



# Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes – Full Notes

**Date of Assembly:** 1/21/2015  
**Start Time:** (Commence): 7:00 PM  
**Finish Time:** (Adjourn): 8:50 PM  
**Location:** DPW Building, Pine St.  
**Notetaker:** Nate Orshan

## **Steering Committee Members in Attendance:**

Alec Bauer  
Elisa Nelson  
Hans Manske  
Nate Orshan

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## **(1) Info/Announcement re: Upcoming Community Meeting: "Champlain Parkway: Let's Do It Right" – Steve Goodkind, Safe Streets Burlington**

### **Summary:**

*Promoted the upcoming meeting, "Champlain Parkway: Let's Do It Right" at ArtsRiot, Wednesday, February 3, 6:30-9:00pm. Stated that the Champlain Parkway does not have to be implemented as currently designed.*

### **Information about the upcoming panel and discussion, Champlain Parkway: Get it Right the First Time", Wednesday February 3, 6:30 p.m. at Arts Riot:**

<http://www.safestreetsburlington.com/2016/01/save-date-wednesday-feb-3-champlain.html>

(Note: Nate arrived late and wasn't able to record the very beginning of Steve's presentation.)

Steve: For NO other project have we had to pay the money back. If the Mayor's agreed to the Champlain Parkway (CP), it's on his neck.

Steve: The CP is destructive. We can do so much better and not be blackmailed (i.e., re having to repay \$7 million).

Steve: The way the recent Champlain School meeting re the CP was a disgrace.

Steve: Re the "road to nowhere", it was designed to get trucks away from Home Avenue and Flynn Avenue. The reason it wasn't built was politics. They were afraid that, if it were open, they'd be pressured to open the rest of it. I would make Pine Street a "complete street".

Steve: Gov. Dean stopped the project in early 90s, essentially saying, "Wait a minute, you won't have a good connection to Battery Street". Now, the Mayor wants to show that he can do a deal.

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**(2) Community Development Block Grant Boardmember Elections  
– All Attendees**

**Summary:**

*The only candidate present, Christina Snow Lindsay, discussed why she would like to be on the advisory board for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).*

Christina Snow Lindsay (Cassie) was the only candidate present and able to talk. Cassie currently works as Donor & Corporate Relations Manager for Vermont Foodbank.

Cassie: My husband's and my first home is here in Ward 5. We're on 58 Caroline St., right next to Woods-Lewises.

Cassie: My whole career's been in non-profit. I do fundraising for the Vermont Foodbank. Work keeps me current with issues of poverty in VT. I'd also like to be able to give some money away instead of just asking for it.

Q: Do you foresee any conflict of interest?

A: No, I'd recuse myself, and the Vermont Foodbank wouldn't apply.

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**(3) School Board Update**  
**- Commissioners Miriam Stoll and Susanmarie Harrington**

**Summary:**

*Commissioners explained the need for a \$2 million revenue increase in the March ballot, specific programs that will be implemented, and the issue with the current possibility that the ballot measure will be worded in a potentially-confusing way.*

Susanmarie: The School Board approved the budget to go the community on Town Meeting Day. There was a lot of outreach for people to participate! There are a lot of things that increased year to year. It'll cost about \$3M more next year if we do nothing this year.

Susanmarie: Act 46 necessitated a reduction in budget of \$1.4M. That said, the Superintendent was also looking for things that we should invest in.

Miriam: If we roll the budget over this year and don't cut, it will result in a \$3 million increase the following year. Much of that is health care cost (going up 7%!).

Miriam: We ended up with a surplus for the year ending June 30. Most of it was due to unexpected infusions of cash, but also because we did a good job.

Q: What is the percent increase in tax rate?

Miriam: It's not 100% clear, but we think it'll be about 1.8% increase in budget, so the property tax increase should be about 1.4%. If you pay based on income, it may actually be a net reduction. That's pretty extraordinary and due to the way the state does the calculation.

Q: I've seen a lot of chatter from high school teachers upset re the cuts slated for the school. There's a lot of anger from the staff. They're talking about average class sizes of 28, Latin getting cut. Having worked in a school system where we had yearly contracts where the salaries were linked to the funding coming in that year...the way Burlington works is that there's a 3-year contract, which is 80% of the budget. You can cut out of the payroll by cutting people...but not by cutting salaries.

A: Miriam: The reality is that you can negotiate a contract for 1, 3, 6 years. The last one was for 3 years, but it's up this year, so we're negotiating for a new contract. I can't say in public what it'll be, but it's up. But I get your point. Superintendent Obeng has come in here with a new twist on the budget. He's promised that all the programs will stay, but what'll change is the number of sections, so it might be slightly harder for some students to get the perfect schedule.

Miriam: Although the district's been growing, the growth's been in the elementary schools. Superintendent Obeng found that there's some room for consolidation.

Q: There are plenty of taxpayers in the city who are burdened and fed up. There are people who are not OK with a tax increase.

A: Miriam: Our board's decided that, now that we've set our budget, we're not going above our budget. But now the state's talking about repealing Act 46.

Q: Re "investments", what kind have we made so that we won't always be "hitting the max"?

A: Susanmarie: We have mandated investment in Pre-K. It's going to cost more next year because the amount we're obligated to pay is higher. The investments include:

- They're adding middle school math support.
- Adding a social worker in middle school to help take action re spike in behavioral disruptions.
- Investments in training the teachers in effects of trauma.
- Continued funding in one-to-one technology.
- A new database program that'll allow parents to input info rather than doing it via paper forms.

Q: (Follow-up) Investment to me means there's a payoff. E.g., better insulation, more maintenance. I'm not hearing that.

A: Miriam: Superintendent Obeng's doing a multi-year plan, which WILL afford us opportunity to make more of those types of investments.

Q: I want to high school in Vergennes in the 70s. Is there a figure on how many people receive Section 8? They have an effect on the amount of property tax the rest of residents pay.

A: Miriam: I don't have that. I think the way the taxes are calculated does put pressure on property owners. If you want to give me your email, I can look into that for you.

Susanmarie: Language in ballot measure's in March is going to be different than before. It requires that we put on the ballot the estimated total spending, including Federal money. So it'll look more than you might expect: \$88 million vs. \$70 million. We're exploring with our lawyers whether we can add clarifying language to the ballot so it doesn't look like what we're paying is going from \$68 million to \$88 million.

Miriam: It represents \$70 million from State education fund, then the rest are from grants, pilot funds, things that AREN'T tax-based...yet we're required to put it on the ballot. The part that taxpayers will be paying (more) is \$2 million.

Miriam: Special Education costs are difficult to estimate. The challenge is that it varies radically, from a child who needs very little support to a child who's high-needs and needs more one-on-one.

Q: Is there any news on the principal search for Champlain?

A: Miriam: Superintendent Obeng has a new hiring procedure, but it hasn't started yet.

Q: The issue's that, now that it's nearly Feb, we might lose out on some applicants.

Susanmarie: Superintendent Obeng's very systematic. Emphasis on strategic planning. He wants to have a five-year plan.

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**(4) Burlington Electric Department Integrated Resource Plan Presentation –  
Meredith Burkett, Resource Planner**

**Summary:**

*Presented a summary of the latest Integrated Resource Plan, which is seeking public commentary.*

**Information about the Burlington Electric Department's  
Integrated Resource Plan:**

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

Meredith has been at Burlington Electric Department (BED) for five months. BED is Vermont's largest municipally-owned electric utility, serving approximately 20,000 customers. It's also a generating utility in addition to being a distributing utility.

The Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is a statutory requirement for all utilities to complete every 3 years. The state requirement is that there should be the least-cost service provided, including environmental cost.

Per the 2012 IRP (Chapter 2,  
[https://www.burlingtonelectric.com/sites/default/files/Documents/BED\\_Links/irp\\_chapter2.pdf](https://www.burlingtonelectric.com/sites/default/files/Documents/BED_Links/irp_chapter2.pdf))

"The objective of the integrated resource planning process is to assure consumers are provided with a safe and reliable service balanced with the costs and benefits of providing this service. An Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is the process by which a utility equitably considers supply options (electric generation plants or contracts) and demand-side management programs when developing strategies to meet its customers' long-term energy needs."

The Department of Public Service requires that, e.g., BED forecast the load, environmental impact assessment, financial assessment, and, finally, come up with an action plan.

The previous IRP Summary (2012) identified 2 areas that BED would like to do a lot better on:

- Demand Response program: Communicating with certain consumers immediately during times of greater overall use in order to help manage the power demand
- Leveraging smart meter infrastructure to control peak loads

The 2016 IRP is ongoing, and BED would like to know people's thoughts on electric utilities and how we get our services. Meredith encourages people to contact them. The IRP Committee will be meeting frequently through March.

Renewable energy credit sales: BED is currently selling \$12 million in energy credits, but there's disagreement as to whether that's a good idea.

Capacity needs: BED currently has a capacity deficit, so it needs to think critically about that.

Impact of technology: Electric vehicles, solar generation, battery/storage, cold climate heat pumps.

Q: Do you contract with VEIC?

A: They run Efficiency Vermont. We meet with them constantly.

Also working on a rate-redesign project to help expand the rate offerings that are available.

Q: We used to be able to buy a bond from BED to offset our expenses.

A: I'm not the right person.

Alec: Advocates for Tesla Powerwalls. Apparently, Tesla recently made a contract with GMP to be the pilot program.

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## (5) NPA Related Open Forum and Closing

Although **Ward 5 Councilor Chip Mason** was unable to attend the meeting, he provided a City Council update to Alec via email:

Only updates I would provide at this time would be as follows:

1. Town Center - On January 5, 2016 from the Burlington Town Center Mall, there was a presentation of the revised plans for the mall's redevelopment and the framework for the City's commitment to this transformative public-private partnership. An encore presentation was held earlier today at 5pm in Contois Auditorium in City Hall. Access to the presentation, power point presentation and comment form can be accessed at:

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/BTV-Mall-Redevelopment-Process>

2. Form Based Code - Meetings of the joint Planning/City Council Committee continue. A target date for reporting it back to the City Council and Planning Committee has not yet been determined although I expect it to be in late February or early March.

3. City Market - A hearing on the proposed ordinance change that would permit City Market to build a second store at Briggs/Flynn has not yet been scheduled. A tentative date of February 2, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. has been set.

4. Vehicles for Hire - A hearing on the proposed amendments to our Vehicle for Hire ordinances will be held on January 28, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 12 at City Hall.

Sandy from Champlain College: We have a RAID (?) emergency system, and we can add our neighbors to it. It's something that our contiguous neighbors in Ward 6 were interested in. If something happens on Campus (fire, security issue), we'll send email and/or text to anyone as part of the system that something's happening and that we'll take instructions

The attendees voted for the CDBG advisory boardmember position, and Christina Snow Lindsay won the vote.

Susan: We should have a formal thanks to Helen Oetjen for offering to be the CDBG advisory boardmember.

Elisa: We have one opening for Inspector of Elections. With the primaries and the Presidential elections coming up, we need more help.

Motion to adjourn adopted at 8:50 PM.

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