



# Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, June 3, 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 Chris Haessly, Ward 3 NPA Steering Committee member. He thanked the community members for attending.

### 2. Attendee Introductions

- **NPA Steering Committee Members:**
  - ✓ Brooks Cummings, Cherry Street
  - ✓ Christopher Haessly, College Street
  - ✓ Charlie Messing, College Street
- **City Officials/Staff:**
  - ✓ Melo Grant, City Councilor, Central District
  - ✓ Laura Sánchez-Parkinson, City Councilor, Ward 3
  - ✓ Barbara Turnbull, Dept of Finance and Administration
  - ✓ Charlie Giannoni, Town Meeting TV
- **Presenters:**
  - ✓ Mark Bouchett, Church Street Marketplace Commission (Chair)
  - ✓ Jeff Nick, Church Street Marketplace Business Owner
  - ✓ Rep. Brian Cina, Chittenden-15
  - ✓ Rep. Kate Logan, Chittenden-16
  - ✓ Rep. Abbey Duke, Chittenden-17
  - ✓ Sen. Martine Larocque-Gulick, Chittenden Central
- **Community Members/Public:**
  - ✓ Bobby Sand, Lake Street
  - ✓ Henry Bechtel, Lake Street
  - ✓ Gerry Prentki, Lake Street
  - ✓ Jill Lesh, College Street
  - ✓ Grace Grundhauser, North Street (Ward 2)
  - ✓ Steve Colbert, North Street (Ward 2)
  - ✓ Bill Eichhorn, Lake Street

### 3. Lake Street Traffic Calming Resolution

Presented by: **Robert Sand**, Lake Street resident and former State's Attorney (Windsor County)

**Issue Overview:** Mr. Sand presented a collection of photos and videos showcasing extreme speeding, reckless driving, and engine noise caused by high-performance cars, motorcycles, and mini-motorcycles on Lake Street. He noted that vehicles regularly organize meetups behind the water treatment plant/pier and accelerate down Lake Street far exceeding the posted 20 mph speed limit.

**Neighborhood Impact:** Multiple residents voiced serious safety concerns:

- **Gerry Prentki** (Lake Street) emphasized that vehicles travel 50–60 mph directly past parallel-parked cars where pedestrians and children frequently cross. He proposed parking an empty police cruiser at the waterfront to act as a visual deterrent.
- **Bobby Sand** (Lake Street) noted reckless driving at the railroad crossing and emphasized that dangerous driving occurs at all times of day.
- **Henry Bechtel** (Lake Street) highlighted teenagers operating high-powered, unlicensed electric and gas-powered "e-moto" bikes performing dangerous wheelies on sidewalks, streets, and the waterfront bike path.

**City Councilor Perspective:**

- **Councilor Laura Sánchez-Parkinson** noted that city councilors have been discussing physical traffic infrastructure controls with Public Works and patrolling limits with BPD Chief Burke.
- **Councilor Melo Grant** reported meeting with the Parks Director and School District regarding "e-moto" bikes to encourage parental education, noting that the state of Vermont may eventually need to follow California's lead on regulating these specific vehicles.

**Resolution:** A formal resolution was read into the record calling upon the Mayor, City Council, DPW, and BPD to perform a traffic safety assessment within 60 days, implement interim calming measures (temporary speed humps/increased patrols), and design a permanent infrastructure plan (speed tables/road dieting) with a progress report due in 90 days.

**Councilor Grant** cautioned that predefined DPW construction schedules might restrict their ability to execute projects within the exact 60/90-day seasonal frames, though a status response is achievable.

**Vote:** A motion to adopt the resolution was called, voted on, and passed unanimously by the members of the Ward 3 NPA.

### 4. Church Street Marketplace Restructuring

Presented by: **Mark Bouchett** and **Jeff Nick** (Church Street Marketplace)

**Background & Governance:** Established in 1981, the Church Street Marketplace operates uniquely as a municipal city department. Property owners and retailers pay some of the highest ground-floor square footage fees in the nation (\$35/sq. ft.) to fund dedicated marketing, events, and maintenance crews. However, because the Mayor appoints the

Executive Director and City Council selects the Commissioners, business fee-payers have minimal control over their own district's operations.

**Proposed Concept:** The Commission is exploring public-private partnership models. The concept involves spinning the marketplace into a standalone nonprofit organization to handle marketing and promotions independently, following national industry best practices.

**Core Protections:** Organizers emphasized that any changes would preserve the highly rated marketplace maintenance crew, including their city contracts, benefits, and retirement accounts. The proposal would expand the commission's board, keeping dedicated seats for city voices to maintain public oversight of the public street.

**Public Retail Safety:** Property owners organically pooled private resources to hire an "ambassador" (Andrew LeSturgeon) to help deter skyrocketing retail theft, coordinate with BPD, and actively connect struggling individuals on the street with social services.

**Next Steps:** The concept is in its earliest dialogue stages. Because the Marketplace is established via the city charter, any finalized restructuring plan must ultimately be approved by Burlington voters. The presenters agreed to forward a copy of the PUMA (Progressive Urban Management Associates) study report to the City Council for broader review.

## 5. Legislative Updates

Presented by: **Rep. Brian Cina** (Chittenden-15), **Rep. Kate Logan** (Chittenden-16), **Rep. Abby Duke** (Chittenden-17), and **Sen. Martine Laroque-Gulick** (Chittenden Central)

**Burlington Charter & Housing Changes (Rep. Logan):** Charter changes passed allowing City Council to update electoral maps without legislative approval and embedding REIB (Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) into the charter. Act 181 advanced, establishing Tier 1A mapping to allow development in Burlington to proceed without the standard Act 250 permitting process. Water quality permitting was successfully streamlined by delegating state point-source authority to Burlington's local staff.

**Environmental & Business Regulations (Rep. Logan):** Municipalities are now restricted from regulating agricultural required practices (RAPs) following a supreme court case correction—meaning Burlington's historical local camel ban is unenforceable, though strict state agricultural rules still apply. Controversial 3-acre stormwater runoff rules went into effect state-wide; Rep. Logan collaborated on a study committee to assess regional stormwater utilities to prevent excessive parcel-by-parcel costs to homeowners. Efforts are ongoing to establish a captive insurance plan for Burlington bars to counter skyrocketing liquor liability insurance rates.

**Revenue & Tax Proposals (Rep. Logan / Rep. Duke):** Rep. Logan highlighted proposed progressive tax legislation aimed at recapturing federal tax cuts by increasing taxes on high earners (over \$250k–\$586k/year) and levying a 4% net investment income tax to generate over \$415 million for the general fund. These measures were held back due to certain executive veto risks. Rep. Duke highlighted successful legislation capping event ticket commercial resale prices at 110% of face value to block deceptive marketing and fraud, alongside ongoing optimization of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for project-based housing (CHIP) and a comprehensive data privacy framework.

**Education Restructuring (Sen. Laroque-Gulick):** House Bill H.955 will establish a second homes tax starting in 2029 tied to a new foundation formula for education financing. Crucially, starting

this fall, Burlington is mandated into a study group with Winooski and South Burlington to analyze a multi-district school system merger. District mergers are tied directly to state construction aid incentives. Reference-based healthcare pricing bill S.190 also faces potential executive gridlock despite projecting \$40–\$80 million in state-wide savings.

**Healthcare, Private Equity, & AI (Rep. Cina):** Healthcare committee priorities focused on global hospital budget management with the Green Mountain Care Board to stabilize small failing facilities. Transparency bills were introduced targeting private equity firms, which currently finance 100% of Vermont nursing homes and own/operate 57% of local opioid treatment (methadone) clinics. Rep. Cina authored a historic "Vermont Model" AI bill, making Vermont the first state to enshrine "neurological rights" into law, establishing legal barriers against advanced neurotechnology/EEG data mining without direct consumer consent.

**Homelessness & Transportation Crisis:** The panel discussed the highly controversial homelessness compromise bill. Advocates express intense concern that cutting motel/hotel vouchers without having supported mental health or substance-use housing units ready will directly expand unsheltered street populations in Burlington. Additionally, the state Transportation Fund is in a dire underfunded status due to falling gas tax revenues from fuel-efficient and hybrid cars. A vehicle-miles-traveled tax framework was severely watered down, leaving Vermont in danger of losing matching federal transit infrastructure and GMT funding.

## **6. Public Forum**

Members of the community came forward to speak on various topics.

## **7. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed unanimously at approximately 8:30 PM.