

MINUTES

Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

In-person at the Friends Meeting House, 173 North Prospect Street

And Zoom online: Webinar ID: 962 4593 9050

Or by phone: +1 929 205 6099 ID = 962 4593 9050

Moderator: Tom Derenthal

Recorder: Carol Livingston

6:15 - Welcome and Food (Namaste Express Kitchen)

6:30 - Formal Start - review agenda

Introductions: name, street

Announcements: share events, meetings, activities of interest to Ward 1 community.

Carol Livingston : from Andres Oyaga of Climate Action Collective - Candidate forum on 2/25 at 6:30 at Ira Allen Chapel - combating climate change. Allie Schacter indicated that she and Kathy Olwell are previously scheduled for a forum so unsure what the date is.

6:40 - Speakout - an opportunity to raise concerns & appreciations about Ward 1 community

Carol L: thank you to Dave Cawley & Old East Enders for hosting their 5th year of

Winterlude last weekend with bonfire, delicious food, crafts, and snow activities.

Charlie Gianonni - look into reinstating Herb Blumenthal award celebration

Cindy Cook - Chitt Co Welcome Corps welcomes immigrants, especially refugees.

Neighbor of 3 yrs just reunited with family 10 days ago - challenging story about getting family here from Pakistan. Not allowed to sponsor folks under current federal freeze.

Catherine Bock - Efforts to organize a boycott against Tesla - standing outside from 4:30-5:30 on 2/13. Vermonters will gather peacefully near the Tesla showroom to protest Elon Musk's dismantling of our democracy. This is a peaceful, legal exercise of freedom of speech. 218 Hannaford's Drive, South Burlington.

Carol L.- Sandy Baird died this past week. She was an incredible advocate for people on a wide variety of issues. She worked on all "sides" of partisanship and her focus was ensuring people's rights are protected. Carol asked that folks here think about how to stay connected and informed, not overwhelmed. Look for ways to support our neighbors and be prepared to support the programs being frozen.

7:00 - School Commissioner update - Gary Golden

Introductions to Gary (candidate for Ward 1) and Matt Price (candidate for East District).

Gary is shifting from East District to Ward 1 commissioner for the March 4 election.

Burlington School District budget = minus 4% from last year's tax percent, funds developed from several years of savings. In the past, schools were funded by foundation funding - same amount per pupil but towns could increase if resourced. Brigham

decision changed this policy - gold towns had easier time resourcing school budgets; since Brigham decision, state legislature tasked with creating new formula to fund districts based on actual services. Burl has used recent State weighted stipend for bearing extra costs. This funding is currently a target for lowering or eliminating by state legislators & governor.

State of VT Education plan from governor - looking at foundation plus formula - common throughout country; VT is outlier. City chose to host refugee resettlement in welcoming ways funded by Burlington district without state support. One concern - the current weighting policy is taking hits from gold towns, but several districts in addition to Burlington have similar needs - strong lobby. Governor's plans are back door proposals that will defund public education and provide school choice. Independent school lobby highly resourced. Regulations differ for private vs public schools - testing; standard for services. Infrastructure bill - many state schools need support in construction and repair, and private schools also need repair.

Troy Headrick - proposed weighting/per pupil spending - from district lobbyist report last week - ideas being discussed: much lower funds for weighted students than previously. Lack of substance - concept without details is probably what governor is proposing. Playing districts off each other.

Gary will post on FPF next week.

Matt Price - East District school commissioner candidate. Parent of 2 children in district; practicing psychologist & professor. Concern about refugee children - they are the primary communicators for their families - translate at medical and legal appointments. Kids need our support for themselves and for helping them advocate for their families.

7:15 - City Councilor update - Carter Neubieser, Ward 1 City Councilor

2 key issues = affordability and public safety

- 1) Housing resolution Carter introduced about funding Housing Trust Fund - passed Council - increasing contribution by 1 million. Very small percent of city budget.
- 2) Mayor's tax task group is meeting - working on making recommendations on how to make property taxes more fair, currently regressive/flat tax. Also tasked with how to make our utilities more affordable.
- 3) Carter happy to meet over coffee with folks about concerns
- 4) Interim police chief - Shawn Burke from So Burl - most of his decades of his experience is at BPD. Still doing nationwide search; possibly SB can apply.
- 5) Carter sending out year 1 update - 4 pages - detailed what he has done on affordability and public safety.

Questions:

Housing affordability - (Cindy Cook) - Council continuing to work on UVM impact?

Carter: MOU is to be discussed by City Council in future. Carter will advocate about UVM housing more students. Champlain is making that change. Students prefer housing conditions on campus.

MOU's are non-binding so not necessarily follow-through, no enforcement. Troy Headrick is working in state legislature on a bill putting a cap on number of

Students admitted to UVM. Troy was interviewed about this bill by the Cynic, so look for the article with this info.

7:30 - City Councilor Candidate Forum - Allie Schacter & Kathy Olwell

Candidates will introduce themselves & explain why they are running. Questions for the candidates can be written down at the meeting's outset and via email to a Steering Committee member.

***** See CEDO recording

8:30 - Discussion: Pending UVM Medical Center Land Use Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Burlington - Question & Answer discussion with Karen Vastine, Carter Neubieser, Charles Dillard, and Chapin Spencer

*****See slide show

MOU = expression of intent, doesn't supersede any existing law/ordinance - meant to be complementary. 20-year agreement with many many commitments by UVM. Changes - asking for extension of height restrictions. Have to add 242 beds to adequately serve region and community. Trying to stay in same footprint and going up in height. Adding 800+ parking spaces.

City Council scheduled to vote on MOU on 2/18.

9:00 - Adjourn