Ward 5 NPA
DPW Conference Room, 645 Pine Street
Thursday, February 18, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

AGENDA

7:00 - Introductions and Welcome

7:05 - Update: City Market South End Progress - John Tashiro, General Manager, with Allison Weinhagen, Director of Community Engagement, and Pat Burns, Expansion Project Manager

7:35 - Ballot items and other city-wide updates and discussion - Mayor Miro Weinberger

8:05 - Presentation: City Climate Action Plan (https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/public/capprogress/) - Jennifer Green, Sustainability Coordinator, Community and Economic Development Office

8:30 - City Council Update with Councilor Joan Shannon

Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes – Full Notes

Date of Assembly: 2/18/2015
Start Time: *(Commence):* 7:00 PM
Finish Time: *(Adjourn):* 9:10PM
Location: DPW Building, Pine St.
Notetaker: Nate Orshan

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Alec Bauer
Bill Keogh
Elisa Nelson
Nate Orshan

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(1) Update: City Market South End Progress - John Tashiro, General Manager, with Allison Weinhagen, Director of Community Engagement, and Pat Burns, Expansion Project Manager

Summary:
Shared details of the proposed South End market design, including pictures, truck delivery schedules, and next steps.

John Tashiro and Allison Weinhagen

John: Thank you for your tremendous support over the years.

We were here at the September 9 NPA meeting last year. Since then, we've been busy. We've also visited every other NPA. We have requirement to share specific info with Ward 5 NPA.

Please fill out the attendance sheet. We also have design sheet and development FAQ sheet.

The Coop's grown over the years. We're operating at 3X our anticipated annual sales! We've been looking for a second location and would like to draw some traffic away from downtown location. We Identified the South End as a location with a lot of our customers. We're conducting due diligence on the current site. We're also always looking for other locations to serve the community, e.g., the Old North End.

We anticipate drawing 20% of sales from current store to the South End location, so, with additional sales, $12M sales.

Hoping to break ground this summer. Looking to open in 6/2017.

Allison: We meet once a week with consultants and architects. Here's what's we're planning for parcel. (Shows images of proposed exterior design.)

It will be a 23,700 sq. ft. store plus 7,000 sq. ft. mezzanine. It'd be just west of Champ Pkwy. The building will be parallel to Briggs St.

114 parking spaces, larger than downtown store.

Store will be ~2K sq. ft. larger than current store.

There's extra room to south of building that would let us build it out. We'll be subdividing out 1.6 acres on the south side.

Interesting upgrades and accessibility: About 70 bike parking spaces (which might require an amendment to accommodate). We'll have more bulletin board space. Also a nice, big "welcome" area and a children's play area. There'll be a living wall, a green wall.

Most traffic will be entering from Briggs Street. We re-did the parking lot design to be able to accommodate CCTA buses if possible. We're still in conversation with the City about it. We'd hope that Flynn Ave would *start* being served by the CCTA (it isn't currently).

We'll have a spot outside for "parking" dogs. We'll have space for a bike tune-up station. We'll have space for community murals. We'll have metal panels on the outside printed with pictures or renditions of pictures that represent the history of the SE.

2 planned entrances: Flynn & Briggs corner and in parking lot (southeast corner).

Our truck traffic will be using Flynn Ave. Our traffic study looked at the additional traffic that'd be created. It's be less truck traffic and more car traffic than current: 180 vehicular trips per high-peak hour. We think it'll actually be less.

Why less truck traffic: Barrett's currently trucks a lot of road salt from that current location.

Q: The property technically isn't owned yet. My understanding is that Barrett would be removing the salt that's on the property currently, and it's be consolidated with a place in Shelburne.
John: Vermont Railroad Systems (the current owners of the property) is moving. They're on schedule to relocate to Shelburne.

Q: What about traffic for delivery?
Allison: That's 30 trucks/week. The receiving dock will be opened from 6am to 3pm, but most deliveries would be completed by 10am.

Q: Will you make traffic study available to public?
Allison: Yes.

Q: Will there be parking meters along Flynn?
Allison: The City would be the one to put in parking meters. We're putting in the max parking. We also think there'll be a lot of bike and pedestrian traffic.
Q: So how do we get that question addressed?
Allison: Chapin Spencer, dir. of Department of Public Works (DPW).

The back 1.67 acres will probably be sold to another organization. And all the current buildings there will be moved.
John: We're being mindful that the organization we sell that parcel to has a complementary use.

Q: If Champlain Parkway doesn't come through, will people be able to come up Lyman Ave?
Allison: If the Parkway comes through, those streets dead-end. Otherwise, they'd stay the same. Our traffic study was done looking at BOTH scenarios.
Q: I don't want cars cutting through our neighborhood.

Q: Foster St. is how a lot of kids walk to Champlain School. There's no sidewalks. Who would we talk to?
Allison: That's for DPW. But when we talk with Chapin, we can bring up issues of traffic calming.

Q: Overview of process moving forward? The tangible next steps?
Allison: The zoning amendment will be on the City Council agenda for March 7. You're welcome to attend. We'll also be going through this process for our permits.
John: You can also contact us with your concerns.

Q: I'm somebody who might walk to the new store, but we have concerns about traffic. It's worth thinking about coordinating it with the Parkway. You'll be miserable in 2019 when the Parkway is being built. For example, when we put through stormwater construction in Bristol, the merchants *hated* that construction. You're going to back traffic up more during the Parkway construction. For our neighborhood, 2017 is the wrong year to introduce it, seeing as the Parkway is going to be under construction the next year

Alec: Can you all come back again to answer more questions?

John: Sure!

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(2) Ballot items and other city-wide updates and discussion
- Mayor Miro Weinberger

Summary:
Presentation of the five ballot items to be voted upon on Town Meeting Day (March 1), and discussion of the recent vehicle-for-hire ordinance and of traffic issues.

Mayor Miro Weinberger

There are five ballot items I want to talk about. I'll be voting "Yes" for all except the second item.

#1: Approval of School Budget for FY 2017. Relative to some past years, it's uncontroversial. The District's done a good job coming up with a budget that's about a 2% increase. It's Superintendent Yaw Obeng's first one here, done under tough circumstances. I'm fully supporting the budget. My sense from City Council is that I didn't hear major concerns raised.

#2: Re the section of North Ave that's currently four lanes. We had the North Ave Corridor process which we've worked on for 18 months. A lot of citizen involvement. At the end of it, there was a long report. Many recommendations were common-sense. But there's a controversial pilot program.

Even though City Council voted to go ahead with this pilot project, temporarily turning four lanes into two lanes with a turning lane and bike lanes, a group of New North End (NNE) citizens have worked hard for a couple of months and gathered over 2,000 signatures to oppose it. I and the City Council felt we couldn't ignore this, though I won't be voting for the ballot item and I hope it doesn't succeed.

Q: I heard that if you support the bike lane, you have to vote "No"?
A: Yes. If you think we should support the pilot, you would vote "No" on #2.

I'm committed to taking into account public opinion in the NNE. I don't know if we'll have a second ballot on it, though. DPW is working through the ways in which they'll measure public opinion. It *could* end up on the ballot again, but that's not necessarily what's going to happen.

Chip Mason, Councilor, Ward 5: For the record, I'm voting the way you are.
Joan Shannon, Councilor, South District: My policy has been forever that "four lanes is not good".
Mayor: That's the reason all this effort's been expended: It's a terrible part of the Avenue to cross on foot. There are a lot of crashes. Motorists don't like it when there are bikes there.

Q: So is there an end date to the pilot project? Does it then go back to what it was?
A: If the pilot program succeeds, then it would be committed to in the long term. For example, there's an improved crosswalk section that'd have an island to make it a safer crossing. Where that island goes depends on whether we go with a four-lane or a three-lane configuration. The timeline: The plan is to get it started this summer after school's out when we're not at our peak traffic season. It'd last through, ideally, a year or close to a year. It could come out earlier if it looks like it's not working out.

Next 2 items:
#3 Police Commission
#4 Parks commission
These are charter change proposals: a "Yes" means that both those bodies have their membership increased from five to seven members. The additional members would be appointed.

Why do this? It's part of a strategic plan focused on diversity and equity issues in municipal government. One recommendation was that we increase the size of these bodies to allow opportunities for diversification. There were proposals to go even bigger, but I and the City Council came down on seven being an optimal size.

Commissioners' terms aren't limited. We've had many commissioners who've served numerous terms. In the past, if you didn't screw up, you almost always got reappointed. Now there's the presumption that you'd be re-appointed, but if the board's lacking some form of expertise or diversity, it's not automatic that you'll get re-appointed.

#5: This is a section of the charter that deals with directing the city staff and commissions with when they should finish the auditing process. It calls for the audit to be complete every year no later than five months after the end of the fiscal year. The City hasn't been able to do this for years, given the complexity of everything, so this section's most significant revision would be to change the deadline to make it consistent with other parts of state law for the summary of the audit to be in the annual report on Town Meeting Day.

We've worked hard to try to accelerate the audit. For example, this year we had a strong audit. Everyone involved thinks this change would be good.

We're also proposing in #5 that we'd only print a summary of the audit and make it clear where you could go online to see the full audit. Otherwise, #5's more of a "financial housekeeping" measure.

In other news:

The vehicle-for-hire ordinance passed on Tuesday. Our regulatory system for vehicles-for-hire has been flawed for a long time. We've had chronic problems with governance and with the system itself. We' just haven't had enough vehicles on the road. There've been persistent complaints about pricing and availability.

We started the process of reforming governance. And then we lost Benways...and then Uber arrived and announced they'd started operating. After a getting a temporary agreement with Uber, we handed off a draft ordinance to Chip Mason, who had a bunch of public meetings, and he made it into a stronger ordinance.

I think that now we have a stronger agreement: More of these types of vehicles online mean less drunk driving. It's an interesting thing we've just come through. It's an example of innovation causing disruption; I didn't think that banning Uber would be the right way to go, and just to "lazily" make them legal would not treat the incumbents fairly. I think we've improved the system, but time will tell.

Q: What are the consequences of auditing Uber's driver background checks?
A: We did something at the governance board level: we're consolidating three boards into one with statutory importance: It'll set fees and play a role in ensuring that new positions created by the ordinance will work. We'll have an enforcement officer doing spot-checks in a way we never have been able to in the past.

We're now allowing a company to do their own background checks, where the city used to do it. The worry is that it'd be just self-certification. But we lay out clear standards that the background checks need to meet. They also have to hire a nationally-accredited background check company. And they have to certify under penalty of perjury that they're doing the things required by the ordinance. Then there are audit rights: two times per year we can audit the books of any of these companies, and it can be done on demand, not just on a schedule.

I think it's unlikely that a company that commits to these new regulations would break them.

I think the public wants these services and that the risk is very small.

Alec: I think Uber is a good service.
Mayor: There's also crowdsourcing for rating cabbies.

Q: What's the Southern Connector status?
A: The status is unchanged from the public meetings. Target date's the summer of 2018. We're still working through it. We have the permits in place. We have a full team working hard on it every day. I think we're on track.
Q: If it doesn't happen and City Market comes into the South End, I'm concerned about the new traffic. What do we do about slowing that traffic down?
A: The development process takes traffic issues very seriously. It'll be forced to answer questions such as those.
Q: You could, when you do the ordinance on 3/7, change the times a bit. You could do yourself a favor and have the coop wait a year or two.
A: I appreciate it. It's an interesting point.

Q: Re the Shelburne Road rotary project. What happens if that happens same time as Parkway project? Could be a nightmare?
A: That's a legitimate concern. If it gets to the point that there'll be a conflict, we'll deal with it.

Q: Are all the traffic studies independent, e.g., the Pine St. project across from Dealer, plus the Shelburne Road Rotary, plus the Parkway?
A: They're not. I would expect that, when a project's traffic studies are being studied, regulating bodies will examine the traffic issues in context of all the projects. And don’t forget, it's not certain that all three projects would happen simultaneously, but if they do, we'll look at their cross-impacts seriously.

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(3) Presentation: City Climate Action Plan Progress Report (https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/public/capprogress/) - Jennifer Green, Sustainability Coordinator, Community and Economic Development Office

Summary:
Shared study timeline and overview of data-collection results.

I work for the City in the CEDO office doing waste and "transportation stuff", and then also at Burlington Electric Department (BED) doing "energy stuff".

There was a recent Conference of Parties (COP21), a gathering of 183 world leaders in Paris saying, "We see climate change as a threat, at we'll cap emissions".

Burlington was first city to come up with a climate action plan in 2000. We had an updated climate action plan in 2014.

We collected baseline data in 2007 re waste, did it again in 2010, and will do it again in 2016, so we'll be able to see where we're going with emissions.

We look at household emissions, government emissions, airport emissions.

We're doing pretty well on everything but one sector: transportation. Our data shows electricity emissions slowly decline, same with solid waste, but transportation continues to grow. Arguably, nobody "owns" it, and we all need to be working on it. So that's where we're at for now.

Q: How can we all help?
A: We collected over 200 strategies, which we boiled down to 38 key strategies. The "Way to Go" challenge is big on the list. We're also looking at a new employee commute strategy for City employees.

Interestingly, now that BED's 100% renewable-energy sourced, there's becoming more encouragement for households to go BACK to using electricity for heating.

BED's Smart Meters are up and running. It's still figuring out how to allow people to see their own electricity use in real-time. Stay tuned. We haven't figured out a way to maximize the way we use this tech.

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(4) City Council Update
- South District Councilor Joan Shannon and Ward 5 Councilor Chip Mason

Summary:
Discussed updates, including the vehicle-for-hire ordinance, Burlington Telecom, and Waterfront-related issues.

Chip: Re vehicle-for-hire ordinance: Council didn't vote on what's in the paper re the limited scope of the taxi audits. That'll be happening in the future. Re fares, we defer to the Taxi Licensing Board's expertise.

Q: Surge pricing allowed?
Chip: Yes, the ordinance allows it. We heard from a number of people who specifically work at peak times, motivated by the surge pricing.
Joan: I'd be interested in hearing people's opinion. Right now we hire a third-party to do background checks. I feel comfortable with that. When the memorandum of understanding (MOU) comes, Uber won't be giving us the background check data.
Mason: Some call Uber bullies in this process. I think they were honest and up-front re what they were willing to do. They said so in the council floor and in meetings. They're sensitive about what they think is confidential information. Their concern is that a competitor would be able to get that info via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

Q: In most industries, you need a professional license. Are taxis different?
Chip: There's no state license, but our ordinance sets forth requirements: No felony conviction, at least 21 years old, pass a background check. You do get a license through our taxi board, but you don't have your skills tested.

Joan: We're working on criteria for sale of Burlington Telecom (BT). If we sell within three months of the agreement, the city will reap a higher return. Our goal is to do the sale by January 2018. We're working on the criteria by which we'd judge offers. Local ownership or at least local presence with local customer service is one criterion. There are also public service board criteria. Also the Bluewater agreement, whereby we're leasing now from Bluewater, not Citibank.

Right now, if someone offered $20M, the first $6M would go to Bluewater, and it'd take a share of proceeds.

Nobody wants to sell to Comcast, and they haven't been knocking on our door. But then would the entity that buys it turn around, and "flip it" to Comcast? We're working on that.

Re any would-be co-op buying, they'd have to come up with a set amount of money up-front and have to be well-capitalized to be able to keep investing in the technology. Ultimately, the largest share that Burlington can own (because we have to share whatever we get with Citibank 50/50) is 25%, because we get 50% of proceeds, less the $6M. Once we get the criteria set, and it's approved by the City Council, then we'll start soliciting offers.

Q: What's the definition of "local" in this context?
Joan: At a minimum, it's having a local presence, but it would be relative to the other potential buyers.

Chip: It's intended to preclude a national company such as Time-Warner.

Chip: Re updates for Burlington Town Center mall, we're in the process of working through the development agreement with the owner. There'll be continuing discussions.

Q: Re Uber, the issue goes beyond Uber. We're on the cusp of a sharing economy. My concern would be, Does the City have in place protocols for these types of scenarios, e.g., background checks? Managing relationships? Uber bugged me from the beginning re how they were throwing their weight around with the "take it or leave it" stuff. I'd like to have protocols for the City to establish these relationships.
Chip: It's a meaningful discussion. Interestingly, a lot of other services don't even *do* background checks. For example, Airbnb. (As the Council, we tend to deal with putting out fires instead of being proactive.)

Q: Any movement on Waterfront projects? Sailing Center? Marina?
Chip: Re the Sailing Center, I don't think anything's holding it up. Re the new Moran plant: No developments, though we did have an Executive Session on that on Monday.
Q: Wasn't there a time limit on funding with the tax increment financing (TIF)? Do we need an extension?
Chip: We're not in the "Danger Zone" yet. Five years from now, it may be a different conversation.

Q (from a Champlain College employee): Re Uber: We're concerned with safety of our students, so having a background check's important to us. At a time in which we're trying to attract and keep young people in Burlington, we want to be able to embrace these disruptive technologies.
Q (from a Champlain College student): I'm a CC student, and I've seen various students who *are* taxi drivers in their spare time.
Joan: Once we come to the table and we're voting on an MOU, we can't renegotiate it on the floor. The issues are, Are you comfortable with the City of Burlington *not* knowing who all these drivers are? Is Champlain College comfortable with it? The students' parents?
Q: I've been dealing with a place called Compliance Depot, and I always get nervous when I see that its address is in Las Vegas.
Chip: We may pick company X, and Uber may pick company Y, but they'd both be accredited.

Motion to adjourn adopted at 9:10 PM.

<END>

City of Burlington
Ward 5 NPA Meeting
February 18, 2016

Attendance & Contact Information

Please print clearly; thank you!

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Attendance & Contact Information

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