



Advisory Committee on Accessibility

Monday, June 16, 2025, 3:00 PM, This hybrid meeting will take place in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, first floor of City Hall 149 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont and online over Zoom.

Meeting Invite information

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/92356452507?pwd=Zk6QCJswEJla4hSa3seazYvWwFa3Uh.1>

Webinar ID: 923 5645 2507

Passcode: 120399

1. Call to Order

2. Adopt the Agenda

3. Adpot Minutes

Subject	3.1. Advisory Committee on Accessibility Monday, May 19th 2025
Meeting	June 16, 2025 - Burlington Advisory Committee On Accessibility - Monday, June 16, 2025, 3:00 PM, This hybrid meeting will take place in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, first floor of City Hall 149 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont and online over Zoom.
Category	3. Adpot Minutes
Department	Other
Type	
Recommended Action	

4. Commitee Members Introductions

5. Public Forum

Subject	5.1. Written Comments Submitted - Meeting minutes as posted on Civic Clerk
Meeting	June 16, 2025 - Burlington Advisory Committee On Accessibility - Monday, June 16, 2025, 3:00 PM, This hybrid meeting will take place in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, first floor of City Hall 149 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont and online over Zoom.
Category	5. Public Forum

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action

Subject 5.2. Written Comments Submitted - BPRW Adult Programing: ASL classes

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Category 5. Public Forum

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action

6. News & Updates

Subject 6.1. Update on operating budget request for walking path mural.

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Category 6. News & Updates

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action

Subject 6.2.
1. Update on capital budget request for Leddy Park elevator

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Category 6. News & Updates

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action

7. Accessible Parking and Accessibility of City Construction Projects

8. Other Committee Business

9. Adjournment of Public Meeting

10. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

11. Election of Officers

Subject **11.1. Election of Chair**

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Category 11. Election of Officers

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action

Subject **11.2. Election of Co-Chair**

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Category 11. Election of Officers

Department Other

Type

Recommended Action



**BURLINGTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY
THIS HYBRID MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE SHARON BUSHOR
CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR OF CITY HALL 149 CHURCH STREET,
BURLINGTON, VERMONT AND ONLINE OVER ZOOM.
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 19, 2025**

1. Adopt the Agenda

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Meeting Called to order at 3:05 pm by Nate Besio
Motion to Adopt the agenda as written
Motioned by Aheley Parker, seconded by Sharon Henault
Final Resolution: Motion Passes
Yes: Unanimous

2. Adopt Minutes

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Subject	2.1. Approval and Adoption of the April 21st minutes of the Burlington Advisory Committee on Accessibility as posted on Civic Clerk
Meeting	May 19, 2025 - Burlington Advisory Committee On Accessibility - Monday, May 19, 2025, 3:00 PM, This hybrid meeting will take place in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, first floor of City Hall 149 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont and online over Zoom.
Category	2. Adopt Minutes
Department	Other
Type	
Recommended Action	
	2.1. Approval and Adoption of the April 21st minutes of the Burlington Advisory Committee on Accessibility as posted on Civic Clerk Motion to Adopt the Meeting minutes as written Motioned by Tim Williams, seconded by John Thomas Final Resolution: Motion Passes Yes: Unanimous

3. Committee Member Introductions

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Joined Online - Nate Besio - Chair & representative of the Vermont Center for Independent Living
Joined in Person - John Thomas (He/Him) - Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Joined Online - Scottie Taylor (They/Them) - Nominee for the committee and Burlington Resident

DRAFT

Joined Online - Lisa Black (She/Her) - Nominee for the committee, disabled physicians assistant, a board-certified patient advocate, licensed ADA coordinator
Joined in Person - Sharon Henault (She/her) - Nominee for the committee and Burlington Resident

City Employees

Joined in Person - Tim Williams (He/Him) - Staff support for the committee
Joined in Person - Ashley Parker (She/Her) - Capital Programs Director
Joined in Person - Katherine Schad (She/Her) - Chief Administrative Officer and ADA Coordinator
Joined Online - Sophie Sauvé (She/ Her) - Burlington Parks Recreation and Waterfront Parks Comprehensive Planner

Persons Not Present

Karen Downey (She/Her) - Resident of Burlington and Adjunct Faculty Instructor UVM Occupation Therapy Doctoral Program
Lisa Black(She/Her) - Nominee for the committee, disabled physicians assistant, a board-certified patient advocate, licensed ADA coordinator

4. Public Forum

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No members of the public present online or in person to address the committee.

5. News & Updates

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Subject

5.1. Update on appointments to the committee

Meeting

May 19, 2025 - Burlington Advisory Committee On Accessibility - Monday, May 19, 2025, 3:00 PM, This hybrid meeting will take place in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, first floor of City Hall 149 Church Street, Burlington, Vermont and online over Zoom.

Category

5. News & Updates

Department

Other

Type

Recommended Action

5.1. Update on appointments to the committee

Tim Williams shared that the HR committee recently met and approved the proposed slate of persons for appointment to the committee. The next steps were the review by the council president and the mayor.

6. Discussion on Accessible Parking

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Item was tabled for the next committee meeting as a member from DPW Tech Services was in attendance as previously planned.

7. Operating Budget request

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Discussion was had on how to utilize operational funds of the committee that had been unused in previous Fiscal Years (FY). These funds do not carry over into the subsequent FY. Sophie Sauvé proposed using the 15k to create a walking path mural to promote accessibility on the newly constructed multi-modal path connecting Schifilliti Park with the Miller Community Center in the New North End of Burlington.

From: Bethany Whitlock <bwhitlock@burlingtonvt.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:39 AM
To: Vanessa Santos Eugenio <veugenio@burlingtonvt.gov>
Subject: City meeting minutes change + accessibility

Hi Vanessa,

I hope you're well and enjoying the sun!

I'm emailing because I have an accessibility query/concern, and I seem to remember you're on the City accessibility committee - please feel free to send this on to someone else if needed.

I have hearing loss in both ears, and rely pretty heavily on the minutes posted for City meetings to know what happened. The minutes used to be detailed and helpful, but recently there seems to have been a change where folks are just giving very short (one or two sentences) summaries of events/actions taken and then linking to the meeting recording and directing folks there for more detail. The recordings are poorly, if at all, subtitled, which essentially means that I can't access the meetings, some of which (City Council, DRB) are important for my role. You can see the difference in the minutes produced in the City Council agenda packet from last night - the old style ones are from 2/10 and 2/18 and the new style ones are the minutes from the March meetings. I imagine some other City staff and residents are also encountering the same issue. Is there any way we can do something about this?

Thanks, and best,
Beth

From: Keaton Knowles <kknowles@burlingtonvt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2025 10:20 AM
To: Timothy Williams <twilliams@burlingtonvt.gov>
Subject: FW: Feedback about adult learning programs through Parks and Rec

Good morning Tim,

I'm forwarding this to you as the staff contact for the Advisory Committee on Accessibility. Below is an email I sent to Natalie Hutchison this morning regarding the upcoming cuts to the adult learning programs offered through Parks and Rec. I won't re-write the email below, but for a quick TL;DR I want to say that I have been taking American Sign Language classes at Miller Center since September, which I started taking because I noticed a gap in accessibility in City Hall. That's why I think this class (and many others like it) are related to the Advisory Committee on Accessibility.

Thank you!
Keaton

From: Keaton Knowles
Sent: Wednesday, May 21, 2025 9:49 AM
To: Natalie Hutchison <nhutchison@burlingtonvt.gov>
Subject: Feedback about adult learning programs through Parks and Rec

Good morning Natalie,

I'm hoping you can pass this along to whoever should hear this feedback. And I recognize that you are likely also shocked and frustrated by these changes, so I want to start by saying I'm in solidarity with you, and I greatly appreciate the work you've done for the city! These remarks are not directed toward you or your work. I am sending this to you since I believe you are the point-person for the adult learning classes through Parks and Rec.

I work in the Clerk's Office for the City of Burlington. Since this past September, I have been taking American Sign Language classes through Burlington Parks and Rec, taught by instructor Alex Grist. I have taken level 1, level 2, and I am currently in level 3. The compliments I have for this class are too many to list, but I will give an abbreviated version of why I think this class (and others like it) are **VITAL** to our community, and why losing them is a complete disservice to our residents.

- In a time when our society and culture as a country are moving toward divisiveness and losing accessibility services, classes like these are *directly* fighting back. My classmates and I have learned invaluable information from Alex. He not only teaches American Sign Language in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, but he also heavily emphasizes learning about deaf culture so we can better understand the community we're communing with. I originally signed up for this class in September because I noticed a gap in accessibility services that we offer at City Hall, and I was glad to be able to do my part in closing that gap. I am so appreciative at this stage to have a "conversational" understanding of the language for my personal life as well, but the primary reason I took the class was for my work with the city. In fact, one of the first phrases I made sure I knew how to sign was, "How many copies of your marriage certificate would you

like to purchase?” which is a sentence my coworkers and I ask customers in City Hall almost daily.

- Aside from wanting to offer better accessibility as a city worker, I have also witnessed stories from some of my classmates who have used ASL in their own work and personal lives. One of my classmates is a children’s librarian who has been able to use the ASL from this class with her young patrons. One of my classmates is a tattoo artist who has used ASL in her shop. One of my classmates works at the Pride Center, where they are now able to offer basic communication with anyone who might live in the intersection of being a member of both the deaf/HoH community and the LGBTQIA+ community. The skills we’re learning in this class are already being utilized in so many spaces across our region—not just by my classmates, but from the *many* students of the ASL classes that have been taught by Alex through Parks and Rec over the years.
- I understand that we, as a city, are in a budget crisis. I work in the Clerk’s Office. I attend City Council meetings. I know city leadership is having to make tough calls and “killing our darlings,” so to speak. However, cancelling or limiting adult classes is an inappropriate and misdirected response to this issue. Part of our overall “crisis” as a city is that people aren’t spending time with each other as often as they used to. There are many factors as to why, but we should be doing all we can to encourage people to gather. The lack of social scenes in town is breeding disinterest, mistrust, and disfavor among our residents. I hear this feedback all the time in my role with the city, working customer service in the Clerk’s Office. How can we expect people to want to invest in making this city better overall, if some of the few positive experiences being offered in return are being cut?
- On that note, Burlington has fewer and fewer spaces where people can gather to participate in *non-retail* activities together. Taking these classes has been a massive breath of fresh air; I am comfortable speaking for all of my fellow classmates when I write that this class is the absolute highlight of our weeks. And I am comfortable speaking for them because that’s what we tell each other *every week* when we discuss the class, either beforehand during our carpool or afterwards in the parking lot where we often chat. There have been some very hard weeks over the last year, on every level (local, federal, and global). Throughout all of it, this class has been reliable as a source of positivity and fun. Where else in town these days can strangers get together for a common interest, without having to either buy a round of coffees or be kicked out for loitering? The adult learning classes are it. They are THE space to do this.
- It’s also important to note how effective these classes are. I am only on level 3, and I already feel fairly comfortable communicating in ASL. My current class has two students who have already taken every level of ASL classes that the city offers, and watching their confidence with signing is rubbing off on the rest of us—we can see directly that if we stick with it, we’ll be at their level someday. That is, we’ll be at their level *if* the city continues to offer these classes.

I have so much more that I could write, but I don’t want to belabor the points. I truly feel that cutting the adult learning classes (*including* ASL, but not *limited* to ASL) is a crushing disservice to our residents. It goes against the culture our city is built upon. I do feel that Burlington is losing its luster; not because of perceived safety issues downtown, not because of the seemingly endless construction (although that doesn’t help), but because we are losing activities and spaces that brought residents out of their homes to spend time together in positive environments.

I ask that these cuts be reconsidered, and that Parks and Rec program managers not be so heavily targeted by the layoffs. Without program managers, we will have weak or nonexistent programs. And

without programs that offer education, safety, community, and general vibrancy, I feel a deep sadness for the direction this city is going.

Thank you very much for your time.

Keaton