



Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Sharon Bushor Room, Burlington City Hall

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:34 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:**
 - ✓ Zachary Cummings, South Champlain Street
 - ✓ Darrell Fields, Church 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:**
 - ✓ Chapin Spencer, Dept. of Public Works
 - ✓ Robert Goulding, Dept. of Public Works
 - ✓ Nick Persampieri, 350 Vermont & Stop VT Biomass
 - ✓ Pike Porter, 350 Vermont & Stop VT Biomass
 - ✓ Nikhil Goyal, Candidate, State Senate (Chittenden Central)
 - ✓ Elaine Haney, Candidate, State Senate (Chittenden Central)
- **Community Members/Public:**
 - ✓ Jeffrey Peterson, Monroe Street
 - ✓ Amy Prenowitz, Johnson Street
 - ✓ Susan Forester, College Street
 - ✓ Jill Lesh, College Street

3. DPW 2026 Construction Workplan

Presented by: **Chapin Spencer** (Director of Public Works) and **Robert Goulding** (DPW)

Major Projects Update:

- **Main Street Great Streets & Champlain Parkway:** Both are on time and on budget. Paving on Main Street could begin as early as tomorrow, with brick crosswalks being installed at Church and Main next week. Both projects are expected to open to the public by late June or July.
- **Ravine Sewer:** Director Spencer highlighted the successful abandonment of a 150-year-old brick/stone ravine sewer 30 feet below downtown, which was necessary for the opening of the Post Apartments.
- **Great Streets Cherry Street:** Potential start in 2027 or 2028. The project will reconnect St. Paul and Pine Streets, reversing urban renewal decisions from 60 years ago.

Maintenance & Infrastructure:

- **Sidewalks:** DPW is targeting a three-mile-per-year replacement cycle. This year's work is funded by the 2025 Town Meeting Day bond. Work has already begun on Manhattan Avenue.
- **Paving:** Plans include approximately 3.5 miles of paving this year. Notable nearby projects include College and Pearl Streets (held over from 2025), Depot Street, and Park Street.
- **Water/Wastewater:** Upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant (Stage Zero) are underway to address phosphorus removal. A significant stormwater improvement project is planned for Manhattan Avenue.

Public Engagement:

- Residents were encouraged to use **SeeClickFix** for maintenance requests and sign up for **BTV Alert** or Front Porch Forum for construction impacts. DPW is also hiring seasonal traffic maintenance workers to help paint crosswalks.

4. McNeil Plant Presentation

Presented by: **Nick Persampieri** and **Pike Porter** (350 Vermont)

Proposal: The presenters argued that Burlington Electric Department (BED) should close the McNeil Power Plant and secure alternative power sources.

Key Arguments:

- **Climate Impact:** It is the largest stationary source of greenhouse gases in Vermont. Presenters challenged BED's "carbon neutral" claim, stating wood burning emits more CO₂ per unit of energy than fossil fuels and creates a "carbon debt" that takes decades to repay.
- **Health & Ecology:** The plant emits particulate matter and toxins near environmental justice communities (Old North End/Winooski). "Whole tree chipping" was criticized for harming forest ecosystems and reducing flood protection.

- **Economics:** Analysis suggests the plant lost over \$34 million over 10 years and that the cost of generating power there (\$96–\$99/MWh) is significantly higher than market rates or wind/solar alternatives.

Policy Critique:

- The presenters criticized the "Net Zero Energy Roadmap" for excluding power generation and the airport from its goals.

5. Candidate Forum: State Senate (Chittenden Central)

Candidates: **Elaine Haney** (Essex Junction) and **Nikhil Goyal** (Burlington)

Elaine Haney: Emphasized her twelve (12) years as a local official and her role in creating the City of Essex Junction. Her priorities include:

- **Education:** Regional approach to consolidation that respects communities.
- **Healthcare:** Expanding "Dr. Dinosaur" coverage to all adults (Universal Primary Care) and exploring dental/vision/hearing inclusion.
- **Housing:** Expanding programs like CHIP and reforming Act 250 to reduce building costs.

Nikhil Goyal: A sociology professor and former advisor to Senator Bernie Sanders. His priorities include:

- **Healthcare:** Universal Primary Care to remove insurance middlemen and implementing reference-based pricing at hospitals to prevent price gouging.
- **Economy:** Addressing the cost-of-living crisis, property taxes, and energy bills.
- **Social Justice:** Protecting immigrant neighbors from ICE and rehabilitating 10,000+ units of dilapidated housing through a State Land Bank.

Q&A Discussion: Both candidates addressed the drug crisis, advocating for more treatment beds, re-establishing a state psychiatric hospital, and a regionalized approach to social services. Goyal noted he is open to researching forced treatment in light of the fentanyl crisis, while Haney stressed the need to protect civil liberties.

6. City Council Updates

Presented by: Councilors **Melo Grant** (Central District) and **Laura Sánchez-Parkinson** (Ward 3)

- **Public Safety:** Councilor Grant reported successful recent drug trafficking arrests that disrupted "problem houses" on Grant and South Winooski Streets. However, she noted this has caused activity to shift to other areas like the "Top of the Block" and near the state building on Pearl Street.
- **Budget:** The City is currently in budget season. Department presentations and line-item documents are available on the city website for transparency. The final vote is expected **June 15th**.

Community Events:

- **Old North End Cleanup:** Scheduled for **May 30th** at the Sustainability Academy (SA) and the Integrated Academy for the Arts (IAA), featuring dumpsters for residents to dispose of large items.

- **Art & Culture:** A Mrs. Secoy public art gift is being recommended for Battery Park.
- **Other:** Central City Little League Community Night (next Wednesday), South End Get Down (May 15th), and the City Marathon were highlighted.

7. Public Forum

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

- **Clark Street Resident:** Expressed deep concern over a massive increase in drug-related activity on Clark Street over the past week, questioning their ability to continue living there. Councilor Grant acknowledged the concern, attributing some of the shift to the closure of other problem houses and the exhaustion of "cold weather" motel program days.
- **Charlie Messing (College Street):** Reflected on the history of deinstitutionalization and suggested the need for positive skill-building programs for those on the street rather than just "playing whack-a-mole" with encampments.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:18 PM.