



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:

			Ward 5	
--	--	--	-----------	--

(choose one)

Date of Assembly : 5/15/25 Start Time: *(Commence)*: 6:30PM

Location: DPW building, 645 Pine St. Finish Time: *(Adjourn)*: 9:06PM

Note taker: Primrose VanWolvelear Please forward these official minutes to:
__npa@burlingtonvt.gov__

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Jason Van Driesche, Cathy Foley, Faried Munarsyah, Jak Tiano, Lena Greenberg, Primrose VanWolvelear

Discussion Topics

- *City Council resolution regarding relationship between NPAs and City Government*
- *Report-back from all wards NPA meeting*
- *Discussion around proposed 453 Pine Street development*

Actions Taken / Decisions Made

- *NPA voted yes to approve the resolution brought forward by the City Council*
- *Future (outside of NPA) public meeting promised for further community discussion regarding 453 Pine Street development*

Agenda Items and Actions:

6:30 PM Community Dinner

- We eat yummy People’s Kitchen food - thanks Faried <3

7:02PM Welcome & Public Forum

- Lena starts the meeting welcoming everyone
- Signup sheet goes around: everyone who signed in is added to a spreadsheet to be emailed a few days before NPA meetings to let them know it’s coming up
- Praise for People’s Kitchen - give them money!!!
- ward5npa_btv@googlegroups.com is our email
- Public forum opens
 - Bram Kleppner
 - Passed around updates and resources on immigrant rights/protections/law, as well as premium increases for MVP and Blue Cross Blue Shield
 - Ruby
 - Asks that the barge canal (where the building this meeting is being held resides) be given a chance to speak - has a video to share – tabled
 - Thomas

- Grew up in South End
- Shared the Mycolab community ecological survey regarding the barge canal
- Several important species live here
 - Black Crowned Night Heron whose breeding population is imperilled
 - Double Crested Cormorant
 - White and Green Ash trees
- Mycolab's work included removing non-native species
- They are looking to install pollinator habitats and bioremediating plants and mushrooms
- Crust Fungi, Turkey Tail, White Rock Fungi are examples that degrade toxins
- Willows, Poplars, Maples etc. are already there removing heavy metals
- Suggested Abenaki be included in the process
- Insisted this site is not appropriate for hosting housing
- Will post documents in chat about work that has been done
- Film about this on Saturday May 17th, at 7pm, 19 church st 2nd floor - not wheelchair accessible
- Greg Stefanski
 - Lives on St Paul street
 - Updates from calahan park crew
 - Working with Max Matalinsky
 - Have 6 park benches that convert to picnic tables being ordered
 - Event coming up to set those up, paint them, enjoying the park
 - Keep an eye on front porch forum
 - Looking for helping hands building those
 - Shoutout Andy for keeping track of details lol
- Jason Van Driesche
 - Downtown construction
 - Appreciates the important work being done, but concerned about pace of work and impact on businesses
 - Why aren't they working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week?
 - Would cost more, but real fiscal impact to city and businesses may be more than additional cost of upping the pace
 - Wants that calculus to be done
 - How much would it cost to pick up the pace?
 - How much are we losing per month by having such disruption downtown?
 - Encourages folks to pursue those questions
 - Another community member asks if Jason knows when it's set to be complete
 - Jak believes it's set to be completed November 2026

- Jason presumes later street work will be less disruptive than sewer work
- Andy Simon
 - Lives on Locust St
 - Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) authorized under legislature act 181
 - People can comment on specific parcels of land and their recommended use
 - Deadline for comments on website in Monday, May 19
 - Google “CCRPC” to find the site, there is also a recent Front Porch Forum post about CCRPC map
 - Made a comment about 453 Pine St
 - Project at 453 Pine St, May 20th at 5:00 before development review board for a sketch plan review
- Jak Tiano
 - Act 181 Process is revisiting Act 250
 - Is his opinion that these maps don't make enough room for additional housing development in Burlington metro area
 - Recommends looking at CCRPC housing targets and consider where else we can plan for growth, if we don't plan for growth all our housing problems are only going to get worse
- We watched Ruby's friends of the barge canal video!
 - The city paid for the barge canal land to build the southern connector, which they then realized how contaminated the land was
- Barge Canal - cctv.org - there's a badass video of nesting geese fighting lol

7:20 PM CDNR NPA Working Group Presentation

- Presented by Jonathan Chapple-Sokol and Councilor Carter Neubieser
- Part of a larger group working on a resolution relating to the relationship between the city and NPAs
- Resolution gives a clear expectation of the relationship between the city council/city bureaucracy and NPAs
- History: Jonathan has been on Ward 1 steering committee since before Covid, has felt like city has been unresponsive to the needs of the NPAs, as well as examples where the NPAs have been unresponsive to the needs of the city
 - Him and Lena put together a resolution to present to city council & all NPAs to get a group together to formalize the relationship between NPAs and City Council

- City Council listened, CDNR took it, and organized a working group to hammer out definitions, rules of engagement (NOT THE MILITARY he wanted to clarify lol) - basically ways we can work together.
- Lena - NPAs are community run and belong to us, but are also supported by the city via funding for food and space rental and Shawny's support. The ~juice~ here is how much jurisdiction the NPAs have.
- Jonathan and Carter hope to talk to all wards by the end of June
- In the resolution
 - The NPAs are essential to the civic health of our community.
 - The NPAs shall be open and accessible to all city residents and shall abide by Open Meeting Law.
 - The NPAs shall adhere to state and local laws regarding anti-discrimination, free speech, and accessibility.
 - The NPAs shall adhere to the provisions of their bylaws and decisions shall be made in a transparent manner.
 - The NPAs shall expend funds allocated to them by the City Council in a manner consistent with the City's terms, conditions, and restrictions.
 - The NPAs shall set the terms and conditions for their gatherings and shall determine their agendas and priorities.
- Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) shall
 - Develop a standardized process in collaboration with the NPAs by which each NPA can communicate a list of annual priorities to the City Council and City Administration
 - Consult with other relevant city staff to develop easily understood materials that outline the legal requirements of the NPAs.
 - Consult with other relevant city staff to review and update these materials as needed but no less than every three calendar years.
 - Collaborate with NPAs and other relevant city staff to ensure NPAs understand the legal requirements of the NPAs.
 - Include a representative, chosen by the NPAs to serve on hiring committees for staff roles predominantly focused on supporting and liaising with the NPAs
- In this the city council is acknowledging
 - The NPAs play an important role in the city's deliberative process.
 - The advice and counsel received from residents at NPA meetings is valuable and important to the City's decision-making process.

- Individual City Councilors shall be encouraged to regularly attend NPA meetings in their respective Ward or District.
- The city council shall consult with each NPA on
 - Issues that impact NPA governance and structure before proceeding with resolutions and ordinances.
 - Issues that disproportionately impact a particular area of the city.
 - Matters identified by the NPAs as priorities for the current fiscal year.
 - All development projects that require Major Impact Review.
 - Redistricting and changes to ward boundaries and polling places.
 - Proposed charter changes and ballot questions that appear on the Annual Town Meeting Day ballot.
- Open up for questions/clarifications
 - David suggests NPA be a sort of check and balance on city council
 - The construction is mounting frustration
 - 230 St. Paul St. residents are showing up to NPA
 - Carter is a believer in direct democracy and sees this as an outlet for that
 - How are they planning to make the communication link between NPA and city council?
 - Their expectation is for each of our 2 city councilors can speak for interests of the ward
 - The last administration moved so rapidly there was no time for proper communication
 - No standardized means of communication right now, but that is the goal
 - Will be a charge from City Council to CEDO to do that standardization
 - Molly
 - Is there ever a point where representatives from each of the NPAs come together to coalesce together
 - Happened last week! XD
 - Jak

- The need to slow down concerns him - we need to lean in and make things happen
 - 2 avenues people see for the NPA
 - 1. A check on city council
 - 2. This is not a space for direct democracy. The NPA can become a place to veto the democratically elected council member, which he views as anti-democratic.
 - How can we mobilize to be proactive to do more of what we need to do, rather than the NPA being used to slow down processes
 - Carter responds: this was born from a time where people said we wanted to slow down, but it isn't inherent. It provides clarity to city staff who have more on their plate than they can manage. Noted that the NPAs aren't representative of the wards currently. This resolution is an MOU, so it is non-binding.
- Lena time checks us like a boss hehe
- Jason supports this resolution, and encourages us to think ahead more, tackle things early, and assume the best of each other and remember our similarities and shared values.
- Jonathan clarifies NPAs have no authority, all they can ever do is advise
- Diane - ward 6
 - Ward 4 created their own contract for their NPA relationship with the city and were in conflict with the city..? Someone clarified it wasn't ward 4..
- David wants to know why other ward NPAs aren't representative when ours does seem to be - tabled for later meeting
- Jason moves that ward 5 approves the resolution
 - Faried second
 - No objections
 - Vote: lots of hands raised
 - No opposed
 - One person strictly neutral
 - Passed

8:02 PM NPA “All Wards” Report

- More in the weeds on process and governance
 - How the NPAs are working, what they’re working on, why they are the way they are, etc.
- Talked about how NPA budget is set and distributed amongst different wards
 - Working group was established to think about how to best use the money allocated by the city
- There was talk of if the NPAs want to talk about how we overhaul how we run our city election
 - Decided NPAs would not take this project on right now
- Any member of a steering committee can propose an all-wards meeting
- Cathy
 - In Ward 5 we spent all our money and got a donation from Ward 8
 - CEDO said all the wards collectively have only spent 44% of the budget this year with less than 2 weeks left
 - \$24,000 for all 8 wards, \$3,000 each
 - How should we spend this money well
 - Advertising to get more people out, community dinners, etc.
 - The meeting was vibrant and not everyone was in agreement, and also Cathy praised Lena’s facilitation

8:15 PM 453 Pine Street Development

- Doug Netty, owner of Netty real estate, former Redstone owner
 - Recent projects 79 Pine “the Nest”, office at 77 Pine
- Alain - Architect Developer
 - Lot of ski resorts, residential buildings over the years
 - The platform of the building is supported by piles that go all the way down to the bedrock, would minimize destruction of soil
 - 4 stories of residential
 - Out of 116 units, 18 are inclusionary
 - 2 buildings
 - Many buildings in the neighborhood already industrial brick, the proposed buildings reflect this aesthetic
 - There is a 4-story zoning limitation 100 ft from pine st, up to 6 stories beyond that. The proposed building is 4 stories plus a podium beneath, so basically 5 stories - would require a waiving of the restriction
 - Plaza in between the 2 buildings
- Scott Mapes
 - Since 2010 state money allocated to evaluation geotechnical quality of the soils to inform what can be done from a development perspective

- 453 Pine is outside barge canal superfund site, it is a “brownfield”, but it has the same limitations
 - I.e., you cannot alter or affected the hydrogeological conditions that would cause the remedy to fail which would cause the contaminant to leak out of the barge canal
 - What building can be built without “loading” (loading meaning pressing down on the soil causing leakage of contaminants)
 - There is a limitation that says there should be no residential use on the site
 - Added back during superfund hearings based on information
 - The state and EPA are willing to remove this limitation
 - South end has been rezoned to allow residential uses
 - Their testing shows residential use should be acceptable here
 - Just under 5 acres, concentrating development to the Easterly 2/3rds of the property
 - East of the “peat line” (see powerpoint)
 - Previous project looked to occupy 80% of 453 Pine St, while this proposed project is smaller
 - 116 rental units, 130 parking
 - Looking to replicate the same stormwater runoff patterns as exist on the site today
- Questions
 - Put gardens, pools, other cool stuff on the roof?
 - A: Problems with height limitations, accessibility - will likely have solar panels on roofs
 - Why don't more lakeside units have balconies?
 - A: All lakeside units do have balconies besides the studios
 - Lucy: Has a lot of concerns about this project. Thinks this site is not a good site because of the fragility of the land. No matter what you do around protecting the soil, it puts people at risk. Wants to know the affordability considerations.
 - 15% of units will be affordable, based on city's definition
 - How much soil will need to be removed and where will it go to?
 - A: 2 feet under everything being built - foundation, parking, etc. - soil will be taken to Coventry landfill.
 - How to prevent contaminating wherever it's brought?
 - Susan Rivers: 40 years ago they were gonna build the southern connector, but it stopped because the barge canal was contaminated. How come we can have housing for humans that is contaminated, how do we know ~right here~ is where it stops?
 - A: The site could not support that weight. There has been found through geotechnical studies where the non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL)

contaminants are. Studies over the last 15 years have shown development can safely occur on this site.

- Andy: Could we have another meeting not under NPA auspices, another community meeting to answer questions about this process?
 - A: Yes they can do that.
 - Andy's comment: This is not a good place for housing. There are plenty of sites in this area who aren't on wetland and forest sites that are at risk. In favor of finding another site for housing in this area
- Carolynn Bates: Strongly feels there are more places to build more freely, creatively, sustainably, and not have to worry about high insurances that this site has. Commends the desire to build, but strongly encourages them to build somewhere else in Ward 5. 15 "affordable" units is not nearly enough. More affordable housing, not more high-end housing. We should leave this land as parks/woodland. We should build an observation tower!!
- Thomas: Finds it irresponsible to develop this land. What would you do for potential residents in terms of letting them know their potential risks of living there?
 - A: Will be part of a corrective action plan the state approves. A notice to residents.
- Jak: Pine St. is a key transit corridor, including the best walking/biking paths. Pine St.#5 bus is one of the strongest in the network. The small parking lot to the south end of the property will create a curb cut that will disrupt the walking/biking path. Suggests using the curb cut at the Maltex building. Dismayed at the number of parking spaces, wonders if there's a way to be more aggressive to minimize the amount of parking.
 - Response: Basing this building on market demand. If the appetite for DRB (?) has opportunity under section 549 to reduce that
- Lena: Doesn't understand why this is considered a safe place to house people. Living on top of a toxic waste site seems so poorly considered. We should be building housing that is smart. We should be building for longevity, this is not forward thinking development. We don't have time to build housing that doesn't make sense.
 - Response: There's no finagling, this project is going through a lot of scrutiny by the EPA and state. If there were concern if this was appropriate use, it wouldn't be happening. The soils in this site are no different than what was in city hall park. The main concern is consuming the soils. After the site is remediated, it will be safe.
- Cathy: This is a well thought out project, fits well with development of Pine St. She is supportive of this project.
- Question: Are units for sale and rental?

- A: Only renting, not buying
- Were the soils from city hall park had to be deposited in a lined landfill?
 - A: yes
- Clarifying point: this was all a part of a superfund site, it was taken out in the 90s
 - Developers: the reason it was removed is because it is different than the rest of the barge canal superfund site.
 - *When it was removed, it was removed on request of the landowner, not because there had been extensive studies, but because it was not salable land if it was in the superfund site.*
 - Developers: it is distinguished in that it has been studied significantly, and it is different geotechnically and ecologically than the rest of the land around it.
- Bram: they had to haul away soil to build the new city market as well, and he feels safe buying food there.
 - A: A requirement of the project is that it won't change the hydrogeologic conditions of the site. The same amount of runoff will be managed so its discharge will mimic how it currently is.
- What is the intention of the mitigation monies from state and feds, and what will happen with long term monitoring?
 - A: Part of the correct action plan requires funding for long-term monitoring. The obligation continues to rest on the owner into perpetuity. The costs for the previous proposed project's corrective action plan exceeded what this project would be because it was more expansive.
- Abby: Children don't understand where a property line is, and they are going to explore that forest and will eat the soil. How can you ensure children won't be harmed by living on this site?
 - Another neighborhood meeting will be held on this project.

9:06 PM Adjourn