



Draft Agenda

Ward 5 NPA

February 11, 2018

1:50pm-4:00pm

DPW Conference Room, 645 Pine Street

Schedule:

1:50-2:00 - Open Forum

2:00-2:30 - Session 1 - City Council: Chip Mason and Jesse Warren

2:30-3:15 - Session 2 - School Board: Susanmarie Harrington, Mike Fisher, and Nicole Twohig

3:15-4:00 - Session 3 - Mayor: Miro Weinberger, Infinite Culcleasure, Carina Driscoll

To submit questions to for candidates go to <http://tiny.cc/W5NPACandidateQuestions>

The Steering Committee Members for Ward 5 are:

Bill Keogh, bkeoghsr@yahoo.com

Alec Bauer, awbauer@gmail.com

Nate Orshan, natosongs@gmail.com

Elisa Nelson, nelsmith@burlingtontelecom.net

Ben Traverse, bentraverse@gmail.com

Joanna Grossman, joeyinvermont@gmail.com

For more information about Wards 5 NPA visit their CEDO webpage

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/Neighborhood-Services/NPAs/Ward-5-NPA>



Keep Current on their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Ward5NPA>



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Attendees

NPA (choose one)	Wards 1 & 8	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 4 & 7	Ward 5	Ward 6
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Date of Assembly : 2-11-18 Location: DPW

Please return to your convenor, Phet Keomanyvanh - CE
or email to cedofd@burlingtonvt.gov

- 1 Jane Hendley
- 2 Marcia Gustafson
- 3 Gisela
- 4 Sue Van Buren
- 5 Andy Simon
- 6 Dwight Aseltine
- 7 Paul S. Webb
- 8 Debbie Landauer
- 9 Kirstin Boehm
- 10 Eric Boehm
- 11 GALANDRIQUE RICHMOND
- 12 Debra Blumberg
- 13 MICHAEL HEALY
- 14 RUSS ELEK
- 15 Mike Fisher
- 16 Rachel Fisher
- 17 MARK BARLOW
- 18 Andy Vota
- 19 Barbie Alsop
- 20 Wendy Hess

- 21 Kim Villemare
- 22 Nancy Owens
- 23 Donal Dugan
- 24 Katrina Plenard
- 25 Ann H. Usdelt
- 26 Dominic Weiss
- 27 Roz Grossman
- 28 Deanna Allen
- 29 Ben Trause
- 30 Kit O'Connor

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Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes – Full Notes

Date of Assembly: 2/11/2018

Start Time: (Commence): 2:00 PM

Finish Time: (Adjourn): 4:30PM

Location: DPW Building, Pine St.

Notetaker: Nate Orshan

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Alec Bauer
Joanna Grossman
Elisa Nelson
Nate Orshan
Ben Traverse

Note from the notetaker: These notes should not be construed as a verbatim transcript of what was said. I made a good-faith effort to transcribe as best I could, but I necessarily had to omit or elide some verbiage but otherwise get points recorded as faithfully as possible. The full video for the meeting is available online at <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-5-npa-meeting-31>.

(1) Open Forum

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Summary:

Andy Simon offered forms and encouraged people to register to vote and get others to do the same. Ward Clerk Elisa Nelson encouraged additional volunteers for Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 6, 2018.



Alec Bauer prepares for the NPA meeting



Alec Bauer starts on lighthearted note, asking how many people are interested in "a vibrant, successful and livable city that fosters and encourages diversity, growth and affordability?" (Everybody raised their hand)

Andy Simon: I have voter registration material, change-of-address, and absentee ballot request forms available! 80% of registered voters did not vote in the last local election!

Elisa: Ward Clerk for Ward 5; I run the election. There's also same-day registration at polls, but please use Andy's paperwork, too. We could always use more help on election day. Please see me.

(2) Candidate Forum for City Councilor for Ward 5 - Jesse Warren, Chip Mason (Incumbent)

Summary:

Candidates answered questions about how they differentiate their candidacy and their specific qualifications; how to improve on the public trust for matters such as the sale of Burlington Telecom; how to manage city priorities re development opportunities associated with the Champlain Parkway and the Railyards Enterprise; the state of public process in Burlington issues; their opinion on the NPAs role in city governance; what the role of the Council should be re marijuana legalization; what delights, surprises, or otherwise inspires them re Ward 5 and the South End; and what they will do if they do not win the election.



Jesse Warren, Chip Mason, Alec Bauer

Opening Statements

Jesse: Thank you to steering committee and all of you. It's wonderful what we have, engagement we have. Background on how I got to Burlington: I first came with partner Katrina; I was working for Chris van Holland and she was working for Bernie in Washington. It's important to talk about perspective I bring. I moved around a lot as a kid. My mom was trying to find an affordable home. That kind of childhood affected my life. I talk to families in the South End that are going through the same thing. It's too expensive; they're being forced to think about leaving. I know how that sort of financial struggle can impact a kid's performance at school. When we talk about achievement gap, I feel for those kids, because that was me. I want to make sure that doesn't happen to other kids. We'll be talk about specific issues this afternoon.

Chip: This is inspiring and scary. We've never had a turnout like this. Special thanks to Alec and Elisa. I'm a lifelong Burlington resident, grew up in New North End, lived on Scarff Ave for last 20 years. I have kids in BHS and Edmunds. I've served and dedicated myself to this community as a coach, a board member to non-profits, and serving city on Tax Appeals board. Most recently, I've served as City Councilor for

last six years. In practice I work with businesses trying to prosper. I'm proud of the work I've been involved with. We've turned our finances around, worked collaboratively with unions, adopted walk-bike initiative, put bike lanes on North Ave, and adopted form-based code to incentive dev in downtown core. I've facilitated City Market and King Street Center development.

Question

Your platforms have a fair degree of overlapping issues: supporting local business, promoting affordability, preserving the environment, walk/bike access being a few similarities....how do you differentiate your candidacy and what specific qualifications do you bring to the table that will promote your success?

Chip: That's hard; this is the first opportunity we've had to say. What I do bring to table is a lifetime of Burlington experience, relationships with civic leaders, non-profits. It DOES take a little bit of time to learn how to get things done.

Jesse: The approach I'm trying to bring: We give people a seat at the table. When we're talking about development, education, are we listening to the people who are going through these issues? I'd like to see people at the table hashing these ideas out. I don't see it happening now.

Question

The optics around the Burlington Telecom sale displayed some deep concerns from the community with the way in which the city council conducted its affairs. How would you seek to improve on the public trust on this or similar matters regarding council transparency and open government?

Jesse: My perspective is informed by national scene. There's a national movement for municipally-owned broadband. It pained me to lose the asset, though I do understand it was a tough process. Let's talk about how we can preserve our digital rights for years to come. That's what's on my mind. I'm glad to see we're making progress in Montpelier to secure these rights, but that's what I'd like to see us do now. We could have done the process a lot differently. It's about involving people in the process rather than just forcing.

Chip: That's probably the issue I and other councilors spent the most time on over six years. I could not have scripted a worse possible process than the one that came out with the 2 AM vote. I'm not sure how to improve transparency on that; that was a fast-moving train with a hard deadline. Now that the decision's been made, how do we best move forward? Net neutrality's baked into the cake thanks to some councilors and me. Re transparency: I understand the desire for a public option. Due to legal constraints with agreements we had already signed, we couldn't go with it. I don't see how there could have been more transparent.

Question:

From a land-use perspective, how do you propose we manage city priorities regarding potential development opportunities associated with the Champlain Parkway and the Railyards Enterprise?

Chip: The Champlain Parkway has to get done. Construction begins a year from now. Other than final right-of-way issues, it'll be going through now. We're waiting for the Parkway before improving Pine St. The Feds and State have said we can do nothing

to change without throwing things into chaos. We're also moving on the Railyard Enterprise project. I'm supportive.

Jesse: It's hard for me to pin down. We don't want to kick the can down the road. I've spoken to folks in the Addition, and they want to see it done. There are folks in other parts of the Ward who are concerned re the dead-ending of Pine St., how traffic on Lakeside and Pine will be affected. We need to have groups like the Pine Street Coalition at the table; even if we don't take their ideas, by having them at the table and working out the ideas together, that's how we'll come to a better decision and better conclusion.

Question:

Do you feel Burlington has enough, too much or not enough public process on large issues affecting the community?

Jesse: I speak to that in all my answers. I'm going to repeat myself again: These groups need to be at the table making decisions with us. We're not going to take every idea from every citizens, but by talking to these groups, we're more inclusive. That's where I see us falling behind.

Chip: I'll acknowledge we're not perfect re public process, and we welcome input. We try to do our best. It's important on big issues to continue our fairly elaborate processes. PlanBTV South End was a total of 60 meetings? That speaks to efficiency...and there are still people upset.

Jesse: I think of it as public collaboration, not just public input to hear the perspective.

Chip: I'll echo that. I've attempted to post to social media and solicit input. Honestly, there's not a lot of input that flows back. We do respond to every email and phone call.

Question:

Some have suggested letting NPAs take on a larger role in city governance, including by providing an opportunity to weigh in on Department Appointments. What's your take on this and the role of the NPAs in general?

Chip: I love our NPA. I've been impressed with the operation. I've not attended other NPAs. I'll also say that the City Council used to be less powerful. I'm slightly concerned with the NPA usurping the role of the Council.

Jesse: I think we should be empowering the NPAs more than we are. We'd need to strengthen them as a whole re how can we get more people out to them. Ward 2/3 NPA's a good example, i.e., where food's served. When people feel like they have a say and power, that empowers people to be more involved and care more. When people know their input's going to matter, more will get involved.

Question:

Legal marijuana is coming to Vermont. What is your take on the city council's role in crafting common sense City legislation around this controversial issue, from a zoning, personal liberty or economic perspective?

Jesse: It's great we're moving in this direction. We should be looking to be responsible about it, how it'll affect our kids. We should be looking into taxing marijuana. I think it'll be a great opportunity to our economy and the city as a whole.

Chip: This was asked at the Mayoral debate (at Contois Auditorium, 2/5). We're NOT in a tax-and-regulate system yet. If that does get passed, then the Council and administration will have to update our regulations, for example, "Are there locations?", "Are too many in a location too much re safety?" It's premature at this time to consider.

Question:

What delights, surprises or otherwise inspires you about Ward 5 specifically and the South End in general?

Chip: I love living in the South End. I thought I'd end up in North End. Just our eclectic mix of shops, access to downtown, walking to children's schools. We haven't touched on PlanBTV South End. Development's happening today without a plan. I look forward to digging into PlanBTV South End.

Jesse: I come from background that combines work in arts/music industry and government. I love our artists and the arts. I love the families living right alongside all these things. The fact we have all these things in one place...The South End has everything we could want.

Question:

City council or bust? If you do not prevail in this election, will you still engage with and provide service to the community and if so, how?

Jesse: Absolutely! I'll touch on some of this in my closing statement as well. Burlington's become a place that has become my home. I'll support whoever gets on the council and mayor!

Chip: If I'm not re-elected, I'll delve into school issues. I'm concerned about school funding and would like to help in that regard. And I'll get back into coaching.

Closing Statements:

Chip: Thank you to everyone who showed up! I'm not a professional politician; I'm just a guy who grew up here. I'll continue to listen to all of my constituents. I'm committed to fiscal responsibility, broadening the tax base, funding schools, helping the vulnerable. I want to reconstituted a Cost Control committee for our school system. I'm committed to moving forward on PlanBTV South End (the Champlain Parkway, a park on the barge canal...there's a lot of good stuff on there).

Jesse: I'm also not a professional politician. I didn't grow up here, but I do care about this city. There's no place I'd call my home other than Burlington. There's a lot of frustration and anger and division; despite all that, we're doing well re the strength of our community. When we do start to involve everyone in our decision-making processes, then we'll reach our full strength. Wages, affordability, achievement gap: we need to get to the core of these issues. THAT'S how we'll get to full strength.

**(3) Candidate Forum for School Board Commissioner for Ward 5
- Susanmarie Harrington (Incumbent), Mike Fisher, Nicole Twohig**

Summary:

Candidates answered questions about how they would market to State government the need for increased school spending; their opinions of statehouse proposals re changing school funding mechanisms (i.e., property tax vs. census-bases vs. sales-tax based); how they would work with State government to mitigate funding formula disparities; what are the most important roles of a school board commissioner; how to move the school board and the teacher's union together for the betterment of the schools and our community; their approach to coalition-building with people with whom they disagree; what the school board can do to encourage safe and respectful use of social media among the student body; and what they will do if they do not win the election.



Susanmarie Harrington, Mike Fisher, Nicole Twohig, Alec Bauer

Opening Statements:

Susanmarie: I'm the incumbent. I'm an educator, parent, citizen. I'm well-qualified. I've been a teacher or administrator for over 25 years. I'm a collaborator and a policy wonk. I've worked hard to work on ways to support every student, supporting our teaching staff, creating stability for district and making finances sustainable. I know teachers are crucial. The board and the Burlington Education Association (BEA) need each other. I've been working hard to lay the groundwork. We don't all have the same experiences in our schools. We fix problems together by having hard conversations and being willing to sit with discomfort. It's an inclusive movement that requires empathy and compassion.

Mike: I was on board of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). I'm running because I saw first-hand how decisions led to strike. My goals: (1) Treat teachers and staff as partners. (2) Citizens of Burlington should be treated as partners. (3) Board should focus on strategy but... There's currently the appearance of support for superintendent. I'll listen, question, advocate. I'll listen to what the data is telling us. I'll advocate on behalf of Ward 5.

Nicole: I've lived in Ward 5 basically 17 years. I grew up in New Jersey, worked in higher education and communications, have done a lot of work with lower-income Vermonters, and have worked with the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF). I've also worked on the national level with school and campus safety and with LGBTQ communities. We haven't brought people of Burlington together to invest in education. The school district is the heartbeat of community. It's an economic driver. We need creative, new ideas re funding, partnering with business community and developing sustainable systems.

Question:

School systems far and wide are perpetually underfunded. How will you market the need for increased school spending combined with appropriate reallocations of funding to the community in terms of return-on-investment (ROI)?

Mike: Funding's complex. Look for opportunities such as leveraging pilot funds or looking at more grants, at same time, work with Montpelier to change the funding formula. We're restricted currently. Re ROI, Superintendent Obeng says he wants data-driven decision. That's easy to say, hard to do. Obeng said magnet schools aren't working, but parents had OTHER data. ROI needs to be led by board and tracked year-to-year.

Nicole: We have a statewide funding formula. It's also weighted: lower-income students get weighted differently, get additional funding. Problem is Act 60 and Act 68: the numbers haven't been adjusted in last 20 years. We're penalized for our high number of diverse students. Nationally, Vermont's lower in funding for English Language (EL) learners. Funding probably comes from Montpelier. If we switch to an income-based formula, people will be penalized. There are substantial problems.

Susanmarie: There's a fair bit of commonality on our answers: the current funding doesn't serve Burlington and Winooski well. As a board, we have to educate the City re how education's funded. We've been connecting with area legislators to help constituents understand. I'm optimistic re the shift to income-based vs. property-based tax.

Question:

What do you think of the recent statehouse proposals regarding changes to school funding mechanisms: property tax vs. census-based vs. sales-tax based?

Susanmarie: Cautious enthusiasm. The devil's in the details. Census-based is under consideration re special education funding. Right now districts are reimbursed at 60%, and there's a lot of paperwork. Census-based would risk taking funding away from vulnerable students, but it comes with money for how the district would reimagine funding.

Mike: I literally wrote down, "Devil's in the details." I'm looking for consistency. I want to hear third-party analysis before we can get behind any of the proposals.

Nicole: House Speaker Mitzi Johnson's proposing income-based but also Sales & Use and Rooms & Housing tax, a diversified stream to offset the volatility of just doing income tax. Until everything's flushed out, it's hard to advocate for just change.

Question:

Funding formulas and challenges with Montpelier are an ever-increasing issue facing Burlington schools. How will you as a commissioner work with our statehouse delegation to help mitigate this issue?

Nicole: We need to do more than we've been doing. Bring in partners like Rights and Democracy (RAD). It's not enough to say, "We as the school district": we need the advocacy of teachers and parents to say that we're not being treated fairly by Montpelier. We're not a 90%-white school district.

Susanmarie: School's been doing some of what Nicole's saying. Needs to continue. There's an opportunity to build a new relationship with BEA.

Mike: I'm sorry this is boring. We all agree! We're fighting for limited dollars. I hear districts say, "We're different!" We're all fighting over the same pot of money. The key is having that united front. Turmoil's been having us focus on each other fighting, so we can't stand as a united front.

Question:

What do you believe are THE most important roles of the school board commissioners, and how are you uniquely qualified to satisfy those roles?

Mike: What should a board member be doing? #1: set the strategy of the school district. They also represent their ward and all the voices, even those who don't have time to write in. Also oversight re how the district's being operated.

Nicole: I believe that role is to communicate with the public, in addition to being fiscally responsible. The implementation of policy governance has caused widespread failure, leading to a lack of transparency and an overly powerful superintendent, weakening information flows. I have problems with policy governance.

Susanmarie: There isn't clarity in the community re what our superintendent is responsible for vs. what the board's responsible for. I'm always thinking, "how is what I'm doing going to make the board better?"

Mike: Re policy governance: No person's all good or bad. City Market uses it, too. It's about the application of it, how it's used. The question is, "Is the board getting the information it needs? Is it coming only from superintendent?"

Nicole: There's a difference between a co-op using it vs. school boards. There's a lot written about it. It's a false equivalence.

Susanmarie: Any governance system is as good as the people who are using it. Policy governance mandates that the board reflect on its own work.

Question:

How do you propose the board and union move forward, together, with the betterment of the schools and community as top priority?

Susanmarie: There are a couple of ways to think about that. After last year's strike, we committed to a relationship improvement process. We also need to not have labor negotiations be the ONLY way the board and union view each other. That's why

we've invited the BEA to join us in Montpelier advocacy. Policy governance asks how do we interact with the community. I hope we'll have a more intentional approach to connect board members with the schools, a more structured connection to have commissioners understand more what the lived experience in school buildings is like.

Nicole: Concept of rebuilding relations: We have an ENTIRE guidance department that quit due to bullying. We have 54 grievances in our district that have gone unresolved; most other districts have only a handful of grievances! We have a culture of silence that goes from the top down from bullying to harassment. People are scared to speak for fear of being retaliated against. "Rebuilding" is a bait-and-switch falsehood that's dishonest to everyone. We need to move to a culture of safety where teachers and students aren't afraid to come to school. It's time for a shift.

Mike: I agree, I've heard from teachers and staff re the climate in the district. I agree with Susanmarie, but the board has NOT done that. To impose working condition is the OPPOSITE of what you're saying. You can't wait till the contract negotiations to have the communication. The board is going to be significantly different next year. It needs to reach out to the union and work with them BEFORE the contract negotiation. The board has not reached out yet. It needs new people and a new attitude.

Question:

What is your approach to coalition-building with people you disagree with and how do you plan on integrating with new board members on polarizing issues?

Nicole: I've been working with people running in a different ward, so I already have relationships with them. We have a lot of the same concerns. We're excited by what we can do. We need to bring more people in to the process. There are certain things that are important, like having a budget that reflects the values of the district.

Susanmarie: I build coalitions by taking a long view. I'm always curious about people's opinions. Running a school district is like watching a river go by. The way we do future things depends on what goes by in the past. Also, let's not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Mike: It's important. That each of us speak to ourselves. You let people speak and listen to what they're saying. It's 12 people. You have to compromise.

Question:

Re social media, similar to our council question earlier but more specifically: if we as a community aren't modeling it, what can the board do to help encourage safe and respectful use amongst our student body?

Mike: I'm on Facebook and do occasional Twitter. There's that adage, "No one's been convinced based on a Facebook post"; it happens person-to-person. But it is a good tool for sharing info and sharing your perspective and your opinion. But if you set out to shout, that's when it devolves.

Nicole: I'm trained in behavior-change campaigns. Social media's an ever-more important thing. Sometimes you do have to have those different conversations in social media. They may be uncomfortable, but THAT'S where they're having them. Sometimes people don't want to do the one-on-one. It takes all kinds of settings.

Susanmarie: After Ferguson, I thought, "I need to spend more time following Black Twitter." Just being able to listen to political discussions have helped me understand the limits of my own understanding. It can help us bridge differences and understand.

Question:

If you do not prevail in this election, will you still engage with and provide service to the community and if so, how?

Nicole: I've been on ...for four years and on finance committee meetings. It's critical that we pass the budget every year. I intend to keep doing that no matter what happens. I'll keep advocating to pass the budget every year.

Susanmarie: Being on board has reduced my volunteerism; I'm a moderately active parent volunteer nonetheless. I've been involved in youth mentorship. I'm committed to volunteering my time. I'm all-in.

Mike: I've done some coaching, but most has been on PTO at Champlain, was VP, then President. I did a good job of building the PTO that does a lot of good at that school. If I don't win, I'll continue volunteering my time.

Closing Statements:

Nicole: Thank everyone for coming out. Please reach out to me! I'm all in. My kids are young. I want to see the school district thrive. My experiences are different. I wasn't used to the lack of diversity in '99, but now I'm impressed with the increased diversity. We need to collaborate with teachers, paraeducators, businesses, higher-education partners. I was endorsed by RAD.

Mike: We're not that different. Ask yourself, "What characteristics do I want?" Judge us by our past actions. It's easy on social media to post what you want to happen; it's harder to do it. People are the core of the district. It's critical to build relationships with teachers and partners for that foundation of trust to be able to challenge each other. I've demonstrated that I'm a critical thinker, not a reactor. The power to drive positive change is in getting at least six other board members to agree with you and get the superintendent to implement it.

Susanmarie: I'll echo what Mike said. After three years, my values haven't changed, but I've seen the lived reality of the messy nature of the financial constraints. We need to build coalitions and partners across the community. This election isn't a referendum on what you think we should have done; it's on who you want to represent Ward 5. My track record on building good relationships speaks for itself. My experience as we move forward is something that will serve the ward and the youth well.

(4) Candidate Forum for Mayor
- Miro Weinberger (Incumbent), Infinite Culcleasure, Carina Driscoll

Summary:

Candidates answered questions about what they love and want to preserve about Burlington; what other funding options for providing community services are, aside from growing the grand list and tax base, while maintaining the city's unique character; what they would do to increase participation in our city elections; where the money for things such as affordable housing, better schools, preserving Memorial Auditorium would really come from; how the Mayor's office can promote a better, more well-funded, and less contentious district; and what their commitment and vision is for the NPAs' roles in the city.



Miro Weinberger, Infinite Culcleasure, Carina Driscoll, Alec Bauer

Opening Statements:

Carina: Thanks to the Ward 5 NPA. I believe it's the Mayor's role to get out. We're going through a transformative role. Change needs to be driven by people who live here, not private development. I'd also like to hear us handle public assets differently. I feel like schools are where we can't get it wrong. We need a stronger role from the Mayor's office. I'd also say there's so much more we could be doing. We're not doing enough for affordability and affordable housing. We have a growing senior housing, 800 on waitlist in cathedral Square.

Miro: We've made great progress. Re infrastructure: until recently, we were underinvesting in public infra. 76% of voters supported sustainable infrastructure plan; replacing proactively water lines; rebuilding three times the average of sidewalk replacement. We've got a long way to go, but we're on the right track. Re the parks and bike path: We've rebuilt five of the eight miles of our bike path. We're on-track to finish the total rebuild by 2019. We have great momentum right now; let's not go back to the failed policies of the past.

Infinite: My neighbors and my friends suggested that I take this lead and serve growing number of residents, in light of growing inequality and how low participation affects them. I see the opioid crisis and high housing prices all intersecting. I've been a community organizer for five years, working with schools on the edge of these crises. I've been able to have families partner with teachers and administration to

find solutions. This is the skill I would bring. The NPAs haven't been given enough resources. I serve on Ward 2/3 NPA and see that they're underutilized. I'd focus energy and resources on NPAs.

Question:

What do you love and want passionately to preserve about Burlington?

Miro: I love the waterfront in summer, love Church St. I've tried to turn these passions into initiatives, for example, the skate park, beach access, public safety. We've added new police officers and firefighters.

Carina: I'm a lifelong resident. We have tremendous public engagement. (Cites the Community & Economic Development Office, CEDO.) I worry that the shift in CEDO office accommodates development and investment. I love the vibrancy of our community. It does well when we're all engaged.

Infinite: I love some of what our legacy's been re community development and economic development. That's faded. I appreciate the reliance of people living below poverty line. I've learned from these people, that they're not the target of pity; they're where we should go to learn which direction city should go in.

Miro: Our policy's been pro-affordable housing. We've said it's unacceptable that the average city person is spending so much on rent. We've been pushing non-profits.

Carina: The City's commitment lately has been to accommodate market-rate housing, but there needs to be more affordable housing.

Infinite: Affordable housing hasn't been built outside market-based development. We haven't built public housing in the country since 70s. States and municipalities need to step up and build more.

Question:

Develop, grow, and build the grand list and tax base so we can use the funds to cover our social services: This seems to be Burlington's trajectory right now. What are our other funding options for providing necessary community services while maintaining that which many believe to be Burlington's unique character?

Carina: CEDO's fully staffed up. It's a question of priorities, not always money. Who is the person you're electing standing with, and how are they prioritizing the resources of the City. CEDO could be focused on bringing people together to determine new uses of our priorities, for example, senior housing: We've many partners we could bring around the table, for example, Cathedral Square, Homeshare, bringing seniors in, bringing realtors in . It's a different ethic and use of our resources.

Infinite: Develop, build, and grow our working class. That would be my approach. Workforce housing and growing the livable wage are key components. We build the capacity for people in our community when we support self-employment, co-ops, small businesses, then we're better able to build a durable economy that's not vulnerable to the market-based approach of the past six years.

Miro: Building grand list's always going to be an important issue; it's by far our biggest source of revenue. A big reason we're seeing a property tax increase for our

schools this year is that the rest of Vermont's seeing a grand list going in the OTHER direction. But there are always opportunities, and City government can be creative and innovative. An example this week: we're getting a new revenue source from the University of Vermont (UVM) and Champlain College, which will put \$6 million into our sustainable infrastructure plan, something they haven't done before in a comprehensive way like this, to improve streets, public infrastructure.

Carina: Re growing the grand list, there's the assumption that these large projects will create tax revenue. We are seeing that, but using Tax Increment Financing (TIF) dollars for sidewalks and roads around these new developments ties up future tax revenue for the life of the bond. Re the Mall Redevelopment project downtown over the next two years, 75% of new education taxes will be going toward the bond. I don't think the TIF met the incentivizing of development.

Miro: The schools and the City will be getting hundreds of thousands of dollars as additional revenues from day one as soon as the project goes forward. The question is, use TIFs to keep other new revenues for the City for infrastructure investment (as we've done for decades) or send the money to Montpelier to be spent around the State. TIF's one of the reasons we have a great waterfront, and now it'll be good for downtown as well.

Question:

Participation in our city elections is at an all-time low. Why do you think this depressing news is the reality of our time and what would you do about this as a candidate and/or as mayor?

Infinite: That's a primary reason I'm running, giving Burlingtonians a different choice: Between people who run the City as a business and politician vs. someone running as a community builder and organizer. Have to meet people where they are. When people feel they don't have a choice that'll make a difference, they stay home. For example, NPAs one space we can grow and engage people year-round. People will come out when they feel they have something meaningful to vote on, especially re ballot items, which we often don't understand because of how complicated they are.

Miro: I don't believe the premise of the question's quite correct. Engagement ebbs and flows from election to election. That said, voter turnout is something we care about, and we've done some things recently to increase turnout, for example, same-day voter registration. Burlington supported that change even when other municipalities didn't. Speaking more broadly about this administration's commitment and public engagement, we came in when public trust in City Hall was shattered, and very little was moving forward on a range of issues due to that lack of public trust. From Day One, we've understood that nothing's more important than earning that public trust. We try to do that in big ways: 1. We're a very accessible administration. The idea that I or other City government isn't accessible isn't correct; if you call for a meeting, we'll get you in quickly. 2. We're transparent with putting data about what we're doing out into the public via BTV Stat effort, BTV Data effort, SeeClickFix.

Carina: We're a city in the 40 thousands, and when we have a high turnout, it's 10 thousand. It's not enough, and we need to keep working on that. I'm campaigning how I'd run the City: engaging with people where they are. It's not about welcoming people in; you've got to do outreach. We've been everywhere in the City, and I've learned a tremendous amount I didn't know. Re running City Hall, we need to pack

CEDO with idealists and visionaries, push them out from their desks and say, "Go out into the community and find the creative people and organizations who want to make amazing things happen and BE the resource for them." Then we'll start to do things, engage the citizens, and we'll see the turnout increase. We'll see the examples that cities across the country want to follow, because we are a city that leads the way. I want to look back in 10, 20 years and say we took some chances and are leading the way.

Question:

Affordable housing, better schools, a new high school, lower taxes AND preserving Memorial Auditorium to name a few: where is the money really coming from and how do you plan to make it happen?

Miro: This takes us back to why it's important that, unlike much of the rest of the state, we're a vibrant, growing, dynamic city. Re affordable housing, my background's in affordable housing. 15 years in Habitat for Humanity, a Southwick Yonkers nonprofit, for and with nonprofits in Vermont and New Hampshire. We have a very proud record of building or preserving over 300 permanently-affordable, low-income homes here in Burlington, which stacks up well against anyone at any time in our history. We've stayed focused on that and have been pushing for other types of housing for all incomes and ages. Again, this is something that the nonprofit community has endorsed with the "Building Together" campaign and that the City Council's endorsed with a unanimous vote for the City's Housing Action plan. Too many places in the country have put up walls and made places unaffordable to too many. It's quite concerning that my opponents in this race, just as this strategy's starting to work –we're seeing vacancy rates go up and rents level off– we're hearing "let's go back, let's throw out these successful policies and let's go back to the old policies" that were overly narrow and that created this problem.

Carina: We're in the age of Trump. In '81 we elected a mayor when Reagan was President. This is a critically important time for cities to figure out how they're going to be a progressive city that IS moving forward despite the challenges that are coming from our federal government. When we talk about affordable vs. market-rate housing, what we're seeing being developed in the City right now is vastly more expensive than what is already available to the people who live here. We're about to have the largest building in Vermont, 14 stories. It includes commercial, residential space that we haven't been given the numbers on, but because of a signed agreement with the hospital, we know we're looking at \$29/sq ft. Anyone in business who rents square footage would recognize that that's very high. \$15, \$16/sq ft, that might be about right, but we're adding \$29/sq ft commercial space and very expensive apartments. We have to recognize that affordable housing being added in our community is being driven by the nonprofits in our community. A City CAN be doing more than we're doing today, including some progressive policies that we're not using. Re leveraging city-owned parking lots, we use one for Champlain College's Eagles Landing, student housing downtown. We use another surface parking lot to allow a developer to build a hotel. We can be leveraging those lots for affordable housing, using them and not selling them off. We could be doing more with tax leniency and zoning leniency.

Infinite: There are fundamental, structural changes that need to happen at the city and state level, starting with school tax, which is heavily burdening property. I'm a proponent of legislation moving away from property tax to income tax, because that's a better marker for ability to pay. Just because you bought a house ten years

ago doesn't mean you can afford the tax for schools now. As Mayor, I'd advocate for that in Montpelier. Not sure how the Mayor's been advocating for that. There are also structural issues re subsidies that we give away to big developers. There would be a cost savings there. We could be using that money for something else. Burlington is by and large a rent-seeking economy; if you have space to rent, you're in good business. If you're not a small property owner without a lot to sell an empty parking space, you have to find a different way to make a living. So we need to take a hard look at the structural way folks are able to build a local economy.

Miro: We were at risk of losing close to 300 hospital jobs that had been downtown for decades. I'm the kind of Mayor that, faced with losing these jobs, did fight and pushed hospital to keep them downtown. I'm happy to say they will have a 60,000 - 100,000 sq ft presence; probably more jobs than ever in the redeveloped building when it's complete, paying a competitive, downtown rate. Any mayor who wouldn't fight for that would be making a huge mistake.

Carina: I support the hospital employees being downtown. I am concerned that we're talking about the hospital paying \$29/sq ft AFTER it puts \$4.6 million into fitting up the apparently raw space that costs \$29/sq ft. I support the hospital being downtown, but I think we could have negotiated harder, and that would have been a benefit on behalf of the people who live here.

Infinite: A Community Benefits Agreement would have created the space for, not just promises, but holding developers accountable and being mindful of the almost 50 jobs lost at Macy's. That's where a lot of my concerns are: The folks on the ground who get up and go to work every day and who are one day going to get up and not have somewhere to go.

Question:

Back to school funding. The Burlington School District isn't a City department, but clearly it's a huge financial priority for the entire community. How can the Mayor's office help promote a better, more well-funded, and less contentious district?

Carina: The Mayor's office needs to play a role. It's critical right now. We have a lot of issues. The ones who suffer are the kids in the district when morale is low. It is not an easy problem, but one the Mayor needs to jump in. We need to collaborate and bring people together to see what is going on in our schools and why we are having such a hard time with morale in our schools. Let's talk about school financing for a minute. The unified PTO recently sent out a communication, and I've also made it a priority to talk about in this campaign, that we've had a shift in tax dollars due to the tax financing education law. First we stopped sending over a million dollars in school pension fund payments from the City, and we did not do anything to make up for that on the school side. And then there were federal cuts that hurt the schools, and in addition we had to stop sending \$1.4 million payments in lieu of taxes, the portion that our city charter, which is our governing document, said we were supposed to send over. There have been some steps taken to address this, but our School Board's had to make massive cuts over the last several years. Some of that is tied to the loss of this revenue as well as the federal revenue. We need to be doing more to address the fact that we lost that revenue. On the school side, that has been made up for to the tune of about \$450,000, but there's still a significant portion of that that has not been accounted for, but it HAS been absorbed into the City side of the budget, both as money in the Unreserved Fund balance, which drives our bond

rating up, and also as paying for Mayoral initiatives. I think we actually had a responsibility to decrease taxes on the municipal side to offset some of those increases we've had to see.

Infinite: That's a tough one. Before we start talking about improving the school district, the City needs to have its own house in order. To start on the payment in-lieu of taxes (PILOT) funds, it's really disappointing to see those funds taken away from the schools in the name of equity when actually it wasn't a very equitable process at all. What disturbed me the most was the way the Mayor's office started to use those funds, some of it in ways counter to the School Board's mission, in terms of equity and inclusion, in particular. Our schools are silos in a lot of ways; a lot of what's going on at Champlain Elementary is not connected to what's going on at the Sustainability Academy, nor is it connected to what's going on in the Integrated Arts Academy. That fragmentation is part of how the school has a difficult time and getting consensus; that pertains to the School Board as well. Also important that we understand how our School Board's constrained due to Montpelier politics. If elected as Mayor, I'd lobby hard in Montpelier so that we actually DO have local control on our School Board here in Burlington.

Miro: I am totally committed to the Burlington School District. I am a product of the Vermont school system, I married a kindergarten teacher, my mom was a kindergarten teacher in the New Hampshire school system for decades, my older daughter's in middle school and our younger daughter will be in kindergarten soon. Both as an individual and as a parent, I'm fully committed to the success of the Burlington School District, and certainly as Mayor I know there's nothing more important to the future of the community than strong schools. The specific issue with the PILOT funds are not a new issue, a four-year-old issue, that came about as a result of a settlement agreement between the School District and Agency of Education, saying that the PILOT funds cannot be used directly or indirectly by the School District anymore. When that happened, we worked very hard with the leadership of the School District to try to find a lawful way for the hundreds of thousands of those dollars to continue to flow in a way that would strengthen the schools, and we were complemented at the time by the leadership for the work that went into that. We have gone back repeatedly since then to try to find additional solutions, and those have been rejected by the Agency of Education. There will have to be a change in the law if people want to see this money spent differently. I'll actually be in Montpelier on Thursday on Local Government Day, advocating for H.795, which would change that law, and I welcome anyone who wants to join us to go down there and be part of that. What can't be lawfully spent on the schools we are investing in, yes, Mayoral initiatives to help our most vulnerable children, ages 0 to 3, in the Burlington Learning Initiative; to turn around the opioid scourge that we've lost too many of our kids to; and, to strengthen our library, we have invested in youth librarians and teen librarians. Those are valuable ways to help our kids right now.

Carina: Our unified PTO's looking for another million. We've come up with \$450,000, but what about the rest? We have heard cited that there is \$1.7 million in benefit to the school due to their bond rating going up, but that's making the decision for the City over the life of the bond, not \$1.7 million in the pocket of the School District. As far as the Early Learning Initiative, that went on for many years, that is a new program, a new \$500,000 source of funds for grants, and there are people in the community who are questioning whether that will be something of value, but that wasn't up to the School Board or District, it was up to the Mayor.

Infinite: To dig a little deeper into the PILOT funds and what the Mayor's office decided to do, it was to put people with guns inside of our schools, which is something our School Board decided to NOT do, i.e., to consciously pull funding from putting people with guns into our schools. The Mayor's office turned around and used those funds to put people with guns back into our schools, and that is a value that I feel very strongly about.

Miro: To clarify there, Burlington School Resource Officers, the program has been supported by the School District and by the City for many years. When funding was cut by the District for those Resource Officers, Chief Shirling thought it was an important program for general public safety and for the schools, and the City continued to pay for it and support it as a public safety measure. I don't believe it's accurate that the School District ever took an action against that. There were some disagreement among Board members, but the School Resource Officers have continued to be supported.

Question:

The NPAs have a long and storied history in the City of Burlington. What can you say is your commitment and your vision for how the NPAs can continue to collaborate with the City in fighting many of the issues that affect the community, whether it's voter turnout, public process, along those lines. This event, and many events like this take place all across the City on behalf of an all-volunteer staff of community members. So what's your take on NPAs' roles in the City?

Infinite: Under this administration, money was moved from the NPAs to our City Council. That is a fundamental problem, because we take resources and put them in the hands of fewer people to make those decisions yields outcomes are not what we want. Our NPAs could have translations, interpretation, childcare, transportation, meals, AND real decision-making power in our City charter, where we make resolutions at the NPA level, and they COUNT when they go to City Council. Right now we have one community development specialist / community engagement specialist to cover the whole city. We can afford to staff one community development specialist / community engagement specialist per NPA.

Miro: There's been no shift in funding away from NPAs in this administration. There was a shift sometime before I was Mayor, but in the last six years there's been no change. The City Councilor initiative is new initiative that we were able to add and create some new ways in which we can be responsive to the community. That's one of the things you can do when the City's finances are in good shape: you can make new initiatives, as we have in so many areas. NPAs are important and vital part of public engagement landscape. We do work very hard to support them. In the past six years, we've created an internship program to bring more resources to supporting the NPAs while also supporting the public engagement specialist. We reframed that position so that that position was responsible for engaging our New American and senior communities in a new way. We've expanded the way the city formally works to engage the public. I think it's one of the reasons that there HAS been this rebuilding of public trust over the last six years. Again: Through access, responsiveness, transparency, we have rebuilt that public trust, and we know this is working, because every time we've gone to the public over the past six years with initiatives to improve the waterfront or the downtown or restore our finances – every time we've had to go to the voters, all 17 times, the voters have supported these initiatives, often by very large margins.

Carina: The volunteers and the people at the NPAs who continue to remain committed should be congratulated for your commitment. There was a time when the NPAs were founded in the '80s where it was about decentralizing power, and there was a tremendous amount of money that the NPAs had input over when it came time to decide how to invest our Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) fund. It's just not true anymore. The fact that people still show up and remain committed is a testament to how much people WANT this to work. My feeling: If you empower people and give them input over budgets, people will begin to show up more. Furthermore, it's really about the ethic of starting with public outreach before you determine the agenda rather than developing the agenda behind closed doors at the small table in City Hall and then pushing the agenda out for "public input" at the NPAs. We need to be revitalizing participation in our community, and that starts in this room by coming here BEFORE the decisions are made and really taking the lead from the people who live here and putting that into practice as we develop our agenda for the City.

Miro: The CDBG program, which apparently was once distributed by the NPAs, is now with a different community group that has members that are appointed by the NPAs, and the NPA's still very much engaged in that process. That has been celebrated as a very grassroots, decentralized way of delegating out hundreds of thousands, millions, really, of federal dollars in a way that's very different from most communities. This administration has remained committed to that. We're also committed to engaging the public and getting ideas from the public. I don't know how you can do that more than the Public Engagement Action Plan for the waterfront, where we crowdsourced ideas from the public that we then ended up building with TIF dollars on the northern waterfront.

Carina: When we're talking about the NPA and the CDBG money, we have to agree that a lot of that money is really locked up at this point. It's checking the boxes of public process at this point when all the options are predetermined. There are a lot of great nonprofits that receive that funding, but we need to shake that system up to free up some of that money again, and we can revitalize that commitment. When I think about the public input process the (? app?) for the waterfront was somewhat of an example of an ethic of a highest-bidder process where even the Burlington Parks and Rec waterfront department had to participate in the process that determined that they would be able to develop a public marina, and we ended up with a PRIVATELY-run marina coming to Burlington. There's more to say but I'm out of time.

Infinite: The CDBG distribution process could be expanded to our PILOT funds, expanded to the City Council initiative, so that it's just not these small groups of people who are deciding how these public monies are being distributed.

Closing Statements:

Infinite: Thank you for coming out on a Sunday. As a community organizer, I'm a professional listener. We have this 80/20 rule where we listen 80% of the time and talk 20%, and we try NOT to take credit for things that we know took a lot of people to do. But what I will tell you is a story about a project that I worked on in Winooski for young kids who live in the Elm St. neighborhood and don't have transportation and have to walk to school in this weather. At my organization, we worked with these families in the neighborhood and in the Malletts Bay area to come together and figure out how to get the kids to school. The School Board and old-school

Winooskians weren't on board with it because it's a very low tax base in Winooski, and the taxes are rising up. So it took a LOT of work as a group, the Winooski community, to look at absentee and lateness data and tell stories and see what it's like for kindergarten kids to talk from the Elm St. neighborhood all the way up to school. And we were finally successful, the School Board found money to put in the budget able to get money for a pilot test run for this year and next year. So right now, young kids in Winooski are getting transportation to school during the coldest months of the year for the next two years. THIS is the work that I'm mostly passionate about, and this is what I intend to bring as a leader if I'm elected as mayor of this city.

Miro: Thank you all again for coming out this afternoon. For six years, I've talked a lot about fiscal responsibility, and I think that sometimes when I do people's eyes start to glaze over. I've heard other candidates suggest that "We've kinda done that and now can move on to more important things, things more essential to what Burlingtonians want". I don't see it that way. Here's why I think fiscal responsibility matters, it's an ethic that we need to stay committed to. Here's an example, when the Fire Department came and said, "We need to add a paramedics program to what Burlington offers when we send out firefighters to emergency calls"; when the fire chief came and said, "We have a problem with forced overtime, forced shifts. We need to add four new firefighters"; when the police chief came and said, "We need to increase our police officers if we're going to do policing right, if we're going to do these foot patrols that are labor intensive but get officers out on North Ave., in the Downtown, on Pine St., making relationships and keeping the community safer"; we were able to say Yes to all those initiatives and more, and we were able to do that without property tax increases. One of the reasons that my campaign has received endorsements from the Burlington Firefighters and the Burlington Police Officer's Association is because of these additions to public safety and other investments in public safety. This is one area of the city where this is an example where Received FD and PD association endorsement. We have real momentum now, the right team in place, the right leadership in place. It is not the time to change course. We have come so far on so many fronts over the last six years. Let's keep moving forward, not return to the problematic policies of the past. Thank you.

Carina: Thank you. Burlington has a choice in three weeks, and I want to take a few moments to tell you what it is I'm offering. I have experience in political positions, elected positions, and public service. I've also successfully run my business for ten years. I understand our City budget and obligations, and I will be a leader who maintains our commitment to fiscal responsibility, and we can do so much more with what we have by being creative and by bringing people back into City Hall, engaging people in our public processes as we determine our agenda. With me, you can count on knowing that you're going to be having a City Hall that listens and engages with people throughout the City. And there will be a shift to an affordability agenda, and a shift to making sure that these development projects are creating jobs for the people who live here. Rather than just accommodating private investment, we need to do the HARD work of making our CEDO committed to working closely with these developers to match with job training programs so that people who live here can gain job opportunities. You can expect transparency when it comes to our city business, whether it's with developers or otherwise. You can expect progress again for all of us, and primarily progress that is for the people who live here rather than private investment. It's time for us to move forward and enter Burlington's next chapter. I'm ready for this challenge, and I look forward to your support on Tuesday, March 6.

Meeting adjourned 4:30pm.

<END>



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes

NPA:
(choose one)

Wards 1 & 8	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 4 & 7	Ward 5	Ward 6
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Date of Assembly : **2 / 11 / 2018**

Start Time: (Commence): **2:00 PM**

Location: **DPW Building, Pine St.**

Finish Time: (Adjourn): **4:30 PM**

Notetaker: **Nate Orshan**

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Alec Bauer
Joanna Grossman
Elisa Nelson
Nate Orshan
Ben Traverse

Discussion Topics and Action Items:

(1) Open Forum

Andy Simon offered forms and encouraged people to register to vote and get others to do the same. Ward Clerk Elisa Nelson encouraged additional volunteers for Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 6, 2018.

(2) Candidate Forum for City Councilor for Ward 5 - Jesse Warren, Chip Mason (Incumbent)

Candidates answered questions about how they differentiate their candidacy and their specific qualifications; how to improve on the public trust for matters such as the sale of Burlington Telecom; how to manage city priorities re development opportunities associated with the Champlain Parkway and the Railyards Enterprise; the state of public process in Burlington issues; their opinion on the NPAs role in city governance; what the role of the Council should be re marijuana legalization; what delights, surprises, or otherwise inspires them re Ward 5 and the South End; and what they will do if they do not win the election.

(3) Candidate Forum for School Board Commissioner for Ward 5 - Susanmarie Harrington (Incumbent), Mike Fisher, Nicole Twohig

Candidates answered questions about how they would market to State government the need for increased school spending; their opinions of statehouse proposals re changing school funding mechanisms (i.e., property tax vs. census-bases vs. sales-tax based); how they would work with State government to mitigate funding formula disparities; what are the most important roles of a school board commissioner; how to move the school board and the teacher's union together for the betterment of the schools and our community; their approach to coalition-building with people with whom they disagree; what the school board can do to encourage safe and respectful use of social media among the student body; and what they will do if they do not win the election.

(4) Candidate Forum for Mayor - Miro Weinberger (Incumbent), Infinite Culcleasure, Carina Driscoll

Candidates answered questions about what they love and want to preserve about Burlington; what other funding options for providing community services are, aside from growing the grand list and tax base, while maintaining the city's unique character; what they would do to increase participation in our city elections; where the money for things such as affordable housing, better schools, preserving Memorial Auditorium would really come from; how the Mayor's office can promote a better, more well-funded, and less contentious district; and what their commitment and vision is for the NPAs' roles in the city.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.