



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:
(choose one)

Date of Assembly : 4/17/2025 Start Time: *(Commence)*: 7:03 PM

Location: DPW building, 645 Pine St. Finish Time: *(Adjourn)*: 8:32 PM

Note taker: Jak Tiano Please forward these official minutes to: SH

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Jason Van Driesche, Cathy Foley, Faried Munarsyah, Jak Tiano

Discussion Topics	Actions Taken / Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>These can be copied from agenda items</i> ● <i>Content of discussion not required</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Immediately following Agenda Item</i> ● <i>Generally includes: electing a new steering committee member, voting as a body to send a formal communication to the City, decisions to spend money.</i>

Agenda Items and Actions:

7:03 PM Welcome + Public Forum

- Introductions
 - Jason welcomes the room to the meeting and lays the ground rules.
- Open floor for community concerns
 - Andy Simon announces that the Friends of the Barge Canal is having their 4th annual Green Up Day Saturday May 3rd 9a to 1p at the Barge Canal. More at pinestreetbargecanal.org
 - Bram Kleppner presents a list of resources for tracking changes in federal cuts in funding. If you'd like to receive the list by email
 - Jak talks about recycling, and his support for the short term plan DPW is proposing in order to better serve the city's workers in the short term, and the residents in the long term.
 - David Foss attended the Low Income Housing Conference in Washington DC. Also asks about a summer gathering for the Ward 5 NPA.

7:20 PM Steering Committee Election

- Jason introduces the role and responsibilities of the NPA Steering Committee.
- Jak, Cathy, and FaReid share their experiences with the NPA.
- Cathy nominates the existing members as a slate.
- Ben seconds the nomination and offers his experience on the steering committee as well.
- Pat Rivers asks what the mission of the NPA is? FaReid answers about the value of giving more direct power to our neighbors.
- David adds his thoughts.
- Charlie explains how the Ward 5 NPA is unique in the city.
- Ruby Perry highlights that the NPA builds power when we come together.
- Jason adds context about the All-wards NPA system.
- FaReid nominates Greg Stefanski, Andy Simon says Greg would rather not.
- Primrose VanWolvelear nominates herself.
- Ruby asks for Primrose to introduce herself, and they do so.
- Jason closes the floor, opens a vote for a full slate, and the slate passes.

7:41 PM City Council priorities

- Ben introduces himself and welcomes Buddy to tackle the questions.
- Buddy says he's excited about the work happening in REIB, especially as a beacon for how the city can be better in the context of the national environment. He's also excited about the work on public safety.
- Ben says there are two things he's excited about this year. One is that he's excited about a bipartisan "Resilience Committee", focused on making all Burlingtonians feel safe and resilient. The second area is the opportunity for housing development in the city.
 - Buddy follows up with his support around the housing changes.
- David Foss asks if the NPA can get involved in the SECORD development, and if residents can get on the ad hoc committees.

- o Ben agrees with the idea of public engagement with the committees, and NPA engagement with SECORD development.
- Terry Rivers asks about businesses downtown, what approaches can we take to help those businesses struggling?
 - o Buddy lists a number of things that we can do to make our downtown more resilient. Ben largely concurs, giving more context for the challenges that main street businesses are facing, and the concept of a bridge fund for downtown businesses as part of construction projects.
 - o Jason adds that FPF is donating tens of thousands of dollars to main street businesses to encourage people to shop downtown.
- Dan Goldsmith has an ask for City Council to focus on the real problems that the city has.
- FaReid says that businesses could pay a livable wage and then workers would have more money to spend. He says that the People's Kitchen has been serving food to homeless neighbors, and that he thought it would be temporary but that he's been seeing more new faces recently. His question is directed at Bram at a state level, and then also at councilors with how the city will handle it.
 - o Bram says that the Governor's proposal was incoherent, and ultimately relented on a subset of the motel program. The legislature has passed a housing bill that includes a successor to the motel program.
- Cathy says that she's happy that both Buddy and Ben are willing to reach across the aisle, and that it's a top priority for her.
 - o Ben says that he feels he has very good relationships with all members of the council, and the Mayor. Makes the case that he does not see room for partisanship given the broader political winds.
 - o Buddy says that he's also committed to being open to partisan.
- Ruby asks for more specific thoughts on what actions the councilors might take to actually reduce the friction?
 - o Ben explains the introduction of a new "orientation" program for new city councilors, and how it will help. He also talked about bringing the City's Community Justice Center into the fold to help

with relationship building on the council. Buddy vouches for the benefit of the new orientation program.

- David Foss asks if we can build a stronger connection to Canada.
 - Ben agrees with Dave's assessment of the needs

8:26PM Legislative Update

- Bram Kleppner outlines the impacts of tariffs, the shadow of looming federal budget cuts, and the work being done on education funding reform.

8:32 PM **Adjourn**