

doing business. Yet a teen center was important to the students in the room. They would run it. They would decide what it looked like, what to call it, what people would do there and who would be allowed inside.

They batted around ideas for possible food to serve. "We ought to have healthy food, neat food. We could have sushi," said Selene Colburne.

"I could Xerox some food," said Chris Reid.

They drew up a list of uses for the 1,600 square-foot space: a stage for plays and rock bands, a food counter, a big screen TV, a skateboard ramp. Driscoll had an architect's plan for the space spread across the table, but she wanted to hear design suggestions from the kids.

"The design is absolutely wide open," she said. "There are some things we have to do because of the fire code. But today we want to brainstorm."

One question was who should be able to use the space. Many of the kids had been asked to leave the Burlington Square Mall for loitering and they didn't want to act like heavy-handed cops in their own place. But they also worried about letting in undesirable who would scare away younger children or their parents. Someone suggested membership cards. Finances also came up. So did staffing.

"I'd like to see it eventually become a youth-run business," Driscoll told the group. "I'd like to see it as a place where the people working there actually make decisions, not another McDonald's kind of job, not another dead end."

Driscoll's latest major project, a teen center in Memorial Auditorium that would cost \$37,000 to construct and an estimated \$10,000 to operate annually, won the Board of Aldermen's approval in May. The proposal rekindled accusations of duplicating existing services and centralization of power under City Hall.

Critics charged that children in outlying neighborhoods need more services than those in the center of town, which already has the YMCA, the King Street Area Youth Program, the Boys Club and Sara Holbrook Center.

"I'm never against programs, I'm just against their placement, their location," says Green of the Sara Holbrook Center, who argued that



Continued on Page 6 Jane Driscoll, on the steps of Burlington's City Hall, meets with a group of skateboarders.