

Meeting NOTES

Ward 2 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)

Dec 12, 2024 | 6:30-8:30pm | All are welcome



Join in person:

ONE Community Center, 20 Allen Street

Join remotely:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85860854764>

O.N.E. Community Dinner

5:30-6:30pm | Free | Donations encouraged

Facilitator: Lauren Ebersol **Notetaker:** Kason Hudman **Attendees:** See last page

Community events and resources mentioned in this meeting		Who shared info
Holiday Cards to Prison Event @ PJC	Dec 13th 5:30pm	Kason Hudman https://pjcvt.org/events
Samba Street Band Brazil Night @ Arts Riot	Dec 13th 8:00pm	Samba Tukata Band
Pitkin Street Potluck Party		Roxanne Meuse
Street Cats Burlington Event @ Desapacito	Dec 13th 8pm-12pm	Street Cats Burlington

6:30 pm Introduction

- Lauren introduces a motion to approve the agenda, which passed

6:35 pm Public Forum (2 minutes max per person)

- Samba Tukata, Samba street band, putting on a Brazil night at Arts Riot on December 13th. Will be with Will Patton.
- Peace & Justice Center will be having a Holiday Cards to the Prison event on Friday, December 13th at 5:30pm
- Vermont Coalition for Palestinian Liberation is passing a sign-up sheet around to stay up-to-date for Apartheid Free Community ballot initiative, which Gene Bergman mentioned is going before City Council on Monday
- Pitkin Street Potluck
- Street Cats Burlington is doing a winter supply drive, they brought a list of items they are passing around, also they are having an event at Despacito on Friday at 8pm
- Hands VT is doing a fundraiser, they are seeking donations

6:45 pm Importance of Overdose Prevention Centers (OPCs)

Ed Baker & Bella Fearn

- Ed and Bella are eager to answer questions, as they understand that there is a lot of information and misinformation out there. Ed has been in drug recovery for 40 years, and he feels like he has been granted a gift at a second chance in life, he has a graduate degree, a meaningful career, he is married, etc. That makes him passionate about this work. Bella lost a family member to an overdose, which makes her passionate about this issue as well.
- A lot of the people using drugs are unhoused, unsheltered folks. There are a lot of overlapping oppressions. They are often alienated from society. An Overdose Prevention Center will offer this group of people unconditional safety. This will allow people who have been disenfranchised to connect with health-related services in a relationship of trust. People will start engaging in health-promoting behavior if they enter into relationships of trust.
- The goal of an OPC is to reduce harm and public suffering. Both the user of the drugs and those witnessing the drug use will benefit from an OPC. OPCs are not new, they have been around for about 35 years, and they have operated with great success in other areas. All the research on OPCs show that they decrease public drug use, decrease public needle discarding, etc. The city will also save money in sanitation services, emergency services, etc. The OPCs need public support because there may be issues in 2025
- The state legislature passed a law H.72 which gave people who work in OPCs protection from prosecution. Former mayor Miro Weinberger, current Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanek, multiple city councilors, etc are in support of the OPC.
- Burlington is a great place to have an OPC because the highest percentage of opioid related deaths happen in Chittenden County, specifically in downtown Burlington. Burlington also has a network of nonprofits that are excited to collaborate with the OPC staff.
- These people suffering from drug addiction were invisible for a long time, but they are no longer. This creates an imperative for us to help.
- Question from NPA attendee - will the change in the Presidential administration affect the OPCs? And how will drug checking and safety checking work? What about transportation options?
- Bella answers, yes, drug checking will be a big part of OPC work! Transportation is a question that Bella will look into. Ed adds that they will want to put the center at the center of death, in downtown Burlington, so people can walk to the center. Ed mentions that even if there is federal opposition, Vermont has rights as a state that can protect us. Rhode Island and New York also have them and will join with Vermont in protecting them if there is significant federal opposition.
- Question from NPA attendee - what is your response to the folks who worry about OPCs bringing more drug users to Burlington?
- Bella answers, validates the question, but mentions that all of the research points to OPCs actually reducing crime and substance use in an area with an OPC. Ed adds that an

OPC is doing something about this very problem that is based in medical science and compassion. Giving them a space that is unconditionally supportive will allow people to make positive changes, and the OPCs will be there to provide that support when people decide to harm themselves less.

- Carol, question, she supports the OPCs, is there a timeframe when OPCs are open? Or are they open 24/7?
- Bella answers, there is no exact timeframe yet, but the OPCs in NYC are open until 10pm, and she expects that Burlington will follow a similar model. Ed adds that it would be best for it to be open 24/7, but having any space open for any time will save lives.
- Lauren Ebersol, question, is there a plan to work with the other centers that are open in the United States?
- Ed answers, yes, Ed has a great relationship with the folks at the other OPCs, and Ed will continue to collaborate and learn from them.
- NPA attendee question, how does it work if, let's say for example, a drug dealer decides to set up close to an OPC. What measures does the center take to mitigate that?
- Bella answers, law enforcement will be in collaboration with the OPC to prevent dealers from operating in the area. Ed adds that networking with the Burlington police will be key, in the hopes that they will help prevent dealers from taking advantage of their clients.
- NPA attendee question, What strategies do you have to get the word out and combat any vocal opposition?
- Bella answers, this is how we are starting this work at the NPAs. But also, writing to Seven Days, or Front Porch Forum, or other public information resources, will be key. Adding evidence-based, compassionate responses to combat the vitriol will help.
- Question from NPA attendee, what do you think about people who might get into drug use due to the existence of the OPCs? Is this enabling drug use?
Bella answers, none of the research shows that happening, all of the data actually shows drug use going down. Ed adds, the people who are addicted to drugs are often in situations they themselves do not want to be in, and they are often suffering. They have been seen through punitive lenses, they are disenfranchised, and they often die before they are ever given help. The OPC will provide compassionate help and save lives, rather than enabling drug use.

7:30 pm Vote: New NPA Steering Committee Member

- Vote on Marc Stannard, Marc moved here in June, he is eager to get involved in his community and provide a community space for people to get in conversations with each other.
- In Favor: 18 Opposed: 0 Abstentions: 0
- Marc is a Ward 2 NPA Steering Committee Member

7:35 pm Listening Session with State Legislators

- *Abbey Duke, Jill Kronwinski, Kate Logan, Troy Headrick, Brian Cina*

- Jill Krowinski starts, she mentions that she is also the Speaker of the House, and it was a tough slog to get the OPC approval over the finish line. So it was special to see it here being talked about. Jill mentions that her priorities are education at a price that Vermonters can afford, also focused on health care, also focused on housing. A lot of progress has been made on housing to ensure that it is possible to build where there is lots of growth, but more work needs to be done. Also climate resiliency and flood resiliency.
- Kate Logan mentions that the priorities are affordable housing, and cost reduction to ensure Vermont is affordable. Kate also mentions that she expects an erosion of worker's rights under the Trump administration, and she is prepared to fight against it and expand worker's rights in Vermont.
- Troy Headrick mentions corrections reform, also the housing crisis, and mentions that UVM is a major culprit for the lack of affordable housing in Vermont. Troy is also concerned about the impact of the Trump administration on migrant workers and immigrants in Vermont, and wants to ensure migrants are protected from DHS and ICE. Troy also mentions that there is more that can be done to protect our LGBT+ neighbors.
- Brian Cina mentions that the Trump administration will likely cut federal funding opportunities, so there is an opportunity for Vermont to become self-sufficient in more ways. Brian will be advocating for housing production that will integrate local energy production and help Vermonters own a home.
- Abbey Duke mentions that she is the newest member of the legislature on this panel. She has been putting extra work into learning about issues and meeting key players. Abbey mentions that housing is the most important thing, it is a lever that will bring economic growth and prosperity to Vermont.
- Question from Christina Erickson, Exec Director of Local Motion - what can we do to ensure that new housing is walkable and bikeable and how can that come up outside the transportation committees?
- Kate Logan answers, that is part of the planning process through the Act 250 reform. There will be a multi-year regional planning commission that will talk about smart land use and ensure walkability.
- Jill adds, that will always be a part of the conversation, to ensure walkability and bikeability.
- Question from NPA Attendee, as a mother of a trans kid who is going to be starting T soon, it is shocking to hear that Federal law "trumps" state law - what are you doing to protect trans kids?
 - Jill answers that all that could be done is being done, and has been done, so they are not in a reactive state at the moment. Kate Logan adds that there is precedent for the state law to preempt federal law in some cases, and all of the state government will be fighting any attempt for the federal government to override Vermont protections.
- Question from Bella Fearn, as housing is being developed, what is being done to protect people with disabilities?
- Kate and Brian both answer, that is integrated into the current housing plans. Brian adds that it is important to educate communities on how to build their own housing and get involved, outside of just the for-profit developer system as well.
- Question from Gene Bergman, bus system is facing a fiscal cliff, how are we going to fix it?

- Jill answers that it will certainly be on the agenda of the House transportation agenda. And there are a lot of budgetary constraints, so it will be important for people to share their stories. Gene is invited to bring the city council transportation committee to talk about this issue.
- Question from NPA attendee, what is being done to confront the aging crisis and the lack of third spaces/educational opportunities in rural communities?
- Abbey Duke answers, there are some communities that are losing out due to demographic challenges, and she thinks that housing is a key piece of fixing this issue. We need people of working age to move to Vermont, and housing is of course a key part of this. Housing is at the crux of this. Particularly housing in town centers, distributed around the state. Jill adds that there are organizations out there like Cathedral Square that are doing great work with housing for seniors. They just opened a housing center in Highgate, VT. Kate Logan adds, creating greater housing density throughout the state and making the permitting process easier will incentivize developers to build more dense housing. Brian adds, we could potentially add public housing options, and what if we brought the Olympics to Vermont?

8:05 pm Updates: City Councilors

- *Melo Grant & Gene Bergman*
- Melo mentions that there remains a lot of issues in the city regarding houses being used for drug trafficking, and our next public safety meeting is on Thursday, December 19th, and people are encouraged to talk about all public safety concerns at that meeting. Melo wants to ensure that there is public access to the police station, and is currently doing a deep dive of the BPOA survey that was published by the VT Digger. She thinks that the survey can be used as the city looks for a new police chief. Melo also mentions that she appreciated the OPC presentation, and there are additional benefits that were not mentioned, such as late-night public bathrooms. She has high hopes that the fire department and the police department will work in close collaboration with the OPC. OPCs have been shown to save cities a lot of money in the long-run.
- Gene mentions that he is really tired, but it is good preparation for a very long City Council meeting on Monday. He says that pedestrian safety/cyclist safety is on the agenda with regards to the Winooski bridge. He says that all the people coming to the meetings and highlighting those issues has had an impact on the planning process. Gene mentions that it is important for the city to have more warming shelters/shelters in general, and he is frustrated that other city councilors have stricken those from their own districts. He will move to amend an initiative that is coming up to include more shelters in the NNE and the South End. Gene also mentions that he is working to strengthen our fair and impartial policing issue, particularly as a new chief is being sought. Gene is also looking at the Apartheid Free issue that is coming up for a vote on Monday, and he is supporting putting that on the ballot.

- Melo mentions that she has received horrifying emails over this issue, and she thinks at the bare minimum it should be put up for a vote so that the people of Burlington can vote for it.

8:28 pm Raffle drawing + Adjourn!

Our next meeting is Thursday, January 9th!

Scan the QR code ([or click here](#)) to: [Email us](#) • Go to [our website](#) • Watch meeting recordings on [CCTV's website](#) • Connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) • Request a time slot with [CEDO's request form](#) • Get to all links related to this meeting



12/12/24 (12+12=24!)

First name	Last name	Email (if not already on list)	WARD? WARD 2 WARD 3	Dinner	NPA	Add to calendar 6/5/24
Lena	Samuelson			✓		
David	Kelly			✓		
Trish	Denton			✓		
Marie	Hernandez			✓		
BRIENT	Pickford			✓		
STEVE	WOLOSCHIN			✓		
Karl	Lukhaup-Bethers		2	✓		
Gillian	Hasen		2	✓		
Mazhar	Quraishi		2	✓		
Sam	Jehin		1			
Beebie	Taylor		2	✓	?	
Kason	Hudman		2	✓	✓	
Frank	Manno		2	✓		
Chris	Mai		2	✓		
Roxanne	Meuse		2	✓		
Ferd	Quraishi		2			
Roger	Lebowitz		2	✓		
Vikas	Mangipudi			✓		
Olivia	Smith-Hammon		1	✓		
Julia	Dickert		2	✓	?	
Alex	TUASUCHAI		2	✓		
John	Gower		2	✓		
Mary	Martin		2	✓		
Ethan	Loe	ethan@meil.com	2	✓	✓	
Damen	Evensol	evensol27@gmail.com	2	✓	✓	
	Sharon Webster				✓	
Jacob	Flanigan		2	✓	✓	
Amy	Prenowitz		3	✓	?	
Crosby	Fish	crosby.f.fish@gmail	2	✓	✓	
Rose	Dumas	rosedumas@posteonline	5	✓		

12/12/24 (12+12=24)

First name	Last name	email (if not already on list)	WARD 2 WARD 3	community Dinner	NPA	Add to email list?
Karen	Kroeger	—		✓		
Rachel	Goldstein	—	2	✓		
SUNNY	BECKER	—	2	✓	✓	
Jessa	Gebble	✓	N/A	✓		
Jess	Moran	—	2	✓		
Kate	Logan	katherine.logan6@gmail.com	2	✓	✓	✓
Christina	Enderson	cerichson14@hotmail.com	2	✓	✓	✓
Bobo				✓		
Olivia	Allegre		3	✓		
Maureen	ORR		3	✓		
David	Nesbit	—	2	✓		
Brian	Nesbit		1	✓		
Emma	WALSH		2	✓		
WILL	LAMBER		2	✓		
Shirley	Oversy		2	✓	✓	
Lisa	Safield		2	✓	✓	
Adessa	Moran	adessa.moran@gmail.com	2	✓		
MIKE	TEED		2	—	—	
Melissa	like		2	✓	✓	
chancelline			2	✓		
Nick	Parrish		2	✓		
Marc	Stenard	marc.stenard@att.net	2	✓	✓	
Charlie	Clark		2	✓		
CHRIS	STARR		2	✓		
Mel	Grant		2		✓	
Andre	Clark		2		✓	
Abby	Duke		7		✓	
Troy	HEADRICK		1		✓	

12/12/24 (12+12=24)

First name	Last name	email (if not already on list)	WARD 2 or WARD 3	community Dinner	NPA	Add to email list?
Eating	Koveance		380	✓		
Gene	Bergman		2	✓	✓	
Wendy	Loe		2	✓	✓	
THEO	SOUCY		2	✓		
ABBIE	MORIN		3	✓		
Ivan	Ripstein		2	✓		
Ed	Baker	arcedbaker@gmail	4	✓	✓	
Grace	Weisman	Natarajadancecompany@1		✓		
Paul	Samuel	gmail.com	2	✓		
Jess	Pearson		2	✓		
Jenny	Roskosch	jenniferroskosch@vermontlaw		✓		
Erin				✓		X
Elyssa	Nielsen		3	✓		
Phoebe	Paron	phoebeparon@gmail.com		✓		
Hayden	Bosker		2	✓		✓

