



Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Sharon Bushor Room, Burlington City Hall

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:33 PM by Zachary Cummings, Ward 3 NPA Steering Committee member. A motion to adopt the agenda was made, seconded, and approved by a voice vote.

2. Attendee Introductions

- **NPA Steering Committee Members:**
 - ✓ Brooks Cummings, Cherry Street
 - ✓ Zachary Cummings, South Champlain Street
 - ✓ Darrell Fields, Church Street
- **City Officials/Staff:**
 - ✓ Mark Barlow, City Councilor, North District
 - ✓ Melo Grant, City Councilor, Central District
 - ✓ Barbara Turnbull, Dept of Finance and Administration
 - ✓ Charlie Giannoni, Town Meeting TV
- **Presenters:**
 - ✓ Rick Bove, Local Developer
 - ✓ Katherine Schad, Dept of Finance and Administration (via remote attendance)
 - ✓ Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Board of Assessors
 - ✓ Rob Gutman, Board of Assessors
- **Community Members/Public:**
 - ✓ Donna Bister, Peru Street
 - ✓ Dawn Ellis, Woodridge Drive (Ward 4)
 - ✓ Susan Forester, College Street
 - ✓ Jill Lesh, College Street
 - ✓ Amy Taylor, College Street

3. Ward 3 Priorities Discussion

Jonathan Chapple-Sokol explained the origin of the "Priorities" resolution, noting it aims to formalize the relationship between NPAs and the City Council. The goal is for each ward to identify three to five priorities that the Council should discuss with the NPA before taking major votes.

Overdose Prevention Center (OPC): Members inquired about the status of the harm reduction initiative. Councilor Melo Grant clarified that while the resolution passed by Ward 3 was presented to the Council, no specific locations have been vetted successfully yet. She encouraged the NPA to provide more advanced notice for future major votes to increase community participation.

Homelessness and Housing:

- **Jill Lesh** and **Amy Taylor** expressed concern regarding where the unhoused population is sleeping, noting reports of hypothermia deaths during the winter.
- **Councilor Grant** noted that the 80-day cold weather shelter motel program ended in early April, which may lead to increased presence in City Hall Park. She highlighted the "Build Resolution" report on housing barriers and suggested future presentations by Charles Dillard on neighborhood code changes.
- **Dawn Ellis** discussed the need for "simple interventions" to help those facing housing disruptions connect with kin or social networks before they fall into chronic homelessness.

NPA Participation: **Donna Bister** and others expressed concern that current meeting attendance is not representative of the whole ward. Suggestions included better signage at City Hall and more proactive outreach beyond Front Porch Forum.

4. Bove's Restaurant Redevelopment Project

Rick Bove presented a proposal for the former Bove's Restaurant site on Pearl Street.

- **The Proposal:** A 100% affordable housing project featuring approximately 25 efficiency units (425–500 sq. ft.). The building is proposed to be between four and six stories.
- **Affordability:** Rents are targeted at \$1,395, including all utilities (heat, electric, Wi-Fi).
- **Historic Preservation:** Because the site is a historic structure, demolition is only permitted if a replacement plan is approved. The UVM Historic Society indicated support for demolition if replaced with community-use housing.
- **Design:** The rendering includes "Art Deco" cues, such as six-sided windows, as an homage to the original restaurant.
- **Parking:** No on-site parking is required or provided in this zone; the project emphasizes walkability and proximity to the bus station.

5. Understanding Your Property Tax Bill

CAO Katherine Schad provided an overview of the municipal tax bill structure.

- **Split:** The bill is roughly a 2/3 (State Education) to 1/3 (Municipal) split.
- **"Splinter" Taxes:** The municipal portion is composed of various dedicated taxes (e.g., Penny for Parks, Street Capital, Library, Housing Trust, Police/Fire).
- **Retirement & Debt:** Retirement is the largest line item on the municipal side. Unlike other rates, the CAO is authorized by the Charter to set the retirement and debt service rates based on the city's actual obligations without a separate annual public vote.
- **Reform:** CAO Schad noted the Mayor's interest in simplifying these "splinter" taxes to make the bill more predictable.

6. How to Appeal Your Property Tax Assessment

Jonathan Chapple-Sokol and Rob Gutman (Board of Assessors) outlined the grievance process.

- **Deadlines:** Grievances must be filed by May 14th at 4:00 PM via the OpenGov portal.
- **Basis for Appeal:** Successful appeals usually focus on factual errors (e.g., incorrect bathroom count) or subjective "Quality and Condition" ratings.
- **The Process:** Appeals before the three-member Board of Assessors are informal (approx. 15 minutes). If denied, taxpayers can move to the Board of Tax Appeals and finally the State.
- **Property Record Cards:** Residents were encouraged to look up their "Property Record Card" online to see the specific data the city has on their home.

7. Public Forum

Melo Grant (City Councilor) provided several updates:

- **Mayor's Meetups:** The next Central District meetup is May 12th at 5:30 PM.
- **Budget:** Departmental budget presentations begin next week; residents can follow along via Town Meeting TV or the city website.
- **Accountability Court:** State's Attorney Sarah George recently reported that the court has cleared hundreds of cases, reducing backlogs.
- **New Councilor:** Laura Sanchez Parkinson has been sworn in as the new Ward 3 City Councilor.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM.