



Town of Burlington



Planning Board

**Minutes of the Planning Board  
Open Seat Interview Meeting of May 4, 2022**

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1. Chairman Rappaport called the May 4, 2022 Special Planning Board Meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Main Hearing Room of the Burlington Town Hall, 29 Center Street.

**Members Present:** Member Covino, Member L'Heureux, Chairman Rappaport, Member Impemba

**Also Present:** Planning Director Kassner, Senior Planner Bonventre

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2. **Interviews**

- a) Niteen Khatra

Mr. Khatra stated that he is a Burlington resident of twenty years, wants to be part of a group that does visioning for twenty to fifty years from now and is here to help solve resident's issues while serving the community.

Member Covino asked if Mr. Khatra could think of a time in which he had to compromise on a decision to which Mr. Khatra referenced his daughter's decision to go into medical school or family business.

Member L'Heureux asked Mr. Khatra about what the board could do better.

Mr. Khatra listed the fire and police department locations need to be proper because they work twenty-four hours for Burlington, Cambridge Street traffic improvements, school improvements across all sites, senior citizen housing, having more spaces for children to play.

Chair Rappaport asked is there a decision he thinks the board should not have made?

Mr. Khatra stated that the 128 Cambridge Street project is good overall, but is too close to the road. Landscaping for various buildings could also be better.

Chair Rappaport asked if Mr. Khatra can sit through long meetings as well as be a part of subcommittees?

Mr. Khatra responded yes that he is aware of meetings that last until 11:30 which he is comfortable with. He is self-employed which allows for flexibility in his life schedule to accommodate any potential sub-committee meetings.

Ms. Kassner asked if Mr. Khatra is comfortable with online platforms for meetings.

Mr. Khatra stated he is comfortable with late meetings and will ask for assistance is necessary.

Ms. Kassner stated the staff works a lot with the board members, so it is important to have a strong line of communication between the two groups.

Mr. Khatra then lifts cellphone while saying he is available by text, call, or email.

Member L'Heureux stated we are not looking for anyone to better than others, we are trying to find the best fit to help the board.

Member Covino stated that if Mr. Khatra is not chosen to stay involved

b) Christopher Hartling

Mr. Hartling stated that he has been involved in various roles in Burlington Town government since being a homeowner over the past twenty years. He has recently taken time off for family health reasons but feels that this is the right time to come back. He respects what the planning board does and would like to be a part of the process of making future decisions. He appreciated how recent decisions have impacted the community and would like to be a part of the board to continue this trend.

Chair Rappaport asked Mr. Hartling if he would be available for potentially late meetings and subcommittees outside of normal times?

Mr. Hartling stated yes and in previous roles he was on the 3A subcommittee and worked on the Northeastern expansion into Burlington.

Chair Rappaport asked what stands out, either good or bad. about what the board has accomplished?

Mr. Hartling stated that he has not always agreed with board decisions in the past but projects such as Dave and Busters he was glad it was not approved.

Member L'Heureux asked Mr. Hartling what specifically does he want to work on?

Mr. Hartling stated the master plan to be finished and get more answers from the mall about long term plans they have.

Member L'Heureux asked what should the process be when the planning board requires legal counsel?

Mr. Hartling stated that that would be a case specific process, but always should be a collaborative effort with other entities.

Member Impemba asked Mr. Hartling his thoughts on the autonomy of different board within the town? Should each decision be respected 100%? Are they responsible to the voters and not to the other boards?

Mr. Hartling stated that he believes in checks and balances, so every elected official must be accountable for all decisions. No board should have 100% autonomy, there should be open lines of communication so that various boards can be well informed and back one another up as needed.

Member Impemba stated that from his time on the Board of Selectman there was an annual meeting to discuss issues. He stated that the meeting should be done jointly which would lead to better understanding and better respect to members of boards.

Member L'Heureux stated that this issue will always be complex as not every member will be the same level of informed on the various issues facing each specific board. There is friction because the select board holds the purse strings over the planning board.

Mr. Hartling asked were there times when the 5 select board members felt very strongly about something but felt unable to intervene in other board's decision making?

Member L'Heureux stated that while the select board, and any other board cannot vote during other meetings, they are still allowed to voice their opinions as citizens. It is too much to expect to have any board be fully informed about every issue being discussed by a different board.

Member Covino stated that we are fortunate to be in a community with so much active participation in local government. The selectman has never denied the planning board legal counsel to defend their position in his experience. Mr. Covino then asked Mr. Hartling to provide an example of a time when he had to compromise.

Mr. Hartling stated that his philosophy on a compromise is that nobody feels 100% happy but nobody feels 100% screwed. Compromise is not an obstacle to him, but he will hold a consistent set of values which he believes in. Mr. Hartling asked about a timeline of next steps.

Ms. Kassner stated that a decision will be made at joint meeting with select board at the end of this month after finishing the interview process. She then stated the importance of responsiveness and being able to attend all meetings in the new member.

Mr. Hartling stated he is a big believer in communication and can attend the meetings needed as part of the position.

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**MOTION** – To adjourn at 2:17 pm.

**APPROVED: 4-0-0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved by,

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Caleb Zimmerman, Assistant Planner

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William Gaffney, Member Clerk

Minutes accepted at the Planning Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_.

Minutes filed with the Town Clerk on \_\_\_\_\_.

**All decisions are on file with the Town Clerk. All the noted documents are on file and can be viewed in the Planning Department. A DVD recording of the meeting is on file in the Planning Department.**