



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
c/o Community & Economic Development Office
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401
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Councilor Carter Neubieser (CN), Chair, Ward 1
Councilor Evan Litwin (EL), Ward 7
Councilor Joe Kane (JK), Ward 3

CDNR Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 18th, 2024
6:30 – 8:30 PM
Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 1st Floor – City Hall

Committee members: Carter Neubieser (CN), Evan Litwin (EL), Joe Kane (JK)

City Staff: Marcella Gange, CEDO

Other Attendees: Brian Pine, Sarah Russell, CEDO; Rebecca Reese, Kara Alnasrawi, Business and Workforce Development

Draft Minutes

Meeting Started at 6:33 PM

1. Approve agenda

MOTION by Councilor Kane, SECOND by Councilor Litwin, to approve the agenda

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. Approve minutes: 10/24/24

MOTION by Councilor Kane, SECOND by Councilor Litwin, to approve the minutes

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

3. Public Forum

- No one spoke at public forum

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities.

For accessibility information, call 865-7144. For questions about the meeting, contact Christine Curtis at ccurtis@burlingtonvt.gov

4. Presentation: Early Learning Initiative (ELI) 2024 Annual Report

- Rebecca Reese, the Early Learning Initiative manager, discusses the 2024 annual report on the First Step Scholarship program.
- The program supports Burlington families in accessing and affording high-quality childcare through scholarships, capacity grants for providers, and workforce training.
- In its fifth year, the program received 256 applications with an 86% enrollment rate across 24 partner providers.
- Rebecca highlights that 50 scholarships were awarded, assisting single parents, BIPOC families, non-English speakers, and those needing childcare for employment.
- She notes the recent state legislation increasing childcare subsidies by 35%, with an estimated 80% of Vermont families qualifying for some tuition assistance.
- The program aims to fill remaining gaps for families still needing extra support.
- The ELI Language Access Grant supports interpretation and translation services for non-English speaking families.
- To address the workforce shortage, the First Steps training program has brought in 29 new educators, and they are partnering with a local organization to provide social-emotional training and establish a substitute teacher pool.
- Rebecca presented on the work of the Family Room, a community organization that provides childcare and support services to families. She highlighted the organization's efforts to bridge the health equity gap, particularly for families with limited English proficiency.
- Discussed the challenges of the childcare industry, including high costs and low profit margins. She mentioned the state's Act 76, which aims to increase reimbursement rates for childcare providers, and the Vermont model as a potential solution.
- EL expressed interest in how to effectively communicate health-related information to diverse communities, and Rebecca suggested that the Family Room could play a role in this. The conversation ended with Rebecca's mention of a forthcoming workforce training program at the Family Room.

5. Updates on NPA support working group – Councilor Neubieser

- CN provided a verbal update on the progress of the Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs) project. The second meeting had taken

place a few weeks ago, and another meeting was scheduled for the following day.

- CN also discussed the scope of the project, which includes defining the role of the NPA, discussing open meeting law, and addressing 1st amendment protections. CN mentioned that the NPA is independent within city government but not completely independent from it.
- CN also mentioned that the project involves discussions around best practices and guidelines for the NPA.
- JK expressed concerns about the project, stating that the NPA is legally part of city government and should be subject to certain guidelines and safeguards. He suggested that the city council should have a role in defining these guidelines and that the NPA should not be completely independent.
- EL also shared his experiences with the NPA, highlighting the differences between various NPA meetings and the challenges of balancing the needs of different stakeholders.
- CN acknowledged these concerns and promised to take them back to the working group for further discussion.

6. Discussion: Draft Resolution re: City's affordable housing crisis

- CN discussed the city's ongoing efforts to address the affordable housing crisis, emphasizing the need for immediate action and the potential for expanding the Housing Trust Fund.
- JK raised concerns about the current funding sources and the potential for competition with other revenue-raising initiatives.
- EL suggested adjusting the tone of the resolution to be more collaborative and less confrontational, particularly when addressing institutions like the University of Vermont.
- Sarah Russell highlighted the need for dedicated homeless units and suggested linking funding to requirements for accepting households exiting homelessness.
- EL and CN discussed the potential for progressive taxation in Burlington, with EL expressing concerns about its impact on businesses and the middle class. Members also discussed the possibility of taxing property owners who exceed a certain number of rental units, with EL suggesting that this could encourage property owners to sell some of their units.
- CN agreed to these suggestions and planned to bring the matter back to the next CDNR meeting for further discussion. Members also

discussed the need for a report on the various options for addressing the affordability crisis, with CN emphasizing the importance of considering the impacts on all classes of people.

7. Other Committee Business

- None

8. Adjournment

- ADJOURN at 8:01 p.m. by Councilor Neubieser with no objection