

## Ward 6 NPA Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 7, 2026

Location: Department of Public Works, 645 Pine Street

6:00 Community Dinner – another amazing meal and time to connect with neighbors

6:30 Call to Order,

- Introductions : Steering Committee Members (Nancy Harkins and Dale Azaria)
- Announcements
  - Kevin Bloom, candidate for Chittenden County sheriff
  - Pike Porter, appreciation for food
  - Rep. Bram Kleppner. The Governor is insisting on forced school mergers, and threatening to veto our budget if we don't have them. The best information is that these forced mergers will not save money or improve outcomes. Please contact the Governor and tell him not to insist on this.
- Steering Committee Membership
  - Looking for new members

6:45 Department of Public Works, Summer Construction Plans Chapin Spencer, Robert Goulding)

- Main Street, finishing up soon
- Almost completed design for reconnecting Cherry Street – will start in 2027 or 2028
- Champlain Parkway, interstate connection should open in mid- to late-June
- Coming up this summer:
  - Improving sidewalks, 3 miles per year (this puts all sidewalks on a 40-year schedule)
  - Re-paving, 3.5 miles. Got more competitive bids this year so can do a little more than expected
  - Upgrades to wastewater treatment plants
- Question about connector from Pine Street to Battery Street (Railyard Enterprise)
  - They need to acquire right of way. Expect the project to cost \$55 million for a ¼ mile connection, because of the need to accommodate the railway.
- Question about lack of attention to stormwater and flood risk in Plan BTV 2050
- Question about private roads and unaccepted roads.
  - DPW is doing research on ownership and responsibilities, working to resolve these issues.
- Question about trucks on South Winooski, which used to have a “no trucks” sign.
  - They'll check and reinstall sign.

7:00 350.org on MacNeil Generating Plant (Pike Porter, Nik Persampieri)

- The science has changed since 1984 when MacNeil was built. At this point we know that burning wood is not a viable way to generate electricity.
- MacNeil is very old and is running into lots of expensive maintenance issues.
- Largest source of electricity in VT and also VT's biggest stationary source of greenhouse gases
- Also emits other pollution, like PM 2.5.

- And it's a very expensive source of energy. MacNeil has generated losses for 8 of the last 10 fiscal years.
- MacNeil claims to use waste wood, but there's evidence that they use whole trees. Also, any burning of wood adds CO2 to the atmosphere, regardless of what part of the tree it's from
- Old North End, near MacNeil, has higher rates of asthma than other parts of Vermont, and Vermont has higher rates of asthma than many other states
- It's a problem that we've put the largest polluter in the state in charge of our climate planning.
- They're asking folks, if they agree, to contact City Council Members and State Reps to move forward with investing in clean energy.
- They have a sign-up sheet for people who would like more information.
- Question about the cost of developing an alternative energy source that would provide similar power:
  - BED could replace MacNeil with energy from another energy source on the New England grid
  - Could install more solar; install batteries; invest in wind
  - BED should issue a request for proposal for energy sources, and see what they get in response
- Rep. Bram Kleppner notes that BED is part of the New England Grid and has ample power, including HydroQuebec, Nuclear, and some gas plants (which emit less CO2 than wood). But we also need to bear in mind that demand for electricity is going to grow.
- Pike: We need new clean power, not just moving to natural gas.

7:30 Parallel Justice Commission and Burlington Police Department (Hannah Brislin, Deputy Chief JohnYoung)

- Overall BPD incidents went down from 2016 to 2021, but has gone back up
- Discretionary Traffic Stops from 2021 to 2025
  - 957 this year, has gone down quite a bit, trying to emphasize more time in communities and on foot
- Community Justice Center, Parallel Justice
  - Conflict Assistance Program (e.g. neighbor disputes)
  - Victim Services and Restorative Justice (court diversion)
  - Parallel Justice Program
    - Receive referrals from BPD about crimes and those who were impacted to provide support to them
    - This is separate from the criminal justice system, to make it more welcoming to those who might be reluctant to work with the police
    - Help with costs (eg replacing key fobs or repairing broken windows), help in dealing with insurance companies, etc.
- Question: What can we do to dissuade repeat offenders? How does that work with restorative justice?
  - This is often for people who have mental health or substance abuse, and the goal is to get them to agree to treatment in lieu of punishment.
- Comment: appreciation for the work that the Community Justice Center does, and the fact that there's a space for healing the victims and hearing from the offenders about what they need

- Question: does this system enable more crime, because of the “squishiness” of the consequences?
  - Hannah works with people who are impacted by crime, who often feel very dismissed by the criminal justice system
  - Also, we need to make a collective decision about what the statutes require. It’s not for the CJC team to make those decisions.
  - If people don’t finish the program they’ve agreed to, they get sent back to the criminal justice system.
- Question about relative recidivism rates.
  - Information online was released in February. It’s a standardized program overseen by the Attorney General
- Question: what is the success rate based on your experience?
  - She focuses on victim services, not really court diversion, so she can’t speak to this.
  - She’ll encourage her colleague in court diversion to come talk to us.
- Question about traffic enforcement and concerns about dangerous driving (for Deputy Chief Young). What can be done to address this?
  - There’s been an uptick on proactive enforcement over the last few months. There’s a little more funding for this. Please let them know about places that need extra patrolling to address the problems. They hear a lot from the North End, from Lake Street. People should e-mail him.
- Question about the ICE enforcement raid. He hasn’t been involved.
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#### 8:00 City Council Report (Becca Brown McKnight, invited)

- Guns in Bars Burlington Charter Change did not get out of the Legislature
- Annual City Budget Process is underway. They hear Department presentations.
- Becca asks that we be in touch about city services that we value and/or could do without. They don’t hear much about that and it would be very helpful for her and Buddy.
- Ash Tree removals. There are a lot of questions about this. Contact her for answers and she can help connect to the City Arborists
- Major trash pickup in the Urban Reserve. And need for a more sustainable process for discouraging camping, e.g. in the Urban Reserve. Need to be able to connect people to resources. One agreement was “no tents on the west (lake) side of the bikepath” to reduce impact on lake, but even that isn’t being enforced.

#### 8:20Adjourn