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The New World Festival at Chandler Center for the Arts - Sunday, September 6, 2015

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Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

The “East Central Vermont: What We Want” action plan is finalized, and some actions are already underway. Please let us know if you’d like to participate in moving any of the actions forward.

Check out the website to learn more: ECVermont.org.

TRORC News & Notes via Email

To receive TRORC News & Notes by e-mail instead of hardcopy, please write to: news@trorc.org.

Greetings!

Thanks for taking a moment to glance through the August issue of *News and Notes*. In this issue we talk about a training on land use planning that, while not always exciting and new, is critical due to the every changing memberships on local boards and commissions. Having the proper foundation of information ensures a smoother, fairer and more timely process in local development review. It remains the most cost effective “permit reform” that occurs every year and we don’t even need Legislative direction to do it! Another news item relates to the formal release of the East Central Vermont’s Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. It is full of actionable steps to improve our economy with timelines and responsible parties and a mechanism to chart progress toward accomplishing these actions. Please take a look at this draft. As always, please give me a call if you have any thoughts on our work. Onwards!

Sincerely,

Peter G. Gregory, Executive Director

TRORC Staffing Announcements

Earlier this summer, Samantha Holcomb moved on to the Big Apple to work on Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts with the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development. We wish her all the best in the new job! We are now in the interview phase for a new planner. Stay tuned for news on a new hire when it is made.

Pollaidh Major, our AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, has completed her year of service, and has begun a new job in the USDA Rural Development office in Montpelier. Her work here was very rewarding for her and us. Our new VISTA, Christopher Damiani, will be starting in August and will carry many of her projects forward as well as working on new ones.

Both Sam and Pollaidh will be greatly missed by staff, board members, and communities alike, and we will ensure a smooth transition on the projects they have shepherded with TRORC.



Report on Invasive Species in the TRORC Region Released

TRORC and the other regional planning commissions were asked by the Legislature to survey regional concerns over invasive plants, especially relating to agriculture. There was no special funding for this task; as a result, highly detailed reports weren't made. This effort, though, still resulted in a useful report and some sobering conclusions. Invasive plants are spreading and will continue to do so without increased concerted efforts on all fronts. However, with heightened education, better monitoring, and targeted eradication efforts, it may be possible to at least slow their spread into new areas. The full report can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/nvwnks4>, and the www.vtinvasives.org is also a great resource for additional information.



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East Central Vermont Economic Development District Update

Your East Central Vermont Economic Development (ECVEDD) partners (TRORC, Springfield Regional Development Corporation, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission, Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation) and committee members have been hard at work completing the deliverables outlined in the 2014 U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant. So far, the ECVEDD has:



- Launched ECVEDD.org. Please visit at your convenience and let us know what you think.
- Developed an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) draft which is available at ECVEDD.org under "News."
- Launched the ECVEDD dashboard. A dashboard is a visual display of the most important information needed to achieve one or more objectives, consolidated and arranged so the data can be monitored at a glance. You can review it at ECVEDD.org or TRORC.org.
- Held the "Local Food Systems' Impact on the Regional Economy" workshop on May 21, 2015 at the Billings Farm & Museum Theater. Attendance was strong, and we received excellent feedback from attendees. One panelist suggested that these types of workshops should continue so that the economic impacts of the local food system are constantly touted to the public at large. The session was recorded, and is available for viewing at ECVEDD.org.
- Met to discuss actions from the new CEDS that each partner would like to move forward in 2016. An application has been submitted to EDA requesting partial funding.
- Scheduled the next full board meeting for September 23, 2015 at the Hartford Town Office from 3:00-4:30PM. These meetings are open to the public, so please feel free to join us.

Contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org to learn more or call (802) 457-3188.



Executive Committee

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Vice Chairperson
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Nancy Jones
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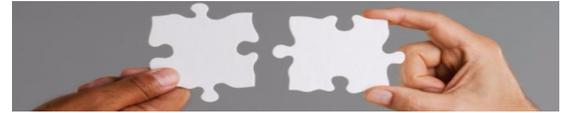
David Brandau
Royalton



East Central Vermont has Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS) through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, which benefits all the communities in the 40-town region. HUD, and other federal entities such as EPA and DOT, awards 2 bonus points to grant applicants located in our region and that agree to further the Livability Principles.

Please contact Loralee Morrow at lmorrow@trorc.org for more information.

A Natural Partnership



The American Planning Association defines Planning as “a dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations.” Vermont Community Prevention Coalitions seek the value in working with regional and municipal planners because they, too, work to implement best practice, environmental strategies that create cultures of health in communities. Both entities agree that public health, safety and welfare are instrumental for sustainable, vital communities.

Too often, though, we don’t recognize good health until unhealthy conditions become predominant. Environments that promote good health require intentional planning: access to recreation/non-motorized transportation, access to healthy foods, controlling corporate industry influence through outlet density restrictions, offering tax incentives, providing conditional use permits that help projects comply with community standards, etc. In addition, cultures of health are an economic development driver in that they preserve historic character of villages, protect and promote Vermont brands, and maintain Vermont’s reputation for high-quality, healthy recreation.

In conclusion, these (and more) planning and community prevention strategies “invite” our citizens to engage where they live, work, and play. The question is: what is it that communities are inviting people to do? Citizens, especially youth, get “messages” from what they see in their surroundings that helps to inform what it means to belong to that community. It is through these messages that choices are made. Planners and the Prevention Community alike want to work together to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Essentials of Land Use Training

TRORC staff recently completed two educational sessions aimed at introducing the basic principles behind land use planning in Vermont. These sessions, which address subjects like Vermont’s Land Use Law, the basics of a Town Plan, the roles and responsibilities of committees and how DRBs/ZBAs make decisions, provide a substantial amount of information to the local official. These sessions have been very well received by attendees. If you feel that your local boards would benefit from this information, TRORC staff would be pleased to present this material to them. Contact Chris Sargent at csargent@trorc.org for more information.

Vermont 2-1-1: Your Link to Essential Community Services

Our social service network is gloriously complex. On one hand, this is a good thing because we have targeted programs for many specific challenges which residents face. On the other hand, it can make finding the right program daunting.



Fortunately, there is an easy way to navigate this system: dial 2-1-1. United Way maintains the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Network across North America. When you dial 2-1-1, locally-based Information and Referral Specialist will assist you by searching through their comprehensive service database to either provide you with the information you need or refer you to the correct service provider. This confidential service is available 24/7, free of charge. This is a truly valuable asset to our communities, but it only works when people know to use it. Support your community and be sure people know that, when they don’t know where to turn, they can turn to 2-1-1.

Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission: August 2015 News & Notes



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News & Notes
August 2015