



Town of Burlington



Planning Board

**Minutes of the Planning Board  
Open Seat Interview Meeting of May 5, 2022**

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1. Chairman Rappaport called the May 5, 2022 Special Planning Board Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Main Hearing Room of the Burlington Town Hall, 29 Center Street.

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

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

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2. **Interviews**

- a) Craig Foster

Mr. Foster stated his interest comes for wanting to be involved with town government, specifically with the planning board as they are involved with a wide array of decision making. Having a young child, wants to be a part of shaping the future look of the town.

Chair Rappaport asked if he understand the full extent of involvement that comes with this position? This includes long meetings and subcommittee meetings. This person would need to run for reelection in upcoming town elections back to back.

Mr. Foster stated that he was aware of all of the commitments except the back to back elections.

Member Covino asked if Mr. Foster is familiar with making compromises

Mr. Foster stated that as part of his job in digital media, he needs to understand what is best for company and for the client so that often means coming to a compromise. He stated that he is a person who has his own ideas, but am open to change my mind. He points to the development happening near his residence and now feels better than originally.

Ms. Kassner stated with respect to the development discussed by the applicant, this could be a conflict of interest if it came back to the board as he lives close to the site.

Mr. Foster stated that he agrees on this potential conflict of interest recusing process and other potential projects that would directly impact his house.

Chair Rapport asked Mr. Foster if there something around town that he views as important to him with regards to development?

Mr. Foster stated walkability around town center, more restaurants, more development around town center to accommodate potential future housing, more local businesses as he works for a local gym, and more affordable housing.

Member Impemba asked Mr. Foster if he is familiar with the downtown overlay and the different facets of it?

Mr. Foster stated that he has a base understanding of the overlay with different spots for housing and businesses.

Member Impemba asked Mr. Foster about his thoughts on 3A.

Mr. Foster stated that he drives it and for a safety standard, it should be a one lane with designated turn lanes where needed. From a traffic safety standard, it should be a two lane road. He also suggested a section should be one lane for improved pedestrian safety.

Mr. Foster asked What is the expectation for the new member and what their knowledge should be?

Chair Rapport stated the member should be someone who is committed, do their research on the issues and complement the existing board.

b) Toni Ann Natola

Vice Chair Gaffney asked Ms. Natola what her to apply to this position.

Ms. Natola stated that a change in job location made it possible to be more available for this position.

Chair Rappaport stated that she had a chance to meet with Toni and learn about her. She then stated that the board needs someone who is committed to long meetings and subcommittees as well as elections in upcoming years

Ms. Natola stated that after learning that, her job cleared her from any ethics conflicts.

Chair Rapport asked if there something in the community which Ms. Natola is passionate about?

Ms. Natola stated Housing accessibility, traffic reduction, the future of Burlington by bringing in the right companies to this community.

Member Covino asked Ms. Natola to give an example of when she had to compromise?

Ms. Natola stated that she must compromise all the time as part of her job as a magistrate in the trial court.

Member Impemba stated he is very impressed with Ms. Natola's accomplishments in her professional life and has asked her many questions about planning board decisions.

Ms. Natola stated that she has a strong interest in what is happening in this community so that is why she asks the questions

Vice Chair Gaffney asked Ms. Natola how does she feel about recusing yourself from certain cases?

Ms. Natola stated that if the ethics came back and advised me to recuse, I would. Ms. Natola asked does this position require a lot of day work?

Chair Rappaport stated that members need to review the staff report and meeting preview to be prepared for that week's meeting. Staff and other members on the board are available to assist as needed.

Ms. Kassner stated that there are also subcommittee meetings that occur during times which are planned for everyone's availability.

Ms., Bonventre stated that whenever staff receive any sort of application, they send out the digital copies to all board members to keep all members updated.

c.) Jessica Sutherland

Ms. Sutherland stated that she has seen the evolution of the town over past sixteen years and has been looking for ways to get involved with town government for past few years as she wants to help for long term. She stated she works at Care.com currently, and has been a business woman for a long time who has always worked on growing businesses for a variety of companies.

Chair Rappaport asked Ms. Sutherland if she has watched planning board meetings? They can be long and we also have subcommittee meetings during the day as well as reviewing staff reports before meetings. This person would have to run for re-election both this year and next year.

Ms. Sutherland stated she has watched a couple of the meetings.

Chair Rappaport asked Ms. Sutherland if there anything in Burlington which she is particularly passionate about? Is there something that you think the board could have done differently?

Ms. Sutherland stated that to first answer previous question, she works remotely so doing mid day meetings is not an issue. In terms of what she has seen in town, she likes the amount of events and involvement. Housing prices have gone up, but would like to see more affordable housing and the benefits it provides.

Vice Chair Gaffney asked Ms. Sutherland if there a particular event that drew you to apply or just general interest?

Ms. Sutherland stated that she has been searching in the town to see where she could best get involved and this group does best impact for long term planning. Even if she did not get this seat, would be a good introduction to understand what would be desired for this seat in the future.

Member Covino asked Ms. Sutherland if she can provide example of when she had to compromise.

Ms. Sutherland stated that decisions you make today will decide the future, so had to weigh commuting far to a great work opportunity. At work, she put a strategy for a new commercial but the CEO and manager decided to reduce the budget. She then reworked the idea under the new budget and came back to repitch it but it was still not agreed on and she had to learn to be okay with that.

Member L'Heureux asked Ms. Sutherland how is she with giving bad news to an applicant.

Ms. Sutherland stated that she has been in charge of people in various positions since 2013 so has had to let people go for different reasons. It is key to be able to explain the reason why behind the decision clearly.

Member Impemba asked Ms. Sutherland what her thoughts are on 3A?

Ms. Sutherland stated that the road is not technically wide enough to do two lanes, but restricting to two lanes is not a good solution. She stated it should stay as it is and up to individuals on how to approach driving through the space.

Ms. Kassner stated that we look for is someone who absorbs the information that staff send out before a meeting and is well prepared as well as being responsive.

Ms. Sutherland stated that she regularly prepares for different work meetings to understand full implications of her decisions. She is comfortable asking questions and being transparent about what is not understood.

Chair Rappaport asked Ms. Sutherland if she had any questions for the board members.

Ms. Sutherland asked what is the skill set they are looking for in someone to fill this seat?

Chair Rappaport stated a team player, someone who will research, ask questions, and willing to go through elections. They need to love this community and want to be here.

Member L'Heureux stated someone who provides a sense of fairness to all applicants.

**MOTION** – To adjourn at 6:14 pm.

**APPROVED: 5-0-0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caleb Zimmerman, Assistant Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
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.**