

Minutes Ward 6 NPA, June 6, 2013

Minutes of May meeting approved

Agenda of June meeting approved

School Commission – Alan Matson

- Described new student engagement projects during last two weeks of school year
- 15% budget cuts of athletics and co-curriculars have been revised to a request to provide same programs next year as were provided this year
- Teacher-student relationships: an outside investigator has been hired

Redistricting – Andy Montroll and Michael Rooney

- Objective: bring wards back to equal populations (or city councilors representing equal populations) as required and keep city council same size and keep neighborhoods together. Legally wards must be within 10% from largest to smallest, but currently have 40% spread.
- The basic structure has been in place 40-50 years
- Committee sent 3 maps of different ward configurations to city council and asked them to pick one.
 - 8 wards with 16 councilors, creating a new ward from homes and college dorms in Ward 6
 - 4 wards with 12 councilors
 - 6 wards with 13 councilors (3 for the New North End)

Legislative Wrap-up –

State Rep Jill Krowinski

- On House Human Services Committee.
- Main legislation: curbing prescription drug abuse using tools available and making those tools more available, including creating a state-wide drug disposal program.
- Equal Pay bill
- Flame retardants: chemical that can cause cancer was banned from children's clothing in 1970's but is now found in baby furniture

State Rep Suzi Wizowaty

- Opiates bill – spent a lot of time looking at how opiates relate to crime, which led to precious metal dealers. Bill did not get out of Senate
- Decriminalization of marijuana – collateral consequences are bad public policy and it is now treated like a traffic ticket. For minors, possession is still a crime so that they can receive help from social services.
- Patent trolling – VT is first state in US to set up a process where small companies can fight patent trolls.
- Migrant worker license
- End of life bill – what passed merged two concepts; it has many safeguards

Disappointments for each during the session:

Suzi – not making a significant investment in weatherization; not making income tax more progressive

Jill – paid sick days is a public health issue

Question on cloud tax answered by Rep Kesha Ram: the legislature took a minimal approach: Vermont taxes modules of pre-written software that is bought and sold by business, but not the services to modify the software.

Resident Parking Permits – John King, Parking Manager, Police Dept.

Permit system was created in 1990's and has not been revised since. Began review last fall and found that the volume of cars on the street was too high and the program is expensive to administer. Example: Fletcher Place has 68 permits issued for 17 parking spaces.

Draft rules may be reviewed at

<http://www.bpdvt.org/HomePage%20Docs/Resident%20Parking%20Review%20-%20DRAFT%20Sec.%202027,%206-5-2013.pdf>

Home Energy Challenge – Ron McGarvey, Coordinator, Allan Bullis, contractor and Michael Leonard, Ward 6 resident

2008 comprehensive energy plan for state called for reducing fossil fuels, increasing renewable energy and efficiency. The goal is to reduce residential use by 25% by 2020, which means 80,000 homes need to be weatherized. Halfway through the allotted time, only 3,500 homes have been weatherized. The Challenge is an attempt to encourage more participation through competition and incentives. To read how it works go to

http://www.encyvermont.com/for_our_partners/community_partners/residential/how-it-works.aspx

Mayor Miro Weinberger & City Councilors

The mayor announced that there will be no increase to the general city tax. In part it is thanks to new perspectives that have “paid off”:

- Jesse Bridges at Parks & Rec plans improved services and better care of buildings
- Ruby Simon at Library analyzed time of use and may change hours to improve services and save money.
- City Attorney was brought in-house and the savings have been invested in software to log all city contracts

Plans for moving forward during the year:

- Using Penny for Parks to get 42 projects done
- Capital budget has unspent funds that will be used on city buildings
- Continue with SeeClickFix, adding other departments to the trouble-reporting app
- Bike path upgrades
- Address racial disparities as an employer

City Councilor Norm Blais – the budget work is being done with no reduction in essential services

City Councilor Karen Paul – the easy savings were taken a while ago. Hope to bring centralized purchasing to the CAO. There are still efficiencies we haven't gotten to. Retirement funds are still a looming issue – city is paying out more in benefits than we are contributing.

Meeting adjourned.

The next NPA meeting will be in September, 2013.