



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:
(choose one)

Wards
1 & 8

Wards
2 & 3

Wards
4 & 7

**Ward
5**

Ward
6

Date of Assembly : **5/16/24** Start Time: (Commence): **7:05pm**

Location: **645 Pine Street** (and Zoom) Finish Time: (Adjourn): **8:42**

Note taker: Maria Mercurio Please forward these official minutes to: Fosca

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Jason Van Driesche, Joe Dery, Jak Tiano, Cathy Foley, Lena Greenberg, and Maria Mercurio

There are a total of 33 people in attendance tonight..

Joe Dery opens the meeting and welcomes neighbors. Guiding Principles: safe space, accessible, respectful, vital, non-partisan.

Introduces our new Steering Committee. All are here but FaRied who is traveling.

Joe explains how to find our website and access recordings.

Fosca and Charlie are also with us.

There are a few folks joining us on Zoom. Joe goes over some Zoom guidelines.

Introduces the agenda. The BPD community engagement agenda item has been postponed.

Public Forum

Carolyn Bates has put out 2 free street mural books on Burlington. Local artist Ron Hernandez is planning to repaint his Buddha mural at Locust and Pine, The mural has been hit with graffiti before. Carolyn is helping to raise some money to help with his equipment costs.

Andy Simon (lives just up from the Buddha) wants to talk about a community safety issue that hasn't been much discussed. Dangerous driving. Speeding, running lights, distracted driving. Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Andy has talked to BPD and DPW and Planning Commission and also addressed individual drivers. Wants to share this concern/burden and not just be a grumpy old man! Is concerned about an erosion of community values that allows folks to drive in dangerous ways. Doesn't have accident statistics but sees accidents waiting to happen.

Kelly on Home Ave agrees with the issue of folks not feeling like part of the community. Also sees issues with city planning. Meeting about the intersection of Home and Shelburne only addressed short-term solutions at that particular intersection. Wondering how the NPA connects to the City when it comes to larger-scale planning issues.

Jason Van Driesch on Caroline Street has thoughts, having worked for Local Motion for a long time. Has 3 thoughts: traffic calming projects are not aggressive enough. Too deferential for cars and about not inconveniencing drivers. Example is the intersection of Locust with Caroline and Charlotte. Was supposed to be speed tables but is not even noticeable. 2nd: legislation introduced about automated tickets for speeding and going through red lights. Intent to enable municipalities

to set up cameras at certain intersections, as there are not enough police to manage traffic violations. Data shows that traffic citations are down in the last few years and people know it and are driving dangerously because they know they won't get a ticket. 3rd: City planning process is very fragmented. Every different intervention is separate and is biased toward those who oppose the intervention. Idea: big meeting that talks about all the improvements that will happen in the given year in the given area (eg. South End). Hoping that with the new administration we will see new options for addressing this.

Jak Tiano lets us know that VPOP (Vermonters for People Oriented Places) is having a monthly meeting at 19 Church at 5pm on Monday 5/20.

Also: Plex Arts Festival 5/25 5pm-12:30am in the ONE (Archibald/N. Winooski area)
Contemporary and Experimental Art.

Carolyn wonders about having a rotary where Pine St. is currently a dead-end. Cheaper and Safer.

Melanie: Home-grown solutions: eg. planter boxes with signs that say Please Drive Carefully, "home-grown" speed bumps.

Leaves the diesel train running all night. Sound is really grating. Has been told that the engine can't freeze so needs to be running all night. Pollution! And Noise!

Jak says term is "Tactical Urbanism"

Bob Collins of Decker. Flashing light at crosswalk across from Decker. Used to be a traffic light. Now it's very dangerous, without a stop sign. The flashing lights are inadequate.

Lena appreciates our long public forum and folks sharing concerns that we have in common. Currently NPAs don't have a lot of power. Interested in having conversations about how the NPA can take back more power. Our counselors and paid officials work for us, let's remember to hold them to task.

David Foss from Decker is concerned about drivers on St. Paul down past Maple and King, people blowing stop signs. Unsafe conditions for pedestrians. We need a way to slow down drivers on St. Paul.

Kelly asks: what is the best way to put pressure on city government?

Lena: we should have another NPA discussion in which we identify specific interventions we want to see for safe streets. We can pass resolutions as an NPA and bring them to the city. This is a group task to get our voices heard in City Hall. The whole rest of our meeting is about elevating our community projects beyond discussion.

Andrew reminds us that when the story gets big enough we can get attention. Eg: Decker getting on the front page of Seven Days.

Jason says what happens at Decker can be called Strategic Embarrassment. Publicly making leaders look bad for being ineffective. Story of neighbors painting a crosswalk on Locust when the city wouldn't do it, and then calling Seven Days about the story.

Jak says we should transition to our next agenda item.

Charlie has an idea: throughout the year at NPA we gather all our grievances and focus them into direct questions for city councilors and then hold them accountable.

Jason talks about the Neighborhood Doing Assembly. Identified 3 specific areas of work: South End Community Center, Improvements to Callahan Park, and Neighborhood Gatherings.

Andy updates on Callahan Park Improvement Society. Ingrid, Greg Stefanski, Amelia, Daisy are also members. Greg, Andy, and Daisy got together to walk the park. Andy was the tour guide. Chatted with Tara who runs the snack bar for the sports events. They are starting to brainstorm ideas. Planning to get together again.

David would like to join Community Gatherings.

Maria updates on the idea for a Garden Tour in W5, hasn't been coordinated yet. Looking for folks in the room who are interested in joining.

Andrew has been part of garden tours around Chittenden County. We could look there for resources.

Carolyn was a photographer for garden tours.

Jak gives a brief presentation on Team Big Thing.

Lena, Jak, Ruby, and FaRied are part of the team so far.

Talks about how the Big Idea got started. We have a real opportunity to make this happen, soon.

"Wouldn't it be great to meet somewhere other than this DPW conference room?"

Downtown and North End have community centers/library/etc. South End does not.

How can we afford to do this?

The opportunity; South End Innovation District (SEID). Getting in on the change that is coming.

We can be an example on how a community can productively lead its own growth.

The Plan: The city, through CEDO, will be doing more public engagement.

Tonight: brainstorming, dreaming, building a team.

In June: develop concrete proposal, begin outreach to development partners

June NPA: bring the proposal to the full NPA for a "vote of support"

Summer 2024: bring a proposal to the development partners to seek collaboration and commitment.

This is our window of opportunity right now.

Cathy asks: what is the window? There has already been a lot of planning.

Jak: zoning process is done. MOU has been ongoing, going well so far.

Jason: Is it accurate to say that we want the City to be advocating for us. Does the city have the clout?

Jak: we shouldn't assume that the non-city partners don't want to play ball. We will be addressing the partners as equal partners.

Lena: lets start the brainstorming process.

Lucia Campriello is on Zoom, thanks us for having this plan/discussion. Agrees with Jak that partners are open and interested in engagement. Lucia is looking forward to being supportive in any way.

Robin: Who is gonna own this?

Jak: there are zoning incentives for a private developer to have a community center in exchange for more rental units, etc.

Let's brainstorm!

Lena is circulating some paper and pens. Splitting into small groups to brainstorm.

Poses 3 questions:

- What would you want to *do* at a community center?
- What does our community need space for that it doesn't currently have?
- How do you envision a South End community center looking and feeling?

Highlights:

Jason: year-round farmers market and local producer space.

Ruby: modular units on inside, walls are movable. Gym floor: good for classes and dancing.

Ingrid: zoo

Carolyn: kitchen

Joe: space for teaching classes

For NPA room: Zoom capability, good acoustics. Bike parking, place for kids to hang out after dark. Free store/library. Kitchen rental space. Ping pong, chess. Indoor movies. ADA accessibility. Gardens. Proper signage. Designed to make it feel like OUR space. indoor/outdoor feeling. NOT selling naming rights to the building.

Lena: We will end the zoom now. Thank you Sally, who is still hanging out online.

We will be sending follow-ups about how to move forward on this.

Jason: get a lot of neighborhood ideas. eg . 50 people from Decker

David: People need a place to go. There is a lot of loneliness in the community. Computers for use, showers for folks who need them. Space that feels really inclusive.

Kelly: digital survey that has QR codes.

Jak: Who wants to spend some time building out a concrete proposal before the June NPA meeting?

Please add your name to the sheet.

Meeting is officially adjourned.