or mail it to him at City Hall, 149 Church Street.

These Streets are Made for Walkin'...

Burlington walkers organized by AARP have taken to the city sidewalks several times in the past couple of years to evaluate the "walkability" of well traveled routes. Data collected on these walks has informed city policy and highlighted areas for improvement. Now the Department of Public Works, in collaboration with AARP and other pedestrian advocates wants to assess every sidewalk in the City. The goals? Provide an inventory of all sidewalks and their current condition; develop a plan with priority areas for repairs and improvements; and make all of this information, along with the budget, available annually to the public and city leaders.

You Can Help!

You can get involved in this effort by becoming a volunteer sidewalk assessor. As a volunteer sidewalk assessor, you will be given streets to walk--ideally your own neighborhood will be included--and you will document deficiencies such as drainage problems, surface deterioration, obstructions, and gaps between sidewalk sections. You can do this in your own time over a two week period (May 19-30). Approximately 36 volunteers, working 10 hours, are needed to cover the entire city. Volunteers are also asked to participate in a one-hour training on either May 12 or 13 at 5:30 p.m.

To sign up or for more information, contact Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur at AARP Vermont 951-1313 or vt@aarp.org. We'll need your name, address, and preferred method of contact (phone or email).

DPW also needs your input to identify priority pedestrian routes for additional sidewalk enhancements. You can "vote" on your favorite destinations by going to the DPW website <http://www.dpw.ci.burlington.vt.us/>. Or you can attend a public meeting on Wednesday April 30th at 6:30 p.m., Room 12, City Hall, hear more about the sidewalk program and vote in person.

Check out the DPW website for the list of sidewalks repairs on deck for 2008 and their recent presentation to the City Council on the condition of Burlington's streets and sidewalks.

Creating a More Livable Neighborhood in the New North End

Seeking interested volunteers to help set an agenda for the New North End as a more livable neighborhood. The Snelling Center, on behalf of AARP, is convening a series of discussion groups for members of the community 50+ to help the project think about how services and amenities can be enhanced and coordinated for residents who want a dynamic and supportive community to continue to live in. The New North End has a large concentration of residents who are over 50 and many would like to stay in the neighborhood for the long term. One of the goals of the project is to look for strategies to make the neighborhood as supportive as possible so that this can happen.

The Snelling Center is organizing groups interested in being part of finding solutions and advancing ideas. We will start with a series of small group conversations in the New North End in May. If you are interested in being notified of these group conversations, please email Beth at the Snelling Center beth@snellingcenter.org. Follow-up will happen as soon as enough people have signed up.

Older Workers Fit Right In!

We have heard a lot about the problems with Vermont's "aging" workforce and about the difficulty that employers have in filling positions. Rather than see older workers as a problem -- all getting ready to retire and move to Florida -- the Burlington Livable Community Project is exploring ways that employers, the city and the state can start recognize older workers as experienced, flexible and enthusiastic employees who don't want to just quit when they turn 65. What will the workplace of the future look like? How long do you want to work, and what kind of work do you want to do? What are your experiences right now in the workplace if you are 65+? What are examples of good work places where mature workers are valued and are part of a diverse team of young and old?

The Snelling Center, on behalf of AARP, will be organizing interest groups to talk about these issues and we want to capture your experience and your ideas about working in the future. We will set up a series of group discussions as soon as we have enough interest. We are particularly interested in people currently working full or part time who are 65+.

To express your interest, please contact Beth at the Snelling Center
beth@snellingcenter.org.

Did you know that ...

- 1/3 of U.S. adults aged 65+ fall each year and those who fall are 2-3 times more likely to fall again.
- Vermont has one of the highest rates of death from falls in the entire country (VT Dept of Health).
- Fall prevention training has been successful in reducing the fear of falling and enabling people to live more socially active lives.

Have You Ever Dreamed of Being a Coach?

We want to draft you! That's right. AARP is teaming up with three Chittenden County major leaguers – RSVP, Fletcher Allen Community Health Foundation, and Greater Burlington YMCA – to sign on crowd-pleasing volunteers for the county's fall prevention program *A Matter of Balance*.

Greater Burlington YMCA has been licensed as the local *A Matter of Balance* training site for the new coaching staff. We are seeking at least seven people with enthusiasm and strong communication skills to take on this important role in Chittenden County. The next training by YMCA staff will involve two, four-hour sessions on Monday, May 12th and May 19th. Coaches will be trained to help older adults overcome their concerns about falling by helping them learn how to build confidence and increase their awareness of their surroundings and things that contribute to falling. Class participants (10-12 people) will also engage in gentle physical exercise during each of the eight, two-hour sessions.

Once coaches are trained, *A Matter of Balance* will be advertised through area health providers and through Cathedral Square and Burlington Housing Authority. As a coach's bonus for completing all training and program requirements, the Greater Burlington YMCA is offering a free, individual membership.

Contact Nancy Reynolds at RSVP (860-1677) to sign up. Remember, "spring training" starts May 12th at RSVP's offices in South Burlington.

AARP Vermont Office is Now in Burlington

Come see us in the new state office at 199 Main Street (aka Courthouse Plaza or the Kinkos building), second floor.