

Ward 8 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Bylaws Burlington, Vermont

ARTICLE I: NAME and PURPOSE

Section 1: **NAME.** The name of this organization is the Ward 8 Neighborhood Planning Assembly, hereinafter referred to as the “Ward 8 NPA.”

Section 2: **PURPOSE.** The purpose of the Ward 8 NPA was set forth in a Resolution adopted by the Burlington City Council in 1982, which stated in part: “...the Neighborhood Planning Assemblies shall, among other things, help provide residents with information concerning city programs and activities; help obtain citizen views of city needs; help obtain citizen views of city needs; help provide citizens with and opportunity to participate in making recommendations with respect to governmental decisions including allocation of revenues.”

In addition, the Ward 8 NPA shall be organized and operated for the following purposes:

- a. Maintain and enhance the quality of life in Ward 8.
- b. Ensure that the voices of Ward 8 residents are heard in all matters pertaining to life therein.
- c. Provide a vehicle for residents of Wards 8 to collectively act.

Section 3: **GUIDING PRINCIPLES.** The Guiding Principles of the Ward 8 NPA are:

- a. The Ward 8 NPA should provide a safe and welcoming forum where residents can actively share their voice about issues that matter to them, and where they can learn from the voices of others.
- b. The Ward 8 NPA should cultivate involvement by a diverse spectrum of community members through active outreach and through eliminating barriers to participation.
- c. The Ward 8 NPA should be operated in a manner that models respectful, inclusive, culturally and economically aware practices.
- d. The Ward 8 NPA should be fun, creative, and vital organizations that value & benefit through the multitude of perspectives shared by those who participate.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: **ELIGIBILITY.** Everyone *fourteen years and older* living within the geographic boundaries of Ward 8 is a member.

Section 2: **PARTICIPATION.** Every *eligible* member may (has the right to):

- a. Participate in meetings of the Ward 8 NPA.
- b. Have an equal vote on all matters properly put before the membership for consideration.
- c. Nominate and to participate in the election of the Steering Committee.
- d. Serve on the Steering Committee if chosen.
- e. Receive notices and minutes of all meetings of the Ward 8 NPA.

Section 3: **PARTICIPATION BY NON-MEMBERS.** Non-members may attend and participate in NPA Meetings *during the open forum meeting time*, but may not vote.

Section 4: **MEETINGS.** Meetings of the NPA will be held no less than four times a year.

Section 5: **NOTIFICATION.** Steering Committees will share meeting dates, times, locations and agendas with members through appropriate advertising.

Section 6: **QUORUM.** No action may be voted on unless there is at least a quorum of the steering committee members present.

Section 7: **AGENDA.** The Steering Committee will set the agenda of all meetings. Meetings shall have at least 5 minutes scheduled for open forum. Steering Committee members will take suggestions for future agenda items at some point during all meetings. Agendas for all NPA meetings will be properly posted by the *Community and Economic Development Office* in at least two public places and on the City website. Items may be added to the agenda of a regular meeting by a majority vote of the members present, provided a quorum has been established.

Section 8: **CONDUCT OF MEETINGS.** Meetings will be convened, adjourned, and facilitated by the Moderator. Members shall abide by the following code:

- a. The NPA Ground Rules should be *posted* at the start of all NPA Meetings.
- b. Meetings should have clearly defined Agenda & Roles (i.e. Facilitator, Recorder etc.).
- c. Honor Time limits (e.g. starting on time, sticking to the agenda, finishing on time).
- d. Listen to others: make an effort to be an open-minded member of the group.
- e. Respect the agenda and the process: try to remain focused on the issue at hand.
- f. Share your opinion respectfully. Speak out, *but not over others comments*.
- g. Treat people how you would like to be treated: *be respectful of everyone*, including guests.

Section 9: **VOTING.** All decisions of the Ward 8 NPA shall be decided by a simple majority of the *quorum* members present at a meeting, except in the case of items below that require a 2/3 vote of members present.

Items to be voted on by the Ward 8 NPA members include, but are not limited to:

- a. Expenditures of funds by the NPA, by a 2/3 vote of members present.
- b. Election of Steering Committee members, by a simple majority of members present, and removal of Steering Committee members, by a 2/3 vote of members present.
- c. Representation on certain City advisory bodies (e.g. CDBG Advisory Committee).
- d. Addition of agenda items and changes to the Bylaws, by a 2/3 vote of members present.
- e. Any formal communication or resolution from the Ward 8 NPA to the All Wards NPA Steering Committee, Burlington City Council, or any other City entity.
- f. Any other action item deemed appropriate for a full vote of the Ward 8 NPA by the Steering Committee.

ARTICLE III: STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1: **COMPOSITION.** The Steering Committee for the Ward 8 NPA shall consist of no less than three members at any one time. All members of the Steering Committee must reside within the geographic boundaries of Ward 8 throughout their term.

Section 2: **ELECTION.** Steering Committee members shall be elected by a majority vote of the NPA members at the first regular meeting following March 1st of each calendar year with their terms beginning no later than May 1st of that same year. Nominations may be made from the floor at meetings convened to elect members of the Steering Committee, provided that two members present at that meeting agree to put that person's name forward in nomination.

Section 3: **TERM.** Steering Committee members will serve for one-year terms.

Section 4: **REMOVAL.** A member of the Steering Committee may be removed for any reason by a 2/3 vote of those members present at a meeting of the NPA, provided that the issue of removal of that member from the Steering Committee was listed on the meetings properly advertised agenda. Consistent absence from meetings may constitute grounds for removal without necessitating a 2/3 vote at a full NPA meeting.

Section 5: **VACANCIES.** If any member of the Steering Committee resigns from the Steering Committee or is removed from the Steering Committee before his or her term has expired, the remaining members of the Steering Committee may appoint a person to fill the vacancy until an election can be held at the next regular meeting of the NPA.

Section 6: **QUORUM.** A majority of the members of the NPA Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Steering Committee, provided that all members of the NPA Steering Committee have been notified at least 48 hours in advance of any scheduled meeting. Absent such prior notification, a quorum shall not be possible, regardless of the number of Steering Committee members in attendance.

Section 7: **VOTING.** All decisions of the Steering Committee shall be decided by a simple majority of members present at a meeting of the Steering Committee, a quorum having been established.

Section 8: **DUTIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE.** The Steering Committee shall be responsible for the general management of the affairs of the NPA in accordance with these bylaws, including carrying out the following duties:

- a. Meeting Management: arranging, advertising, convening, coordinating, and facilitating regular and special meetings of the NPA, including the setting of the meeting agendas, the booking of meeting space, and the scheduling of meeting guests and speakers.
- b. Neighborhood Outreach: sharing of information, meeting schedules, and NPA activities with NPA members, Ward 8 residents, and the general public.
- c. Municipal Monitoring and Oversight: paying regular attention to actions and plans of City Departments, Commissions, City Council, and the Department of Planning and Zoning for the purpose of keeping Ward 8 informed of events, investments, and proposed projects that might affect the lives of people living there.
- d. Proper Recording: taking of meeting minutes, recoding of all Votes and Resolutions, proper distribution of all Resolutions, coordination with the Community and Economic Development Office on recording of meeting minutes.
- e. Representation to the All Wards NPA Steering Committee to represent the interests of the Ward 8 NPA in discussions and decisions of the Committee established to help guide citizen engagement and neighborhood activities in Burlington. Keep the members of the NPA informed of all discussions and decisions occurring within the All Wards NPA Steering Committee.

ARTICLE IV: KEY POSITIONS WITHIN THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1: **DESIGNATION.** Members of the Steering Committee shall appoint from among themselves one person to each of the following positions: Moderator; Neighborhood Liaison; and Representative to the All Wards NPA Steering Committee. No person may be appointed to more than one of these positions at the

same time. Any member of the Steering Committee may be appointed to any one of these three positions, except that a current member of the Burlington City Council may not be appointed as Moderator.

Section 2: **TERM.** These persons shall serve for one-year terms. After a person serves for three years in any of these positions they must take at least one full year off before they may serve in that specific position again.

Section 3. **DUTIES.**

- a. **Moderator.** Facilitate *most* regular and special meetings of the NPA. Attend at least one training a year and meet with the Moderators from the other NPAs two other times a year to improve skills and share experiences.
- b. **Neighborhood Liaison.** Receive and review agendas of the City Council, Commissions, and Boards. Attend meetings of these municipal bodies, as necessary. Keep NPA members and Steering Committee members informed on municipal issues and actions affecting the Ward. Keep the Community and Economic Development Office and other City departments informed about projects, decisions, and concerns of the NPA.
- c. **Representative to the All Wards NPA Steering Committee.** Regularly attend All Wards meetings; stay informed of all issues taken up by the Committee. Keep NPA members and Ward 8 Steering Committee members informed of actions and decisions of the Committee. Vote on behalf of the NPA, representing the NPA's interests and the Ward's interests before the Committee.

ARTICLE V: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1: **AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS.** The Ward 8 NPA may make amendments to the Bylaws. An amendment may be made to the Ward 8 NPA at a regularly scheduled meeting if the change is listed in the meeting agenda and approved by a 2/3 vote of members present.

Section 2: **NON-DISCRIMINATION.** In accordance with the guiding principles of these NPA Bylaws, the Ward 8 NPA will promote and work to sustain an inclusive participatory environment that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.

Section 3: **COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETING REQUIREMENTS.** The Ward 8 NPA must act in compliance with all open meeting requirements. See the City Attorney's Office for a listing of these requirements.

Section 4: **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.** Members of the Ward 8 NPA have a responsibility to their NPA to fairly review and vote on matters directly affecting their Ward without prejudice or bias. If an NPA member believes that a conflict of interest could exist with any agenda or voting item, that member should take the responsibility to disclose this conflict, and address the issue with the NPA. If upon disclosure, a quorum of members present wants to include this member in the discussion and/or voting process, then the NPA has concluded that no conflict of interest exists. Failure of a member to disclose a potential conflict of interest could result in a null/void vote or cause the need for further discussion or re-vote on a particular issue.