

*Minutes Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly Thursday April 12, 2012 -7PM –Edmunds School – Full Video available at <http://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-6-npa-meeting-23>*

*Co- Facilitators and Note Takers Annika Freudenberger and Neil Groberg; Videographers: Steve Norman and Robert Meijers; Cookies: Neil Groberg*

### **Overview and approval of agenda & minutes**

Neil Groberg introduced the meeting and Annika Freudenberger began facilitating. The minutes for the prior meeting were approved.

### **7:15 – Institutional Neighbors Report – Champlain College-**

John Caulo reported that -

- The scaffolding for the first of the res tri residential halls has been removed.
- The project on schedule; no surprises to his knowledge from the project related to the surrounding neighbors.
- The Champlain Board of Trustees meeting in June about a construction start date for the remaining res tri residence halls.
- There will be interior and some outside renovations to Bader Hall this summer.

### **City Councilor’s Report – Norm Blais, Karen Paul - City council update**

Norm discussed -

- The upcoming Monday City Council meeting that will consider some boards and bureau vacancies.
- That for most part there is not a lot on agenda because of the new term of the mayor.
- That the Mayor is from Ward 6.
- That there is a lot of enthusiasm and the Council looks forward to working with new administration.

Karen Paul advised that -

- Basically nothing is going on yet.
- Tentative committee assignments for councilors have been made.
- Andy Montroll is retiring from NPA steering committee.
- He has been a valuable resource to Karen personally and made a tremendous contribution to the steering committee.
- Knowing him Karen is sure that he will be at future NPA meetings.

Neil Groberg resolved that the NPA thank Andy for his service to Ward 6 and community at large. This passed unanimously.

### **Institutional Neighbors Report – UVM –**

Lisa Kingsbury indicated that the-

- 61 Summit street work that is providing interim maintenance is being finished up. This building will eventually be alumni house. UVM is hiring an architect to work on its design.
- Notwithstanding the recent Redstone loft vandalism it is anticipated it will still be open on time in August.
- UVM is working on a faculty student staff master plan with input from various constituencies. The draft is expected in mid May and it will be reviewed with community

Jeff Schulman Associate Director of Athletics followed up on his presentation in April with more details about the upgrades to Virtue Field (soccer/lacrosse field). These improvements, which will relocate soccer and lacrosse to the UVM athletic fields (next to the Patrick/Forbush/Gutterson complex), include the construction of new bleachers, support buildings and lights. He explained that:

- Phase one of the project was completed last summer with the installation of a turf field, and fencing.
- Remaining is the construction of stands for 2500 spectators, a new press box, hospitality center, scoreboard, lockers, and field lightening.
- This is already the site for lacrosse (played in an adjoining field). Beginning this fall men's and women soccer will be played at the new field adding an additional 15-20 games per year to the site.
- There will probably be 7-10 soccer games and 3-4 lacrosse matches played at night.
- Most night games should start at 7PM and will end by 11PM.
- There is state of art lightening system that directs light to field.
- According to spectrometric analysis there will be no spill to surrounding neighborhoods from the lights.
- The light poles are 80 feet high and there should be no place off campus in Ward 6 where you can see them.
- The speakers will be mounted on the press box and will be directed to west. However, a sound analysis suggests that there will not be spillage to neighborhood.
- There are no plans to use the field for concerts.
- The field will be used by the community for events such as the Special Olympics and high school state championships.
- The permitting process is ongoing and although it is not clear at this time, UVM would like to see construction it start this summer or fall.

There was a follow up discussion with the audience. There were questions about whether the sidewalks will be permeable material. Jeff Schulman did not know the answer to this question but agreed that he could bring those involved specifically on the construction to speak to the NPA.

An audience member noted that the 2009 plan for the field called for only 300 seats. The full build out had been part of the master plan.

Concern was noted about the lack of disclosure of increase in seating capacity in current plan,

traffic impact, and whether bus shuttles will be provided like they are with hockey or basketball games. Jeff Schulman responded that there is an established parking protocol in place; prepared for 4000 at hockey and 2000 with basketball at the same time and they have been able to handle traffic in that regard. In that regard, Jeff reported that the average soccer crowds are between 300-500 spectators.

Neil Groberg introduced the panel discussion that included the following individuals.

7:50 – Panel Discussion – increased Crime in Burlington- Causes and Prevention

- Rain Banbury – Burlington Parallel Justice
- T.J. Donovan- Chittenden County State's Attorney
- Ashley Mikell- Champlain College Director of Residential Life
- David Nestor- University of Vermont Dean of Students
- Debbie Thibault - Corrections Dept. Community Corrections District Manager
- Matt Young – Howard Center
- Michael E. Schirling - Burlington Police Chief

#### **Panel discussion on the increased crime rate in Burlington**

- Burlington Police Chief Michael Schirling began by speaking about the increased number of burglaries. It climbed from 247 in 2009 to 380 in 2011. Most of these were committed by substance abuse addicts, or in some cases they had committed many crimes before. In the South End, the burglary rate followed the same trend in 2009-10 as it did in 2010-11. He also stated that there is an increase in service-based responses, which include trespassing and mental health-related events. A continuum needs to be built and not in a haphazard way, otherwise money will simply be wasted. Amid the rise in crime, however, he applauded the work of the criminal justice system in Burlington. Out of the 18,000 law enforcement associations in the U.S., three in Burlington won national awards.
- T.J. Donovan, Chittenden County State's Attorney, agreed with the previously discussed trends in burglaries. He believes that substance abuse is a statewide issue. In Vermont, more people die from opium addiction than from highway fatalities. He said it is important to plan for when people are released from jail, specifically treatment centers. Similar treatment centers also need to be in place to prevent crime. He noted that there has been a waiting list of about 300 people at a meth addiction treatment center.
- Debbie Thibault was present as the District Manager of the Corrections Department. They address the issues after a person has been convicted. Recently, the numbers have gone down of people under their supervision. Once closer to 300, they now only have about 240. They do have specialized officers so there is more direct supervision. She would like to see more resources put towards the most serious offenders, and an increase in transitional housing and treatment centers.
- Matt Young, from the Howard Center, said their work focuses on observing those in pre-contemplating stages. He said the number one issue is substance abuse. The second is mental health issues, though he specified this is not mental illness. The third issue is related to unemployment. People become frustrated waiting for benefits, so poverty increases and mental

health deteriorates. He would like substance abuse treatment centers to be as easily available as the substances are currently themselves. He would also like to see the demand for social services met.

- Burlington Parallel Justice mainly works with victims of crime. Rain Banbury explained that they help compensate for any objects that may have been damaged during a burglary, for example, like broken car windows or damaged tires. Their budget is based on donations.
- The University of Vermont Dean of Students, David Nestor, was also present. They believe in holding students accountable for the crimes they commit, and setting them up in restitution programs. They extend their school policies to all off-campus students as well. Most issues stem from "quality of life crimes," which can be underage drinking, open containers, or noise problems. They reported about 250 infractions/year off campus. Drugs and alcohol are the major influence of crime, which he believed increased counseling could help with. High density housing can contribute to quality of life crimes and is categorized as a likely "problem area."
- Ashley Mikell, the Champlain College Director of Residential Life, said that mainly alcohol and marijuana influence crimes, not as much the use of prescription drugs. 47 students this year were cited or arrested, with only 2 being categorized as being serious crimes (those were assault and burglary). Very few students have a record of repeated crime. She would like more resources for proactive education and ethics work on campus, and more for the other departments and organizations on the panel as many of them work closely together.
- An audience member asked what is happening in other municipalities in regards to crime rates. Chief Schirling said that other areas in Chittenden County have similar increasing trends. He noted that trends in urban centers are different than those in rural Vermont areas.
- The second audience question was about the Rapid Intervention Program. T.J. Donovan explained that it is a pilot project that conducts risk-needs assessments, links offenders with the right social services, and tries to address root causes in a proactive way. The next question asked what citizens could do to help stop the current trends. Chief Schirling responded that everyone is in this together, and needs to be actively engaged. People need to call, report, intervene, and support those doing work in the criminal justice system who otherwise doesn't get much public support.
- A related question arose concerning the correct way to deal with panhandlers. Matt Young said that a new ordinance might affect panhandling downtown. They try to "teach" people how to panhandle legally and warn them of the consequences.
- Champlain College and UVM were asked what their policies were towards students with noise citations. Champlain College receives information from the Burlington Police Department. They put it on the student's record and fine them. If it happens more than once, they take additional measures such as contacting the family and landlord, put the student on probation, or even expel them. UVM has a similar policy. If there is no record of previous violations, the consequences are less harsh. They look at the student's cooperation during the incident to decide the strictness of the punishment. The student may also be brought through the judicial process.

- The next person inquired whether the policies at the institutions vary much from city laws. Because UVM is a public institution, they need to be in accordance with state and city law. Champlain College has more flexibility because they are a private college, but they are still in accordance with other existing laws.
- There was some discussion about the lack of fast response regarding noise violations.
- Someone also asked if a violation could be reported without an "official" witness such as a police officer. Chief Schirling said that it is extremely busy between 10pm and 3am. It's hard to respond immediately to the large number of calls. If the witness can provide a statement that can lead to a ticket. If the noise is considered social or party noise, the whole household is held responsible and ticketed. Champlain College said that they extend the perimeter that their officers patrol during warmer weather to decrease noise in the neighborhood. A follow up question inquired whether it is legal to give tickets to the whole household on the lease for a noise violation. Chief Schirling explained that rules have shifted slightly. Certain noises, such as a loud radio, would result in an individual being ticketed. If it is a party noise, the entire household is held accountable.
- City Councilor Karen Paul added that if anyone doesn't want to call the police to report a violation, she can be contacted and in previous experiences the problem has been solved when she contacted the landlords and tenants. She will try to immediately address the issue. A final audience member asked why there hasn't been much communication between Councilor Karen Paul and the institutions. Ashley Mikell thought that they should communicate more. Gail Shamnois provides lots of information about off-campus students that Karen could also give.

8:45 - NPA Steering Committee election-

- Karen Paul placed in nomination Rick Bryant, Annika Freudenberger, Neil Groberg, and Mary Esther Treat for a new one-year term on the NPA Steering Committee. The nomination was motioned seconded and passed unanimously.
- Chris Hill nominated Peter Keating as an additional member. Peter lives on South Union and Neil Groberg read an e-mail from Peter regarding his interest in the community and his experience on transportation issues. The motion was seconded and Peter was elected.
- Neil Groberg indicated that if anyone else is interested in joining the Steering Committee they should let a Steering Committee member know.
- The meeting was then adjourned at about 9:05PM.