



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:

Ward
5

Date of Assembly: 10/17/24 Start Time: (*Commence*): 7:03PM

Location: 645 Pine St Finish Time: (*Adjourn*): 9:16PM

Note taker: Jak Tiano

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Joe Dery, Lena Greenberg, Cathy Foley, FaRied Munarsyah, Jak Tiano, Maria Mercurio

Agenda Items and Actions:

- 7:03: Attendee Introductions and Welcoming Message | 9 min
- 7:12: Reminder of Upcoming Election | 1 min
- 7:13: Public Forum | 16 min
 - Melo Grant: Showing Off the New City Website
 - Sam Leary: Raising concerns about the South End Co-op disallowing staff parking
 - Andy Simon: Raising awareness of the petition to adopt a pledge for an apartheid-free community, on behalf of himself and local chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace
 - Greg Stefanski: On behalf of the "Calahan Park Crew" (NDA), an update of recent community improvement work at the park
 - Nov 2nd: Visit Schmanska Park to see what the Old East End is doing
 - Submitted application to "Penny for Parks" for 5 picnic tables, maybe have a picnic table party in spring
 - Zach Nersinger: SECORD is scheduling a community open house Wed Nov 6th ~6:30PM. City will be sharing details soon.
 - FaRied Munarsyah: People's Kitchen is feeding people around Burlington, and could use some help in feeding people. faried@workerscenter.org, 8024913491
 - Jak Tiano: Raise awareness about GMT funding gap
- 7:29: HomeShare VT | 17 min
 - Overview: We match people who have space in their homes with people who need a place to live.
 - We've expanded through VT over the last 42 years.
 - Process: First, they complete an application (no fee to apply), sliding scale fee \$60-\$500 only if a match is made. Payment programs and waivers exist, payment not a barrier.
 - We want to create a compatible match between a host and a guest. Host may want help or rent or some combination.
 - Number one reason people come to HomeShare VT is because of our safety; 6 background checks and 4 reference checks. Take safety very seriously.

- Interview, meeting with case manager, and then a two week trial where you can test it out. 95% of trials go on to be matches. Most match lasts 1-5 years, average around 2, currently have a 14 and 18 year match
- Host and guest can both end the match with 30 days' notice.
- Case managers are always available to help keep things running smoothly.
- 95% satisfaction rate, 100% recommendation rate, and hosts feel safer and more engaged in their community.
- Help: not healthcare. Yardwork, errands, tech care.
- Rent cap at \$650, and help cap is 12 hours/week. Guests pay an average of \$360/month, providing an average of 7.5 hours/week help.
- Hosts' ages range from 27-99.
- Guests' ages range from 22-89, average 49.
- Wed Oct 30th, open house 3-5PM Farrell Street (United Way/Cathedral Square)
- Question from Jacob:
 - How many matches?
 - A: Most ever, 83 homeshare matches, about a dozen in BTV, about 40 in Chittenden County. In BTV we have more guests than hosts, in rural areas it's flipped. Recently, Chittenden County is starting to flip.
- Comment from Cathy:
 - I went through the process, and I ended up not needing it, but it was a pleasant and thorough experience.
- Question from Joan:
 - My mother grew old in NY state and wished for a program like this. I wonder if this is ever available to couples, or what happens if guests get partnered?
 - A: The minimum is a private room and bathroom, which works for singles. Sometimes the hosts have more space available, and it's rare, but we try to accommodate.
- 7:46: Fletcher Free Library | 13 min
 - Small promo
 - We're more than just books, but tools and objects too
 - We also have online resources to access backprint databases
 - Ancestry.com, Candid non-profit database
 - Will soon have access to "WestLaw" for legal info
 - Comment from Andy:
 - You can also request books (and some other things)! And they're quick to do it.
 - Question from Robin:
 - What if you maybe have an overdue library card?
 - A: We don't have fines anymore, and if you had fines they should be gone. But if you had missing books, we might have to work more with you on that, but we don't want anyone to not come.
 - Comment from Dave:
 - The library is great, especially for such a small city. What about the safety issue?

- A: I think what we see at the library is usually more sad than unsafe, but we have staff to handle deescalation, and we have systems for dealing with people who are being disruptive. And we also have cameras.
- Question from Andrew:
 - Can you talk about the new Howard Center staffer?
 - A: We got approval to have a 1 year pilot of a social worker at the library from the Howard Center. The hope is that they can be a permanent fixture that can build relationships at the library, and also connect people to the resources at the Howard Center. It is also a great community resource.
- Comment from Mary:
 - My family loves librarians!
 - A: Thank you
- 7:59: Burlington Electric | 30 min
 - Here to discuss BED Ballot Item #1
 - Asking permission from voters to issue \$20M revenue bond to fund capital projects through the end of the decade
 - Bond is repayable from revenues of the department; do not affect taxes or city debt
 - Needs a majority (>50%) to pass
 - We've used this for big projects in the past, McNeidl, Efficiency Vermont, Winooski One, and recently climate initiatives
 - 2022 NZE Bond
 - First of its kind in the country. We've spent ~12.5/20M.
 - The goal is to increase grid capacity; last bond took us from 77MW to 80MW, currently peaking at 65MW
 - EV charging infrastructure; some state of the art fast chargers in the city, and a few level 2 chargers
 - EV bucket truck—first in the state
 - 2025 Proposal
 - 80MW to 90MW for continued electrification, will give us a lot more headroom to aggressively electrify
 - Tech system updates
 - More EV fleet and bucket trucks
 - 200 new EV charging stations, 47 being fast chargers
 - How will it be spent?
 - ~80% is for Distribution, Capacity, and EV Charging
 - ~10% for generation
 - ~10% for IT, Fleet, Flexible Load
 - More info
 - If bond isn't approved and we keep up our same programs, rates would have to go up about +12.8%
 - If the bond is approved, the pressure would be +2.0%
 - If the bond isn't approved, it also gives us the room to time ourselves with good interest rates
 - Question from Dave:
 - We should have an EV charging station at Decker Towers

- A: We can reach out to work with them on charging.
- Question from audience:
 - As an EV owner, problems: not enough chargers. Can we get more fast charger annexes? They work well elsewhere. City question: people leave their EVs plugged into chargers and then people can't use them
 - A: On the annex: good question, because we don't really know how to solve this problem because we've never overhauled a fueling source like this before. We have agreed that fast chargers should be grouped together in probably at least 4 at a time.
 - A: On the parking: we have new utility pole chargers, and we're seeing challenges there that we're learning and solving. After 4 hours, you start paying for parking to encourage people to move. We're still learning how this can work, but we're on it.
- Question from Lena:
 - Q: Reports that McNeil is not doing well financially and that biomass is not renewable, what will happen there?
 - A: There's a wood chip dryer project to increase efficiency for the plant, and a NOX catalyst to do {something}. Also, we just talked about how McNeil is financially positive because the report left out important data. Looking at battery storage at McNeil.
 - Q: Will penny lane be coming off line?
 - A: We do have a gas turbine there, it basically never runs, but we get paid to have it exist for peaking by the ISO. We have done a lot of research to figure out how to make it more renewable. It currently runs on BioDiesel, and we have plans to shift to "R99" a 99% renewable diesel.
- Question from Robin:
 - Q: I don't understand if Burlington is connected to the City?
 - A: BED is a department of the city, we're a public power utility owned by the city, there is no shareholders, it is owned by.
- Question from Jak:
 - Keeping in mind the connection between grid expansion and transportation habits.
- 8:29: Police Oversight | 47 min
 - Melo Grant (Central District City Councillor) presenting on the Police Oversight ballot item
 - Melo gives a background on her involvement with policing and oversight in the city.
 - We started from basically nothing, building up the process of police oversight.
 - The idea in the community that oversight was needed is long standing.
 - Melo agrees with Ben (CC-W5) that when you look at the history of the original proposal and the promises that were made, that something needs to happen.
 - Why I support it: there's been a process that has been created, and it needs to be codified and put in the charter. I believe that this will help restore trust in BPD in the community.

- Right now the police commission doesn't have representation in wards 2 and 3, even though we are the epicenter for the county in regards to drug overdoses. This would make sure that there's more representation.
- In the past, the discipline that happens after issues has sometimes caused more damage. The police commission would be able to override the chief with a $\frac{2}{3}$ supermajority.
- Melo quotes ACLU communication about how "oversight hurting recruitment" is a false choice.
- Comments from Cathy:
 - Military has similar powers, but also has civilian oversight. In the intelligence community, there is also civilian oversight. In my life, I've seen that oversight and accountability built trust and pride in the department. The bad reputation of BPD has been earned, even if by a few actions by a small number of officers. There needs to be oversight so that the officers can build pride in their department, and trust in the department. I'm a big supporter of BPD, and believe this will help build up the department.
- Comments from Joan Shannon (CC-SD):
 - The police union doesn't like it because it's too much process.
 - The police chief doesn't like it for the same reason.
 - Too many people on the board makes it hard to find a meeting date.
- Comments from a police commissioner:
 - I'm not supporting this for two main reasons:
 1. Things are working well policy wise, though we can't currently maintain commissioners as it is, because it's currently too much work and we have no support staff
 2. There's a point about us hiring and overseeing an investigator, which seems difficult
- Comments from Mary:
 - Don't support for three reasons:
 - Too much work as it is on the police commission
 - The concept of oversight goes against collaboration
 - The current system works very well for complaints
- Comments from FaRied:
 - As I see it, the problem with the current charter is that officers can appeal, but the complainant cannot. Would the three settlements we've experienced have turned out differently if we had this new process?
 - The Fire Department charter is really simple and easy, the city council can fire them at will
- Comments from Gene Bergman (CC-W2):
 - This charter change puts in a call to change the budget, and also doesn't force the commission to take a case, so it doesn't add to the workload on its face, nor is it necessarily unfunded.
 - The changes wouldn't have necessarily been different in those settlements, but they had the possibility to be different.
- Comments from Joan (CC-SD):

- We want to build a system that avoids harm
- Victims want compensation, the public wants accountability.
- Comments from Melo (CC-CD):
 - I'm glad that the relationship between BPD And the commission has improved.
 - We shouldn't say that we can't find people who will do this work, or disparage people who could be perceived as "activists"
 - Reiterate Gene's comment that it doesn't automatically add another layer, but augments serious cases with disagreements.
 - What victims of use of force want is to be heard, not necessarily about compensation.
 - If one of the issues we've seen in the recent past was handled at the complaint stage, we wouldn't have had a lawsuit.
 - The medical field handles these things much better nowadays, how do we learn from this and improve our system? We have to look at that in our policing systems.
- 9:16 Meeting Adjourned | 2 hr 13 min