Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)
AGENDA
Wednesday, January 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: Carol Livingston

6:30 Snacks provided

7:00 Formal Start - Announcement & Introductions - name, street, ward

7:10 Speakout

7:30 City Council Update - Zoraya Hightower, Maea Brandt

7:45 School Commissioners Update - Kathy Olwell, Aquilas Lokossou

7:50 DPW Park Services Update - Jeff Padgett
Initiatives; transition of Parking Enforcement from BPD to DPW; parking changes

8:10 Discussion with our State Legislators: Representatives Brian Cina & Troy Headrick;
Senators Martine Gulick & Tanya Vyhovsky

9:00 Adjourn

Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee
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Dave Cawley: Winterlude, first weekend in February - food, snow activities with Parks & Rec equipment, craft-making, trails in Schmanska Park - sponsored by UVM OSCR and AARP; keep an eye out for more info.

Gary Golden: running for position representing the East District on the Burlington School Board Commission; retired teacher / special educator - concerned most about marginalized students; hoping for 21st century high school - looking for alternative pathways for learning & expanding tech offerings - more student input about new building; will send email to get input.

Joel Kolata & Sam Ayotte - introduced selves, live on Chase St.; Thank you for remote option; interested in what is happening in the community and how to become more involved.

Sharon Bushor - Devt Review Bd meeting tonight: decision passed to demolish cathedral; Sharon spoke against. Planning Commission has forwarded Trinity project to City Council; during last Planning Commission mtg many ward 1 residents spoke, City Council urged us residents to come to CC mtg. Sharon will let us know when the mtg is so we can disseminate info. Thursday before the meeting is when find out the date of the City Council meeting.

Erhard Mahnke - January 17: public hearings on city's redistricting proposal - comments still welcome; Erhard is concerned about existing map. Upcoming: 2 public hearings as well as other ballot items. Reminder: many of us were displeased about the adopted map - does serious disservice to ward 1. Still work to be done - important to use public hearing to be discussed again. City Council can only make changes to map based on comments received in public hearing. CC can't make changes unless comments made through public hearing process.

Julia Curry - thoughts about housing crisis - has worked in housing field for 13 yrs and now admin for Facebook group looking for housing - seeing many stories of people who are

houseless and who are struggling and close to homelessness. Change coming to our city - no choice. How are we going to shape that change? It feels like a moral imperative to provide housing to people who otherwise would be shut out - of the city and the state. We need to build market rate and more affordable housing. It's important to help keep people's lives intact. Changes to housing being discussed: please bear in mind the lives of many of our neighbors aren't feeling secure.

Peter Lackowski - Women's Prison on Swift Street is in terrible shape. Legislature considering building new prison somewhere in state. Considering building a prison holding about 2x as many as the current prison houses. Peter is concerned about this assumption. He believes punishing women is often punishing children, as well as others needing caretaking. Should: work toward cutting numbers of women in prison; look at other ways besides imprisoning women. Public pressure should be exerted to decrease number of prisoners.

Tom Derenthal: this week Green Mtn Transit announced plan to reestablish fares for buses after pandemic time of no fares. Funding to support GMT is getting lost. Tom encourages us to talk to state legislators who control the funding.

7:30 City Council Update - Zoraya Hightower, Maea Brandt

1) The mayor put out legislative priorities - City Council is also sending additional items - do talk to Legislators about GMT but also other legislators over whole state.

Pending charter changes - gun regulation, just cause evictions, City's oversight of cannabis sales.

2) Trinity Campus - Zoraya will post update on Front Porch Forum. 5 City Councilors sent letter to UVM last summer about Trinity - not concerned about project itself but that UVM has stopped the MOU with the city - UVM needs to be more of a partner, is pulling back. Hoping that we don't approve Trinity Campus project so hold UVM responsible for MOU (Memorandum of Understanding: historic document, agreement that UVM be transparent about housing, new bed for each new student, some commitments around admission, accountable. Recently Burlington Planning Commission agreed to zoning change for Trinity Project, without Ward 1 Planning rep Alex Friend - but they passed this, assuming the City Council will demand accountability from UVM. Z plans to reach out to Democratic colleagues to join Progressive Councilors in leveraging a better relationship with UVM.

Maea reached out to UVM and brought up Ward 1 concerns, Trinity Project will be a mutual project. Lines of communication are open. Need to think about what we want from university. Maea spoke with UVM community liaison Joe Speidel.

Zoraya has spoken with variety of UVM people, including Richard Cate, who have clearly conveyed that the president is not interested in signing a new MOU - non-starter. How can we move forward if that is the attitude?

3)Homelessness - CDNR committee started conversation about camping in parks. Now more urgency with housing vouchers ending in April; homelessness population increased a lot during

pandemic - will have large number without houses, starting May 1. Moving the campsites is energy consuming, frustrating - nowhere to go. Working on allowing some campsites in a few urban parks - not sure where and what it would look like - not a good solution, least we can do when have to move people. Example: 40 campsites around Burl.; park rangers have about 8 places to concentrate people - 4-6 people/time. Elmwood pods opening - 36 units. This is considered one of most cost-effective responses and provides more effective services than motels. People sleeping in cars now, more common as vouchers unavailable. Need community partner with city.

Erhard: thank you for all your work. Correction: state voucher program extending for 50% level beyond March. (now 70% of cost), more vouchers available from Champlain Valley Office of Econ Opp. E to Maea: glad you had a good conversation with Joe, and things are better - up and down. Fact they are unwilling to entertain MOU is a bad sign - CC needs to hold UVM accountable - don't act on Trinity until some agreement. Original MOU was set up after Planning Project held up from approval - to have sophomores live on campus, replaced some housing, protected Centennial Woods (80's and 90's)

Troy Headrick /Erhard - state got fed dollars to create motel voucher for all - 2700 people living in motels around state. Program ending. Emergency housing program is continuing for adverse weather conditions - through March.

Caryn Long - getting written promise from UVM is key - beds need to be juniors and seniors. Jrs and srs - allowed to live on campus but no housing available. Affordability, restrictions are issues that jrs/srs don't want.

Sharon - Can't mandate jrs/rs living on campus.

Julia - UVM has lots of employees that could be considered as part of the housing discussion.

Erhard - So. Burlington housing for UVM medical ctr staff - planning to add more housing in future in SB City Ctr - housing the workforce

7:45 School Commissioners Update - Kathy Olwell

Budget - will be staff cuts - 10 reductions - 6.8 FTE, has to do with lower student numbers; hope is that through attrition that we can hold all staff. Reduction of students - not sure - less than 100 across the district. HS and MS haven't changed but elem K-5 have fewer kids. Pre-K may be able to fill those rooms - bldgs are full. Question about Drama position at IAA. Funding sources are changing, Kathy concerned about number of academic coaches increasing - not sure what impact has been. Scores continue to be down - need to show data about the impact of coaches.

Sharon - Drama position seemed to be integral to mission of school, so not an outlier position.

7:50 DPW Park Services Update - Jeff Padgett

Initiatives; transition of Parking Enforcement from BPD to DPW; parking changes

See slideshow presentation. A lot of changes, trying to fix concerns people have. Parking services, pkg facilities, traffic are each separate group - operate without tax dollars; produce funds themselves through parking fines.

Parking services - tickets based on safety or equity. Goal is to minimize tickets. Shifting parking services from BPD to own parking services - enforcement is parking. Gates off garages just like streets. Tripled workforce. Created sr level union positions - management positions - so increased coverage and better services. If you have questions please call.
Will be managing lots in parks. Fines over holidays go toward food. 2 hrs free parking - Fri, Sat during holidays. Resident only permits can be digital. 645 Pine St. Whoops program - (residents can call and give email addresses so get notice) can take advantage of Whoops program. Can only get 1 forgiven per year. Call Parking if you think a mistake was made.

Jeff would like to return to future NPA meeting with new software.
Chronic parking problems - in VT not criminal - it's a civil offense. Restorative justice with parking fines?

8:10 Discussion with our State Legislators: Representatives Brian Cina & Troy Headrick;
Senators Martine Gulick & Tanya Vyhovsky

Troy Headrick - Bilodeau court, 22 yrs. 4 days orientation - legislators show great energy, passion, good ideas - excited. My priorities - similar to speakout: corrections and UVM. Worked at UVM (res life); meet with 1,000 students / yr who have made mistakes. Upperclass students do not want to live on campus. Priorities: intro bill; outside private groups coming onto school bds to change curriculum (Moms for Liberty)- chapters in Mass, CT, and NH. New bill into ED committee - create a firewall, don't want to create curriculum - this is the job of Bds and districts; bill would prevent teachers eliminating conversations about race, identity, gender. Will keep us updated on bill, working on partnerships. Corrections & Institutions committee - status of incarcerated women. 107 women incarcerated - 50% held prior to sentencing.
Trinity Project - skeptical about UVM willingness. May need to look at enrollment caps - can we cap until our rental housing vacancy reaches 5%. Also, mandate square footage of minimum for students - students jammed into small spaces. More doubles and more singles needed.

Tanya Vyhovsky - committee on judiciary and vice chair of Govt operations. Concerns: cannabis equity, decriminalizing cannabis illegal behavior - be sure everyone is represented, connection between mental health and public safety. Regulating police. Antiprivatization of state contracts. Looking at charter changes - Burl just cause eviction as well. Priority = police oversight, cash bail, opposed to new prison, look at who is incarcerated. Vast majority in jail are

there for substance use. - need community resources to tackle this. Restorative Justice responses - centers and options need to be universal in VT.

Marine Gulick - vice chair of Senate Ed Committee; also on Health and Welfare Committee - hearings with lots of people from agencies and schools to help us understand the issues better. Priorities: ED: equity, taxpayer dollars going to private schools & religious schools - need to tread carefully. Equity in terms of curriculum as well, financing. Student weighting bill is being rolled out - 3 separate weights: living in poverty, EL, rural communities. Formula changed to be more equitable. Literacy rate in VT is low - Legislature passed legislation and AOE working on blueprint to disseminate into schools - test scores disheartening. School construction - schools poisoning students and staff - priority for Martine. Other schools suffering as well as Burlington. Health & Welfare: heard from mayors of Winooski and Burlington: need for specialized care for substance abuse, growing meth use, long-term residential treatment needed. In addition, it's important to determine ways to shield abortion providers.

Brian Cina - entering new crises - eco systems; building resiliency, how sustain the positive changes. Invest in social determinants of health - build on progress in housing, food, econ devt. Year-round food production in VT. Banning pesticides, protecting from pfas. Need for Regional planning assemblies - assess strengths and concerns for each region. Universal primary care. Public banking system. Giving tenants first refusal. Moratorium on new prisons. Expanding housing to meet needs at every level of treatment - substance and incarceration. Avoid separating people from resources. Holding people accountable, not punishing.
How sustain these investments and changes - short-term tax on high-income residents. Paying back loans that can be invested in people in VT, not out of state banks.

Q/A -
Sharyl Green - primary care legislation: incarcerated. Program looks at support for primary care-takers . Sharyl send any info to legislators. NH has draft of legislation - S will send.

If sending info to leg'ors should we send to all Burl legislators? Yes, please send. Will send to Baruth as well. Mailboxes full but send anyway - don't hesitate. If urgent, write again if don't hear back. Voices of voters really helps leg'ors advocate.

Tom Derenthal: any legislation about rebuilding schools - state moratorium on new construction - what can we do? A: yes, good chance - speaking with new treasurer, VSA leadership, superintendents all support. Tie to work force devt - people won't take these school jobs unless schools safer - ground swell of support. Aid could pay for parts of bldgs - huge burden for taxpayers, need to help. Good chance not all schools will need to be rebuilt - maybe more renovation. Martine: very positive about possibilities.

Joel & Sam - transportation equity - observation: how difficult to be mobile if poor. Cars difficult to have - expensive. Looking at old transp. Maps - get tax credit for elec. Vehicles - but batteries bad for envt. Better public transp?? Tax incentive for public transp or no car? Tanya - really interested in growing our public transp. Almost every Vermonter lives within ½ mile of rail. Fed investment in high-speed rail. More cohesive system within state.

Tom - GMT presented alternatives for funding transp - current don't work. GMT cutting services because don't have operating funds. Pull a little elec money to go to public transp.
Tanya - talk with transp committee.
Erhard - Bill for Clean heating standard: Martine co-sponsor, supporting Senator Bray.
Tanya - how protect low income from high tax hikes. Bio fuels still in bill, but now capped. Room for improvement - committee hearing feedback and trying to address.

Our state legislators are willing to meet again in next few months - dependent on calendar. They are working to develop coffee groups so people across all wards can come talk with legislators. Troy and Brian can come regularly - easier than the senate.

9:00 Adjourn

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