

Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)

Summary of Minutes

Wednesday, October 11, 2023, Friends Meeting House & on zoom

Start time: 7:05pm

End time: 9:22pm

Facilitator: Tom Derenthal

Minutes: Jonathan Chapple-Sokol

1. Announcements:

Community Development Block Grant - Each NPA appoints a representative to a Community Advisory Board which decides how the city should allocate \$ from HUD (Housing & Urban Devt) block grant. Community Advisory Bd looks at applications, makes recommendations to City Council & mayor. This representative serves for a few months over the course of two years. ***Ward 1 NPA is looking for a representative.***

Martine Gulick introduced herself; she is one of our three state senators for the Central District, and also serves on the Burlington School Commission. She is involved in discussions about health care in prisons, health care and housing, adult education, and encourages people to email her with their concerns. (mgulick@leg.state.vt.us)

Fosca Bechthold is our new NPA Public Engagement Coordinator at CEDO and will be providing support at our Ward 1 NPA meetings.

2. Steering Committee Election

Sam Ayotte was elected to a position on the Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee, which plans & facilitates our meetings and activities. She lives on Chase Street with her partner and has been involved in working with the DPW on the safe neighborhoods project for the Old East End. Sam has been providing food for us at our monthly NPA meetings. Welcome, Sam!

3. Speakout

Enrique Buena from the non-profit Vt Passive House spoke about the group's work to inform state and city officials and the public about passive house standards. More information is available at www.vermontpassivehouse.org.

Richard Hilyard signed up at the City Clerk's office for non-citizen voting; many others have signed up as well.

4. District Heat Resolution - Tom Derenthal

As a result of previous discussion at the September Ward 1 NPA meeting, Tom Derenthal wrote a resolution containing key questions that should be answered as the City Councilors determine whether to support the recent proposal by Burlington Electric Department's Burlington District Energy project to distribute some McNeil Power Plant combustion heat to the UVM Medical Center.

There was lengthy discussion about additional questions to be added to Tom's resolution. These included: concerns about the impact of rate increases; the impact on children's health; the long-term thinking about McNeil's future; the importance of looking at the

BED website (<https://www.burlingtonelectric.com/mcneil>) for information about the plant and the project; logging vs sequestration; the City Council deliberative process on this project.

The meeting attendees voted in favor of Tom Derenthal revising the Resolution to include questions about the impact of rate increases and the impact on people's health.

He will post the revised resolution on Front Porch Forum for several days before sending it to City Council and to BED for their consideration.

5. City Councilor updates - Tim Doherty and Zoraya Hightower

Tim reviewed the events of the October 10 City Council meeting, including: public safety presentations by Burlington Police and Fire Departments; City Councilors voted to approve a public safety resolution. City Council also voted for approval of the new 30-bed low-barrier shelter from December through March at the Volunteers of Foreign Wars building in Burlington. Tim plans to recuse himself on the City Council decision about the BED District Energy Project.

Zoraya continues to consider how to vote on the BED District Energy Project. She is not supportive of shutting down McNeil, but is thinking about this \$42 million investment in the facility and the most effective ways to make energy transition. City Council is also looking at thermal energy and whether to pass a carbon tax on fossil fuels or regulate high-carbon use buildings. Development is increasing in Burlington's South End with rezoning efforts. Zoraya hopes to meet with City Building Inspector Bill Ward about problematic housing units in Ward 1. ***Please let Zoraya know about concerns you have.*** (Zhightower@burlingtonvt.gov) UVM Moveout Day will be discussed at City Council as they consider a ticketing plan for landlords.

6. School Commissioner update - Gary Golden

Deconstruction of BHS building continues. Rough spots have included delay by lawsuits. Higher construction costs have led to a 20 million adjustment; the project is within budget - BSD saved state money which is being used to cover cost changes. Other initiatives: literacy program; extensive anti-racism training for the whole district has increased. (Ggolden@BSDVt.org)

7. Burlington Neighborhood Code- Sarah Morgan & Megan Tuttle

From the the Burlington Office of City Planning: "The Burlington Neighborhood Code will propose zoning changes to allow for more 'neighborhood-scale' multi-unit housing options...looking at low-density districts which make up nearly 35% of Burlington's total land area...Neighborhood-scale housing refers to certain housing types such as duplexes, fourplexes, and cottage courts that are not currently able to be built...due to zoning regulations."

"The Neighborhood Code will be reviewed through a joint committee process between the city's Planning Commission and City Council Ordinance Committee." At the start of their meetings, there will be opportunity to give feedback: October 4, Oct. 17, Oct 24, November 2 & 28, December 19. See the website address for specifics on these meetings, as well as other opportunities to learn more and give feedback.

See: www.burlingtonvt.gov/CityPlanning/NeighborhoodCode

8. Drugs, Public Health, Public Safety - City Councilor Melo Grant

Councilor Grant spoke about the current drug crisis & crime associated with drug addiction. The Public Safety Commission says the city needs to do more to inform residents about the crisis and to coordinate efforts to get resources, including funds owed to the city from the state. It's important to get information to people & to advocate for Burlington. City Council passed the Public Safety resolution and the Public Safety Committee is holding two public forums to get input and share information with local residents.

Councilor Grant strongly urged people to use the City website to find important information about public safety. The two recent presentations from BPD Drug Unit and the Fire Dept's Chief Lachance are available, as well as the Police Commission meeting in September when Chief Murad reviewed his incident report.

If you have questions, contact Melo Grant (megrant@burlingtonvt.gov), Zoraya, or Tim who are all on the Public Safety Committee.
9:25 - Meeting adjourned

Here are some useful reference links:

This is the link to all City of Burlington recorded meetings:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIjLFn4BZd2PwCge7INoKug676jlf_iUA

Here is the link to the most recent City Council meeting (which is located among the meetings above)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5NNNWCuROw&list=PLIjLFn4BZd2PwCge7INoKug676jlf_iUA&index=7

Here is the link to the files presented at that meeting by PD, FD, and the Public Health/Safety resolution:

<https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2292/overviewitems> 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Here is where FD and PD charts and data can be found:

<https://data.burlingtonvt.gov/pages/public-safety>

Here is where our NPA Zooms are located:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Ward+1+NPA

Here is the McNeil page on BED site:

<https://www.burlingtonelectric.com/mcneil>

Here is the un-updated resolution on Civic Clerk.

<https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/event/2297/files>

In general, files presented at City Council meetings can be found on Civic Clerk:

- a) go to <https://burlingtonvt.portal.civicclerk.com/>
- b) click on meeting of interest
- c) click on 'meeting overview' in the upper left of the page
- d) scroll down until you find the presentation you are interested in and click on it (they typically have a 'paper clip' showing they are an attachment)