

# Ward 8 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

May 28, 2026 | 6:15 - 7:48pm | City Hall, Sharon Bushor Conference Room



Recording & transcript available on Town Meeting TV →

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI1G6THx6T8>

FACILITATOR: Tom Carroll | NOTETAKER: Amy Malinowski

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tom Carroll, Amy Malinowski

**6:15pm**

## Welcome and food

Pizza (vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free options)

**6:35pm**

start time

## Opening & Speak Out

- Tom calls meeting to order
- Introductions: Tom Carroll, Ambrose Moore, Amy Malinowski, Stephen Chisa, City Councilor Allie Schachter, Linda, Peter Macausland, Floyd Campbell, Jeffrey Peterson, Caroline Coussoule, Lisa Lax, Robert Goulding, Sarah Montgomery (with City Clerk's Office), Barbara Turnbull (with CEDO), Charlie Giannoni (with Town Meeting TV)
- Floyd: Expressed appreciation for the Burlington Clean Up Crew that just had a birthday party celebration. Learn more: <https://www.pjcv.org/btv-clean-up-crew/>
- Jeffrey: Shared that they were at the Burlington Clean Up Crew birthday party and encouraged folks to get involved. They shared that they are running for State Representative in Chittenden 16 district. Learn more: <https://www.jeffreyforvt.com/>
- Barbara: For the August 11th primary, you will not get a ballot sent to you automatically, you have to request it. Ballots are sent out starting June 29th and that is also the day when you can start early voting in person at City Hall. You can request a ballot anytime now until the Friday before the primary. Request your ballot → <https://vote.vermont.gov/>
- Allie: Shared that they are nearing the end of budget season and trying hard to pass the budget by June 30th. Shared that the UVM housing resolution brought forward by Councilor Broderick previously has been followed up on– the City Council passed an ordinance at their last meeting re-affirming how they will hold university partners to housing standard rules. Shared that she brought forward a resolution re-instating our Aging Council which had been formed in 2021 and created a report– it's now officially being staffed by the REIB office and hopefully can act on the recommendations in the Age Strong BTV report.
- Steering Committee announcements:
  - We will be pausing our NPA meetings over the summer – see you in September!
  - Candidate Forum: VT Senate (Martine, Tanya, Elaine, and Nikhil) | Ward 1 NPA | June 10 @ 7:30 | <https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/9998/files/agenda/20189>
  - Candidate Debate: State's Attorney (Bram and Sarah) | Contois Auditorium | July 29

**6:45pm**

## VOTE: Budget proposal

- Vote on spending of balance of 2025-2026 NPA funds (\$2,401.84). Steering Committee suggests spending:
  - Our contribution to zine renewal | \$100
  - NPA Organizing & Outreach Intern(s) | \$2,301.84 for 2025-2026 & up to \$1000 for 2026-2027
- NPA budgets must be used for: promoting the NPA, providing residents with information about city programs/activities, and/or gathering input from residents about city needs. Budget expenditures are approved by a 2/3 vote of Ward 8 residents present.
- Tom: Shared about the purpose and goals of the internship. Learn more: <https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/9951/files/attachment/16231>
- Discussion:
  - Linda: Shared excitement about this internship idea. Question: Does any money need to be set aside for any initiatives?
- Linda motioned to adopt this budget proposal. Seconded by Stephen. Vote: PASS (5 YAY, 0 NAY)

**6:55pm**

## Updates from Department of Public Works

Robert Goulding

- Main Street project and the Champlain Parkway project are both anticipated to wrap up in early

summer. Both projects are on-time and on-budget. Stay tuned for a series of community events to celebrate the end of these multi-year, multi-ward projects.

- Champlain Parkway is a 25 mph road that connects south end with downtown with stormwater improvements and pedestrian enhancements (signals, shorter crossings, new sidewalks). Things left to do:
  - Pine Street: roadway sign installation, signal activation, pavement and sidewalk repairs, general clean up
  - Champlain Parkway: overhead signs, roadway signs, final pavement, line striping, signal timing adjustments
- Main street is a welcoming gateway into the city that includes wider sidewalks for pedestrians and commerce, more trees & gardens, and enhanced lighting. Importantly, this project has included the abandonment of the ravine sewer which was 19th century infrastructure that was limiting development on top of where this sewer ran. This took longer than expected and was very challenging. Things left to do: sidewalks, signals, tree plantings, paving, public art
- Updates about...
  - Sidewalks: Sidewalks can last about 40 years – ever 5-8 years, they use a machine to do a mechanical inspection of all the sidewalks and then develop a prioritization for which sidewalks to work on. Sustainable sidewalk renewal means renewing roughly 3 miles of sidewalk each year. If there is truly an urgent dangerous repair, please call DPW (802-863-9094) and don't just record it on See Click Fix.
  - Paving: Sustainable paving renewal means renewing 4 miles of paving each year. Use a prioritization matrix to catalog condition of network of roads and develop work plans. Learn more: <https://burlingtonvt.gov/construction>
  - Waterworks: Renewing all three wastewater treatment plants with significant upgrades—including tertiary treatment which removes phosphorus which has been a driver of blue/green algae in Lake Champlain (though this is watershed wide issue).
- What you can do:
  - Get a free stormwater assessment <https://www.uvm.edu/seagrant/blue/>
  - Adopt a drain <https://vt.adopt-a-drain.org/>
  - Make maintenance request on See Click Fix [https://seeclickfix.com/burlington\\_2](https://seeclickfix.com/burlington_2)
  - Look out for construction impacts on Front Porch Forum, signage around town, or by signing up for VT-Alert <https://vem.vermont.gov/vtalert>
  - Contact customer service: 802-863-9094 | [dpw-pinecustomerservice@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:dpw-pinecustomerservice@burlingtonvt.gov)
- Discussion:
  - Peter: How many have adopted drains?
  - Lisa: Share that the communication about the work in ward 1 was great, timely, and gave us a chance to think about different routes. Question: The rain gardens—is that a city project? How does that work?
  - Floyd: Expressed concern about pedestrians and bikers being able to be safe and comfortable walking. Appreciated transparency and communication. Question: Regarding the walk/bike path, I'm curious about upcoming developments and expansions?

7:15pm

### Concerns about the McNeil Plant

Lisa Lax, Peter Macausland

- This is a presentation about the McNeil Plant in Burlington by the Chittenden Node of 350Vermont and Stop VT Biomass. They would like to lay out a case for why the McNeil Plant needs to be closed.
- “Burning wood for electricity is a bad idea—the science has changed a lot since Burlington started doing it decades ago. It makes sense to phase it out, not incentivize it.” - Bill McKibben, March 2023
- History: McNeil plant started operation in 1984, burns wood to generate electricity, and is the largest electricity generator in Vermont. It is jointly owned by Burlington Electric Department (BED) (operator and 50% owner), Green Mountain Power (31%), and Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (19%). In 2023, BED obtained City Council approval to move forward with a District Energy Project which would depend on McNeil.
- *Largest stationary source of greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont* | McNeil emitted 316,405 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2025 (EPA)--which is somewhere between 7,000-8,000 tons per resident in Burlington. “Burning wood to generate electricity emits more carbon dioxide per kilowatt-hour generated than fossil fuels—even coal, the most carbon intensive fuel.” - Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (2022). BED claims that McNeil is carbon neutral because BED engages in sustainable forestry and the carbon dioxide emissions from its stack are re-sequestered by trees as they regrow in a “closed loop.” But when trees are burned down the carbon dioxide is released immediately creating a carbon debt which takes decades to centuries to eliminate through tree regrowth (which is in itself uncertain).

- *Negative impact on forest ecosystem* | McNeil burns “Whole Tree Chips” which includes chips generated by cutting down and chipping whole trees. Cutting down trees impairs forest ecosystems and flood protection and is destructive to biodiversity. It takes a lot of new large landscape trees to equal the carbon-storing-power of 1 mature canopy tree.
- *Harmful to health* | Burning wood emits pollutants in proximity to racially diverse, low and middle-income neighborhoods of Burlington’s Old North End and Winooski.
- *High cost* | BED shows that McNeil has generated losses for 8 of the last 10 fiscal years totaling more than \$34 million over the 10 -year period. The average real-time price for wholesale power in New England in 2024 was \$39.50 per mega-watt hour while the net cost of generating power from McNeil was \$98.70/MWH in fiscal year 2024.
- *Old, inefficient* | The plant is only 26% efficient. It runs about 50-60% of the time because it is frequently off-line for planned maintenance, repairs due to operational problems, or because of market prices. You couldn’t build McNeil today because it would have to be 60% efficient and it’s not.
- “Net Zero” or “Renewable” vs. “Low Carbon” – When we focus solely on “net zero”, we might be reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, but not reducing the carbon we are putting into the atmosphere. Wood may be “renewable” but it is not “low carbon” like hydropower, solar, and wind. Other states are changing their language in their policies.
- Goal:
  - Burlington City government should place responsibility for development of the city climate policy in a city department or official who is independent of BED. BED has directed the course of Burlington’s overall climate policy, leading to flawed policies.
  - Burlington city government should develop a plan to close the McNeil Plant, preferably by June 2028—which is the next time it could be closed. Do this in a way that keeps electric rates stable, meets our energy needs, and has a just transition for employees.
- What you can do:
  - Email and call your city councilors – Councilor Broderick has been a strong ally and Councilor Schachter has not articulated a position on this yet.
  - Write to the Mayor.
  - Speak at public forum at city council meeting
  - Encourage NPAs to consider a resolution to send to City Council on this issue
  - Attend Electric Commission meetings and speak during public comment
  - Get involved with VT <https://www.35Overmont.org/> or Stop VT Biomass <https://www.facebook.com/stopvtbiomass/>
- Discussion:
  - Tom: What is your sense of the political climate around this at city and state level leadership? And what is the realistic projection of actually putting renewable energy sources in place in the next couple years?
  - Caroline: Expressed that there is potential to work with students who are interested in this.

7:45

**Charlie asked to offer some suggestions to our NPA**

- NPAs got rejuvenated by 2-4 americorps interns with federal grant money in the late 1990s. Are there any records left behind?
- Suggested survey question of “where would you go to a meeting?” and ask about specific, potential locations.
- When having steering committee meetings, invite folks to come and weigh in even if they can’t vote.
- Totally discourage even attempting to use Robert’s Rules – they are extremely complicated and can create power imbalance.
- Have presenters summarize their presentation in 2-3 minutes before they get started.

7:48pm  
adjourn

**Adjourn**

- Tom adjourned the meeting

**Ward 8 Steering Committee:**

Tom Carroll  
Amy Malinowski

**Contact us!**

[ward-8-sc@googlegroups.com](mailto:ward-8-sc@googlegroups.com)

**Next meeting:**

September 2026

**Submit a request to present!**

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/>

