



# Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Sharon Bushor Room, Burlington City Hall

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 PM by Zach Cummings, Ward 3 NPA Steering Committee member.

### 2. Attendee Introductions

- **NPA Steering Committee Members:**

- ✓ Brooks Cummings, Cherry Street (via remote attendance)
- ✓ Zachary Cummings, South Champlain Street
- ✓ Christopher-Aaron Felker, Park Street (via remote attendance)
- ✓ Darrell Fields, Church Street
- ✓ Christopher Haessly, College Street
- ✓ Charlie Messing, College Street

- **City Officials/Staff:**

- ✓ Mark Barlow, City Councilor, North District
- ✓ Melo Grant, City Councilor, Central District
- ✓ Allie Schachter, City Councilor, East District
- ✓ Barbara Turnbull, Dept of Finance and Administration
- ✓ Theresa Vezina, Mayor's Office
- ✓ Jen Monroe Zakaras, Mayor's Office
- ✓ Charlie Giannoni, Town Meeting TV

- **Presenters:**

- ✓ Georgie Rubens, Burlington Farmer's Market
- ✓ Katherine Schad, Dept of Finance and Administration
- ✓ Sarah Morgan, Office of City Planning

- **Community Members/Public:**

- ✓ Nick Brown, College Street
- ✓ Susan Dow, South Champlain Street
- ✓ Susan Forester, College Street
- ✓ Debbie Krugipudi, North Champlain Street

- ✓ Jill Lesh, College Street
- ✓ Trudy Richmond, Elmwood Avenue (via remote attendance)
- ✓ Sarah Rose, North Winooski Avenue
- ✓ Laura Sánchez-Parkinson, Front Street

### 3. City Council Updates

Presented by: Councilor Mark Barlow (North District)

Councilor Barlow provided an update on the work of the City Council's Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee and the recent proposal related to unaccepted streets.

- **Policy Formalization:** The Department of Public Works (DPW) is working to formalize policies regarding fifty-five (55) total streets: thirty-two (32) private streets and twenty-three (23) unaccepted streets.
- **Ward 3 Impact:** There are five (5) unaccepted streets in Ward 3: Lawson Lane, Markham's Lane, Mechanics Lane, Sunset Court, and Bolt Street.
- **Service Maintenance:** Residents on these streets often assume they are city-owned. Councilor Barlow clarified that while engineering standards are a concern for formal acceptance, the city does not intend to abandon services (like plowing) by the original October 2026 target without formal agreements.
- **Individualized Process:** The Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee (TEUC) is pushing for an individualized review of each street rather than a blanket cut-off date.

### 4. City Council Updates

Presented by: Allie Schachter (East District)

Councilor Schachter provided an update on the work of the City Council's Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and the recent syringe litter report.

#### Data Highlights:

- In 2024, approximately 944,000 needles were dispensed from the Clark Street location; the return rate was fifty-five (55) percent.
- As of summer 2025, the return rate increased to eighty-one (81) percent with 370,000 returned out of 457,000 dispensed.

#### Key Recommendations:

- **Data Collection:** Improving the "SeeClickFix" app to track specific quantities of syringes found.
- **Disposal Boxes:** Strategic installation of safe disposal boxes in "hotspots" like Pearl Street and city parking garages.
- **Volunteer Coordination:** Standardizing training and equipment for volunteer cleanup walks.

- **Public Health Context:** Teresa Vezina clarified that programs are "Syringe Service Providers" (SSPs) rather than 1-for-1 exchanges. Research indicates 1-for-1 models can inhibit public health by forcing the reuse of non-sterile needles.

## 5. Downtown Farmer's Market

The NPA met with Georgie Rubens, General Manager of the Burlington Farmer's Market, and discussed the possibility of re-establishing a Downtown Farmer's Market.

### Background:

- **Current Status:** The market is currently located at 345 Pine Street. While successful, there is consistent community feedback regarding the loss of the "charming" downtown atmosphere.
- **Barriers to Return:** City Hall Park's new design is physically smaller and cannot accommodate the full current roster of vendors safely. Additionally, the market must maintain a 50% agricultural vendor ratio.

### Proposed Solutions:

- **Pilot Program:** Exploring a smaller "mid-week" or "satellite" market downtown with five (5) to ten (10) keystone vendors.
- **Accessibility:** Concerns were raised regarding the Pine Street location being inaccessible for elderly residents due to distance and gravel terrain.

## 6. City Budget Presentation

Presented by: Katherine Schad, Dept of Finance and Administration

Chief Administrative Officer Schad provided an update on the current status of the city's proposed FY27 budget.

### Fiscal Outlook:

- The city faces a projected \$10M to \$12M budget gap for Fiscal Year 2027 on a \$107M general fund budget.

### Primary Drivers:

- **Personnel Costs:** Contractual cost-of-living adjustments for the Fire Department (7%) and the Police Department (5%).
- **Healthcare:** Significant rising costs for self-insured plans.
- **Deferred Maintenance:** The city has not replaced general fund vehicles since 2020. Police and Fire currently require at least six new vehicles.

### Revenue Strategies:

- A proposed **5-cent tax increase** for Police and Fire services.
- Exploring the sale of vacant city-owned land (non-occupied assets).
- Implementing a five (5) to ten (10) percent cut across all city departments.

## 7. PlanBTV Downtown Fences

Presented by: Sarah Morgan, Office of City Planning

Principal Planner Morgan provided an update on a proposed change to PlanBTV related to the height of downtown fences.

- **Zoning Amendment 26-02:** Proposed changes to allow taller fences (up to 6 feet) in downtown "form districts," specifically to secure alleyways and loading docks.
- **Aesthetics vs. Security:** The Planning Commission is balancing the need for security (to prevent loitering and waste in service areas) with the desire for a "welcoming" pedestrian experience.
- **Materiality:** Chain link is being considered as a temporary, lower-cost option that is more likely to be removed in the future compared to permanent high-investment aluminum fencing.

## 8. Public Forum

Several members of the community came forward to speak on various topics.

- **Sarah Rose (North Winooski Avenue):** Reported ongoing dangerous activity at 42 North Winooski Ave, including a recent shooting and inadequate property maintenance by the owners. Councilor Grant agreed to follow up.
- **Debbie Krugipudi (North Champlain Street):** Announced her candidacy for Inspector of Elections in Ward 3 and collected signatures for the ballot.
- **Laura Sánchez-Parkinson (Front Street):** Introduced herself as a candidate for Ward 3 City Councilor, focusing on renter safety and community engagement.

## 9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:35 PM.