

Minutes from February 7, 2013 Meeting

Facilitator: Peter Keating Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Minutes by Annika Freudenberger

The Ward 6 NPA's February 7th meeting was dedicated to items that will be on the March Ballot. A video can be watched online <http://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/programs/burlington-ward-6-npa-meeting-29>.

The meeting kicked off with an update from City Councilor Karen Paul. Preliminary work on plans for a Public Investment Plan (for the waterfront and Moran) has begun. Anyone can submit ideas to CEDO for a plan; eventually, five people will serve on a public investment team to choose a final plan. She also gave brief updates on the airport and retirement.

Rachel Siegel, Ward 3 City Councilor, spoke in support of the Tar Sands Advisory Referendum that will be on the March ballot. The city has already endorsed the measure but if approved by voters, the referendum would encourage the state to boycott tar sands oil and engage in thorough environmental and health impact research.

The Student Government President of UVM, Connor Daley, reported a decrease in students walking around off campus at night, which is likely weather-related. Some neighborhood cleanups occurred in January, and more will continue throughout the spring. The University has also received some grant money and is developing a mandatory online course for students planning to live off-campus.

Brooke Fifield, a student leader at Champlain College, gave an update on a taxi-card system to get students off the streets late at night. It has proved to be a successful program and will likely be expanded. John Caulo, also from Champlain, explained a new parking plan that will affect some areas on Maple Street. He will return in April to give detailed updates on other Champlain College-related items, including construction projects.

The next big item on the agenda was the school budget, with comments made by Superintendent Jeanné Collins, School Board Commissioner Keith Pillsbury, Ward 6 School Commissioner Alan Matson, and student Annika Freudenberger. The greatest budget increases for the next year are related to Special Education and health care costs. Part of the budget is also dedicated to funds for technology and English Language Learner (ELL) programs. To keep a tax increase lower, the head office and Special Education has been asked to be restructured; two teacher positions will be eliminated at BHS; one elementary Spanish teacher position will be cut; and extracurricular funds will be cut by 15%. At the moment, the School Board is expecting a 6.9% tax increase, though that may shift over the next few weeks. From the student perspective, the

extracurricular budget decrease is concerning most students. For more information on the schools and the proposed budget, visit www.bsdt.org

Norm Blais is running for re-election as City Councilor for Ward 6. His priorities for the next term are a reform of the pension, Burlington Telecom, redistricting, and an assault weapons ban.

Alan Matson is also running for re-election for School Commissioner. This will be his last term, in which he plans to address the long-term inflation issue.

Marcy Krumbine from CEDO, gave an update on CDBG (Community Development Block Grants). Their primary purpose is to help low-income neighborhoods to provide decent housing, economic opportunities, and suitable living environments. More information on CEDO, CDBG, and a link to a survey on Burlington issues can be found at <http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/>

The NPA elected Andy Montroll to serve on the City's Redistricting Committee. In addition, Michael Rooney was selected as the Alternate if the City Council adds alternates to the Committee. A representative is elected from each ward to serve on the committee.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 7th at 7pm at the Greek Orthodox Church on South Willard Street. We hope to see you there!