



**Public Information Hearing re: March 2, 2021 Annual City Election
Ballot Questions - Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 5:00 pm
VIRTUAL MEETING
2/24/2021**

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING RE:

MARCH 2, 2021 ANNUAL CITY ELECTION BALLOT QUESTIONS

REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Paul

Max Tracy

Brian Pine

Jack Hanson

Perri Freeman

Jane Stromberg

Sarah E Carpenter

Zoraya Hightower

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eileen Blackwood

Nathan Lavery

Amy Bovee

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA



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The meeting was called to order by City Council President Tracy at 5:05 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Stromberg, SECOND by Councilor Paul, to adopt agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

2.01 Approval Of School Budget For Fiscal Year 2022

Mr. Lavery provided an overview of and highlights from the school budget for the 2022 fiscal year. He said that there are a number of operating reductions in the budget. He said that there are modest increases to increase communication and support for multilingual families and for strategic plan implementation. He said that the main expenditure increases are due to the relocation of students to classrooms downtown, and that some of those costs will be covered by state funding. He said that estimated tax impacts include a 6.88% increase in property tax rates, but that the final rate may be lower due to more funding from the State.

3. PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGE TO ADD MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF AIRPORT COMMISSIONERS

3.01 Proposed Charter Change To Add Members To The Board Of Airport Commissioners

Councilor Paul provided a summary of the ballot item, which would increase the number of Airport Commission seats from 5 to 7. She said that the current commission includes 4 seats for Burlington and 1 seat for South Burlington, and that the proposed change would add 1 seat for Winooski and 1 additional seat for Burlington.

4. PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGE TO REGULATE THERMAL ENERGY SYSTEMS

4.01 Proposed Charter Change To Regulate Thermal Energy Systems

Councilor Hanson said that this ballot item, if passed, would give the City the ability to create policies to regulate thermal energy systems in new and existing buildings, including the ability to assess a carbon impact fee. He noted that policies in this area would be for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gases in the City. He said that any sort of carbon impact fee would need to go before the voters of Burlington at a Citywide election prior to being enacted. He said that other policies to regulate thermal energy could be enacted under this charter change. He noted that this doesn't prescribe any particular policy but authorizes the City to create policy within this domain.

5. PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGE TO ADOPT RANKED CHOICE VOTING FOR CITY COUNCILORS

5.01 Proposed Charter Change To Adopt Ranked Choice Voting For City Councilors





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Councilor Hanson explained this ballot item, saying that it would change the way that elections are conducted for Burlington City Councilors. He said that it would change from the current system where a candidate needs 40% of the vote to be declared winner and a runoff if more than one candidate has 40% of the vote, to an instant-runoff ranked-choice voting system. He said that this would allow voters to rank the candidates in order of preference. He said that it would change election processes in three ways: it would change the threshold of victory, would allow for the ranking of candidates, and would include an instant runoff process instead of a separate runoff election.

6. PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGE TO PROVIDE PROTECTIONS FOR RESIDENTIAL TENANTS FROM EVICTIONS WITHOUT JUST CAUSE

6.01 Proposed Charter Change To Provide Protections For Residential Tenants From Evictions With Just Cause

Councilor Pine said that this proposed charter change would amend laws to regulate the termination of residential tenancy. He said that this proposal would require rental property owners to have just causes to eliminate a tenancy. He noted that there are some exemptions from this revision, including exempting sublets, in-unit rentals, owner-occupied duplexes and triplexes, units being withdrawn from the rental market, and units in need of renovation or rehabilitation. He added that there are a number of provisions that would mitigate potential impacts on residents and property owners, including adequate notice, reasonable relocation expenses, a reasonable probationary period, and to limit unreasonable rent increases that could be deemed de facto evictions.

Chapel Sokal? Asked about the property being taken off the rental market and that the landlord can terminate the tenancy. He asked if the charter change would apply to rentals being taken off the market and converted into short-term rentals or Airbnbs. City Attorney Blackwood replied that the City is grappling separately with the issue of rentals being converted into short-term rentals or Airbnbs. She also noted that this charter provision would allow for the adoption of an ordinance, but that a specific ordinance has not yet been created.

7. AUTHORIZING CANNABIS SALES

7.01 Authorizing Cannabis Sales

Councilor Carpenter said that the State passed legislation in the fall of 2020 to legalize the sale of cannabis products, and that under that legislation (Act 164), the State has said that a community can choose to opt in to allow for the sale of cannabis in their community. She noted that this change would not be implemented until October 2022, and that the soonest that retail sales could begin in the state is in May of 2022. She said that if the community opts in to cannabis retail sale, it would need to set up a cannabis control board and corresponding ordinances.

8. ADVISORY QUESTION RE: CLIMATE JUSTICE IN BUILDING DECARBONIZATION

8.01 Advisory Question Re: Climate Justice In Building Decarbonization

Councilor Hanson noted that this advisory question directly relates to Item #3 above, and that it would advise City Council to enact policies in the realm of thermal energy regulation that would benefit low and moderate income and BIPOC community members.





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9. ADJOURNMENT

9.01 Motion to adjourn

MOTION by Councilor Hanson, SECOND by Councilor Carpenter, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

The City Council meeting adjourned at 5:36 PM.

RScty: AACoonrad