

Ward 1 NPA (05/13/2026)
Zoom AI with J Chapple-
Sokol

Minutes

Attendees

Gretchen Platt*
Rob Gutman*
Carter Neubieser
Allie Schachter
Breck Bowden
Linda Bowden
Julie Springer
David Cawley
Sharon Bushor
Troy Headrick
Tim Ashe
Elaine Haney
Katherine Verman
CJ Knudsen

Richard Hillyard
Caryn Long
Kathy Olwell
Angie Chapple-Sokol
Jonathan Chapple-Sokol*
Carol Livingston*
Catherine Bock
Erhard Mahnke
Jean Hopkins
Sophie Quest
Tom Derenthal
Mark Demers
Kevin for Sheriff
Lisa Lax
Leendert Huisman
Sharyl Green
Peter Lackowski
Deborah Kraft
Charlie Giannoni
Barbara Turnbull

Votes

Steering Committee Slate (slate marked with *asterisks, above, plus Sam Doherty); Moved Angie, Seconded Kathy; Approved by voice vote, no opposing votes

Motion to entrust spending of remaining NPA funds to Steering Committee, with consideration for the opinions of the group assembled. Moved Lisa, Seconded by Richard; Approved by voice vote, no opposing votes

Poll of assembly (with votes)

Schmanska Rink Liner (12)
Stickers (11)
Zine (contribute to All Wards project) (10)
Flyers for targeted distribution (7)
BBQ (7)
Magnets (2)

Re-investigate city entrance sign in the fall (13)

Quick recap (Links are to documents referenced in the meeting)

This Ward 1 NPA meeting covered several key topics including [the Lake Monsters' summer schedule](#), budget allocation decisions, and updates from city officials. The steering committee discussed how to spend the remaining \$1,260 of their \$3,000 annual budget, with options including neighborhood flyers (\$100), magnets (\$300), zine updates (\$75), ice rink liner (\$300), and a neighborhood welcome sign (postponed to fall). City Councilor Carter Neubieser provided updates on tax reform proposals including a homestead exemption and property transfer tax, while Allie Schachter discussed the [Burlington-Winooski Bridge project](#) and the [SECORD housing development](#) in the South End. The Department of Public Works [presented on infrastructure projects](#) including the Main Street and parkway improvements, and Lisa Lax and Leendert Huisman delivered a presentation about [concerns with the McNeil wood-burning power plant](#), advocating for its closure due to environmental and economic concerns.

Summary

Lake Monsters and Neighborhood Updates

The meeting covered several key topics including the Lake Monsters' summer schedule, neighborhood updates, and NPA business. CJ Knudsen from the Vermont Lake Monsters announced their upcoming season starting May 30th, highlighting affordable family tickets and community initiatives. David shared concerns about the Burlington-Winooski Bridge project, noting that a planned bike path under the bridge has been dropped from the design. Sharon Bushoir suggested community involvement in flower planting to support the new parks director and proposed inviting him to a future steering committee meeting. The group discussed candidate forums for the upcoming State Senate election, with a forum planned for the June 10th meeting. Finally, the steering committee slate was approved, and the group reviewed budget allocation options, including the possibility of spending the remaining \$1,260 on a neighborhood welcome sign.

Neighborhood Outreach Strategy Discussion

The group discussed various options for neighborhood outreach, including a neighborhood sign, informational flyers, magnets, a zine, and a plastic liner for an ice rink. They reviewed costs and potential effectiveness of each option, with particular focus on a \$2420 installed price for a sign and concerns about the low number of magnets needed (125) for off-campus students. The group recommended pursuing updated zines at \$75 and potentially revisiting the

sign project in the fall, while expressing skepticism about the effectiveness of paper flyers and noting that a barbecue initiative would require someone else to step forward due to bandwidth constraints.

Tax and Housing Updates Meeting

The meeting covered several key updates and decisions. Carter provided an update on the Tax Fairness Committee, discussing two main proposals: a homestead exemption with a cutoff at \$400,000 in property value, and a property transfer tax on homes over \$1 million to fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The committee aims to reach consensus and get proposals on the November ballot. Friends also discussed the Burlington-Winooski Bridge project, mentioning an upcoming site walkthrough and condemnation hearing on May 21st. The council recently approved a development agreement for the SECORD housing project in the South End, which will include a 204-unit mixed-income building as its first phase.

Student Housing and Infrastructure Updates

The meeting covered two main topics: student housing development and public infrastructure projects. For the housing development, it was clarified that while CHIP funding (approximately \$8 million) would support the project, it was not TIF-funded, and the developer Jonathan Rose Companies was committed to creating affordable housing units. The public works department provided updates on two major road projects - the parkway and Main Street - both expected to be completed by late spring or early summer, along with details on sidewalk and paving work across the city, including specific projects in Ward 1. The discussion also addressed how project priorities are determined, including mechanical assessments of the sidewalk network and an activity-based scoring system that considers factors like pedestrian traffic and funding availability.

Burlington Infrastructure and Construction Updates

The meeting covered updates on road construction and infrastructure projects in Burlington. The city reported progress on paving projects, including Colchester Avenue, and discussed a patching list resulting from the challenging winter. Wastewater bond money will go to treatment plant upgrades, including tertiary treatment for phosphorus removal to help clean Lake Champlain. The city also announced upcoming stormwater outfall repairs and encouraged community involvement through programs like Blue BTV and the Adopt-a-Drain network. During Q&A, a participant expressed disappointment about not implementing a roundabout at a gateway to the city, to which Rob Goulding explained that grade challenges and space constraints made it difficult to design a functional roundabout that would work for pedestrians and bicyclists.

McNeil Plant Closure Advocacy

The presenters advocated for closing the McNeil plant, Vermont's largest electricity generator, citing its significant greenhouse gas emissions, environmental impacts, and inefficiency. They challenged the claim of carbon neutrality, explaining that while burned wood's carbon is eventually sequestered by new trees, this doesn't account for emissions from multiple harvesting and burning operations in the interim. The presenters also highlighted concerns about human health impacts from particulate matter emissions and the high operational costs of the 40-year-old plant, which has generated losses for eight of the past ten years. They criticized current city climate policies, arguing they emphasize reducing fossil fuel use rather than reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and called for transitioning to low-carbon power sources like hydropower, solar, and wind.

McNeil Power Plant Closure Discussion

The meeting focused on concerns about the McNeil power plant and its environmental impact. The presenters advocated for the plant's closure by June 2028 and called for investing in green power alternatives. They emphasized the need to place climate policy development in a city department independent of Burlington Electric Department (BED) due to perceived conflicts of interest. The discussion included questions about replacing McNeil's power with ISO grid sources and the economic implications of closing the plant. Participants also debated the environmental benefits of wood burning versus fossil fuels, with arguments made about carbon sequestration and the role of forests in climate mitigation.