

Nomination for Professional Planner Sandrine Thibault

Name of person or board: Sandrine Thibault, Principal Planner - Comprehensive Planning Planning & Zoning Department, Burlington

Contact Person(s): David White, Director, Planning and Zoning, City of Burlington

The first three items are for citizen planner, citizen board and professional planner. Check just one of those, then go on and fill in as much information that you can to support that item.

Check one box only:

1. Serves as a volunteer on a committee, board or commission or as citizen activist
Names of board(s) _____
Citizen activist or neighborhood leader _____
2. Serves as a volunteer board for a municipality, region or state
Name of board _____
3. Serves as a professional planner on behalf of Vermont, on the local, regional or state level or in the private sector (for example, consultant).

Criteria:

4. About how many years has this individual or board committed to planning, as part of a group, program, initiative and/or cause? Give details:

Sandrine was a planner in New Hampshire for about 6 years and subsequently with the City of Burlington for the last five years. Prior to that she earned her Masters in Planning in Louisiana and worked there for several years

Her experience in New Hampshire included (1) Principal Community Planner for the North Country Council RPC, where she managed a multitude of planning projects and state grants, and (2) Principal Planner for the State Office of Energy and Planning. This latter position involved a variety of activities, including management of FEMA projects, coordination of planning activities between state agencies, publication of guidebooks and technical bulletins on planning and zoning, development and coordination of training programs for local and regional planners, and overseeing distribution of funding to RPCs.

For the City of Burlington, her overall responsibility has been city-wide long-range planning and principal staff to the Burlington Planning Commission, focusing on sustainability, as well as an advisor to the Conservation Board, Design Advisory Board, and Development Review Board. In addition she has been responsible for preparing the Burlington Climate Action Plan, including the development of the greenhouse gas emissions inventory, the setting of reduction targets and the coordination of the public involvement process with the formation of

eight workgroups. She also serves as a technical and policy resource to other city departments including the Mayor, City Council, Departments of Public Works and Parks & Recreation, and the Community Economic and Development Office regarding land use, development and sustainability issues. Most recently, she has been, over the last two years, the principal planner in charge of PlanBTV, Burlington's land use and development plan for its Downtown and Waterfront. This last has been a major undertaking.

Sandrine has also served as the first Public Information Officer for the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association for almost a decade, overseeing the design, upgrading the reliability and professionalism of both the chapter newsletter and the website.

5. To what extent has the nominee's time and dedication increased the understanding of planning principles and the planning process as well as the goals of the organization of which he/she is a part? How has this advocacy role been pursued?

In all of her jobs, Sandrine has always pushed for good planning, providing technical assistance and education to local planners. Her roles have been educational and advisory, as well as promoting good communication among various organizations. In both these capacities, she has promoted planning principles and processes to folks that would otherwise not be very effective in their roles.

As a member of NNECAPA, she has also worked tirelessly in providing education to other professional planners. She has been actively involved in planning NNECAPA conferences, as well as developing the website for the organization. Her work on the 2011 NNECAPA in Burlington was most invaluable, and the success of the conference would not have happened without her. She was instrumental in developing workshops, inviting speakers, marketing the conference, helping with the budget and registrations, as well as many of the other details that must go into a conference of this size.

Sandrine has also tirelessly worked on the regular publication of the chapter newsletter, a source of communication and education for northern New England professional planners.

6. Within what sphere of influence has this effectiveness been realized (local, regional, statewide, national)?

Sandrine's sphere of influence ranges from the local town level to the international level. In Burlington she works with all the volunteer boards, as well as a resource to other City departments. With her work with NNECAPA, she's active across the region and, because of her Quebec roots, she keeps in contact with the Canadian Institute of Planners, trying to connect NNECAPA to the eastern provinces on issues of interest.

7. To what extent has this person or board exhibited outstanding leadership in his, her or their endeavors? To what extent is this person or board respected and emulated by peers? List example(s)

From her earliest job, Sandrine has been a skilled leader, taking on more and more responsibility. Her latest endeavor, the planBTV, is a prime example of her leadership. This has been a tremendous and very complex undertaking, and she has led the charge with great expertise and aplomb.

Sandrine is respected for her great dedication and passion—as well as for her creative, out of the box thinking—by her colleagues and by the volunteers she works with. She is also respected by the developers, engineers and other professionals she has contact with through her planning oversight, as one of the support letters attests to.

8. To what extent has the nominee been effective in formulating and implementing his/her plans and furthered the cause of planning?

For her relatively short time working in the planning world, Sandrine has been incredibly effective. She is extremely knowledgeable, articulate, personable and energetic. All this results in accomplishments beyond her years. For Burlington alone, her work on both the Climate Action Plan and the planBTV has been very valuable, and both plans have a deep and broad impact on the City and the region.

Her work for NNECAPA has had an enormous impact on planners in northern New England. Her involvement on the NNECAPA Executive Committee has been important to both those on the Committee as well as those in the general membership.

9. Other – for example list involvement in public outreach and citizen engagement, or if this person or board has any publication related to planning.

Sandrine has always actively included public involvement in her work. Her latest endeavor is a good case in point. The PlanBTV used many public engagement and input tools to compose the city's plan, outlined in a 132-page document on the city of Burlington's website. These tools included social media, lectures, meetings, public workshops, a design charette, art submissions, direct communication, surveys and a public input web tool. Sandrine developed this web tool to receive public comments and to keep the planning process open and transparent, wanting to allow everyone to see the comments and ideas heard at meetings, during the charrette or through email, as well as to give people another chance to add any new ideas that might have been missed. During the month the tool was available, the City received 672 new ideas/comments and nearly 45,000 votes were cast. Residents could also see what other participants thought of their own ideas, as indicated by a thumbs up or down on the public input web tool. This allowed participants to see why some ideas were not used, such as the suggestion for a gondola connecting UVM campus to the waterfront. Subsequently, the tool was used to provide public comments on the draft plan. The process for planBTV emphasized community participation. Gathering such feedback is a central component of her planning philosophy.

Her publications have included guidebooks and technical bulletins for local and regional planners.

Letter of Support for Sandrine Thibault for Vermont Planner of the Year

April 7, 2013

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Sandrine Thibault to receive the Vermont Planner of the Year award.

Sandrine has committed her professional time, expertise and energy to planning for Burlington's future. I have worked with Sandrine over the past five years and have always been impressed with her dedication, her enthusiasm and the strength of her spirit in moving planning endeavors forward in a city that greatly values public engagement and civic pride.

Three years ago, I began working with Burlington's office of Planning and Zoning to develop what we hoped would be a landmark plan for Burlington centered on Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront districts. Sandrine was instrumental in crafting a grant proposal to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development that resulted in the City of Burlington receiving one of their coveted Community Challenge Planning grants.

From that point on, Sandrine was at the center of what has become PlanBTV, a comprehensive plan for two of Burlington's most prized assets, our downtown and our waterfront. Sandrine played a critical role in the selection of our consultant, the amazing charrette process that was held in January 2012 and has been in the thick of all phases of public engagement to bring this Plan to life and ensure its broad acceptance by the community.

As a City Councilor, I was the lead sponsor of the resolutions that led the way for this planning process and in doing so, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Sandrine both as a planner and as a human being. Sandrine is a devoted and hard-working professional who has both the intelligence and character to navigate public and political processes with grace and kindness.

While Sandrine is incredibly knowledgeable on planning issues, she is always a wonderful teacher and understands that others may not know all that she knows. She is a good listener whose demeanor is humble and giving. Sandrine understands the municipal process and is a good team player.

We are most fortunate to have Sandrine's expertise in Burlington. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor than Sandrine. I hope you will give Sandrine Thibault Vermont Planner of the Year award this year.

Very truly yours,

Karen Paul
City of Burlington
City Councilor - Ward 6



Peg Elmer
3272 Rte 14N
So Royalton, VT 05068
802-522-3844

April 8, 2013

VPA Awards Committee
c/o Polly McMurtry
Fayston, VT

Re: Sandrine Thibault

Dear Polly,

Thank you for putting together this award nomination for Sandrine.

I've served on the NNECAPA Executive Committee with her for about 10 years. When I started on that board, the communications part of NNECAPA, the Yankee Planner and the website, were handled by Carl Eppich, a student then at the University of Southern Maine. Even though there was a nominal salary for the work, it was sporadic at best and a problem. It was a problem finding someone willing to take it on, nevermind do a good job of it. We gained a very real difference, in the professional quality and reliable delivery, of NNECAPA's communication for professional planners, when Sandrine offered to take them on. We created a new voting position on the Executive Committee for the "Public Information Officer", which was all she wanted, rather than remuneration.

In that position for our regional APA chapter, Sandrine took on a re-design of the website, which entailed gaining the competitive bids, evaluating them for us, setting up a contract with the web design firm, and overseeing the project. She was very proactive on all accounts, keeping the Executive Committee involved and responding to her questions. The website re-design was very well done, and she deserves credit for that. The same with the Yankee Planner newsletter which, under her editorship, upgraded significantly in its appearance and content. The newsletter and website are the major connections the chapter has with its 400 members across the 3 states – she has enormously increased the reliability and professionalism of both. Both are shared nationally as well, across the other chapters.

She may not be as visible to Vermont planners because she gets consumed between her work for the City of Burlington, and for NNECAPA> She's an active professional across the region and, with her Quebec roots, keeps in contact with the Canadian Institute of Planners, keeping NNECAPA and Vermont planners connected to the eastern provinces on issues of interest.

And then, the BTV plan for Burlington has been an ambitious effort. The results are quite exciting – it should be an effective and impressive result for Vermont’s Queen City, and Sandrine's been coordinating the effort.

She’s an outstanding member of our profession. I’m glad you’re seeking recognition for her.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peg Elmer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peg Elmer, AICP



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David E. White, AICP, Director
Ken Lerner, Assistant Director
Sandrine Thibault, AICP, Comprehensive Planner
Jay Appleton, Senior Programmer/Analyst
Scott Gustin, AICP, Senior Planner
Mary O'Neil, AICP, Senior Planner
Nic Anderson, Planning & Zoning Clerk
Elsie Tillotson, Administrative Assistant



VPA Awards Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to write in support of the nomination of Sandrine Thibault, AICP as the **2012 VPA Professional Planner of the Year.**

I've known and worked with Sandrine for nearly a decade, first as members of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) and later as colleagues in the Burlington Dept. of Planning & Zoning. Throughout all of this time I have known her to be both a dedicated professional and a skilled practitioner.

As a long-time member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Sandrine demonstrated early in her career her dedication to the planning profession. Her commitment to supporting planners and the planning field is exemplified today by her active involvement in NNECAPA as a planner while working in both New Hampshire and in Vermont. She's been a long-time member of the NNECAPA Executive Committee currently serving as the organizations first Public Information Officer (PIO). In this capacity one of her strongest skill-sets is illustrated in the organizations newsletter and website. She is dedicated to constantly improving her own skills and supporting the work of others to do the same.

Sandrine has a well-known and deserved reputation as a skilled practitioner rooted in her work in both New Hampshire and Vermont. What others may not know is her professional experience extends to the City of Baton Rouge, LA where she began her career working in current planning. Her work experience then expanded to serving rural communities in northern New Hampshire working at the North Country Council. There she provided technical assistance and managed planning projects on behalf of member municipalities. Finally while in New Hampshire Sandrine worked at the state-level in the former-Office of State Planning where the scope and complexity of the projects she was responsible for expanded to include hazard mitigation planning. She also had a key role in developing and organizing training and educational opportunities for volunteer and professional planners across the state.

In 2008 I had the opportunity to bring Sandrine to Burlington to serve as the City's Principle Planner for Comprehensive Planning. Shortly after joining our team Sandrine took responsibility for supporting the work of the Planning Commission, revising of the Climate Action Plan, and modifying the Special Flood Hazard Area zoning among other things. Her work quickly demonstrated her tenacity and follow-through to deliver a high quality work product. The Climate Action Plan revision included an especially complex process of data collection and an imaginative public engagement process. Sandrine drafted and re-drafted final document to address evolving community concerns ensuring that the best possible product was delivered.

Finally, Sandrine's signature project has clearly been as the project manager for "planBTV" – a new master plan for the city's downtown and waterfront (see www.burlingtonvt.gov/planbtv). Sandrine serves as the project manager for this exciting and complex effort, and has been responsible for soliciting and managing more than a half dozen consultants. Sandrine's creativity, skills and passion are particularly embodied in the extensive public engagement process she developed and managed. She is passionate about engaging the public in the planning process and making their voices heard in fun and meaningful ways.

These projects and others illustrate Sandrine's dedication to the profession and capabilities as a skilled practitioner. She's a creative and independent thinker who brings tremendous energy and enthusiasm to her work. She is also a collaborator and team-builder who always open to new ideas and working to form new working relationships. I think you will agree that she is most deserving of recognition as the 2012 VPA Professional Planner of the Year.

David E. White, AICP
Director of Planning & Zoning



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April 10, 2013

Selection Committee
Vermont Planners Association

RE: Nomination of Sandrine Thibault for APA Professional Planner of the Year

Dear Awards Committee:

I am writing to weigh in on the nomination Sandrine Thibault for APA Planner of the Year. I have only been in Burlington for 9 months but in that time I have worked with Sandrine enough to see and appreciate her incredible work and commitment to advancing the conversation on urban planning policy in the City.

In her role as a leading team member in the PlanBTV work, I have seen her present a set of very progressive planning policies in a language and style that is both accessible and compelling to a wide variety of audiences. In her work the Climate Action Plan (which she has advanced outside of her standard work load), she has been able to coalesce multiple inputs and a complex set of variables into a coherent and concise policy document.

The fact that both these documents are on the very of being adopted with broad based support by the City Council next month speaks volumes about Sandrine's ability to move planning policy forward in a complex political context.

I recommend her strongly for the award.

Sincerely,

Peter Owens, Director
Community and Economic Development Office
City of Burlington, Vermont



April 8, 2013

Vermont Planners Association
c/o VLCT 89 Main Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: Nomination for Professional Planner of the Year

To whom it may concern-

It is my great pleasure to nominate Sandrine Thibeault, AICP, and Principal Planner for Comprehensive Planning for the City of Burlington, VT for Professional Planner of the Year.

I have been on the Burlington Planning Commission since fall of 2008, have had the opportunity to work with Sandrine closely since that time, and am currently the chair of the commission. Sandrine's work has always been exemplary throughout that time period, but I wish to call special attention to her role in Plan BTV, which can be found online at www.burlingtonvt.gov/planbtv.

When the idea of competing for a HUD grant to fund a comprehensive development plan for the downtown and the waterfront area of Burlington was first proposed in the fall of 2009, the commission was very supportive, and gave the green light to staff to proceed with the grant application. Sandrine was the project manager for the grant, and oversaw the initial scope of work. When the grant was awarded, she quickly and professionally became the primary responsible party on staff for grant management and administration, and managed all of the consultants hired to help with the process.

Sandrine's signature piece, however, was the public engagement and outreach process for Plan BTV, and her passion and enthusiasm for the latter was absolutely infectious. Sandrine worked with all of the city NPA's, at multiple farmers markets, at public charettes, and presented to citizen and business organizations throughout the city over a period of two years, as the plan evolved.

Over the course of this process, she was instrumental in spreading the "gospel" of planning throughout Burlington, and not only involving ordinary citizens in the process, but also helping them to understand how important planning and the principles behind it are to a healthy and vibrant community, and letting them know that their visions and ideas mattered.

The result has been an active sense of ownership by the citizens of Burlington for Plan BTV, as well as a groundswell of support and interest in the planning process, and how similar exercises might be applied to other areas of the city. We owe Sandrine a tremendous debt of gratitude, and it is my sincere belief that she is a perfect candidate to be honored with the distinction from her peers as Planner of the Year.

Respectfully yours,



Yves Bradley, Vice President, Commercial Brokerage
Chair, Burlington Planning Commission