

Minutes to the Wards 1 & 8 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)  
meeting. October 14, 2020 [6:45 - 9:15 p.m]

The full agenda is below. Meeting details can be found below and on our CEDO Website:  
<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/Ward-1-NPA-Agendas>. Bookmark it for easy  
access to agendas, minutes, videos, and presentations.

Attendees:

James Barr  
Phil Baruth  
Michael Blood  
Jonathan Chapple-Sokol  
Thomas Chittenden  
Brian Cina Selene  
Colburn Tom  
Derenthal  
Amanda Hannaford  
Jack Hanson  
Zoraya Hightower  
Jean Hopkins  
Hannah King  
Carol Livingston  
Caryn Long  
Ginny Lyons  
Karen Paul  
Chis Pearson  
Sophie Quest  
Barbara Rachelson  
Kesha Ram  
Linda Rizvi  
Ericka Redic Jane  
Stromberg  
Martha?

Start Time: 7:00 PM

## AGENDA

6:45 Sign on to Zoom online meeting Waiting Room (See below if you have problems) 7:00 Announcements  
7:05 Introductions & Speak-out  
7:20 City Councilors: Jack Hanson, Zoraya Hightower, Jane Stromberg 7:35 Mark Hughes: update on Racial Justice Alliance Operation Phoenix 7:55 School Commissioners: Kathy Olwell & Aden Haji  
8:05 Candidate Forum, Vermont General Assembly:  
VT Senate candidates  
VT House of Representatives candidates  
9:15 Adjourn

NPA Wards 1 & 8: October 14, 2020 Minutes

Host/facilitator: Hannah King Tech host: Jonathan Chapple-Sokol Recorder: Tom Derenthal

7:00 Announcements - Hannah King described introduction format

7:05 Introductions & Speak-out

- Speak out
  - o Jean Hopkins – Attended a League of Women Voters meeting. Rank choice voting resource center is eager to bring RCV to Vermont. RCVresource.org
  - o Carol Livingston – Letter from Jared Wood – Fire pits are not safe due to sparks/embers and smoke.
  - o Carol Livingston – Aden initiative for new Americans. Two zoom meetings, last and next Friday. Three breakouts, each with a different language. Translators and election experts are used. W18 agreed to support this to the tune to \$200 each. Last Friday featured French, Napoli and Mimi. Sessions were recorded for future use. Attendees were eager to learn the American voting process.
  - o Caryn Long – Agrees with Jared Wood regarding fire pits. Is also against fire pits. Safety, air quality and management is difficult. We have small yards. Fires maybe OK at beaches and in parks if managed well. Generally, a bad idea.
  - o Caryn Long – BHS students are willing to pick up leaves [found on FPF]. The City is working hard to keep leaves off storm grates resulting in less storm runoff not being captured. Students are picking leaves as a community service. This is important for the quality of Lake Champlain.
  - o Caryn Long – Yard Parking is growing. Send email to CDNR committee. Demolition by neglect, lead paint is an issue. Tenants park on lawns. Email to city officials have gone unanswered, even by W18 councilors.

- Caryn Long – Sidewalks – There was extra \$ allocated, but “tripper hazards” persist. Three inch different in height. Email to BTV Public Works go unanswered. Who tracks this?
- Jonathan – Lora Wheelock has been contacted about the [annual?] sidewalk survey. Caryn – these are old issues. Why haven’t they been fixed? Jonathan to followup with Lora.

7:20 City Councilors: Jack Hanson, Zoraya Hightower, Jane Stromberg

- Jane Stromberg
  - Racial Justice Alliance – Battery park occupied for 33ish days. Much conversation resulted. We all learned a lot.
  - Police – A separation agreement with Sgt. Jason Bellavance has been closed. It includes \$300K plus health insurance for 18 months. Resignation date was oct 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - Rank choice voting has been approved for the March 2021 ballot.
  - Council training on executive session / open meeting law. Legal justification for invitations to executive session. City will post justification and attenders for future executive sessions.
  - Open fire pits: Surprised this is a big issue. BTV board of health [BoH] has discussed and is preparing recommendations to the council. BoH has a public forum.
- Zoraya Hightower
  - Open fire pits: Educated by email. Board of Health is the right place to discuss. Safety – Reach out to BTV fire chief. The chief seemed OK on this.
  - Racial Justice – RFP for community visioning facilitator, who will cover public safety and quality of life, find gaps and address. So more than just police.
  - Joint committee – Kyle Dodson, Director of police transformation, will lead an assessment of Burlington police dept.
  - Joined the committee for Burlington schools. Up front is a discussion of school resource officers.
  - Response to emails. – Councilors get copied on much email. Email directed to councilors or with a direct ask get better attention.
- Jack Hanson
  - Parking - Ordinance committee meeting last night and next on 10/29. Parking has and will be discussed. Developing parking policy. There is much backyard parking and parking creep. The policy will likely have Landlords post a parking plan that defines who and where parking is allowed. The goal is to minimize confusion and non-compliance.
  - Landlords – Discussion started on landlord licensing. Landlord licensing would be a mechanism to hold landlords accountable and that properties are up to standard.
  - Streets - Winooski Ave has been redesigned this week, south of Pearl St. This is a high crash zone. Dedicated bike lanes and traffic calming features have been added.
  - Climate - Announced potential City Council action that would prohibit new construction to use fossil fuels for heating and appliances.

- Ericka Redic - New carbon fee that would add \$7K to housing. This will increase rents / make it more expensive to build and increase rents. Concern that councilors are discussing options that will make BTV more unaffordable. Zoraya – Burlington has to deal with environment and housing costs. Not doing environmental initiatives is not the only way to reduce the cost of housing and make BTV more affordable. The new rule would not increase construction costs. We cannot afford to continue dependence on fossil fuels and retrofitting buildings after construction is expensive. Ericka – How will BTV produce sufficient electricity to meet the increased demand? Jack - Burlington Electric is net zero energy today. Ericka – will we burn more wood chips? Jack - solar/wind/biomass will be part of the mix.
- Jean Hopkins stated that many homeowners are installing solar panels. Co Housing produced sufficient electricity from solar panels to sell \$6000 of energy to Burlington Electric.

Zoraya - Switching to solar includes front loading the capital costs and saving on traditional fuels.

7:35 Mark Hughes: update on Racial Justice Alliance Operation Phoenix – No show

7:55 School Commissioners: Kathy Orwell & Aden Haji – No show

8:05 Candidate Forum, Vermont General Assembly

VT Senate candidates

- Tom Chittenden ○ Has worked in W1 at UVM for 20 years. Grew up in Chittenden County. Advocate for Vermont to grow.
  - Advocate of regionalization, e.g. dispatch, airport regional authority, storm water... There are more opportunities for collaboration to increase performance and decrease costs.
  - Concerned about climate change ○ Advocate of using amenities at Park & Ride, to encourage use of mass transit for those who have a choice of transportation vehicles. e.g. convenience will encourage transit. ○ Former chair of the GMT board when First 2 electric busses added.
  - S. Burlington City Councilor ○ Is accessible
- Ericka Redic ○ Born and raised Vermonter ○ Accountant ○ Focus on affordability and economy. These are foundational and unifying issues. ○ 30% of suicides are due to lack of employment and lack of opportunity
  - Current legislature passes bills on guns, climate, and to help everyone, each with high costs. This strangles businesses and middle class. Middle class is greatly impacted, because they have sufficient income to pay taxes, but insufficient income to not be harmed by the taxes in aggregate. ○ Tax rates are too high, this is a cause of people leaving the state.
  - Half of college graduates leave the state
  - Would like to make VT #1 in business friendliness. Then jobs would be more plentiful, college grads could afford to stay and contribute to society ○ Vermont sequesters carbon. We're already doing a good job
  - With more tax revenue from businesses, we could pay for infrastructure and prevent harm, e.g. dumping of raw sewage into Lake Champlain
- Phil Baruth ○ Current senator ○ Covid response
  - Feds contributed Covid cares monies – time sensitive – must be spent by year end.
    - Chair of Senate Ed committee
      - Best school use – HVAC upgrades

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- Program run by Efficiency Vermont ▪ Before covid  
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- Lead testing bill last year – most strict standard in  
the nation

- \$3M for testing schools and child care

- Ginny Lyons ○ Long time senator – chairs health & human services ○ Biology  
professor ○ Got \$275M from Feds ○ Healthcare initiatives reflected in lower covid  
rate in the state ○ Food security - \$4.5M into food banks... ○ Feds have taken  
away local food distributor – result is no fresh local foods ○ Environment, public  
health, health care ○ Evidence based decisions ○ Climate change

- Heat pumps save dollars

- New Renter weatherization and energy programs ○

Healthcare is 20% of state economy

- Drug importation bill – save in Canada

- Chris Pearson ○ 2<sup>nd</sup> term State Senator - ○ Federal politics is overwhelming and  
upsetting ○ VT leg is hard work... bills addressed

- Virus - safe from evictions, hunger, childcare,

- Clean water – dedicated funding

- Boosted minimum wages

- Reduced cost of prescription drugs

- Abortion a right in state law

- Gun safety updates

- Police use of deadly force

- Greater role of citizen oversight

- Wiping out marijuana records

- Small business portal – easier to register business

- Consumer protection

- Climate

- VT has highest per capita emissions

- VT has reduced emission the least against 1990 levels

- Work in progress to get VT to 100% renewable energy ○

Climate caucus has some wins 3 of 4.

Have not solved income inequality, the climate crisis, racial justice but these are in  
progress

- Kesha Ram
  - o Credit to incumbent senators
  - o Formally a state house member
    - Bill passed - Indigenous peoples day
    - Police use of force
      - o New police bill includes data collection
      - o Civility is fragile, especially for LBGT, indigenous, people of color.
    - o Senate has opportunity to for pilot initiatives
    - o Each senator closer in watching the administration
    - o Each senator closer to watching the admin [only 30 senators].
    - o Concerned how we raise revenue.
  
- Michael Sirotkin
  - o 4<sup>th</sup> senate run
  - o Chair of economic development and housing committee
    - Wide jurisdiction – also includes labor and consumer issues.
    - o 35 years working as advocate for populous causes: family, labor, housing.
    - o Issues
      - Minimum wage – Lead sponsor
      - Family leave – Lead sponsor
      - \$250M Housing bill
      - Covid19
        - Expanded unemployment to include not working due to covid exposure risk.
        - Added an assumption that when found covid infected, workman’s comp will assume covid exposure was at workplace.
      - Tries to represent common Vermonter
  
- Senate Q & A
  - o Carol – PCBs in BTV high school. How can PCBs be made a shared, i.e. state burden and not exclusively a local one. Baruth – Launched information collection, Cares funding will not work. ESSR funding – may be possible. Student transfers to safe location plus building cleanup. One issue is Vermont standard is stricter than Fed’s. Macy’s building may be an option for BSD.
    - o Hannah – How to engage with student constituents HS/Univ. Chris Peason – visit area high schools, political club... Challenge is to engage some who are not curious. Leverage educational clubs. State house internships and issue visits, deep impact especially on guns and climate. Ginny Lyons – Teaches on regular basis. Has college interns.

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Kesha Ram – Has students on campaign. Keeping young people here, using local resources like printers. Engaging young people is important, especially getting them to run for office. Michael Sirotkin – Used student activists during first campaign. Stayed in contact with their organizations and careers.

#### VT House of Representatives candidates

- Barbara Rachelson
  - Current State rep
  - Social worker by training
  - Lead Not-For-Profit organizations
  - Covid
    - Exacerbated Vermont poverty and affordability
  - VT needs to use resources carefully. Fiscally tough.
  - Corrections
    - VT spends more on corrections than higher education.
    - Against use of for-profit prisons.
      - Against the high price charged for sundry items and phone calls.
    - Recidivism rates are too high.
    - WIP to rethink who we put in prison
  - Voice for those without lobbyist
  - Pro student bill or rights – consumer protections, especially student loans
  - Pro non-conforming student bill of rights, including use of pronouns of choice
  - Pro marijuana – concerned about saliva tests, even with warrant
  - Against police use of facial recognition – moratorium passed
  - Concerned with technology that includes a record feature, how & who uses the resulting data.
  - Affordability
    - Health care spending
  - VT continues to be a state where people want to live.
- Brian Cina
  - Current state representative
  - Social worker
    - Individual and family level
    - Running to bring social issue to the state / policy level.
  - We need to empower people to take action against the status quo.
    - Child care – Currently a choice between work and staying at home to care for children
      - Status quo is people forced to choose between housing and food
      - Status quo is students with large debt while execs have large bonuses



- Status quo is delays for unemployment assistance that erodes their health ▪  
Status quo is fighter jets blaring overhead, over some of the poorest and brownest.

Status quo is police state and school-2-prison pipeline that perpetuates oppression.

- Oppression that goes back to the origins of our economy which was established on stolen land and slave labor.
  - Status quo is collapse of ecosystem and climate change
- State is vested in extractive technology that has a multifaceted impact on the planet.
  - Covid has exacerbated all the bad stuff
- We are told repeatedly this is not the time for change. When will the time for change come?
- Worked on laws
  - Ethnic studies – school curriculum
  - Columbus day to Indigenous peoples day, free hunting & fishing licenses ▪  
Comprehensive police reform
  - AI task force – how to use AI / algorithmic biases. ○

Looking forward

- Reparations for slavery and indigenous peoples ▪
- End the war on drugs. End criminalization.
- Public universal healthcare
- Shift to regenerative energy economy

- Selene Colburn ○ Former BTV City councilor ○ Born and raised in BTV ○ Part of the Mayor's youth office under Bernie ○ Member of Library at UVM / teaches advance classes ○ Two daughters who go to BTV public schools ○ Covid impacts

- Inequities made wider and more visible
  - Food insecurity – food lines
  - Racial disparities in healthcare – people of color disproportionately impacted
  - Essential frontline workers, often the lowest paid, have paid the highest cost, taken the highest risk... to keep the economy afloat and are struggling to get by on wages that are just not livable.

○ Next session

- Revenue shortfalls
- May have to look at cuts
- More federal aid may not come
- Focus on inequities during budget process
- Determine priorities

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- How are we going to raise revenues?
  - Address inequities
  - Federal tax breaks – can state reclaim this
  - Education finance – bulk is on middle income Vermonters, can we make it more progressive based on income. ▪ People moving into the state
  - Fees on sales of 2<sup>nd</sup> homes
- Much talk about the status quo & steady state budget
- Focus – How to build progressive coalition
- House judiciary committee
  - Restorative justice
  - Less incarceration, where can we decriminalize
  - Campus sexual harm - use restorative approaching
  - Active on climate solutions – how to move away from an extractive economy

#### Questions and Answers

- Amanda – Census to redistricting – city wards and districts are not aligned. Barbara Rachelson – none current were serving during last redistricting. Selene – city wide committee will make a proposal to the state operations committee. City committee already created.
- Amanda – Census to redistricting - More representative? Selene – districts may not matter as much as the financial viability for interested persons to run for this part year office. Brian Cina – we can use technology to engage and involve more people. We should increase the direct power of NPAs. Regenerative economy h868 – implement regional peoples’ assemblies. These would plan and rollup into state plans. More direct democracy. Increase people’s engagement.
- Jack Hanson -How to respond if Trump loses and will not vacate the presidency? Some state caucuses have discussed this and how to defend democracy in the face of a coup. Supreme Court is the last stop. Mass action has stopped other coups’ by slowing things down to let democracy play out. Selene – Look at this organization “Choose Democracy”. They have organization tips. VPIRG joined “Protect the results” and are organizing events.

Meeting end time: 9:00 PM

Minutes written by Tom Derenthal.