



Wards 1 and 8 NPA Meeting
Wednesday, June 8, 2016
Draft

University of Vermont Medical Center
McClure Lobby Conference Room
111 Colchester Ave, Burlington, VT

Meeting Start: 7:00pm

Welcome & Introductions

Facilitator: Richard Hillyard

Speak Out: Audience Participation

It should be a priority to increase attendance at this and other NPAs, considering the important issues being discussed at this evening's NPA.

All residents, including those from other wards, are invited to attend tomorrow night's Wards 2 & 3 NPA, which will include discussion on issues of city-wide importance.

Sharon Bushor, City Councilor: At the development review meeting, Mr. Farrell was exceedingly precise and thorough with his sketch review. He will attempt to provide a pathway from North Avenue to the open public space, although challenges exist with regard to respecting private property. City Council is in the process of being presented with the final copy of the Mayor's budget. As it currently exists, I have concerns about the budget.

Ward 8 CDBG Review, Anne Breña

I was the Ward 8 Representative for the Community Development Block Grant review process. The money comes from the federal government through HUD (Housing and Urban Development) with the expressed purpose of alleviating poverty. Representation is from each Ward, the Mayor's Office, the State of Vermont, and United

Way. Separate funding was parceled out for public service and development. We met three times in January, and were tasked to rate contenders and award funding.

Public service recipients included Pathways for Vermont, Women Helping Battered Women, Champlain Valley Area Agency on Aging, and Home Share Vermont.

Development recipients included Champlain Housing Trust, Mercy Connections, the Howard Center, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, and Chittenden County Senior Citizens' Alliance.

The Howard Center was denied funding for an opiate crisis worker under the public service category. The Mayor did express preference for opiate-related funding. Apparently, the proposal through the Howard Center was designated as having design flaws. The Mayor indicated that there will be additional discussion about funding for opiate-related projects.

State Legislative Review & Forum: Senator Tim Ashe, Representatives Barbara Rachelson, Chris Pearson

Tim Ashe: One of the challenges about representing the Chittenden delegation is the wide variety of constituents we serve. I serve on the Judiciary Committee, and as the Chair of the Finance Committee, dealing with taxes, fees, utilities, insurance, banks, credit unions, etc. Something that was felt this term was the “wrapping up” of the current gubernatorial administration, which led to a lack of energy and forward-thinking ideas. The marijuana issue was few members' top issues, yet received much media coverage. If there is one bill that we will look back upon as transformative, it may be H-95, which looked at how we deal with young people who commit crimes. Additional revenue was raised through new fees on mutual funds, which allowed Vermonters to share the load with out-of-staters to a greater extent. As a result of education spending increases at the local level, the average Vermont taxpayer will see a slight increase in their taxes, but a much lower spike than in the past. The needle exchange program was supported by the legislature, restoring some of the money that was lost at the federal level. We estimate that due to tax avoidance by “new economy” business such as Airbnb and Amazon, about \$50 million in sales tax revenue is lost.

Barbara Rachelson: As a social worker, I've spent my career in youth services. I serve on the Education Committee and Juvenile Retention Committee. It was interesting to see the divergent perspectives on the marijuana issue between the Senate and the House. At the very least, I was hoping that we would decriminalize. It is unfortunate that we spend the share of our precious law enforcement resources on nonviolent drug use. We were disappointed that gun control reform did not pass with regard to Burlington charter changes.

Chris Pearson: In Vermont, we want strong schools, and property tax relief at the same time, which creates tension. If you look at who shoulders the burden of education under the current property tax structure, it is almost entirely middle class and upper middle class families. Middle class families pay about 3% towards property taxes going to education; wealthy families pay about 1% or lower. Closing that gap by moving from a property tax model to an income tax model would increase revenue, and relieve some of the burden from middle class families. Although this is a heavy lift, it is currently being studied at the state level. Affordability of pharmaceuticals is a big issue, yet we are restricted in what we can achieve at the state level. We passed a bill that will annually identify fifteen pharmaceuticals that have ballooned in cost, and direct the Attorney General to investigate why and work with the industry to remedy the cost spike. We worked with birth control issues to increase access and allow long-term solutions such as IUDs to be more available.

Burlington School Board Update: Chairman Mark Porter

Burlington offers 5 languages over 24 course offerings, which is more per student than many area schools. AP courses only dropped by one, without adding a penny to the budget. We turned back over a million dollars in surplus. We are \$65 million behind in maintenance of Burlington schools. Vermont has an 87.5% high school graduation rate; Burlington is 81%.

City Planning & Zoning Director, David White, reviews Form-Based Code

One of the essential elements to ensure PlanBTV is manifested in our downtown and waterfront was identified as a review of our development review process. This was done to ensure that new development and alterations fit with the City populace's vision.

The geographic extent of the form-based code has been refined from a larger area to focus on the downtown and waterfront area. Emphasis was placed on what one sees at the street level, ensuring that the city remains walkable and becomes more so over time.

The three main areas of form-based code are:

1. Which Form District are you in?
2. Of the allowed Building Types, which do you have or want to create?
3. Of the allowed Frontage Types, which do you have or want to create?

The full visual presentation of Form-Based Code [can be viewed here](#).

Coalition for a Livable City

The Coalition's concern about the downtown mall redevelopment centers on the increased height, which exceeds the current zoning, as well as a perceived lack of proper procedure. The Coalition disagrees with the developer's request for spot zoning, and prefers that downtown buildings maintain a 3-5 story height as optimal.

Adjourned at 9:40pm

Steering Committee Members: Richard Hillyard from Ward 1; Anne Breña from Ward 2

Note Taker: Matt Ketcham, CEDO