Wards 1 & 8 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)
Agenda
February 10, 2021 6:45 - 9:00 p.m.
Zoom online meeting
Please click the link below to join the webinar:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84036123619
Webinar ID: 840 3612 3619

Facilitator: Hannah King Host/Tech support:CEDO - Liam Daugherty Minutes: Tom Derenthal

6:45 Sign on to Zoom online meeting Waiting Room (See below if you have problems)

7:00 Announcements & Introductions

7:05 Speak-out

7:20 City Council Update & Q/A: Jack Hanson, Zoraya Hightower, Jane Stromberg

7:45 School Budget review & update: School Commissioner Kathy Olwell

8:00 Candidate presentations: Jack Hanson - East District City Councilor; Kathy Olwell - East District School Commissioner

8:20 Terry Bouricious: Ranked Choice Voting ballot item

8:40 Jack Hanson, Bill Ward (City Inspector), Darren Springer (BED): Thermal Energy ballot item

9:00 Adjourn

If you have any difficulties accessing the meeting before, during or after, please feel free to contact Jonathan Chapple-Sokol at (802.777.3521; leave a message if no answer) or chapplesokol.npasc@gmail.com and he will walk you through the process, and troubleshoot any issues. Want to watch the meeting but not be in direct attendance? Watch on Channel 17 YouTube. You will be able to watch the livestream, without logging into the Zoom. And, if you're unable to tune in during the Wednesday meeting you can access the recording there, too!
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjLFn4BZd2Pa3H8l30gy_gZ3NL6orXcN

NPA Steering Committee
Tom Derenthal (Ward 1) tomd.npa@gmail.com , Carol Livingston (Ward 1) carol.livingston1951@gmail.com, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol (Ward 1) chapplesokol.npasc@gmail.com, Hannah King (Ward 8) kinghannah190@gmail.com

W18 NPA Minutes – Feb 10, 2021

Additional information about W18 and NPA meeting is available on our facebook page *https://www.facebook.com/Ward1and8NPA*

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7:05 Speak-out
7:20 City Council Update & Q/A: Jack Hanson, Zoraya Hightower, Jane Stromberg 7:45 School Budget review & update: School Commissioner Kathy Olwell 8:00 Candidates for office:

Jack Hanson - East District City Councilor;
Kathy Olwell - East District School Commissioner

8:20: Ballot item - Ranked Choice Voting ballot item - Terry Bouricious 8:40: Ballot item - Thermal Energy regulation Jack Hanson, Bill Ward, Darren Springer 9:00 Adjourn

Attenders:
Bill Ward
Carol Livingston
Caryn Long
Darren Springer
Dave Cawley
Derrick Lawrence
Faith Morgan
Glen McRae
Hannah King
Jack Hanson
Jane Stromberg
Jean Hopkins
Jim Barr
Jonathan Chapple-Sokol
Karen Vastine
Kathy Orwell
Liam Daughterty
Linda Bowden
Serrill Flash
Tom Derenthal
Zaraya Hightower
The meeting started at 7:00 PM

Announcements:

Hannah King

- Thanked those who worked long and diligently to put on the All Wards candidate and ballot item forum.

Dave Cawley

- Reported the Colchester Ave Safety Study continues. Items being considered include a raised bike lane, and parking changes. The East Ave / Colchester intersection is a challenge as is parking between East Ave and the hill. The next step is an option review on 2/18. Dave ill report back in March.

  Reference: https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/scoping/colchester ave-bikeways-parking-and-intersection-safety/

- Winterlude at Schmanska Park – Barn lights have been installed, the story walk and woods trail are both available. See https://oldeastendbtv.com/

Speakout:

Caryn Long

- Expressed concern about the care given to housing and the impact to neighborhoods. Part of the problem is the lack of timely inspections. We should have zero tolerance for slumlords. Johnathan
- Certificate of compliance [C-of-C] can be 1-5 years. Fully 25% of properties have C-of-C out of date.

Tom Derenthal

- Is there a limit as to cars parked at a house? Carol Long said front yard parking is not allowed at all. - Carol suggested inviting Bill Ward [Code enforcement] to a future meeting. Jim Barr
- Supported use of See-Click-Fix to report issues to the city.

City Councilors Report(s):

Jane Stromberg

- March ballots have been mailed out
- Ballot items are as follows:
  - Charter change - Adoption of Ranked Choice Voting [RCV] for City Council races. ○ Charter change - Provide protections for residential tenants from evictions without just cause.
  - Charter change - Airport Commission to include a Winooski representative
  - Charter change - Regulate thermal energy systems.
  - Authorizing retail cannabis sales
  - Advisory question: Deliver clean energy transition benefits to disadvantaged community members.
- Amtrack service Burlington to NYC will start later in the year.

Jack Hanson

- Support expressed - for a charter change giving the City regulatory authorization over

thermal energy systems
- Project - District Energy – Phase III work is in progress to use excess / waste heat from the McNeil plant to heat some building in the City. Partners include Evergreen Energy, VT Gas, UVM Medical Center and the City.
- Ordinance - Rental Unit Weatherization – An ordinance is being formulated that would enable the City to set standards.
- Ordinance - New Building Heat Source – New construction must use renewable energy for heating. In progress
- Ordinance draft – Responsible Contractor – WIP – wage classification and pay standards to be set
- Development – City Place – The City is working on a new agreement. The City will get new streets ASAP at no cost [these north-south streets were taken up by the previous building]. - Voting – Mail-in ballots are being requested to be returned by Feb 20.

Zoraya Hightower
- Rental Housing Inspections – are behind schedule. See-Click-Fix is an effective way to report issues.
- Police Issues
    - Staffing – The Mayor has requested an increase in uniformed officers as part of an interim plan. The plan included increasing community police officer count from 2 to 6, increase total officer count by as much as 10-12. Police Dept would include one CSL with the remainder TBD.
    - There are many opinions on the police force max officer count. The City Council wants to keep the current cap.
    - Negotiations include changing the cap for certain assurances, for example: to not lose the Domestic Violence Prevention Officer [DVPO] and some other positions. ○ Wants some of the police budget to go for Community Service Liaisons [to address mental health].
    - Zoraya meets weekly with the Mayor, the Director of Police Transformation, Racial Inclusion Director and Mark Hughes.
    - Jack Hanson expressed support for Zoraya's leadership, effort and accomplishments working on Burlington's law enforcement issues.
    - Caryn Long voiced that proactive safety and safety net is very important. ○ Carol Livingston expressed support for Zoraya doing a very tough job. ○ Johnathan expressed support for DVPO position, while recognizing there are competing needs in Burlington.
    - Jack - said traditional policing is failing and we need to lean in to get to a solution that works for all.
    - Jack – City Council approved funding for a public safety analysis. Public involvement is needed. Will be completed in April. This will be followed by broad outreach to get feedback from the community.
- NPAs – Zoraya is advocating giving NPA's more formal input City Council decisions.

School Budget review & update – Kathy Orwell

- Not much has changed since last month. There is possibility of more state funding, but no firm amount has been disclosed. Currently we're looking at 6.88% budget increase on the ballot. Budget is $95.5M which translates to per pupil spending of $17,069 which is 0.89% more than last year. A high level summary of the budget and tax changes is available here https://www.bsdvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/FY-22-Budget-One-Pager-Smaller Size.pdf

- Caryn Long – If downtown development moves forward, will TIF funding impact the schools. - Kathy Orwell – TIF projects across the country hurt schools and no one has defended Burlington TIF projects as not having a negative impact on school funding. We're adding more housing without sufficient taxes to pay for education / schools.

- Hannah King– TIF projects may take a long time to benefit schools, perhaps as long as 20-25 years.

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Candidates for office:

Jack Hanson - East District City Councilor

- Jack is running unopposed. Excited and energetic to be running again. Focus has been on climate change. We can play a leadership role. We need to push harder to decarbonize. Transportation carbon fuels are the two major areas. Street changes for safety and accessibility for different types of users. We're trying to shift away from the personal automobile for transit. Focus on Colchester Ave and Winooski Ave. Dealing with transportation demand management with employers. Decarbonizing buildings will be talked about later.
- Policing and racial justice are two other focus items.
- Housing – Two initiatives on Better resource on code enforcement. Take a hard line with landlords, who have an outsize influence although their numbers are modest. We need a new tone on housing.
- Advocate for RCV
- Tom D – What is the housing challenge? Jack – Housing is constrained and unstable. Healthy would be 5% vacancy, Burlington is at 2-3%. Renters have little choice and poor options in Burlington.
- Caryn Long – Likes updates at NPA and on FPF. The housing issue is visible if you walk the neighborhood. Too many landlords don't take care of their properties. Burlington is 60% rentals.
- Jack – WIP on rental weatherization.
- Jack – Appreciates the conversation that NPAs bring to the table.
- Angie – Appreciates responsiveness to problems and issues. 60% of housing is rentals. How many of these are students? Can UVM be more accountable?

Kathy Olwell - East District School Commissioner

- Commissioner for 4.5 years. Retired social worker. Co-chair of the curriculum and personnel committee. Curriculum is her first love. Literacy scores are sinking. We have a high % of children living in poverty. We need to ensure kids receive a good basic education. PreK is

important. Those without Pre-K are not prepared. They quickly fall behind.
- Personnel – Want the teaching staff to mirror the student body. We need to find, attract and importantly retain more POC teachers. We have a long way to go on this. - Funding - 20 years ago the state passed Act 60. However within a few years we had less funding to work with. The weights used to calculate equivalent pupils are wrong for Burlington and other towns. The state's 2019 study showed education is woefully underfunding education of children who live in poverty, use ELL and attend small rural schools. BSDVT with others have hired a lobbyist to push for equivalent pupil weight changes. State dept of education is looking a 3 year phase-in to changes, with the most important change, that accounts for poverty to be made in year 3. We need legislative support. The report would increase BSDVT funding by 17%.
- Tom D. – Will changing the homestead tax from property based to income based help Burlington?
- Kathy – Wants the focus on the equivalent pupil weights.

Ballot item - Ranked Choice Voting [RCV] ballot item - Terry Bouricious - RCV is designed to handle races with more than 2 candidates with split majorities and spoiler dynamics. Today, to win in Burlington requires a candidate to receive the most votes and a minimum of 40% of votes cast. When no candidate meets this criteria, the two candidates with most votes have a runoff. By eliminating candidates with the fewest votes and selecting voter's 2nd choice, RCV enables the runoff to happen instantly. This reduces the City's runoff vote expense and removes an advantage when one candidate can quickly finance advertising for the runoff. Since runoff elections typically draw fewer voters than runoff elections, RCV results in higher participation. RCV has been successfully used in many places. Its easy to understand and for voters to make informed choices. .
- Note: RCV authorization is only being requested for City Councilor elections.

Ballot item - Thermal Energy regulation Jack Hanson, Bill Ward, Darren Springer - Climate change is happening. To alleviate the worst effects, The world has to move away from C02 generating energy sources. While, Burlington Electric is net zero, but building heat and automobile energy has a critical dependency on fossil fuels. The City is asking for authorization to regulate building heating with the intent to accelerate a change from natural gas and other heating fuels to electricity powered heat pumps. Burlington Electric currently offers subsidies on heat pumps. All buildings existing and new will either heat with renewables or pay a carbon tax. One side economic effect shifting to electricity is that most BE revenues stay in the state. Only 25% of fossil fuel revenue stays here.

See the sample ballot for each ward here https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Sample-Ballots Warnings-and-Notices

The meeting ended at 9:08 PM