



One Burke Village Infrastructure and Visioning and Economic Development Meeting

July 24, 2020

Online via Zoom

Dufresne Group
481 Summer Street, Suite 8
Saint Johnsbury, Vermont 05819
Tel: (802) 748-8605

On July 21, 2020 at 4:00 pm, a meeting was held via Zoom video conference to discuss the Burke Visioning and Economic Development Study and Water and Wastewater Study. The following individuals attended:

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Dan Flanagan	One Burke
Kevin Mack	One Burke
Dan Flanagan	One Burke
Des Hertz	One Burke
Linda Lotti	One Burke
Todd Vendituoli	One Burke
Tom Manges	One Burke
Tammy Wagner	One Burke
Laura Malieswski	Burke Chamber of Commerce
Mike Harris	Town of Burke
Coralie Curran	Public
Izaak Onos	Public
Peter Fairweather	Fairweather Consulting
Greg Gossens	gbA
Dan Wheeler	gbA
Lynnette Claudon	VT DEC
Andrea Day	Dufresne Group

Andrea Day has prepared the following summary of notes taken at the meeting. Please notify me if you have any corrections or additions to these minutes. Tasks to be completed as a result of this meeting are underlined.

- I. The minutes from May 26 and June 23, 2020 meeting were approved.
- II. **Visioning/Economic Development Study – Fairweather Consulting**
 - a. Latest results from physical inventory
 - i. Inventory update from gbA

- Prepared boards of historic photos and existing conditions
- West Burke had a strong sense of place historically with streetscaping and walkability
- The Village can easily rediscover this historical context
- Major nodes were:
 - a. At the intersection of 5 and 5A which will have a board of historic photos and existing conditions prepared;
 - b. At the general store and park area
- The historic architecture is in place – it needs to be reinvigorated. Also improving the streetscaping will greatly improve the appearance of the Village.
- There is a good sense of place already it just needs to be uncovered.
- Would residents be supportive of reviving the historic appearance of the village?
 - a. People do have a connection with the past of West Burke and what it used to be. A reflection of the past but recognizing changes may be appropriate.
 - b. West Burke has a strong history and doesn't want to be East Burke. Capturing history would be embraced by the community.
 - c. Village residents are supportive of restoring historic structures.
 - d. What are the stumbling blocks to restoration of the village?
 - i. Stumbling blocks are most likely financial. Funds need to be available for restoration. Possibly a group could be formed to gather funds for West Burke.

- ii. Buildings downtown in West Burke are for sale but don't make financial sense for investment at this point. If there was a potential tax benefit it may increase interest.
 - e. A fundraising effort was undertaken in Peacham which included formation of a community-based non-profit to restore the Village store. Momentum and support grew once it got started. A plan for West Burke needs to be developed to show potential.
 - f. A non-profit may need to be formed to access funding for restoration of historic structures in the Village of West Burke.
 - g. The bones of West Burke are good. Connections between places are missing. Streetscaping could be a start to build these connections.
 - h. A property owners' session to gauge interest may be a good starting point.
 - i. Property owners need to be engaged to identify those that support the ideas and those that have concerns.
- b. Preliminary summary of stakeholder interviews
- i. Small-scale manufacturing
 - Water and wastewater capacity is needed
 - ii. Outdoor recreation and food related business
 - There was a Sterling College study completed in 2018 that looked at the potential in the NEK – Peter is trying to locate this study
 - Goods and services to support VAST and gravel road biking groups could be provided in West Burke
 - Additional outdoor recreation activities that could be supported by providing goods and services in West Burke include:

- a. Equestrian trailer parking and trail access
 - b. ATV riding
 - i. Mike at Cole's may have information
 - c. Ice climbing
 - d. Hunting
 - e. Scuba diving
 - f. Backcountry Skiing
 - Support services for outdoor recreation will still need adequate water and wastewater.
- iii. Housing
- Due to COVID-19 people are moving to VT.
- iv. Tourism
- What kind of lodging is available in West Burke?
 - Market a calendar of events of things happening in West Burke.
 - a. There is currently a calendar on the Burke Chamber website
 - How can West Burke be a gateway for the NEK?
- v. Cultural Activities
- Gallery, event space, performance spaces
 - Creative economy needs broadband
 - Multi-use spaces could get building reactivated
 - Connection could be made with Catamount Arts to team for cultural activities – Catamount Arts may have some grant funding currently to promote the creative economy
 - a. Peter may want to connect with Jody Fried
- vi. Other ideas

- NEK Fund from the VT Community Foundation could be a source of funding to support efforts.

c. Public Outreach

i. Plan for September

- Need to get word out, discuss more in next meeting
- Hold property owners meeting
- May still have to be outdoors in September
- Get word out on community board
- Some funds are available to help with outreach
- One Burke community dinner typically held in October. Typical community dinner won't be able to happen this year. Perhaps combine with public outreach and hold in September to allow for outdoor venue.
- Possibly offer two sessions to keep numbers lower at each event.
- Format – setup stations to cover One Burke committees and topics including water and wastewater
- Food truck? Smoothies? Combination of free food and food available for purchase.
- Send out a postcard mailing to announce meeting and provide update to property owners not only in the study area but the adjacent area.
- Topics to be covered at meeting include:
 - a. OneBurke committee updates,
 - b. Visioning, and
 - c. Infrastructure

III. Water/Wastewater Study

a. West Burke Wastewater Study

i. Landowner permission

- Update on outreach – 6 properties were identified; permission has been obtained at 4
 - a. One of the properties (Mike Cole) may have test pit information available already – Mike Harris will follow up with Mike Cole on this.
- Mike Harris has been helping with these contacts and is working on getting access permission forms signed.
- Initial investigations are by hand with very minimal disturbance, if those look promising a backhoe is used to do more extensive investigation. Landowners can choose to stop the process at any time if they decide they aren't comfortable with having further investigation done.
- A NEPA process needs to occur for land disturbance. Andrea will provide Lynnette a map of the potential sites for investigation so she can begin that process.
- Andrea will reach out to Amy with Stone to start scheduling the field investigations.

b. East Burke

i. Summary of response to date

- 22 returned so far (37% compared to 33% in West Burke)
- 9 have drilled well
- 12 are interested in getting water tested – likely confusion on well vs. public connection and testing
- 11 think a Public WW system is desirable
- 7 interested in connecting
- 8 aren't sure about connecting
- 10 think a Public WW system would improve economic development in East Burke

- 4 would like to be contacted by One Burke for follow-up
 - a. Volunteers?
- 9 to add to the email list
- Written comments from the surveys with identity information removed will be shared with the group.

ii. Outreach

- a. Kelly Greer is interested in combining efforts for the East Burke Fire District that currently manages the water system with any managerial capacity required for a wastewater system.
- Strawberry Festival – how did it go?
 - a. Approximately 200 visitors
 - b. Linda and Tammy spoke with visitors about the Visioning and Infrastructure committee work.
 - c. There may have been more residents from West Burke than East Burke.
 - d. People appreciated getting updates on the committee's work.

IV. Next meeting – August 18 at 4pm

Committee Meeting, West Burke Visioning Project

July 21, 2020

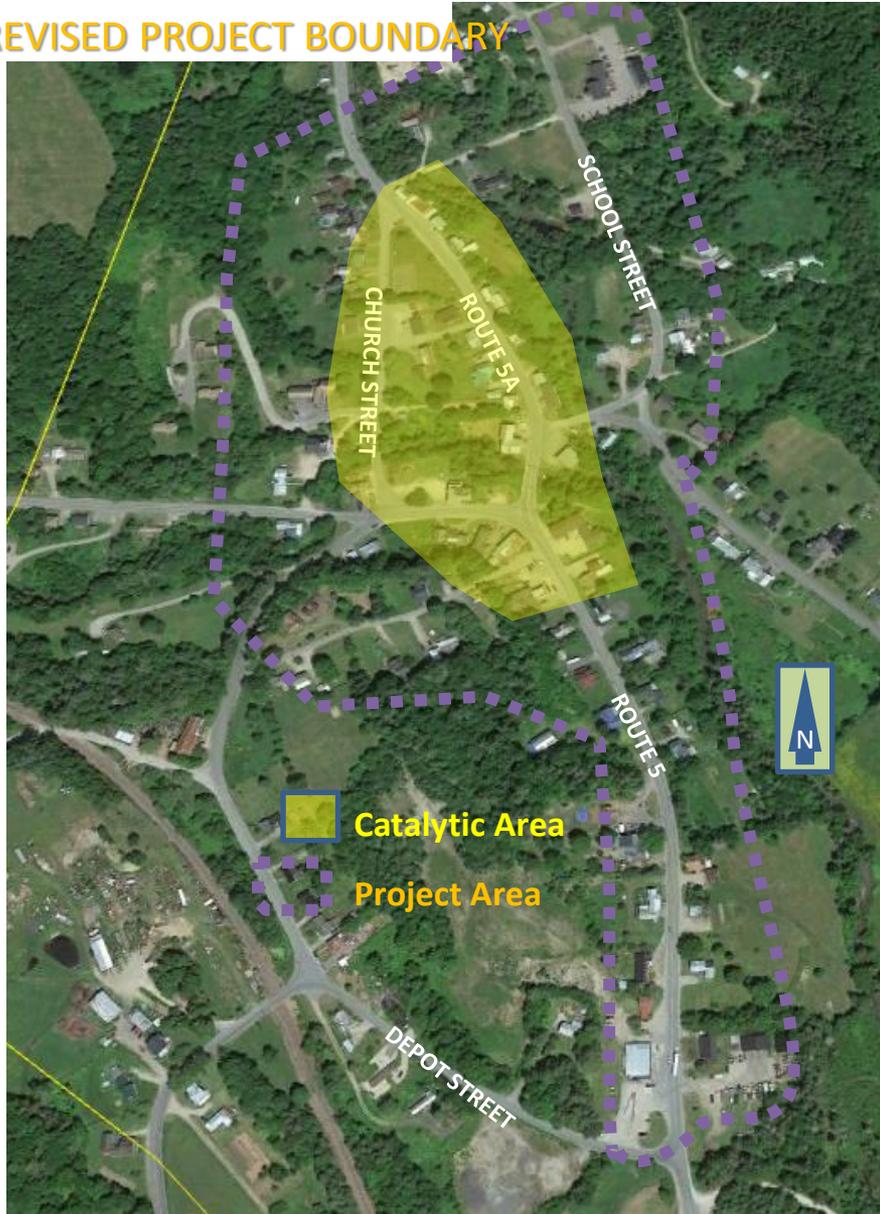
Agenda

II. Visioning/Economic Development Study – Fairweather Consulting

- a. Latest results from physical inventory
- b. Preliminary summary of stakeholder interviews
- c. Organizing public outreach

Update on Physical Inventory

REVISED PROJECT BOUNDARY



WEST BURKE, VERMONT HISTORICAL INVENTORY

Much of the historic architecture remains in the downtown area of West Burke village. As these historic images reveal, West Burke was quite dense in the past.

The density of historic West Burke was integral in creating a strong sense of place.

Historically, there were concentrated commerce "nodes" that also served as community gathering spaces.

Historic West Burke streets had a very pleasant scale, one that invited walking and community interactions. Sidewalks were in place throughout the downtown, and most commercial and residential buildings had strong orientation to the sidewalks.

Many historic images and maps reveal a large mill pond that anchored the center of town. Beyond its practical use for industry, the mill pond provided opportunities for recreation, and served as a significant landmark.



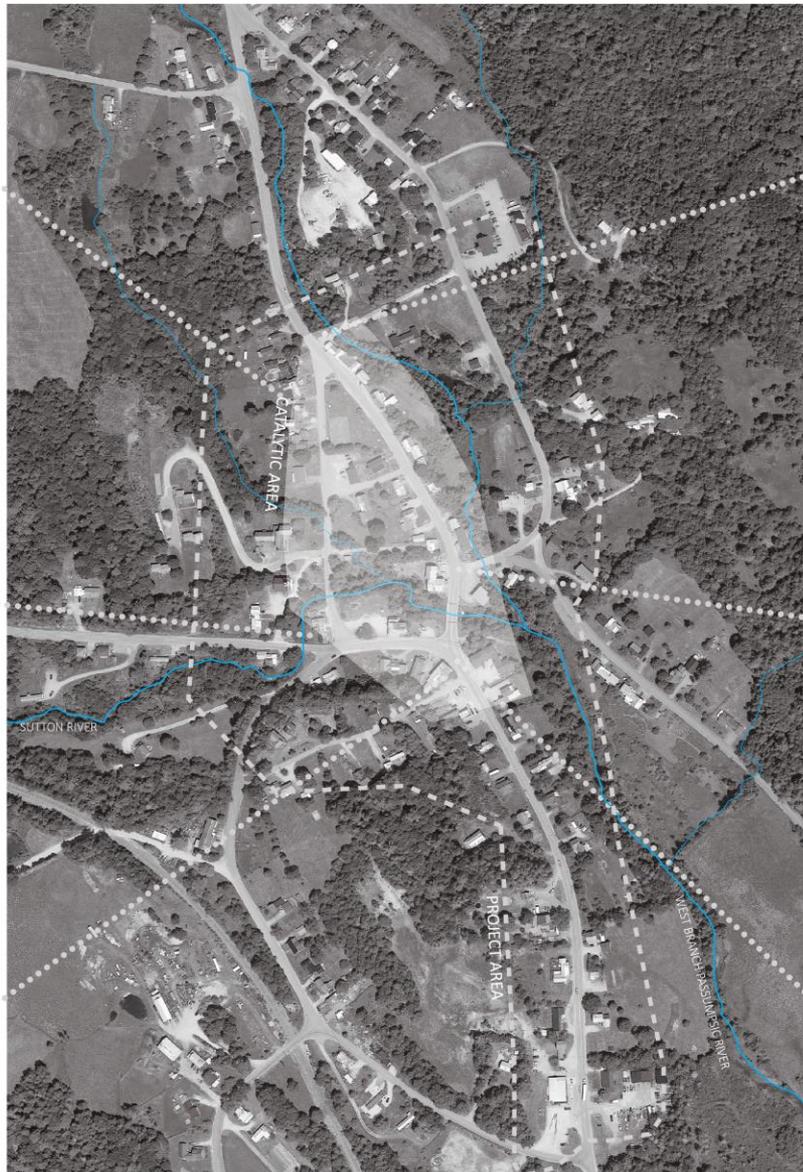
Church Street Residences



Residences and Landmarks



Main St. Business Section



Intact historic architecture on North Main Street



Historic street scape with pedestrian emphasis



Public architecture and historic density



View from tower of United Methodist Church



Historic mill and pond



Historic mill pond and landmark architecture

Update on Stakeholder Outreach

Organization	Contacted	Interviewed
Burke-based Organizations		
ONE BURKE		
Town of Burke		
Burke Chamber of Commerce		
Technical Assistance/Training		
Northeast Kingdom Collaborative	X	X
Vermont Small Business Development Center	X	X
Incubator without Walls (iWOW)	X	X
Financing & Related Technical Assistance for Businesses & Municipalities		
Northeast Kingdom Community Action Microbusiness Development Program	X	X
Northeastern Vermont Development Association	X	X
North Country Investment Corporation	X	X
Northeast Kingdom Fund	X	X
Northeast Kingdom REAP Zone (see NVDA)	X	X
Northern Border Regional Commission	X	referred
Food & Agriculture-Related Services		
Center for an Agricultural Economy	X	X
Wood Products-Manufacturing-Related Services		
Northern Forest Center	X	
Outdoor Recreation		
Vermont Association of Snow Travelers	X	X
Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative	X	
SE Associates (for Kingdom Trails Study)	X	X
NEK Gravel		

Review of Economic Market Analysis: Target Opportunities

1. Small-scale manufacturing
2. Outdoor recreation & Food related businesses
3. Housing
4. Tourism
5. Cultural Activities

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

1. Small-scale manufacturing

- Build upon artisan wood traditions?
- Caution: beverage/food manufacturing need water & wastewater

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

2. Outdoor recreation & Food related businesses

Sterling College 2018 study explored the potential for NEK

Potential Outdoor Recreation Niches:

- Equestrian
- Water-related (e.g., draw upon Willoughby traffic)
- Snow travelers looking for long, leisurely, low traffic rides
- Gravel road biking
- Back country skiers (contact Matt Williams at Cannon Mountain)

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

3. Housing

- Could be opportunities related to post-COVID-19 urbanites, second homes, other Vermonters taking advantage of low interest rates.
- Energy efficiency/weatherization programs can be sources for funding housing improvements.

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

4. Tourism

Old CCC camp at Willoughby is being redeveloped, could generate demand for tourism services

Lodging would be required: B&Bs/Glamping

Creating a calendar of events can attract NEK tourists to West Burke

Can West Burke be positioned as Gateway/Interpretive Center for NEK tourists?

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

5. Cultural Activities

- Create a multi-use space that includes retail, tourism services and arts/cultural activities
- Can West Burke take a lead in the Creative Economy? (would require broadband)

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

Other Ideas from the Interviews

West Burke is a drive through community now—how do we get people to stop?

Strong community hubs are increasingly important to people. West Burke could be one.

Broadband is important to West Burke's future.

Linking to iWOW and the Foundry could help attract businesses to West Burke.

Refining the Opportunities through Interviews

Other Ideas from the Interviews: Funding

There is a modest but important philanthropic community in West Burke.

USDA's REAP Zone has been an important source of funding in the NEK.

The NEK Fund of the VCF provides \$30-\$60K of grants annually as grants of \$3K-\$5K for "community capital" projects (e.g., wayfinding signage, parks equipment, etc.)

The NEK Dev. Corporation is being revived by the NCIC and NVDA as could be a vehicle to hold property.

The tax credits available through Village Center designation can help businesses short on capital.

Discussion of Public Outreach

1. When? September
2. Where? TBD
3. How do we get the word out?

Discussion/Next Steps

Continued work on Outreach &
Physical Inventory

Next meeting Aug. 11 or 18, 4PM?