

Ward 6 NPA Meeting Agenda

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Location: Department of Public Works, 645 Pine Street

6:30 Call to Order,

- Introductions
- Announcements
 - Nancy Harkins: Proposed Charter Change to ban guns in bars. That bill is still sitting in the House Committee. Nancy urges us to contact our reps to encourage them to vote for it.
 - Alan Matson, Ward Clerk. Town Meeting Day election on March 6. Looking for additional people to work at the polls. Ballots will be mailed out around 2/15 to all registered voters. If you're going to vote by mail be sure to vote early. There are also drop boxes, in front of DPW, downtown at City Hall. Voting will be in the Edmunds Elementary Gym. If you come to vote in person, please bring your ballot with you. You can still vote even if you don't, but it's more efficient if you bring it.
 - FaRied: distributing a petition on behalf of Proposition Zero, to support putting ballot items on the ballot without approval by City Hall. And looking for people to distribute this petition at the polling places
- Nomination of Hannah Riley to the Steering Committee and vote – Unanimous vote
- Call for additional Steering Committee members

6:45: Shall the Ward 6 NPA express its support for the sentiments expressed in the Open Letter to City Council that was presented to us at our December 4, 2025 meeting? (Text of Letter is below the agenda.).

- Romeo Von Hermann's alternate proposal (appended below)
- Comments from members of the public can be viewed in the online recording
- Amendment defeated 5-9
- Resolution passed 7-6

7:15 School Budget Presentation and Candidate introduction: Clare Wool (candidate for re-election) and Jeff Wick

- Slight decrease in school population. This appears to be due to a lack of housing, not people choosing other schools.
- Trimming costs in tandem with that
- Working to control costs – reducing number of teachers, reducing admin and central office staff
- High school expected to open in August. Impact of borrowing is complete. Did not have to spend the entire bond. But this has resulted in increased costs (bond service). Will no longer be paying rent.
- Teacher salaries are in the middle for Chittenden County.
- Ballot item will show the total budget, including federal funds, etc.
- Overall budget is increasing by 4.7%
- Ballot question 4 is about an honorarium for school board members, roughly \$50/meeting. We want to support engagement for people who want to run for office.

7:30 City Ballot items

- Tax Fairness Advisory Question and Public Safety Tax Increase: Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak
 - Tax Fairness Advisory Question was not supported by a majority of the City Council
 - City Budget:
 - Our budget is not actually required until the spring
 - Working to move the budget process earlier, but it's still not set for this year
 - There is an estimated \$10-12M budget gap (general fund). This doesn't include BED, Airport, Church Street Market Place, etc.
 - Adding 2 new firefighters to respond to safe staffing requirements.
 - General cost of living increases
 - Need new vehicles for first responders.
 - Cause of deficit:
 - Slow growth (1%/year) in grand list
 - Reliance on one-time funds from COVID and other federal funds
 - To deal with budget gap:
 - Ballot item to put a 5 cent increase on police and fire tax, which would yield about \$3 million
 - One-time funds, enhanced collections
 - "Right-sizing" to reduce staff 5-10%. But this will impact services the city provides.
 - Also considering selling some city properties.
- Proposed Racial Equity Inclusion and Belonging Charter Change: REIB Communications and Community Engagement Manager Christian Berry and Katie Green, Community and Belonging Program Manager
 - Proposed charter change to make the REIB Office an official and permanent part of city government
 - Diversity Equity and Inclusion is a set of tools to evaluate whether the city is meeting the needs of all residents and make that happen
 - City Council members Buddy Singh and Becca Brown McKnight submitted statements, both in support of the ballot initiative
 -

8:20 Adjourn

Open Letter to City Council (referenced above)(passed)

Dear Burlington City Council & Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak,
Democrats on the City Council blocked the AFC pledge advisory question from going to voters two years in a row, despite thousands of Burlington residents signing petitions to put the pledge on the ballot. In April 2025, the Council unanimously approved a resolution for protecting free speech on Palestine, and it is time to rectify the fact that our free speech rights have been repeatedly denied. There should be a democratic vote on adopting the pledge.

THE APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITY PLEDGE:

WE AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people; and

WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and

WE DECLARE ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end,

WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

We, the undersigned, **SUPPORT** the Apartheid-Free Community (AFC) pledge, and **DEMAND** that the Burlington City Council place the AFC advisory referendum question on the town meeting day 2026 ballot.

[end of open letter]

Proposed Amendment offered by Romeo Von Hermann: (defeated)

Dear Burlington City Council and Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak,

We, the Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA), write in response to the City Council's most recent vote regarding the Apartheid-Free Community (AFC) pledge.

Over the past several years, the AFC advisory question did not advance to the ballot despite securing the required petition signatures from Burlington residents. In April 2025, the City Council unanimously adopted a resolution affirming protections for free speech. In light of that action, we believe it is appropriate to continue discussion around the AFC pledge and to provide an opportunity for broader community engagement.

We respect and recognize the City Council's vote and its role in setting policies, and we appreciate the seriousness with which these matters are considered. At the same time, we believe it would be constructive to provide members of the Ward 6 NPA, including the Steering Committee, as well the South District and the wider community, an opportunity to weigh in on the Council's vote and its implications.

The Ward 6 NPA Alternate AFC Pledge:

THE APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITY PLEDGE:

- **WE AFFIRM** our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for all people; and

- **WE OPPOSE** all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and
- **WE DECLARE** ourselves an apartheid-free community and, to that end,
- **WE PLEDGE** to join others in working to end support for apartheid policies at home around the world.

We, the undersigned, support continued dialogue around the Apartheid-Free Community pledge.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly