



# Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA: (choose one)	Wards 1 & 8	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 4 & 7	Ward 5	Ward 6
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Date of Assembly : 06 / 05 / 25      **Start Time: (Commence): 6:43**

Location: Dept of Public Works      **Finish Time: (Adjourn): 8:39**

Note taker: Ivy Enoch

Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Anita Rapone

**Discussion Topics**

6:00 | Community Dinner  
 6:30 | Call to Order, Announcements, Public Forum  
 6:45 | City Council Updates  
 7:00 | UVM, proposed development at Redstone Campus  
 7:15 | CHT, new housing proposal  
 7:30 | DPW, City's Open Space Plan  
 7:45 Legislative Updates  
 8:00 Adjourn

## Agenda Items and Highlights:

### 6:43 | Call to Order, Announcements

- Branch Out Burlington - Tree Walk of Champlain College on Saturday June 7 at at 10am, Tower Terrace
- Reps. Tiff Bluemle and Bram Kleppner will be at Speeder & Earl's on Saturday June 7 from 8-10am
- Green Infrastructure Committee - Rain Garden Tour on June 29 (flyers coming!) from 3pm - 5:30pm.

### Public Forum

- S. Prospect St neighbor- opposition to UVM plan to build Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Center. Unclear impact on parking, how much traffic it will create.
- S. Prospect St neighbor - opposition to UVM plan to build Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Center. Frustration with how it was communicated to people who live near the proposed plan. UVM should have reached out earlier to seek input from residents.
- S. Prospect St. neighbor - opposition to UVM plan to build Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Center. Disrespectful of people who live in the city. Intrusive to community. What other locations did UVM identify as prospective options? UVM is not utilizing all of its available space at 1 S. Prospect St. Officials of the City need to do a better job of working with neighbors.
- S. Prospect St. - opposition to UVM plan to build Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Center. Increase in traffic is already impacting the community.

### 6:45 | City Council Updates, issues with downtown food distribution (Becca and Buddy)

**Becca** - Discussed resolution to support downtown businesses, annual budget, and Leahy Airport construction

- Biggest accomplishment: passing resolution aimed at supporting downtown businesses. Month long process in hearing cries for help from businesses. The resolution included:
  - Looking at Main St. construction project. DPW coming back to City Council with a menu of options to increase access to businesses.
  - Business & Workforce Development to envision what the downtown economy is going to look like based on big-picture trends.
  - BPD to have a more responsive presence downtown.
  - Return Marketplace Garage to strict use as parking garage, not site for food distribution.

- Garage lost \$60k in revenue this past year.
  - Paying \$75k/year to maintain facility.
  - Decided to relocate food distribution service to location with greater access to other needed facilities.
- Mayor signed resolution and will collaborate with City Council on these four areas.
- Working with Mayor to pass balanced budget. Property taxes will go down this year. June 30th deadline.
- Attended mid-construction party at Leahy Airport for “Project Next” - new terminal funded by airport fees and federal dollars.
- *In response to Public Comment on UVM construction proposal:* Project is example of falling short on healthy relationship between city and university.

#### **Buddy**

- Becca was integral in getting resolution passed.
- Tax & Budgets: owe this work to the school board with updates to how schools are being funded. Important to show the collaboration between School Board, City Council, and Mayor’s office.

### **7:05 | UVM, proposed development at Redstone Campus (Lisa Kingsbury, Blake Reily, Alex Helpurn)**

**Summary of Presentation:** UVM Board has approved a new Center for Health and Wellbeing to address serious space and service challenges in student health. The project will co-locate medical and mental health services in a new, accessible building designed to fit into the surrounding neighborhood. Public engagement, including a standalone community meeting, is underway with construction targeted for Summer 2026.

#### **Project Objectives**

- Timely, coordinated access to integrated services to support student success.
- Create a rightsized clinic and co-locate medical and mental health services.
- Reduce wait times and improve service continuity.
- Expand Graduate counseling training programs to support future workforce.

#### **Project Background**

- UVM Community Health & Well Being (CHWB) support:
  - Student Health Services
  - Counseling & Psychiatry
  - Health Promotion
  - Athletics support
- Student Mental Health Context - National data (Healthy Minds Study):
  - 57% of students experience depression, 36% anxiety.
  - There is a serious need for these services, and building will support greater access to these supports
  - High student demand: ~8,000 students/year use services
- Current Challenges
  - Existing CHWB (S. Prospect St.) space is outdated, inadequate, and cannot be expanded.
  - Nationally accredited by AAAHC, but consistently flagged for inadequate facilities.
  - Access issues:
    - Location is a barrier: fragmented mental health services, spread across campus
    - 33% of appointments are delayed beyond what is ideal; students often resort to ER visits when services aren’t accessible

#### **Site & Design Details**

- Site selected for:
  - Proximity to student housing and pedestrian access.
  - Feasibility of co-locating services.
- Design features:
  - Access from University Road (Green side, not S. Prospect St.).
  - Set back 30+ ft from sidewalk.

- No access from S. Prospect.
- Heavily landscaped, single-story, rooflines consistent with neighborhood scale.
- In early feasibility stage; materials undecided, but intent is to fit neighborhood character.
- Public process will be interactive with neighbors.

#### **Project Timeline**

- May 2025 - Conceptual design completed
- May 20, 2025: Project approved by Board.
- June 5, 2025: First public presentation at the Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA) meeting
- Summer 2025: Resident input sessions
  - Standalone resident meeting planned for late June or early July; neighborhood will be notified.
  - NPA offered to help publicize this upcoming meeting.
- Fall–Spring 2025–26: Final planning and design.
- Summer 2026: Construction begins.

#### **Questions and Comments:**

**Summary:** *The majority of residents commenting on the project were in opposition with the primary point of contention being that UVM did not communicate this project to S. Prospect St. residents in a timely fashion; and the secondary point of contention being the scale of the proposed site of 14,000sqft.*

- Scale and location of building is a concern. UVM should consider building this more internal to their campus, not closely to the S. Prospect St. neighborhood.
- Mention that UVM should better utilize their space at 1 S. Prospect St.
- Concern about parking and impact on S. Prospect St. residents
  - Response from UVM: Do not plan to add additional parking. Most staff working in the proposed building would park at Gutterson Lot (where they currently park)
- Concern that building would include a retail pharmacy
  - Response from UVM: There is no plan to include a retail pharmacy. Students access prescriptions all over depending on their preference.
- Suggestion to reduce footprint of building by making it 2-story and having 1st story at basement level
  - Response from UVM architect: Nothing is off the table at this state, appreciate the suggestion. Functionally, the building has to be on one level.
    - *At this point, there was rowdy exclamation from one resident neighbor that this does not need to be one level and that they should be able to include an elevator. This was resolved when Steering Committee member moved along the discussion.*
- Question about hours of the building - will hours remain 8am-4:30pm?
  - Response from UVM: Current operations will be maintained. Can't promise that won't change.
- Comment of appreciation from "local nurse and mom of 5 kids who have gone through UVM" for project, questions about hours of operation to better support student needs.

**Conclusion:** UVM appreciated the comments and concerns raised. They will send notice to residents in the mail, FPF, and NPA will use their mailing list to advertise upcoming listening session, scheduled tentatively for July.

#### **7:40 | CHT, new housing proposal (Kirsten Merriman Shapiro)**

**Summary:** *Champlain Housing Trust plans to renovate existing St. Paul St. building as apartment building for local adult residents with developmental disabilities. The building would be owned and managed by CHT.*

#### **Project Objectives:**

- Renovate existing building at 322 St Paul St between Spruce St and Smalley Park on East side of street for a 10-unit apartment building for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities

#### **Project Background:**

- CHT worked with group of local parents of adults with developmental disabilities for needs assessment and design of facility. Looking for viable options for this population to safely live independently while remaining in community
- Identified need in community for housing for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities
  - 2023 VT study revealed 602 units needed statewide for this population.
- Worked with individuals with lived experience to design the building.

#### Site & Design Details:

- Land Use: Supportive Affordable Housing. 10 apartments, 2 of which will be 2-bdrms.
- Existing building is 2300sqft, addition is 3700sqft.
- Parking: 6 spaces plus 2 ADA spaces. Reduced parking by 2ksqft. Right on bus line.
- In addition to apartments, building will offer common space to provide delivery of support services.
- Funding support from State of VT

#### Questions & Comments

**Summary:** *There was general support for this project with concern from a group of neighbors over the management of the building, referencing prior poor experiences living near CHT-owned “group homes.” There were questions about the energy efficiency of the building. There were questions about the population that would reside in the building, and number of residents.*

- Concern about the management of the building.
  - Response: CHT will have agreement for Howard to provide programming for individuals, but the individuals will be the tenants of CHT.
- Concern about the timeline and way neighborhood residents were notified of this project.
  - Response: This is the first step in reaching out to neighbors; the city provided a list for outreach.
- Concern about potential rowdiness of residents.
  - Response: Without knowing who the 10 individuals are and what they need in the setting, can’t say it will be exactly like this or that. Will not be a group home, fundamentally different from other CHT projects.
  - Response from parents of adults with disabilities involved in project: Their “adult children” have a range of needs - some are more independent than others, but their children care about their community, are good residents (already living in the neighborhood), and many of them are in bed between 7:30 - 9pm.
- Question about oversight of the building.
  - There will be staff/service providers present for most hours of the day supporting residents.
  - There will be cameras onsite to ensure if something is happening, there is timely opportunity to respond
- Concern: Building standards, durability, energy efficiency—especially given tight funding.
  - Response: Project will meet and go beyond minimal codes:
    - Sprinklers and an elevator included.
    - Strong thermal envelope and energy efficiency prioritized.
    - Collaboration with weatherization programs and VGS.
    - Durable materials selected for longevity and low maintenance.
    - Sensory-supportive design elements are being considered (e.g., insulation, quiet spaces).
- Concern from resident of Spruce Ct - Lived adjacent to prior facility for more than a decade, which was a group home owned by CHT, managed by Howard Center. It was a nightmare: people screaming, swearing, etc. Could not get support from Howard Center to respond to issues. No trust in CHT to operate a group home well. 3700sqft exceeds corridor.
  - Response: Appreciation for comment. Acknowledgement that this is not a group home, it is a 10-unit apartment building, a very different project.
  - These people have a right to live in the community. Acknowledgement that this will not house people with severe mental health issues like prior facility, but low- to moderate-needs adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.
  - Unlike prior facility, CHT will be the owners, landlords, and responsible for management of building. Howard Center will only be onsite for providing service, not managing building.

- Becca: responding to concern. More input will be important part of this process, and sounds like CHT is on the right track in hearing from neighbors. Thanks for attention to this population of people who need this resource. Innovative approach.
- Question: Can there be a code of conduct for tenants?
  - Will have service provider working with individuals struggling at any given moment.
  - Individuals living here will be a range of people. Not one “type” of person. There will be more oversight.
  - CHT can take action with its tenants depending on level of behavior. There will be a lease agreement.
  - Young adults with high to moderate needs - people who can’t live completely on their own.
- Question: Will people live there for a long time?
  - There will be turnover, but there will also likely be people living there for many years.

## 8:20 | DPW, City’s Open Space Plan (Zoe Richard, Scott Gustin)

**Summary:** DPW working to update city’s “Open Space Plan” to respond to needs, values, and climate assessment. There is opportunity for public comment via survey on their website. There was little time for Q&A.

- Rewriting City’s Open Space Plan, seeking comment.
- Adopted open space plan 25 years ago. Working to rewrite it.
- BTV is largely built out, not much open space to protect. Working to protect what we currently have.
- Working on this for a year, including
  - Needs & Values assessment
  - Review of prior and related city plans
  - UVM conducted Spatial Analysis Lab Tree Canopy Assessment
  - Stakeholder & Public Outreach events
- Urban Tree Canopy Analysis
  - Have 40% open space is canopy covered. 2600 acres.
  - 4% relative loss in canopy - Cambrian Rise development, Champlain Parkway
- Stakeholder Values Needs Assessment Emerging Themes
  - Conserve - adapt conservation legacy fund; expand restoration and management; support wildlife movement; collaborate for open space acquisition
  - Connect - lots of fragmented green space, goal to connect with green corridors
  - Experience - increase awareness about open spaces; grow public access to nature-based experiences; break down barriers to open space access
  - Cultivate - sustainable community gardens; support alternative food sources
- Next steps
  - Creating roadmap spring & summer 2025
  - Draft Plans
  - Start public hearings for adoption in August 2025
  - Adoption in September 2025
- Why care for Open Spaces? With climate change, important to remember role open spaces play in healthy ecosystem - keeping city cool, keep lake clean, mitigating invasive species
- Website for more information: opportunity fill out short AND/or long survey - longer survey respondents entered to win raffle

**Questions & Comments** - Due to late schedule, there was no Q&A. There was expression of appreciation for the project.

## 8:36 | Legislative Updates (Tiff Bluemle and Bram Kleppner)

- Due to late schedule, did not cover their material.
- Passed out a written legislative report, which is incomplete due to veto session scheduled for mid-June.
- Will share report to NPA to issue in their newsletter

## 8:38 | Adjourn