



Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly
Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Greek Orthodox Church, 600 South Willard Street

*Facilitator: Neil Groberg; Minutes: Annika Freudenberger; Greeter & Sign In: Peter Keating;
Cookies: Mary Esther Treat; Videographers: Champlain College Students Evan Treadgold & Shane Queeney*

- 6:45 Social time & cookies**
- 7:00 Overview and approval of agenda & November and December Minutes**
- 7:05 Champlain College & University of Vermont - Administration & Student Government Update**
- 7:15 School Update, School District Budget - Alan Matson**
- 7:35 School Commissioner Candidates: Stephanie Sequino**
- 7:45 City Councilor Candidates: Karen Paul**
- 7:55 Discussion on TIF Ballot Resolutions: Presenter- Nate Wildfire CEDO**
Other Ballot Items: Presenters Norm Blais, Barbara Grimes See specific ballot items at:
<http://burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Elections/>
- 8:25 Redistricting Ballot Item – For specific details see <http://burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Elections/>**
- 8:45 Mayor Weinberger- City Status, Position on Ballot Items and Tax Increase Proposal**
- 9:00 Other Business**
- 9:05 Adjourn**

Ward 6 Steering Committee:

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For information on accessibility, alternate forms of the agenda, including something on the agenda, etc., of the Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly, contact any of the Steering Committee members listed above. The Ward 6 NPA's strive for flexibility in planning before and during the meeting. Accordingly, the specifics of the agenda and the allocated times may change.

Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes Meeting of February 6, 2014

Drafted by Annika Freudenberger

We had a packed room and packed agenda at our February Ward 6 NPA meeting. Our agenda was almost exclusively dedicated to ballot issues with an appearance by Mayor Weinberger. As always, you can watch our meetings online: <http://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-6-npa-meeting-35> And for detailed information on ballot issues, visit <http://burlingtonvt.gov/CT/Elections/>

Champlain College kicked off the meeting with a couple quick updates. A new president was recently selected and he will be occupying the retiring president's home when he moves in. Construction on the CCM (Communication and Creative Media) Center – near Maple and Willard Streets – will begin in a few weeks. The project is expected to be completed by late August 2015.

Alan Matson, one of Ward 6's School Board Commissioners, had a couple updates as well. He explained that 9th grade English and Social Studies classes at BHS next year will no longer be "tracked" (grouped by ability) and instead students in these heterogeneous classrooms will have the option of earning honors credit. A couple of real estate transactions are moving forward and are being presented to a special finance committee.

Alan also discussed the upcoming school budget. The issue the board is facing is to keep education funding sustainable even as education inflation is increasing and federal funding is decreasing. These funding cuts affect essential elements such as classroom size. It's been a challenge to keep high standards of instruction and all current programs when funding sources are depleting. For more information on the budget, visit www.bsdt.org

Next, Stephanie Seguino introduced herself. She is running for School Board Commissioner to replace Jill Evans, who is stepping down. She is an economics professor at UVM and has done a lot of research on poverty and inequality. She believes we need to invest in education to have a vibrant city. She hopes to focus on a few elements: learning more about and working on new initiatives (for example, the Partnership for Change, new guidelines under Act 77), creating a set of indicators to measure change and success, and analyzing whether we are getting what we are paying for.

Karen Paul is one of Ward 6's current City Councilors and is running for reelection for the 4th time. She has a background in finance, accounting, and public administration. She is hoping to continue working on and finish work on important issues such as the pension and continue giving back to the city in which she grew up.

Next, Charlie Tipper, Nate Wildfire, and Mayor Weinberger discussed the PIAP (Public Investment Action Plan) and TIF ballot items. Essentially, the proposed changes are an effort to strengthen existing waterfront resources, resolve the northern waterfront proposal (through a new Moran Plant proposal),

and continue revitalizing our waterfront. This \$9.6 million investment will not affect the tax rate. The current Moran Plant proposal is to transform the current building into a mixed-use hub for the arts, maker spaces, green energy, recreation, event spaces, and various educational components. More information can be found at www.newmoran.org. If this ballot item is not approved, the Moran Plant will be torn down. The City has been trying to find a viable proposal for decades and this is the last chance to use the building. Other related ballot items include Waterfront Park upgrades, construction of a marina, improvements on the Northern waterfront, new initiatives in collaboration with ECHO, and a new home for the Sailing Center.

Norm Blais, current Ward 6 City Councilor, discussed the three proposed gun safety resolutions. These charter changes must first be approved by voters, then by the Statehouse, to be in effect. The first measure is to authorize police in domestic abuse situations to temporarily confiscate any guns in sight. The second is to prohibit guns in bars (or establishments with a liquor license). Third, guns stored at home must be kept in a locked location or have a trigger lock.

Barbara Grimes, Director of the Burlington Electric Department, explained the ballot item proposing the purchase of Winooski One, a hydroelectric plant in Winooski. It would provide 8% of Burlington's power. It is a renewable source of power so costs may decrease for Burlington residents.

Norm Blais returned to describe the redistricting plan up for public approval. Currently, the city is divided into 7 wards with 2 councilors each. The recent census found that the New North End is overrepresented in the City Council and the downtown/university area of Burlington is underrepresented. The new proposal creates 4 districts (not to be confused with House districts) with 1 councilor each. Each district is composed of 2 wards (8 wards total) with 1 councilor per ward. The total number of city councilors would be 12. Robert Bristow-Johnson spoke in support of the plan. This plan would keep most wards almost intact in size and location, and except for the Redstone area, Ward 6 would not be affected. He believes it is a good compromise to keep the size of City Council low, balance representation, and limit effects on residents. Michael Rooney, on the other hand, believes this plan unfairly affects other wards just to keep Wards 4 and 7 residents content. In addition, district councilors will have to campaign to double the population councilors now have to and because of the increased constituency there is the potential that they could become "super-councilors" and not all councilors would have equal authority.

Finally, Mayor Weinberger gave his perspective on a couple ballot issues. He supports the redistricting plan because he thinks it's the best compromise that doesn't change much for most people. It's the only plan that emerged with consensus. He thinks it's time to move on and deal with more pressing challenges. In terms of the TIF and PIAP issues, he urges citizens eager to see Burlington move in the right direction to vote yes.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, March 6th at the Greek Orthodox Church. We are urgently looking for NPA Steering Committee members – if we do not have at least two new members by June our NPA is in danger of disappearing. Please contact any current steering committee members or attend our March meeting if you are interested.