

**Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly  
Minutes December 5, 2013**

**By Peter Keating**

Steering Committee member and meeting facilitator Mary Esther Treat kicked off the meeting by briefly going over the evening's agenda.

The meeting minutes from November were approved on a voice vote.

**Crime Wave Discussion** – Police Chief Mike Schirling and Lt. Scott Davidson gave a report on recent criminal activity in the Ward which included:

- A handout on tips to avoid being a victim and when to call to report suspicious activity
- Some national crime trends
- A Burlington comparison between 2012 and 2013 (slightly down citywide this year)
- The opiate/heroin role in property crime and thefts to support addiction
- 400 to 600 long waiting list for methadone treatment
- Average annual cost to support drug habit is \$70,000 to \$90,000
- Favored items for theft are precious metals/jewelry and Apple products (“Apple picking”)
- Working with Legislature to address second hand dealers that handle stolen property
- Check the Police Department web site for more information and safety tips

Q&A and further discussion followed the Chief's presentation.

**Neighborhood Safety Initiative** – Karen Vastine of the Community Justice Center described some findings from a recent city wide survey on safety and community involvement. She started by introducing others involved in the neighborhood safety planning group – Jerry Manock, Gail Shamnois and Jane Knodell. Over 700 surveys were completed. Selected results included:

- Resident “likes” include the city's walkability and diversity
- “Dislikes” include burglaries, vandalism, noise and traffic speed
- Noted responses from Ward 6 showed a shared concern with other wards over burglaries and car break-ins
- Ward 6 responses showed a higher rate of feeling safe compared to other wards.
- Next steps include presenting to other NPAs, training neighbor groups and calling attention to the city's parallel justice program

**School Update, School Commission redistricting and budget** – School Board Chair Alan Matson, School Superintendent Jeanne Collins, Edmunds Elementary Principal Shelly Mathias and former Board Chair Keith Pillsbury attended and made the following remarks:

- The Board decided future Board membership would be one per ward under the new redistricting plan for 8 total (in contrast to 12 members in City Council redistricting plan)
- Two budget related handouts were distributed and the following points were made:
  - There was a reduction in the increase between first and second budget drafts detailed on one of the handouts.
  - The budget target is now a 6.9% increase
  - Increase relates to higher enrollment and program details
  - Burlington student enrollment is up compared to downward trend statewide

- School Board priorities and budget process

A Q&A and further discussion followed.

**Champlain College and UVM** – Two Champlain students, Brandyn Csorgo and Kristie Adonizio reported that:

- with David Finney's departure a new college president will be arriving in January
- a meeting of students with residents/neighbors is being organized for next fall
- College events are available on the College website
- Ability for neighbors to use the College library and gym

**University of Vermont Alumni House** - Lisa Kingsbury of UVM focused her time on the University's plans for Alumni House at 61 Summit Street. With Lisa were Ruth Henry of the UVM Foundation and Karen Hansen a project contractor. Ruth displayed a rendition of what the site will look like with a new addition to the current building's north. She also noted the uses in the various parts of the buildings, the proposed parking and circulation, the anticipated construction schedule (2014) and total cost (\$11.2 million with \$3 million already raised).

**City Councilors Report** - Ward 6 City Councilors Norm Blais and Karen Paul gave an update of City Council activities that included:

- Charter changes related to redistricting
- City employee pensions
- Easement for CCTA transit center on St. Paul St.
- A third gun regulation back to City Council

The meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.

To view the meeting, go to: <http://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-6-npa-meeting-34>

The next NPA meeting will be February 6th at the Greek Orthodox Church on Ledge Road. The meeting starts at 7:00pm with a social time beginning at 6:45.