

# Neighborhood Planning Assembly

## Burlington Vermont

### Ward 6 Bylaws

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#### ARTICLE I: NAME and PURPOSE

Section 1: **NAME.** The name of this organization is Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly, hereinafter referred to as the “Ward 6 NPA.”

Section 2: **PURPOSE.** The purpose of the Ward 6 NPA was set forth in a Resolution adopted by the Burlington City Council in 1982, which stated in part: “...the Neighborhood Planning Assemblies shall, among other things, help provide citizens with information concerning city programs and activities; help obtain citizen views of city needs; help provide citizens with information concerning city programs and activities; help obtain citizen views of city needs; help provide citizens with and opportunity to participate in making recommendations with respect to governmental decisions including allocation of revenues.”

*In addition*, the Ward 6 NPA shall be organized and operated for the following purposes: a. maintain and enhance the quality of life in Ward 6 b. ensure that the voice of Ward 6 residents are heard in all matters pertaining to life there c. provide a vehicle for residents of Ward 6 to collectively act.

Section 3: **GUIDING PRINCIPLES.** The Guiding Principles of the Ward 6 NPA are

- a. The Ward6 NPA should provide a safe and welcoming forum where citizens can actively share their voice about issues that matter to them, and where they can learn from the voices of others.
- b. The Ward6 NPA should cultivate involvement by a diverse spectrum of community members through active outreach and through eliminating barriers to participation.
- c. The Ward6 NPA should be operated in a manner that models respectful, inclusive, Culturally, and economically aware practices.
- d. The Ward6 NPA should be fun, creative, and vital organizations that value & benefit through the multitude of perspectives shared by those who participate.

#### ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: **ELIGIBILITY.** Everyone *fourteen years and older* living within the geographic boundaries of Ward 6 , is a member.

Section 2: **PARTICIPATION.** Every *eligible* member may (has the right to)

- a. participate in meetings of the Ward 6 NPA;
- b. cast one vote on all matters properly put before the membership for consideration;
- c. nominate and to participate in the election of the Steering Committee;
- d. serve on the Steering Committee if chosen; and
- e. receive notices and minutes of all meetings of the Ward 6 NPA.

Section 3: **PARTICIPATION BY NON-MEMBERS.** Non-members may attend and participate in NPA Meetings *during the open forum meeting time*, but may not vote.

Section 4: **MEETINGS.** Meetings of the NPA will be held no less than 4 times a year.

Section 5: **NOTIFICATION.** Steering Committees will share meeting dates, times, locations and agendas with members through appropriate advertising.

Section 6: **QUORUM.** Ten members of the NPA shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7: **AGENDA.** The Steering Committee will set the agenda of all meetings. Meetings shall have at least 15 minutes scheduled for open forum. Steering Committee members will take suggestions for future agenda items at some point during all meetings. Agendas for all NPA meetings will be properly posted by ***The Community and Economic Development Office*** in at least two public places ***in City Hall***. Items may be added to the agenda of a regular meeting by a majority vote of the members present, provided a quorum has been established.

Section 8: **CONDUCT OF MEETINGS.** Meetings will be convened, adjourned, and facilitated by the Moderator. Members shall abide by the following code:

- a. The NPA Ground Rules should be ***posted*** at the start of all NPA Meetings
- b. Meetings should have clearly defined Agenda & Roles: (Facilitator, Recorder etc.)
- c. Honor Time limits: (including starting on time, sticking to the agenda and finishing on time.)
- d. Listen to others: (make efforts to be an open-minded member of the group)
- e. Respect the agenda and the process: (try to remain focused on the issue at hand.)
- f. Share your opinion respectfully: (Speak out, ***but not over others comments***)
- g. Treat people how you would like to be treated: (***be respectful of everyone***, including guests)

Section 9: **VOTING.** All decisions of the Ward 6 NPA shall be decided by a simple majority of the ***quorum*** members present at a meeting, except for decisions involving the expenditure of funds which shall require an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the members present.

## **ARTICLE III: STEERING COMMITTEE**

Section 1: **COMPOSITION.** The Steering Committee for the Ward 6 NPA shall consist of no less than three members and no more than five members at any one time. All members of the Steering Committee must reside within the geographic boundaries of Ward 6 throughout their term.

Section 2: **ELECTION.** Steering Committee members shall be elected by a majority vote of the NPA's members at the first regular meeting following March 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year with their terms beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> of that same year. Nominations may be made from the floor at meetings convened to elect members of the Steering Committee, provided that two members present at that meeting agree to put that person's name in nomination.

Section 3: **TERM.** Steering Committee members will serve for one-year terms. After a Steering Committee member serves for five consecutive one-year terms she or he must step down from the Steering Committee for at least one full year, before becoming eligible to serve on the Steering Committee again.

Section 4: **REMOVAL.** A member of the Steering Committee may be removed for any reason by a 2/3 vote of those members present at a meeting of the NPA, provided that the issue of removal of that member from the Steering Committee was listed on the meetings properly advertised agenda. Steering Committee members will automatically be removed if they miss three consecutive meetings.

Section 5: **VACANCIES.** If any member of the Steering Committee resigns from the Steering Committee or is removed from the Steering Committee before his or her term has expired, the remaining members of the Steering Committee may appoint a person to fill the vacancy until an election can be held at the next regular meeting of the NPA.

Section 6: **QUORUM.** A majority of the members of the NPA Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Steering Committee, provided that all members of the NPA Steering Committee have been notified at least 48 hours in advance of any scheduled meeting. Absent such prior notification, a quorum shall not be possible, regardless of the number of Steering Committee members in attendance.

Section 7: **VOTING.** All decisions of the Steering Committee shall be decided by a simple majority of members present at a meeting of the Steering Committee, a quorum having been established.

Section 8: **DUTIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE.** The Steering Committee shall be responsible for the general management of the affairs of the NPA in accordance with these bylaws, including carrying out the following duties:

- a. Meeting Management: arranging, advertising, convening, coordinating, and facilitating regular and special meetings of the NPA, including the setting of the meeting agendas, the booking of meeting space, and the scheduling of meeting guests and speakers.
- b. Neighborhood Outreach: sharing of information, meeting schedules and NPA activities with NPA members, Ward residents, and the general public.
- c. Municipal Monitoring and Oversight: paying regular attention to actions and plans of City Departments, Commissions, City Council and the Department of Planning and Zoning for the purpose of keeping Ward 6 informed of events, investments, and proposed projects that might affect the lives of people living there.
- d. Proper Recording: taking of meeting minutes, recoding of all Votes and Resolutions, proper distribution of all Resolutions, coordination with the Community and Economic Development Office on recording of meeting minutes
- e. Representation to the Neighborhood Coordinating Council: represent the interests of Ward 6 and the NPA in discussions and decisions of the citywide council established to govern citizen engagement and neighborhood activities in Burlington. Keep the members of the NPA informed of all discussions and decisions occurring within the Neighborhood Coordinating Council.

## **ARTICLE IV: KEY POSITIONS WITHIN THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Section 1: **DESIGNATION.** Members of the Steering Committee shall appoint from among themselves one person to each of the following positions: Moderator; Neighborhood Liaison; and Representative to the Neighborhood Coordinating Council. No person may be appointed to more than one of these positions at the same time. Any member of the Steering Committee may be appointed to any one of these three positions, except that a current member of the Burlington City Council may not be appointed as Moderator.

Section 2: **TERM.** These persons shall serve for one-year terms. After a person serves for 3 years in any of these positions they must take at least one full year off before they may serve in that specific position again.

Section 3. **DUTIES.**

- a. **Moderator.** Facilitate *most* regular and special meetings of the NPA. Attend at least one training a year and meet with the Moderators from the other NPAs two other times a year to improve skills and share experiences.
- b. **Neighborhood Liaison.** Receive and review agendas of the City Council, Commissions, and Boards. Attend meetings of these municipal bodies, as necessary. Keep NPA members and Steering Committee members informed on municipal issues and actions affecting the Ward. Keep the Community and Economic Office and other city departments informed about projects, decisions, and concerns of the NPA.
- c. **Representative to the Neighborhood Coordinating Council.** Regularly attend Council Meetings; stay informed of all issues taken up by the Council. Keep NPA members and Steering Committee members informed of actions and decisions of the Council. Vote on behalf of the NPA, representing the NPA's interests and the Ward's interests before the Council.

## **ARTICLE V: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

Section 1: **AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS.** *The Ward 6 NPA may make amendments to the Bylaws.* An amendment may be made to the Ward6 NPA at a regularly scheduled meeting if the change is listed in the meeting agenda and approved by a 2/3 Majority vote of The Ward 6 NPA.

Section 2: **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** *In accordance with the guiding principles of these NPA Bylaws, the Ward6\_ NPA will promote and work to sustain an inclusive participatory environment that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.*

Section 3: **COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC MEETING REQUIREMENTS.** *The Ward6 NPA must act in compliance with all public meeting requirements. See the City Attorney's Office for a listing of these requirements.*

Section 4: **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** *Members of the Ward6 NPA have a responsibility to their NPA to fairly review and vote on matters directly affecting their Ward without prejudice or bias. If a NPA member believes that a conflict of interest could exist with any agenda or voting item, that member should take the responsibility to disclose this conflict, and address the issue with the NPA. If upon disclosure, the quorum wants to include this member in the discussion and/or voting process than the NPA has concluded that no Conflict of Interest exists. Failure of a member to disclose a potential conflict of interest could result in a null/void vote or cause the need for further discussion or re-vote on a particular issue affected.*