

Ward 6 NPA Meeting Agenda

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Location: Department of Public Works, 645 Pine Street

6:30 Announcements:

- Steering Committee Members present: Nancy Harkins, Anita Rapone, Dale Azaria
- Dale Azaria: Gratitude for delicious dinner from FaRied and People's Free Kitchen.
- Andy Simon: Demonstration at City Hall, 12:00 Saturday, Hands Off our Government. People will be gathering at Calahan Park at 11:15 to walk down together, with music by Sambucada. Don't let a little rain stop you!
- FaRied: Volunteer with People's Kitchen. Providing food and other supplies for unhoused neighbors. Ice Shelters (like an upgraded tent). Also do free food distribution for people in the South End on Fridays. Contact FaRied to volunteer or donate (including sleeping bags, warm clothes, etc.)
- Nancy: Senate Gov Ops is considering the "No Guns in Bars" initiative. Please contact them to express your support.
- Bram Kleppner: adds that Texas and Oklahoma have banned guns from bars, so it's hardly a radical move.

6:45 What's Next? From Stormwater Bonds to Green and Blue Community Solutions

- Megan Epler-Wood: Importance of addressing stormwater, given aging infrastructure and increasing extreme weather
- City Stormwater Overview by Eleonore Walker: Burlington Water Resources
 - Water comes from lake, treated at water treatment plant, goes to homes and businesses, then goes into sewer system, also stormwater, it all gets treated and then returned to the lake
 - Main Plant built in 1953; North and East Plants in 1955
 - Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Acts in 1972 and 1974
 - Water Plan built in 1984
 - 1994: \$52 million investment in WW Treatment, including stormwater treatment, nutrient removal, sewer separation work (reducing combined sewer overflows)
 - Water Quality Concerns include Phosphorus, Erosion and Sediment, Combined Sewer Overflows
 - Projects in the South End: Raingardens (complete), O8 Pond (complete), Overlake Condos Flow restoration (proposed), Storage Tank under Calahan Park (proposed, funded by bond)
 - Working on design for Main Plan upgrades, expect construction 2027-2029,
 - Expect Water Plan work to happen next year
- What is Blue[®] BTV? By Michelle Lockhart
 - Provides up to \$2,000 per property to install treatments that will reduce stormwater runoff from your property (home, may expand to businesses)

- Begins with a site visit to identify impervious surfaces, gutters, downpouts, driveway slope. Trenches
- Homeowner receives a report with suggestions, including conceptual plans and recommended practices
- They have other resources available as well, including a list of contractors (planting, landscaping, gutters, etc.)
- Recently added impervious surface removal as a new treatment that's eligible for funding
- Know and Love your Barge Canal & what it can do for you by Andy Simon and Ruby Perry, Friends of the Barge Canal
 - Volunteers. To raise awareness of the value of the Barge Canal, esp in the context of stormwater management
 - Large Superfund Site (including DPW and BED Buildings, plus significant natural areas
 - Preserved from development in the 1990's by citizen activism. Prevented EPA from scraping off the surface, creating a large containment vessel for the contaminated soil. Residents and scientists both rejected this.
 - Instead, it's been allowed to recover naturally. It is regularly monitored and the contaminants are successfully contained.
 - Combination of public and private land. The private land has been on the market but has never sold. Mostly because of liability, pollution on the land, various regulatory hoops that a developer would have to go through.
 - Land is owned by Rick Davis, who also owns the Maltex Building.
 - They lead walks on the Barge Canal. Open area, wood, wetlands.
 - Ecosystem Services include wetland habitats, carbon sequestration, stormwater storage, etc.
 - Join us for Green Up Day on May 3
- Green Infrastructure Design by Diane Gayer: Examples & inspirations from other places
 - Water falls on the Golf Course, at the top of the hill, and makes its way to the Lake.
 - Centennial, Potash, and Englesby Brooks
 - Calahan Park has water collection areas, swales to slow down the water, proposed location for a new tank that would hold stormwater
 - There are other, more artistic ways to create stormwater parks (see slides)
 - Creating underground systems serves some purposes (and can save space), but it misses out on other benefits, like wildlife habitat
 - Another possibility: treat the water once it gets to the lake with floating docks that provide treatment services
 - Goals of Green Infrastructure: Maintain air and water quality, allow water infiltration into the soils, work with natural systems and processes, pay attention to the flow pattern of water and people's desire lines, and more
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Q and A:

- Question about the project behind Market 32:
 - Gravel Wetland to treat runoff from the parking lot and Champlain Housing Trust Land, will reduce runoff to Potash Brook
- How do we know what the rain gardens are doing?

- Based on modelling, data, etc.
- And even if they don't capture the water, they will slow it and therefore it will be cleaner and have less contaminants
- How much more could we be doing (with rain gardens, etc.)
 - Not sure.
- Neighborhood Code. We can build more housing on our existing properties. How will this impact the amount of impervious surface?
 - Chapter 26 of our ordinances regulates stormwater and redevelopment. So, even though this wasn't included in the Neighborhood Code directly, it's still addressed.
 - Although this doesn't apply to the small neighborhood code developments
- Hill seems to be saturated so water comes out of the ground, like at Edmunds Playground. So, is putting more water into the ground useful?
 - South Union has very high ground water (water on top of bedrock), but most of Burlington has sandy soils, so infiltration works.
 - With high ground water, the best thing to do is build up the vegetation.
- Is there a plan for maintaining these structures?
 - We try to address maintenance upfront, when talking with homeowners about any installations, because there is a maintenance need.
- Adopt-a-Drain. Could expand this to Adopt-a-Raingarden, to help maintain it. The City can't do everything – we need to participate.
 - Some drains can't be adopted, which weakens the program.
- What is the new Mayor's attitude towards the Barge Canal?
 - She is engaged, but still has the challenges of the split ownership, plus the EPA regulations.
 - Friends of the Barge Canal wants CEDO to convene an all-parties conference to discuss the future of the Barge Canal, because it's so hard to think about what to do.
 - Sign the petition for this!!
 - It's kind of nice that they haven't been able to do anything, but this doesn't promote visioning of what we want to do with this space, how to protect it and make the most of it.
- Englesby Brook: there is a section that belongs to the city and a section that is privately owned. This should get more attention.
 - Diane would offer a tour of Englesby and/or Potash, but people have to be prepared to walk in the mud, etc.
- We need a shift. We need to move from thinking about water (and increased water) as a problem to be solved . . . but rather that it's life, it's a part of like, and we need to incorporate it and work with the water and with the earth instead of fighting it.

Upcoming Events:

- Rain Garden Tour in June
- Green Up Day for Barge Canal May 3
- Adopt a Drain (online signup)
- Survey for Open Space Plan Burlington
- Bike Map tour of Burlington Rain Gardens

- Proposed Tree Walk by Branch Out Burlington

8:00 Adjourn

Attendance: 27 in room, 7 online