

Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)
AGENDA
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 7:00 - 9:00 PM
In-person at the Friends Meeting House, 173 North Prospect Street
And Zoom online
<https://zoom.us/j/96245939050>
Webinar ID: 962 4593 9050
Or by phone: +1 929 205 6099 ID= 962 4593 9050

Facilitator: Tom Derenthal

Minutes: Jonathan Chapple-Sokol

- 6:30 Welcome and Food: Sam Ayotte
- 7:00 Introductions
- 7:05 Announcements
- 7:10 Steering Committee Nomination/Election
- 7:13 Speak-Out - General Discussion
- 7:33 District Heat Resolution – Tom Derenthal
- 7:48 City Councilor Time – Zoraya Hightower, Tim Doherty
- 8:03 School Commissioner Time – Gary Golden
- 8:13 Burlington Neighborhood Code - Sarah Morgan, Office of City Planning
- 8:38 Drugs, Public Health, Public Safety – City Councilor Melo Grant
- 9:03 Adjourn

Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee

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To Mayor Weinberger and City Council of Burlington Vermont,

Subject: Burlington District Energy Environmental Impact and Economic Viability.

We the citizens of Ward 1, in the spirit of addressing Carbon Dioxide emissions that have and continue to contribute to global warming, beseech Burlington's City Council to require the following questions be answered and satisfactorily addressed before further consideration of Burlington Electric Department's Burlington District Energy project that proposes to distribute some McNeil Power Plant combustion heat to the UVM Medical Center.

Issue 1: McNeil efficiency: It's estimated the lion's share, ~74% of heat generated, is lost without serving a useful purpose. Burlington District Energy will not capture and use this heat loss. Can we do better? What is the current efficiency of McNeil - by exactly what percent does this project increase efficiency?

Issue 2: McNeil lifetime: Typical plant lifetime is approximately 40 years. McNeil will celebrate its 40th year of operations in 2024. What investments are required to keep McNeil operational for sufficient duration to pay off the Burlington District Energy investment? Does Burlington want a wood burning generator in its long term future?

Issue 3: Net Zero Status: McNeil generates electricity using steam created from the combustion of wood chips. When active, the burn rate is in the neighborhood of 74 tons of wood per hour. The claim is that the carbon released is captured by CO2 capture of new tree growth. With ongoing and impending climate changes, is the planet better served keeping Carbon in existing trees rather than spreading CO2 capture over the time to grow a mature tree...which can be many decades?

alternative: At the city council symposium IPCC climate experts strongly disagree that burning wood is net zero. How can we as a city count wood burning toward our net zero goals? On what timeline is BED claiming that wood burning is net zero ?

Issue 4: Cost: The 2020 project cost estimate of \$16M has mushroomed to \$42M in a mere 3 years. The financial ROI has not been estimated. What is the investment liability to BED and its customers? What about BED's partners, Green Mountain Power (31% owner) and the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (19% owner)? And will the UVM Medical Center and other Burlington District Energy beneficiaries invest?

Issue 5: Impact of McNeil uptime less than 100%: While the McNeil plant can be turned on to meet electric demand, operations are not currently 24/7. Will Burlington District Energy increase operation or need to be turned on 24/7 during the winter months and if so, what impact will that have on wood consumption and electricity availability? Does this proposal authorize, in any way, an increased amount of wood burning at McNeil?

Issue 6: Impact of Burlington District Energy on electrical generation: Steam used for heat is not simple waste, but will be diverted before generating electricity. This will decrease McNeil's output by 3.5 MWatts or some 7%. This translates into less electricity for general use [electric cars and appliances]. How will this impact electric rates for McNeil owners?

Issue 7: Construction disruption: The steam path will follow Intervale Road, North Prospect St, North St, Mansfield Ave Colchester Ave and the UVM Medical Center property. Construction may take a couple of

years. How long will each segment be disrupted? Will the construction overlap that of the replacement Burlington-Winooski bridge? What outreach to affected residents will be done?

We believe that meaningful answers called out by these issues is instrumental to delivering a thoughtful, intentional decision on Burlington District energy.

Addressing climate change caused by CO2 emissions is no easy task. Burlington is said to be on track to be 100% carbon neutral emissions by 2030. But if it takes many years to recapture Carbon through reforestation, can we really say we're meeting that goal with a large outstanding Carbon debt?

Signed,

Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee for the Citizens of Ward 1