

*January 2026*  
**Better(not bigger)Vermont**



<https://www.betternotbiggervt.org/>

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***Blocking a Pro-Growth Takeover in South Burlington***

Let's Build Homes (LBH - a growth-growth-growth evangelist with an altruistic-sounding name) recently asked South Burlington's City Council to endorse a call for more growth. The resolution which LBH asked the City Council to approve is [here](#).

Thankfully, by testifying prior to the Council's vote on January 5th, John Bossange, Better(not bigger)Vermont's president, and four other South Burlington residents convinced the Council to reject the LBH request. We encourage Newsletter

**recipients to read John's testimony below as it contains powerful talking-points.**

**It goes to show that by banding together and having a compelling message, slow-growth advocates can win.**

**To: CITY COUNCIL**

**From: John Bossange**

**Good evening**

**Please read Saturday's commentary in VTDigger I sent you in anticipation of tonight.**

**I believe South Burlington has done its best to increase housing supply, protect remaining open space, and address the growing climate crisis.**

**To the credit of you and others who have served before you, we have kept our city more or less a very livable community. It has been nice to live here.**

**Other organizations and individuals outside of our city have not talked about what liveable means now, and into our future. They have consistently applied pressure to define life in South Burlington.**

**You have most likely read my previous commentaries in VTDigger, The Other paper, and in other media outlets throughout our state. I write a lot about my passion for sustainable and responsible growth. I'm also passionate about**

**affordable housing of all types, constructed in the appropriate locations, and built to address our climate emergency.**

**I've always said that in my commentaries and always put my money where my mouth is. Major donor to CHT**

**In my quest for truly affordable housing of all types, I've met with Maura Collins, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Alex Ferrell from the Governor's Office, 2X, Kevin Chu from the Vermont Futures Project, 3X, John Rogers our Lieutenant Governor, communicated directly with the Governor's office, and a month ago met with Miro Weinberger.**

**I've challenged their numbers, projections, vision and rationale for growth and the impacts of their proposals.**

**Never have any of those individuals or their organizations ever mentioned the need to address the environmental impacts and financial carrying cost impacts that building more and more housing will bring onto communities everywhere. I have been unable to get them to say anything at a press conference or in an article about the impact of their approach to the so-called "housing crisis."**

**Are they in denial?**

**Surely they know what's unsustainable. Instead it's full steam ahead with mythical thinking.**

**40,000 new homes by 2030,**

**150,000 more people needed in our state.**

**Build more and more unaffordable single-family homes, and we'll deal with the consequences later.**

**By the way, last year 34% of new homes were bought by out-of-state investors, i.e., hedge funds. Latest - Spear Meadows unaffordable luxury homes starting at \$700,000**

**Thankfully, you have tried to avoid that with our recent Market Place development. That's been a wise and responsible step in the right direction.**

**But the organizations I mentioned earlier, and the ones I noted in Saturday's VT Digger commentary say one thing, but promote another. Or say nothing and just use the word "crisis" to justify building anywhere and everywhere, to "streamline" Act 250 to avoid environmental regulations, or to override local control, like our LDRs and our easements on the remaining natural spaces.**

**Let's Build Homes is leading that charge. Full steam ahead no matter the costs of impacts. I've told Miro that and handed him copies of my multiple commentaries pointing out all the shortcomings of his approach.**

**Crickets, from him and others. Instead we read about how Vermont needs an "Abundance Agenda." Thus my editorial published Saturday on the hijacking and exploitation of the Abundance agenda myth.**

**In response to specific "Whereas" statements in the Resolution...**

**The 7th - Let's Build Homes is not "in harmony with our working lands." I can't get Miro to write or talk about the environmental degradation if we are not careful.**

**The 8th mentions "Coalitions of organizations businesses to support growth." Yes - Developers, realtors, lending institutions, investors, out of state financial groups, and lawyers are a big part of their coalition.**

**The 9th "supporting for pro-housing legislation and regulatory streamlining." Sure, so they can build where they want, when they want, uncontrolled, quickly, and as I mentioned earlier use the term "housing crisis" to create a sense of panic and reap quick profits.**

**Whereas #10 states "promoting housing growth" again, with no**

**discussion about financial and environmental impacts and to "support property owners," that's playing the fear factor of denying a person of their individual rights. We have our LDRs and have dealt with that already.**

**The 11th "engaging in Act 250 Tier-mapping." That's been creating language so they can build on environmentally sensitive lands mapped out in Tier 3 and promote building within 25 feet of a designated wetlands, and then sell that as needed infrastructure development in village centers?**

**The 12th uses the guilt card of "welcoming new neighbors," or tying "growth to opportunity," or "preserving its unique**

character.” As if those of us who want a more deliberate sustainable growth process are unwelcoming, discriminatory, and do not want others to have an opportunity to grow.

Preserving the unique character of our land? Like Spear Meadows, the blight off Kennedy Drive, Kimble Ave. and Old Farm Road or the existing car culture dependent satellite of South Village, or the isolated single-family homes scattered along Dorset and Spear. Is that the unique character we want?

So no, please do not associate our community with Let’s Build Homes. Do not sign this resolution. The organization does not reflect the good things we have already done.

Let’s Build Homes is the capstone organization now representing all the organizations I have met with. Their vision and priorities do not align with what’s important here now, and in our future.

I know this first hand. I’ve met with the leaders of all of these organizations and I know where they are headed. We do not need a partnership or support from Let’s Build Homes. We should not join their coalition nor should we become a member.

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### **[Pushing Back in Middlebury](#)**

**[We wanted to share this well-written letter published in the January 8th issue of the \*Addison Independent\*. It was penned by Jerry Shedd, a BnbVT member, after reading about a](#)**

## **Vermont Futures Project presentation to the Middlebury Selectboard.**

**The Vermont Futures Project advocates increasing the population of our state to 802,000 by 2035, citing the economic challenges that come with a stable population. But VFP is silent on what would happen if that goal were to be achieved. Would they then have us level off at 802,000? If so, all the effects of stability would return. VFP must make the case that stability at that level is better than the stability we have now. If stability is the problem, the alternative is perpetual population growth. Is it desirable to have a Vermont of a million people? Two million? Ten million?**

**Just because population growth has been our history does not mean that it is desirable. Humans need food, use cars, produce waste, and heat homes. Any per-capita environmental gains we make in these areas are reduced when the number of people increases. It becomes worse when laws designed to protect the environment are repealed or curtailed in order to benefit developers. The real crisis we face now is a carbon crisis, and requirements for new construction ought to prohibit or severely limit combustion heating, for one example.**

**There is no question that Vermont has an obligation to see that no one is living without shelter. But in my view the state of Vermont ought not to give tax breaks to businesses, or to gut environmental protections, in order to grow the population. We have a land that requires protection, and we need to reduce, not increase, our carbon footprint. Population stability is not a crisis - it's something to celebrate.**

**Jerome Shedd**

***Please support our work***

**Better(not bigger)Vermont is a registered 501(c)3 with no paid members or staff; we are a 100% volunteer organization.**

**But we still have expenses such as our website and special projects.**

**We very much appreciate your donation, which can be mailed to us at...**

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