

NPA Wards 4 and 7
April 22 2026

6:30 - Welcome and Ground Rules

6:35 - Community Forum

6:50 - Update on DPW projects from Chapin Spencer, Director of DPW and Rob Goulding from DPW: repairing sidewalks by contractors as well as in-house DPW staff. Two big projects are both on track for completion on time and on budget: Main Streets Great Streets and Champlain Parkway (25mph here). Last steps: connecting it to I-189. This will happen in next 2 or 3 months. Sidewalk paving: it's happening; it can't all happen at once; decisions are made based on use, proximity to schools, etc. Similar decisions made around paving priorities and schedules. They anticipate over 3.5 miles of paving this year. There;s also a large patching program for streets that don't meet criteria for full re-paving. There is a 5-year paving plan on the website, to see projections for future projects. `Water infrastructure: upgrade to water treatment plant is completing phase 0 on time; next steps are screening and equipment to begin repairs made possible by 2025 bond that passed. A new program: adopt-a-drain: protect drains. Street sweeping is underway, and a big comprehensive clean-up began today. East Side begins tonight. West Side begins tomorrow. 3 easy ways to reach out: a maintenance request (SeeClickFix), Construction Impacts (sign up for alerts via VT-ALERT; also Front Porch Forum), and also customer service: 802-863-9094 ; folks can also send questions to dpw/pinecustomerservice@burlingtonvt.gov. DPW staff take questions from attendees.

7:10 - Lisa Lax and Kim from 350VT, presenting on Burlington McNeil Plant and why they believe it should be closed. Quote from Bill McKibbin stating that science has been updated and shows that burning wood for electricity is a "bad idea." History: started in June 1984; this is the largest electricity generator in VT. Jointly owned by Burlington Electric, Green Mountain Power, and VT Public Power Supply. Generates 32-45% of Burlington's power supply. It is the largest stationary source of greenhouse gas emissions in VT. We know it is harmful to health, has a negative impact on forest ecosystems, and is old and inefficient, making it expensive to source the energy that it creates. Much of the burning is getting rid of the moisture before you can even get to the part of burning for energy. (Wood has a lot of moisture.) The carbon neutrality myth: trees get burned and carbon dioxide is release immediately, and it is not neutralized until decades or even centuries have passed and new trees have grown. And the growth is uncertain. Another myth: the "closed loop" theory, saying that carbon is released by burning wood, then reabsorbed by other trees. But carbon is carbon: there is not a closed-loop relationship between trees burned and trees grown. Releasing carbon into the atmosphere is a bad idea all around and we should be doing what we can to reduce its emission. Another myth: forest is less affected when wood is burned than other fuels. Reality: the high emission cost of burning wood is so high that trees cannot catch up to offset it by absorbing it at the same rate. Myth: ecological harm: Burlington Electric says that McNeil primarily burns woodships, but the reality is that it also does burn whole trees to meet demand. For one mature tree burned, 465 mature trees are needed to completely absorb the carbon emitted by that one tree. This does

not make sense as a sustainable or smart way to generate electricity. Human health: many detriments. Folks at UVMMC say that wood smoke is akin to cigarette smoke in terms of its health impacts. McNeil is located in Old North End neighborhood. Vermont ranks 5th in the nation for asthma. Expense: BED shows that McNeil has generated financial losses for 8 of the past 10 years. Most states retire biomass plants when they are 30 years old. In 2023, BED obtained city council approval to expand operations, not wind them down. It is only 26% efficient. 350VT says that BED has flawed policies, partially led by BED. The policies undercut the potential benefits of electrification of buildings and vehicles, since the ecological cost of generating the electricity powering these is so high. Better alternatives: wind and solar. What can you do? Advocate to: place responsibility for development of the city department to oversee the plant in a body that is independent; ie not BED.

-Connect with city councilors

- Connect with Mayor Emma

-Attend a city council meeting and give public comment

- Ask your NPA to consider a resolution to send to City Council on this issue

- Get involved with 350 VT for ongoing efforts and involvement.

Lisa and Kim take questions.

Voting: Gary from Ward 4: 16 votes for, no votes against

Sal from Ward 7: 16 votes for, no against, 1 abstain

Joanne from Ward 4: 14 for, none against\

Amy: Ward 4: 13, no opposed

Annie: Ward 4, 15 yes, no against

Sarah: Ward 7: 10 for, none against

Next NPA Meeting: Wednesday May 27

Next Planning Meeting: May 6