



Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, March 4, 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 Christopher Haessly, Ward 3 NPA Steering Committee member. Christopher Haessly and Zachary Cummings co-facilitated the meeting.

Motion: Zachary Cummings moved to amend the agenda to include:

- A presentation on a new housing development project (20 minutes).
- City Council Updates (15 minutes).
- Public Forum (10 minutes).

The motion was seconded and approved by a voice vote. It was noted that the developer presentation would be for informational purposes only, as official warning requirements for a major impact review had not yet been met.

2. Attendee Introductions

- **NPA Steering Committee Members:**
 - ✓ Zachary Cummings, South Champlain Street
 - ✓ Christopher-Aaron Felker, Park Street (via remote attendance)
 - ✓ Darrell Fields, Church Street (via remote attendance)
 - ✓ Christopher Haessly, College Street
 - ✓ Charlie Messing, College Street
- **City Officials/Staff:**
 - ✓ Laura Sánchez-Parkinson, City Councilor-Elect, Ward 3
 - ✓ Melo Grant, City Councilor, Central District
 - ✓ Barbara Turnbull, Dept of Finance and Administration
 - ✓ Charlie Giannoni, Town Meeting TV
- **Presenters:**
 - ✓ Taylor Thibault, Champlain Housing Trust (CHT)
 - ✓ Sarah Russell, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)
 - ✓ Barbara Shaw-Dorso, Burlington Community Justice Center (CJC)
 - ✓ Rick Bove, Local Developer
 - ✓ Dave Hartnett, former City Councilor

- **Community Members/Public:**

- ✓ Jill Lesh, College Street
- ✓ Josh Fiore, Elmwood Avenue
- ✓ Amy Taylor, College Street
- ✓ Evan Flynn, Church Street
- ✓ Debra Clemmer, Clarke Street
- ✓ Trudy Richmond, Elmwood Avenue (via remote attendance)

3. Elmwood Avenue Shelter Pods

Taylor Thibault (CHT) and Sarah Russell (CVOEO) provided an update on the status of the Elmwood Avenue Shelter Pods and answered questions from community members.

- **Status & Impact:** The shelter has been open for over three years. In that time, it has served 149 guests. Currently, nineteen (19) guests have successfully moved into permanent housing.
- **Operations:** The facility offers thirty (30) individual units and operates 24/7. Unlike original estimates of a six-month stay, the average length of stay is now two hundred and fifty (250) days due to the severe lack of available permanent housing.
- **Challenges:** The "hardest to house" individuals face systemic barriers, including criminal history, substance use, and a lack of income. Furthermore, the Burlington Housing Authority has paused issuing new rental assistance vouchers for the 2026 calendar year.
- **New Capacity:** CVOEO is opening a new recovery-focused shelter at 184 Pearl Street in partnership with the Howard Center.
- **Community Concerns:** Councilor Grant noted ongoing behavioral issues outside the pods that impact neighbors' quality of life, suggesting a future meeting with Police Chief Burke to mitigate these issues.

4. Conflict Assistance Program (CAP)

Barbara Shaw-Dorso (Community Justice Center) provided an overview of the free services available to community members.

- **Program Overview:** CAP is one of twelve (12) programs under the Community Justice Center and is the only one that accepts direct referrals from community members. All services are free and based on restorative practices.
- **Services Provided:** The program offers coaching for difficult conversations, neutral facilitation for restorative dialogues, and formal mediation.
- **Community Workshops:** The program holds eight free workshops per year to help residents build skills in managing conflict, focusing on active listening and emotional regulation.
- **Resident Feedback:** Charlie Messing (South Square) highlighted severe communication breakdowns between residents and the Burlington Housing Authority (BHA), specifically

regarding building maintenance and security. Barbara encouraged residents to reach out to CAP to help equalize power dynamics during these disputes.

5. Bove's Restaurant Redevelopment Project

Rick Bove, local developer, and Dave Hartnett, former City Councilor, provided an overview of a proposed housing development at the former Bove's Restaurant on Pearl St.

- **Project Details:** A proposed six-story building at the site of the former Bove's Restaurant. It will include approximately twenty-five (25) efficiency units and a ground-floor commercial space.
- **Affordability:** The developers aim for a price point of approximately \$1,395 per month, which includes all utilities (heat, water, electric, Wi-Fi, and cable). All units will accept Section 8 vouchers.
- **Design:** The building will feature an Art Deco-inspired facade as a legacy to the original restaurant and is designed so that all units have views of Lake Champlain.
- **Timeline:** This was an informal preview; a properly warned neighborhood meeting will be scheduled for the official Major Impact Review.

6. City Council Updates

Councilor-elect Laura Sanchez-Parkinson, P-Ward 3:

- Expressed gratitude for the community's support during the recent election.
- Emphasized the need for diverse lenses when addressing the housing shortage and community conflict.
- Announced her inauguration will take place on April 6 at City Hall.

Councilor Melo Grant, P-Central District:

- **Town Meeting Day:** Noted that while ballot items passed, she was disappointed by the low support for the REIB department and the removal of the tax fairness item from the ballot.
- **Mayor Meetups:** The next Central District meeting with Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak is Tuesday, March 10, from 5:30–6:30 PM (Virtual).
- **Budget & Services:** The city is considering "strategic pauses" on certain programs, such as municipal recycling, due to a \$10 million budget gap and difficulties filling labor positions.
- **Public Safety:** Foot patrols have increased significantly under Chief Burke. The next Public Safety Committee meeting is March 26.

8. Public Forum

- **Charlie Messing (College Street):** Raised concerns about the removal of public bulletin boards and their domination by private advertisers (e.g., Higher Ground), arguing this hinders community communication.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.