

Ward 1 NPA Meeting Minutes - 6/10/26

Prepared by Zoom AI w/ Rob Gutman

Attendees

Richard Hillyard	Angie Chapple-Sokol
Julie Springer	Jonathan Chapple-Sokol*
Elaine Haney	Carol Livingston*
Caryn Long	David Cawley
Gary Golden	Mark Demers
Pardu?	Sophie Quest
Matt Price	Lisa Lax
Martine Gulick	Jean Hopkins
Karen Paul	Sharyl Green
Nikhil Goyal	Peter Lackowski
Tanya Vyhovsky	Sharon Bushor
Evan Horne	Rob Gutman*
Sarah Morris	Allie Schachter
Carter Neubieser	Barbara Turnbull
Breck Bowden	Charlie Giannoni
Linda Bowden	

Quick Recap

This was the Ward 1 NPA meeting on June 10th, where residents gathered to discuss local issues and hear from state Senate candidates. The meeting began with introductions from steering committee members and residents, followed by "Speak Out" topics where participants discussed e-bikes and electric scooters on sidewalks, concerns about UVM's impact on Burlington housing, and updates on the Winooski - Burlington Bridge project. The NPA reported spending their \$3,000 surplus on an ice rink liner for Schmanska Park, 500 stickers, and 100 flyers for neighborhood outreach. City Councilors Allie Schachter and Carter Neubieser provided updates on the city budget, tax reform proposals, and the comprehensive Plan BTV 2050. The conversation ended with a candidate forum featuring four state Senate candidates: Elaine Haney, Tanya Vyhovsky, Martine LaRocque-Gulick, and Nikhil Goyal, who answered questions about UVM's role in Burlington, affordable housing, transparency, charter changes, immigration issues, and environmental protection.

Summary

Ward 1 NPA Meeting Updates

The Ward 1 NPA meeting covered several key updates and discussions. Jonathan Chapple-Sokol announced the collection of questions for State Senate candidates, while Dave

Cawley promoted the continuation of monthly potlucks in Schmanska Park. Sharon Bushor raised concerns about inclusionary zoning and e-bicycles, suggesting the steering committee schedule discussions with planning commissioners in the fall. The NPA discussed spending surplus funds, including purchasing a rink liner for Shemanska Park, ordering 500 stickers, and planning a fall welcome-back barbecue.

City Council Update

Allie Schachter, the East District City Councilor, provided updates on the city budget process, recent consumer protection ordinances, and the comprehensive Plan BTV2050 initiative. Carter provided an update on tax reform efforts, explaining that a special committee formed to discuss proposals ultimately voted to send two proposals back to committee, including a \$30,000 universal homestead exemption and a 5% property transfer tax on properties valued at \$1 million or more. The committee accepted Councilor Traverse's homestead exemption proposal verbatim but was unable to vote on individual proposals when the majority voted against splitting the question. Carter expressed disappointment at not getting the opportunity to put these proposals before voters in the November special election and committed to building political support for the property transfer tax to be potentially included on the March ballot.

Community Planning and Initiatives Discussion

The meeting focused on community planning efforts and updates on local initiatives. The planning advisory group was discussed, with emphasis on engaging community members through various outreach efforts including work with trusted voices and the Aging Council. The group addressed questions about the purpose of planning, explaining that it serves as a roadmap for decision-making, guides implementation of major initiatives like housing development, and must be updated every seven years due to state law requirements. Updates were provided on funding for the Heineberg Center, with discussions about a potential \$38,000 increase, though final decisions were still pending. The meeting also covered school building tours starting next Saturday and upcoming legislative changes affecting education, including Act 41 which impacts education from preschool through high school.

Vermont Education Reform Legislation

The meeting focused on education reform legislation in Vermont, with participants discussing a new bill (H.955) that allows voluntary school district mergers rather than requiring them. The discussion highlighted concerns about the timeline for implementation and the impact on smaller districts like Winooski. Participants also addressed the transition from a weighted student funding model in Act 74 to a foundation formula, which could affect funding for English language learners and students with IEPs. The

conversation included updates on successful legislation protecting sanctuary school policies and creating sanctuary spaces for immigrants. The conversation ended with introductions of four candidates running for State Senate in Chittenden County, who were scheduled to answer questions about their platforms and approaches to various issues including education, healthcare costs, and housing affordability.

UVM Housing Strategy Discussion

The candidates discussed strategies to address UVM's impact on housing in Burlington, with a focus on restructuring the Board of Trustees to include students, faculty, and community members. They agreed that UVM needs to take responsibility for housing its students and modernize existing accommodations, while also supporting increased state funding for higher education to reduce reliance on student tuition. The candidates also emphasized the importance of funding legislation to avoid unfunded mandates and discussed approaches to implementing transparent communication with constituents, including regular community outreach and engagement.

Vermont Senate Primary Candidate Forum

The meeting featured a discussion with four candidates running for the Vermont Senate, focusing on affordability and key policy issues. The candidates shared their plans to address housing shortages, healthcare costs, and education reform, with particular emphasis on reducing property taxes and creating economies of scale through regional cooperation. They also discussed their opposition to recent vetoes regarding wetland protection and salt usage regulations, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection and flood mitigation. Each candidate concluded by outlining their priorities and calling for support in the upcoming election.

The meeting focused on discussing community engagement strategies and approaches to local governance. The participants, including candidates Elaine, Tanya, Martine, and Nikhil, shared their plans for connecting with constituents and addressing local concerns. They emphasized the importance of direct communication with residents, responding to emails, holding regular coffee hours and meetings, and building relationships with elected officials across different communities. The discussion also touched on the challenges of implementing charter changes in Burlington, with participants suggesting ways to increase local control and bridge the rural-urban divide in Vermont's governance.

The discussion then focused on the impact of the Trump administration's changes to green card application practices and how Vermont can respond. The candidates discussed the limitations of state-level action due to federal supremacy, while highlighting various

legislative efforts and supports for immigrants, such as the proposed Office of New Americans and language justice initiatives. They emphasized standing in solidarity with immigrant communities, strengthening constitutional protections, and working with state attorneys general to challenge federal overreach.