



## Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Wednesday, September 3, 2025, 6:30pm – 7:30pm

Join in person: City Hall, Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 149 Church St.

Join virtually: <https://zoom.us/j/98644635243>

**Facilitator:** Christopher Haessly

**Notetaker:** Michelle Borbas

- 6:30 pm**      **Call to Order | 5 min**  
*Adopt the agenda and review meeting ground rules.*
- 6:35 pm**      **Adoption of New Bylaws | 45 min**  
*A discussion and vote on a new set of bylaws.*
- 7:20 pm**      **Public Forum | 10 min**  
*An opportunity to share opinions, news, and events.*
- 7:30 pm**      **Adjourn**

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Use the QR code to go to any of these links: [Email us](#) • Go to [our website](#) • Watch meeting recordings on [CCTV's website](#) • Connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) • Request a time slot with the [NPA Request Form](#) • Links from this agenda



# Appendix to the Agenda

## Ward 3 NPA Ground Rules

- Meetings should have clearly defined agenda and roles.
- Honor Time limits: A best effort must be made to start on time, follow the agenda, and finish on time.
- Wait to be recognized: Members may not speak until recognized by the moderator.
- Listen to others: Make efforts to be an open-minded member of the group.
- Respect the agenda and the process: Try to remain focused on the issue at hand.
- Share your opinion respectfully: Speak out, but not over, others' comments.
- Treat people how you would like to be treated: Be respectful of everyone, including guests.

## Public Forum Protocol

- Community members will be required to sign up for the Public Forum before the start of the meeting consistent with the process used by the City Council.
- Participants will have up to two (2) minutes to share their thoughts and will speak based upon the order in which the requests were received.
- Participants may speak only for themselves and individual speakers will not be permitted to yield their time to other speakers.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated and the moderator reserves the right to limit comments that are disruptive and/or obscene.
- Ward 3 residents will be given priority and, if there is still time, persons who live outside the ward will be provided an opportunity to speak.

## Question-and-Answer Protocol

- Please state your full name prior to asking your question.
- Each participant will have thirty (30) seconds to ask one and only one question.
- There will be no follow up questions so everyone has a chance to participate.
- Ward 3 residents will be given priority.

## Discussion and Debate Rules

- Members may not speak until recognized by the moderator.
- Each member will have a maximum of two (2) minutes to speak on questions before the NPA.
- No member will be permitted to speak a second time until every member has had an opportunity to speak once.
- No member will be permitted to speak a third time until every member has had an opportunity to speak twice.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Ward 3 NPA Members  
**FROM:** Christopher Haessly & Zachary Cummings  
**DATE:** September 2, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Summary of Proposed Changes to Ward 3 NPA Bylaws

This memo outlines the key differences between the current Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA) Bylaws (adopted March 10, 2022) and the newly proposed version. The proposed bylaws represent a significant restructuring and clarification of the NPA's governing rules.

The most substantial changes are a move toward a more formal, structured document, a lower voting age to encourage broader participation, clearer rules for meeting conduct and quorum, and significant updates to the composition, eligibility, and terms for the Steering Committee.

Below is a detailed comparison of the key articles:

### **Preamble, Guiding Principles & Purpose**

- **Structure:** The new bylaws are more concise. The lengthy Preamble of the current bylaws, which details the history and functions of NPAs, has been shortened significantly.
- **Purpose:** The new bylaws add a dedicated "Article I: Purpose," which directly lists the NPA's functions as established by the Burlington City Council resolution. This content was previously integrated into the Preamble.
- **Guiding Principles:** The principles remain largely the same in spirit but are formatted as a simple list in the new version.

### **Membership**

- **Voting Age:** The eligibility for voting members has been lowered from seventeen (17) years or older in the current bylaws to fourteen (14) years or older in the new version.
- **Participation by Non-Members:** The new bylaws are more restrictive. They state that non-members may only speak during the public forum after members have spoken and may not participate in general discussions. The current bylaws allow non-members to participate in discussions but not to vote.

### **Meetings**

- **Frequency:** The meeting requirement has changed from regular monthly meetings to a minimum of four (4) meetings per year.
- **Quorum:** The new bylaws establish a clear quorum for general NPA meetings, requiring ten (10) members to conduct business. The current bylaws only defined a quorum for the Steering Committee.
- **Conduct:** The new bylaws explicitly state that meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

- **Voting:** The new bylaws specify that a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required for bylaw amendments and the removal of a Steering Committee member. The current bylaws only required a simple majority for most actions, except for bylaw amendments which also required a 2/3 vote.
- **Public Forum:** The new bylaws mandate that each agenda allocates at least ten (10) minutes for a public forum, an increase from the five (5) minutes required previously.

### Steering Committee

- **Composition:** The number of committee members has been adjusted from "no fewer than three (3) and no more than six (6)" to "at least three (3) and no more than seven (7)."
- **Eligibility:** The new bylaws introduce explicit eligibility restrictions, stating that the Mayor, City Councilors, School Commissioners, and Mayor-appointed City department heads cannot serve on the Steering Committee. The current bylaws have no such restrictions.
- **Term Limits:** The current bylaws impose a term limit, requiring a member to step down for at least one year after serving four consecutive one-year terms. The new bylaws remove this term limit.
- **Duties:** The duties are restructured into clearer categories: Civic Oversight, Meeting Management, Financial Management, and Neighborhood Outreach. The specific roles from the old bylaws are removed in favor of these broader duty categories.
- **Removal:** A Steering Committee member can be removed for "just cause" by a two-thirds (2/3) vote under the new bylaws. Following removal, they are ineligible for re-election for one year. The current rules require only a simple majority vote for removal and include no subsequent ineligibility period.

### Miscellaneous Provisions

- **Non-Discrimination:** The new bylaws reference the City of Burlington's Declaration of Inclusion for additional context.
- **Public Meetings:** The new version explicitly references the Vermont Open Meeting Law, whereas the current version refers more generally to "public meeting requirements."
- **Conflict of Interest:** The definition of a conflict of interest has been clarified to specify a "significant personal or financial interest."

In summary, the proposed bylaws create a more formally structured and legally grounded framework for the Ward 3 NPA, with significant changes aimed at increasing youth participation, clarifying meeting procedures, and refining the rules governing the Steering Committee.

# Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Bylaws

Adopted [Date]

## PREAMBLE

The Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA) is a grassroots neighborhood organization established to encourage resident participation in city government by facilitating communication between neighborhood residents and city officials.

The NPA serves as a neighborhood advocacy group that provides an organized, democratic forum where neighborhood residents can share their perspective, make recommendations, and learn about city programs and activities.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Ward 3 NPA shall be guided by the following principles:

- A. To operate through democratic principles and procedures.
- B. To provide a safe, welcoming, and respectful forum where all residents can actively share their voice about issues that matter to them and learn from the voices of others.
- C. To cultivate involvement from the diverse spectrum of community members through active outreach and by eliminating barriers to participation.
- D. To operate in a manner that promotes respectful, inclusive, and culturally and economically aware practices.

## ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

As set forth by the "Resolution Relating to Creation of Neighborhood Planning Assemblies" adopted by the Burlington City Council, the Ward 3 NPA shall:

- A. Communicate to the City Council the views of neighborhood residents with respect to the needs of the city.
- B. Consider the issues facing city government and make recommendations for consideration by appointed and elected officials charged with implementing city policies.
- C. Increase the level of resident participation with respect to the Community Development Block Grant program and other state and federal programs.
- D. Provide advice to appointed and elected officials with respect to the issues facing the various neighborhoods and the city.
- E. Provide neighborhood residents with information concerning city programs and activities.
- F. Provide neighborhood residents with an opportunity to make recommendations with respect to governmental decisions and the allocation of revenues.
- G. Provide advice to the appropriate commission or City Council with respect to Community Development, housing programs, the city's Comprehensive Development Plan, waterfront planning activities, the city budget, and other issues.

## **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: ELIGIBILITY**

All residents age fourteen (14) years or older residing within Ward 3 shall be considered voting members of the NPA.

### **Section 2: PARTICIPATION RIGHTS**

Every eligible member has the right to:

- A. Participate in all meetings of the NPA.
- B. An equal vote on all matters put before the membership.
- C. Propose topics for meeting agendas.
- D. Nominate and participate in the election of the Steering Committee.
- E. Serve on the Steering Committee if elected.
- F. Receive notices and access minutes of all NPA meetings.

### **Section 3: PARTICIPATION BY NON-MEMBERS**

- A. Non-members may speak during public forum after all members wishing to speak have had an opportunity to do so.
- B. Non-members may attend meetings of the Ward 3 NPA but are not eligible to participate in discussion or vote.

## **ARTICLE III: MEETINGS**

### **Section 1: FREQUENCY**

The NPA shall hold public meetings no fewer than four (4) times per calendar year. The Steering Committee may call additional meetings as needed.

### **Section 2: NOTIFICATION**

- A. The Steering Committee shall provide notice of meeting dates, times, locations, and agendas in accordance with the state Open Meeting Law.
- B. Additional notice may be posted on relevant social media platforms and in local print media.

### **Section 3: QUORUM**

- A. A quorum for conducting business and holding votes at an NPA meeting shall consist of ten (10) members.
- B. A quorum for conducting business and holding votes at a Steering Committee meeting shall be a majority of its current members.

### **Section 4: AGENDA**

- A. The Steering Committee shall set the agenda for all meetings.
- B. The Steering Committee shall consider future agenda items upon request of members, city departments, and community organizations.

- C. The Steering Committee shall ensure that all agendas are posted in City Hall.
- D. Each agenda shall allocate at least ten (10) minutes for public forum.

#### **Section 5: CONDUCT OF MEETINGS**

- A. Meetings shall be convened and facilitated by a designated moderator from the Steering Committee and shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules for Order.
- B. All participants are expected to honor time limits, listen openly, share opinions respectfully, and remain focused on the agenda.

#### **Section 6: VOTING**

- A. Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws, all decisions of the NPA shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present, a quorum having been established.
- B. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present is required for:
  - 1. Amendments to these bylaws.
  - 2. The removal of a Steering Committee member.
- C. Proxy voting is not permitted. Members attending meetings remotely shall be counted toward the quorum and are eligible to vote.
- D. All decisions of the Steering Committee shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present provided a quorum has been established.

#### **Section 7: CANCELLATION**

Meetings may be cancelled upon a majority vote of the Steering Committee provided a quorum has been established.

### **ARTICLE IV: STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### **Section 1: DUTIES**

The Steering Committee shall be responsible for carrying out the following duties:

- A. **Civic Oversight**: Monitor the agenda of the City Council, the Board of Finance, and the various Commissions to identify proposed policies, ordinances, charter changes, development projects, and other relevant issues that may impact neighborhood residents.
- B. **Meeting Management**: Reserve meeting space, set agendas, schedule guests and speakers, facilitate meetings, take minutes, record all votes, distribute resolutions, and coordinate with appropriate city officials.
- C. **Financial Management**: Develop an annual operating budget, track all income and expenses, and oversee the expenditure of NPA funds to ensure compliance with city guidelines and policies.
- D. **Neighborhood Outreach**: Promote NPA meetings, post on social media, organize public forums, sponsor candidate debates, prepare outreach mailings, canvas neighborhood residents, and encourage member participation.

## **Section 2: COMPOSITION**

The NPA shall elect at least three (3) members and no more than seven (7) members to serve on the Steering Committee.

## **Section 3: ELIGIBILITY**

All members of the Ward 3 NPA are eligible to serve on the Steering Committee, except for the Mayor, City Councilors, School Commissioners, and Mayor-appointed City department heads.

## **Section 4: NOMINATIONS**

- A. Eligible members may be nominated for election to the Steering Committee by another member or by self-nomination.
- B. Members whose nomination has been seconded by another member shall be considered a candidate for the Steering Committee.
- C. Nominations shall be made from the floor and slates of candidates shall be permitted.

## **Section 5: ELECTIONS**

- D. Steering Committee members shall be elected at the regular NPA meeting in September.
- E. Steering Committee members shall be elected using a single candidate, first-past-the-post method of voting. Slates shall not be permitted.
- F. Members standing for election to the Steering Committee must receive a majority of votes from all members present and voting to be elected to the Steering Committee.
- G. Members who arrive at the meeting after candidate presentations have started shall not be permitted to vote.

## **Section 6: TERM**

- A. The term of office for Steering Committee members shall commence and conclude at the beginning of the first regular meeting in September.
- B. The term of office for Steering Committee members elected at other times of the year shall conclude at the beginning of the first regular meeting in September.

## **Section 7: ATTENDANCE**

- A. Steering Committee members are expected to attend all Steering Committee meetings and all regularly scheduled NPA meetings.
- B. Steering Committee members absent from three (3) consecutive Steering Committee or NPA meetings without providing notice shall be considered to have resigned from the Steering Committee.

## **Section 8: REMOVAL**

- A. Steering Committee members may be removed for just cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a properly warned NPA meeting provided a quorum has been established and the issue of removal was listed on the agenda.

- B. Members who have been removed from the Steering Committee for good cause or consecutive absence shall not be eligible for election to the Steering Committee for one year from the date of removal.

**Section 9: VACANCIES**

- A. If a Steering Committee member resigns or is removed before their term expires, the Steering Committee may appoint a member to fill the vacancy.
- B. Appointed members of the Steering Committee shall stand for election at the next regular NPA meeting.

**Section 9: CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- A. A conflict of interest exists when a Steering Committee member has a significant personal or financial interest that conflicts with the proper discharge of their duties.
- B. Any member who believes they have a conflict of interest must disclose it to the Steering Committee. Failure to disclose a potential conflict may nullify that member's vote on the affected issue.

**ARTICLE V: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**Section 1: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

These bylaws may be amended at any regular NPA meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, provided the proposed amendment was listed in the meeting agenda.

**Section 2: NON-DISCRIMINATION**

In accordance with its guiding principles and the City of Burlington's Declaration of Inclusion, the Ward 3 NPA will promote and sustain an inclusive environment that does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, or any other protected characteristic.

**Section 3: COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC MEETING REQUIREMENTS**

The Ward 3 NPA shall act in full compliance with all Vermont Open Meeting Law requirements. Guidance can be obtained from the Burlington City Attorney's Office.