

The Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly held its last meeting before summer on June 5th, 2014. New Steering Committee members Julie Richards and Clare Wool were approved; anyone who is interested in joining the NPA Steering Committee should contact any current members. Below are the highlights of the meeting. A full video of the meeting can be watched here: <http://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-6-npa-meeting-39>

First, John Caulo reported out on Champlain College's construction work. Construction is ongoing at the President's house and at various locations on the core campus (Joyce Hall, the CCM Building, the Res-Tri project). He apologized for the confusion regarding the shuttle busses on Summit St. He is also looking for ideas on how to better communicate with the neighborhood and invites anyone with ideas to contact him.

Next, Lisa Kingsbury reviewed some of UVM's construction projects. They are hoping to begin the permitting process soon for 61 Summit St. UVM is also in the process of looking for developers to begin work on the housing master plan, which would include the demolition and rebuilding of some residence halls. Finally, she and Bob Vaughn (Director of Capital Planning and Management) gave a detailed presentation on the STEM project. It is a series of buildings located around the campus green that house the engineering, physics, math, chemistry, statistics, and computer science departments. The project includes renovations of existing buildings, demolition and new construction. The design for the buildings will hopefully be completed in the next 8-9 months, and if the approval and permitting process goes smoothly construction will begin in May 2015.

Following the institutional reports was Rubi Simon, the Fletcher Free Library's new director. The library's current structure has been in place for the past 20 years or so. This past year has been an assessment period and this summer a consultant will help create a strategic plan. Burlington's changing demographics are affecting the library's needs and services. For example, one element the library is looking at are ways to collaborate with existing social services in Burlington.

Karen Paul, City Councilor, gave a quick update on the city budget process and the new Committee on Commissions and Boards. In other city news, CEDO is meeting with projects that could receive TIF money. The City Council and School Board are also moving forward with a cost-cutting committee.

The last portion of our meeting was a legislative wrap-up. Suzi Wizowati, David Zuckerman, Michael Sirotkin, Philip Baruth, Ginny Lyons, and Barbara Rachelson were present. They each explained a couple of important bills that they worked on and/or that were passed this session.

- Suzi Wizowati worked a lot on the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Convictions bill that deals with restrictions placed on housing, jobs, etc. for former inmates. She also worked on a pre-trial services bill that diverts people involved in drug-related crimes from jail to treatment.
- David Zuckerman spent a lot of time working on the GMO labeling bill. He also worked on the law regarding Lyme disease and was part of conversations discussing the consolidation of school districts.
- Michael Sirotkin arrived in the Senate 3/4 of the way through the biennium when his wife, Senator Sally Fox, died. He worked on a carbon emissions bill that didn't end up passing and on capital construction budget items. The conference center in Waterbury will be named after Sally Fox.
- Philip Baruth described some of the legislature's historic accomplishments from the past year. He also spoke about the minimum wage bill and the shorelands bill.
- Ginny Lyons described her work on a toxics bill, which facilitated the process of evaluating and banning toxic chemicals from products. She also described a bill that protects small businesses in the case of a security breach.

- Barbara Rachelson spoke about universal pre-K, the ban on cellphones while driving, and the decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana. She is hoping that Burlington's gun charter-change will be looked at next session.

The Ward 6 NPA will not be meeting again until September. We will send an agenda and reminders for that meeting at the end of the summer. Enjoy the warm weather!