

Ward 1/8 NPA Draft Minutes  
February 14, 7:00-9:00pm  
McClure Lobby Conference Center, UVM Medical Center

**Steering Committee Members present:** Richard Hillyard-Ward 1, Cindy Cook-Ward 1, Anne Brena-Ward 8

Start: 7:00

**City Council Update and Impartial Summary of the F35 Ballot Question: Richard Deane**

Deane began by discussing the bridge that is failing in Ward 1 and what they are trying to do about it and how to replace it. He talked about four alternatives they are looking at for this problem, a scoping study led by CCRPC. 1) Creating a pedestrian bridge and rebuilding a separate one using the old bridge for pedestrians and building another one. However, it doesn't address traffic concerns. 2) Uses the existing piers, structures and replacing all the steel, which would include a separate pedestrian bridge. Would have a more robust structure and the pedestrian bridge will hold more capacity for pedestrians and cyclists. 3) Builds a pedestrian bridge from the existing bridge, then kicks down the existing bridge, widens the piers, wider traffic lanes, and the rebuilt bridge. This would address concerns of narrow lanes, a bike lane, and sidewalks. 4) Build downstream, build an adjacent bridge on temporary adjustments, and then slide the pedestrian bridge over when it is complete. All of the first 3 options are 2-3 year projects, but the fourth would take a 1/1.5 weeks to demolish the bridge and slide the bridge into place and is more expensive. The project will cost, but primarily funded federally, and are looking at this as a 5-10 year project.

Burlington Telecom: Selling to Shurz Communications, creating a new entity called Champlain Broadband, and the proceeds are approximately 33 million dollars. The city will get approximately 12.5 million and of that money, City Bank is entitled to 50% of those proceeds. Eventually, the city has about 5 million dollars to use, and the question is do we use it for city needs now, or have a carried interest in the BT entity, now called Champlain Broadband. There will be a 7 member board of the Champlain Broadband, and if the city decides to take 7.5 % stake, the city will have 1 seat, through investing 33% and using all of the 5 million dollars, the city would have a 60% stake.

Discussed what language to use about the F35 on the advisory ballot, which is supported by voter led initiative. Clarified if you want the current mission of the International Guard to continue and F35 to be based in Burlington, vote no in the ballot, and if you want something else at the airport, vote yes.

Deane replies to the question about proposals and how they came from McFarland Johnson, an engineering firm, and were led by CCRPC, and is isolated from Winooski Transportation.

**Burlington Fire Chief Steve Locke the establishment of a Regional Dispatch Center.**

Discussed ballot question about regional dispatch in Chittenden County. Over the last 18 months, stake holders have gotten together to discuss how the eight communities that operate could be consolidated to one. If you say yes, it allows the next conversation of the consolidation to the City Council for another vote. If three or more of the counties vote yes, we talk about how to combine them. Ballot question authorizes it, does not bind them. Why do this? Benefits include cutting time for dispatching and idling, answered and dispatched from the same site with 70 seconds of transferring them to another dispatcher. Williston is an anomaly, one of the few counties that pay very little for dispatching, close at 11 PM, and the call goes to State Police, which they don't pay for and it's only a matter of time before they do. We are confident that we are going to save money, but that's not why we're trying to do this, but more about saving time and fixing the system.

## **Speak Out**

**Carina Driscoll:** Running for mayor as an independent and is a life-long resident of Burlington, business owner, and founded Vermont Woodworking School. Wants more public engagement, wants to empower our NPAs through more funding, and was disappointed about the community assets, especially the sale of Burlington Telecom. Wants to help build more affordable housing and change the market rate of residential and commercial buildings through leveraging progressive policies. Wants to be more involved with schools and will work with Montpelier to change the regressive property tax and fund schools with income tax. Wants to improve transportation and housing at Cathedral Square.

**Andy Simon:** Talked about voting and that the participation rate is dismal with 80% of registered voters not voting. Can register online or absentee ballot.

**Carina:** Can call 865-7000 for the City Clerks/Treasury's Office

**Infinite Culcleasure:** Running for mayor as an independent, lived here for thirty years, worked as a community organizer at Burlington and Winooski Schools, as well as with Spectrum. He worked at the Chittenden Learning Commission, also worked on public participation plan at Winooski transportation master plan, and outreached to young communities (walkers and bikers) when on the NPA. Running for mayor for community development to build its capacity of its residents in an economical matter, and supports affordable housing, a livable wage. Discussed supporting safe injection sites, but with nuance to the issue and how it can bring consequences to the community. Will make sure community benefit agreements hold developers accountable.

## **F35 informational update**

**Charles Simpson:** Discusses the referendum and advisory process with over 3,00 signatures against the F35. It is item number 6 on ballot, which calls to have City Council advise the air force to replace the F35 with a different civil plane. Costs of the F35 are 150 million at 18x, making it 2.7 billion dollars. Can affect housing including the demolition of 200 houses around the Burlington airport and 57 million dollars in tax money to create 44 acres of open field. Housing costs go up, losing a neighborhood, as well as a noise problem. Also highly flammable and difficult to put it out. Statement from the audience describes the cost as well.

## **Burlington Schools Commissioner candidate forum, Ward 8: Keith Pillsbury**

Moved here in 1974, after graduating UVM, worked at Essex Town Middle School for 36 years, Elected to the school board in 1987 served for 7 terms, worked as board chair for two years, implemented technology, involved equity and diversity, hired new American new staff, and worked with student's needs.

Asked about the 8-10% tax and responded that the population of the student body had not changed much, 1%, and has requested information about the tax, but hasn't received it. Asked about what suggestions do you have to govern this board? Keith responded that he had been talking to neighbors and constituents and it's about communication. Also, salaries are not doing as well as other districts and that he would listen and do what he could to make things better.

## **Burlington Schools Commissioner candidate forum, Ward 1: Eric Gorman**

Parent of a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grader, a doctor with an undergraduate with math, which he stated shows that when he takes something on he does his homework. Has experience in large systems that deal with money and emotion, has worked at a few hospitals, 120 people underneath him, and describes the similarities school board politics and medical administrative politics. Asked about nullifying the teachers union, and responded that he had worked in an unionized building, which gives employees leverage, but there should be a line between imposing and striking. One can't take leverage from a union or impose.

Would like to not see striking again, will use open communication and never impose. Asked about what he would have done to prevent the strike, and he responds to not impose. When asked about his thoughts about this year's school budget he described that he wants to get away from the policy governance approach that the school board is taking and that we need a much more hands on approach that has to involve the budget and make it more user friendly.

### **Mayor Miro Weinberger**

He describes that the administration has a better credit rate, more savings for city and school tax payers. Miro states that we are making great progress, affordability, better infrastructure, a safer community, new investments in police officers and fire fighters, and progress on environmental issues. He describes that we are a Net 0 city, and the opportunity to keep moving forward.

### **Burlington City Council candidate forum, Ward 1: Sharon Bushor (Independent)**

Grew up in Massachusetts, went to UVM, started working at the hospital, works in the lab on transfusion medicine, and decided to make her voice heard after attending a Contois Event to show how to let your elected officials know what you think. Was appointed to the Public Works Commission, ran for City Council, and was elected at 1987. She described that this last term was one of the hardest terms, with the sale of BT, and hopes we can have a carried interest. When asked about supporting proposed legislation that people will have to be 21 years old to purchase tobacco, she responded that she did not, but didn't want to curb rights for certain things, describing joining the military. Asked about loud church bells in the area and the best way to respond, which she states, email.

### **8.30: Burlington City Council candidate forum/debate, Ward 8: Adam Roof (Independent), Carter Neubieser (Progressive)**

**Adam Roof:** Lives on Pearl Street and is the current city councilor seeking reelection. Lived in Ward 1/8 for about 10 years now, came as a first generation college student at and as a student was very involved in the student community: learned about equity and representing diversity, while serving on many committees. Has led a few initiatives such as on an issue of homelessness and sexual assault prevention in our downtown.

**Carter Neubieser:** Described how Ward 8 is uniquely located and that UVM is an important part of the city of Burlington, and Vis versa, adding to downtown, music, arts. Supported/helped organize Bernie's Campaign in 2016, visited hundreds of Vermonters, and has talked to students and the community of Ward 8. Believes that the UVM administration is not fair to the housing market and the student's wallets, and that we need to take action on environmental changes and other marginalized communities.

**Member:** I would like to ask you both how you will represent my voice?

**Carter:** Community involvement. I was a part of Keep Burlington Local with the sale of Burlington Telecom, unfortunately it did not have the outcome we wanted. There is a very much top down approach with community involvement, and I think we need to empower citizens through participatory budgeting or citizen budget commissions.

**Adam:** It is detailed work, dealing with hyper local and hyper complex issues, and it's important to be a translator. As a counselors, we get access and we need to translate it to the community. Being available is key, as well as understanding the different standards for city councilors and mayors, part-time vs. full time.

**Carter:** I'm willing to organize students to be more involved in local issues, and I have surveyed students on what issues they find important.

**Member:** Given that the school gets state funding, what do you both think the City Council's role should be interacting with the university?

**Adam:** So there's a lot going on with UVM, funding, and their structure, and it is second to last with funding in the nation as a state university. It's relationships, advocacy, state, and taxpayers.

**Carter:** City Council doesn't have direct control, but a lot of students are really engaged. We as a community don't have as much input as I think we should.

**Member:** On a statewide level, we have a governor who is saying that he wants to make Vermont more affordable, while trying to make policies that raise healthcare and etc. On the local level, what does an affordable Burlington look to you?

**Carter:** It is a time with high tuition and housing. The standard the housing is around 20-25% of one's income, and that's what it should like like.

**Adam:** That's the question of the last decade. Arbitrary commitments to affordable housing is not enough. Affordability is arbitrarily defined and we need to define what it means. Inclusionary Zoning as a perfect policy, is mis-defined. AMI is off by all of the Chittenden County.

**Member:** I work at UVM, and UVM is spending 65 million dollars on residence house and are open to the idea of developers making more housing. I would like to hear more ideas about affordable housing.

**Adam:** I'm proud of the work I've done so far with partnership with the University. Getting UVM to the table about where they can do more. Housing trust fund has doubled over the last few years, 300,000 dollars to non-profits.

**Carter:** We need to raise the minimum wage to \$15, which is an important part of affordability. UVM can't just build its way out of affordable housing, it's more about up charging students and its bringing up the price of the surrounding the area. Students feel like they have no voice.

**Adam:** I agree with Carter about the \$15 wage, and I've supported that. Just to be clear, UVM is on par with what most people pay for rent in Burlington.

**Carter:** The price does not mean quality. Landlords can charge higher because UVM prices are so high.

**Member:** What do each of you specifically have planned for Ward 8?

**Carter:** Out of all of the Wards, Ward 8 has one of the highest student populations. I want to build communication between the two groups and put in the time to get students involved.

**Adam:** Don't disagree with Carter. Some of the things I want to continue to work on is the YMCA Development up at the former Ethan Allen Club and continue to be a watchdog for zoning, during this transitional time.

**Member:** One thing we never talk about are young professionals who can't afford Burlington and that we are becoming a city of students. I would like to know that you will stand up to UVM.

**Carter:** I agree, the response from UVM is always that they will raise tuition and cut classes, and that's a lie. For example, I worked with the internship at UVM Faculty and looked at the budget. \$853,000 for the 1% annual pay increase, 11 art and science classes cut, saving \$100,000. \$1.6 million spent on a branding consultant, \$1 million is going towards three vice presidents. \$3 million for constructing a bridge from the dorm to the library, \$10 million for a new basketball stadium. It's a matter of priorities.

**Adam:** The City Council and the role we serve you is limited in what we can demand from the university and I haven't just skimmed a budget sheet - you don't demand things of people who you don't have relationships with. I can't promise you anything, but we can work on it one step at a time and work with their board of trustees.

**Carter:** I don't think I'm promising anything unrealistic. Yes, we should hold them accountable. This year most people in the local government didn't respond to our racial justice march.

**Member:** Both have talked about housing, racial justice, and the environment, I was wondering what areas aren't touched upon.

**Adam:** Homelessness, we don't talk about it enough. We don't talk enough about the quality of our discourse in our politics anymore, it's about our inability to converse about disagreements and we all have been subject to it.

**Carter:** Social justice isn't talked about, and affordability is being talked about but it's not a real conversation that has happened in the past. Needs progress.

**Adam:** The conversation on affordability has been happening and we've had people fighting for a while.

**Question:** Are district boundaries gerrymandered?

**Adam:** We have the 20/20 and census coming up and we will have to redistrict.

**Carter:** If you look at Ward 8 it obviously is gerrymandering, and it is important to give student voices.

**Adam:** I don't think you create a voice by creating a district for them to vote, you encourage them to vote.

**Member:** As a permanent resident, what do you feel like the biggest Ward 8 issues are?

**Carter:** I think housing prices, zoning, and the F35.

**Adam:** Housing, quality of life, and communication - I make my personal cellphone to my neighbors.

**Question:** We often hear that we can't tell UVM what to do, how are the agreements?

**Adam:** We are not shifting wards for affordable housing, and with infrastructure it is step by step, and the may dictates that conversation.

**Carter:** We need a greater say, but we can start increasing their contribution to pilot funds, forcing UVM to pay property tax, and we have to stand up to UVM.

End time: 9:30pm

Minutes taken by Sydney Hinckley-CEDO