



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:
(choose one)

			Ward 5	
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Date of Assembly : 9/18/25 Start Time: (Commence): 6:30pm

Location: DPW building, 645 Pine St. Finish Time: (Adjourn):

Note taker: Lena Greenberg Please forward these official minutes to:
__npa@burlingtonvt.gov__

Steering Committee Members in Attendance: Jason Van Driesche, Cathy Foley, Faried Munarsyah, Lena Greenberg	
Discussion Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library card signup month Anticipating Burlington's comprehensive 	Actions Taken / Decisions Made <ul style="list-style-type: none">

Agenda Items and Actions:

6:30 PM Community Dinner

7:10 PM Public forum

- Dave Foss: October 11th - open market 9am - 3pm in the Bobbin Mill complex. Festive atmosphere!
- Melo Grant: Quick reminders about Public Safety Committee
 - 4th Thursday of each month - next thursday! Meetings and all data available on CivicClerk
 - Continuing a monthly public safety press conference with the Mayor, Police Chief, Fire Chief. These are informative - even the slides are useful if you don't have time to watch the conference.
 - Data from Jan 1 - Aug 15 of this year compared with previous years
 - 84% increase in foot patrols downtown
 - If officers are not on an active incident they are patrolling
 - Directed patrols are up 2268%
 - Cruisers driving around, checking in on hotspots, following community policing principles
 - Increase in arrests by 54%
 - Start of the situation table, which will look at individuals who are taking up a lot of our community response system resources and figure out how to address those issues
 - Response system has greatly improved under Chief Burke to increase response; new set of guidelines will result in people

other than sworn officers responding (wellness checks, etc). The plan is to not “throw an officer at everything” in an intention to better meet needs with appropriate responses.

- Vermont State Police - not accurate to say that the Mayor ‘refused’ support of additional policing. Friendly reminder that updates from the Mayor about issues like this are available via email!
- Alex: general comment about the importance of local journalism and also an instance of local wildlife difficulty, trying to call BPD for help, got sent on a goose chase of agencies about who to call. What options are there for animal control in Burlington?
- Cathy: City Circle is a new program from the Burlington CJC, rapid restorative justice effort in response to violation of new ordinances
 - Looking for volunteers, orientation this Wednesday 9/24
 - Free training clinics at the Miller Center on Wednesday mornings 9am - 11am three weeks in a row
- Scott: Been involved in other community justice centers and am unclear how City Circle program will be different from existing COSA (Circles of Support and Accountability) program, which is already offered out of the CJC
 - Melo: VT spends \$3.5 mil a year to send incarcerated people to Mississippi because we don’t have space; this is an effort to incarcerate fewer people. Not quite a court diversion program, rather a way to have some accountability with people.

7:30 PM Library updates and library card signup month - Mary Danko

- Sign up for a library card if you don’t have one!
 - Proof of residency: ID or license with your address, a utility bill, etc
 - If you work in Burlington, you can also get a library card! Just need some proof that you are connected to an entity in Burlington
- Come into the library! We have a lot to offer downtown and at our NNE branch.
 - Programming - book groups, language lessons
 - Librarians can help you find information, help with tech issues
 - Lots of books, library of things
 - Help with using digital library tools
- Online stuff too! fletcherfree.org/digitalresources
 - Movies on Kanopy
 - Online subscriptions
- FFL is part of the HomeCard system - you can borrow from other libraries in the system. Come get a sticker on your card and that’s your passport to all other libraries!
- Digital services you can use in the library itself:
 - ancestry.com and WesLaw, through the VT Dept of Libraries, where you can access law cases, and also Candid.com, foundation library
- Good tech security protections at the library
- Construction updates?
 - Sign up for the email newsletter and follow us on social media 😊

- Preservation work on the 1904 building - windows have all come out and are getting refurbished and should be done mid-December
- Librarians are caretakers of information and people and also this old building!
- Libraries are not the algorithm - it's a great way to find information you wouldn't be pushed into seeing on the internet!
- Also, anyone in Burlington can get a UVM library card!

7:45 Discussion to plan a special-topic NPA meeting about housing affordability

- Follow-up to the intention to have a summer event focused on housing, which didn't happen, but housing has come up at many past NPA meetings and want to make space for this conversation
- Discussion
 - Lived in an owned home, lived in an apartment, been unhoused before, utilized BHA and state economic services. Growing up here and advocating for people who are unhoused and struggling, the biggest problem I've seen is the lack of social empathy coming from resource providers, who are under-funded. Not advocating for taxpayers to cover this cost; rather, find volunteers if need be, but more people to help with locating and obtaining suitable affordable housing
 - A lot of people can't get jobs to pay for housing because they need an address
 - Pathways housing program! More of this
 - Support for people to get housed, and also stay housed
 - And, resources to help people with other things like accessing mental health care, finding employment
 - Advocating for housing first approach
 - Collaboration between Bissonette, Pomerleaus, CHT, BHA to expand the pod program on Pine Street
 - Other support for housing first programs
 - How can people who want to be helping, who care about these issues, be helping?
 - What about public showers and bathrooms that are more readily available to people?
 - More public housing
 - We see a lot of construction going on, but we still need so much more housing
 - Can we have a bigger picture of what we're building (hotels, high rise apartments) - how many people are actually being served by this construction, and how many will be occupied full-time? Not just about short term rentals, but about people buying/renting housing and using it for tourism
 - Why are we so bad at meeting the needs of people who need the barest minimum of housing, as opposed to these complicated luxury buildings?
 - Beyond Burlington, there should be more affordable housing in surrounding communities, connected to public transit

- ADUs are great! It was difficult to build one 10 years ago, but since then this has become more commonplace and enabled by neighborhood code
- SROs are really helpful for people and could be a really great way to house people densely
- Filling single family homes with roommates! Projects like HomeShare do this
- Housing should not be an investment opportunity, interested in hearing from people who live in non-market housing (land trusts etc). The housing market is very financially inefficient and this is a way out of that cycle of upward costs.
- The market is great at creating excess to the detriment of the planet, which still doesn't solve the housing problem because housing is a commodity
- Exploring investment in real estate coops that communities can invest in beforehand
- CHT
- Tiff: there is broad bipartisan interest in funding housing development, but there are a lot of reasons why this might not succeed in the legislature
- Nate from VT Housing Finance Agency is willing to present about housing funding and understanding some of the data
- What options exist to help people set up coops with friends and family? Burlington has a few cohousing setups and this would be a valuable focus of investment
- Concern about how much of our housing stock in Burlington is sub-standard when there is the power imbalance that is present between landlords and tenants
- Tenant right of first refusal to purchase mobile home parks exists; expanding this to include other kinds of residential buildings
- Tenants union is hamstrung in organizing people because we don't have just cause eviction, even though it's been voted on in Burlington, and has been languishing waiting for approval in the state legislature
- Upcoming review of housing that's been permitted since the update in neighborhood code
- Financing is a huge part of the conversation and the obstacle to many affordable housing projects that haven't panned out
- We won't have time for everything, especially if we have people talking at us! Hope to see the structure of this meeting be that facilitators call in experts to speak rather than to present