



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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By Amy Nixon, as seen in the Caledonian Record:

<http://www.caledonianrecord.com/news/local/village-infrastructure-traffi...> [1]

BURKE HOLLOW ? More than 80 community members turned out Tuesday night for the second in a three-part community visit process brought to Burke by the Vermont Council on Rural Development - narrowing down about 21 earlier brainstormed ideas for town improvement to just three main focuses.

Making a community investment in the school facilities in Burke - which is a growing town, unlike many in the Northeast Kingdom - ended up being one of the three areas the group got behind for work going forward.

The other two include improving village traffic and pedestrian safety including looking into developing a trail between East and West Burke; and revitalizing village infrastructure, including water and sewer capacity.

One important area that was not included in the first list offered by the council was the need for improved cell and internet service in the community, which many agreed needs to be a priority for the town if it is to attract more businesses, visitors and residents.

?Burke is a fabulous community,? said Selectman Joe Allard. ?We?re located in the perfect spot for recreation all four seasons.?

The staff of the rural development council said Burke has a lot to work with and a strong base and citizen involvement many communities would envy.

Select Board Chair Christine Emmons stood and voiced her support for the community rallying behind investing in the town?s school. Needs include a gym and a middle school area. She pointed out the school also doubles as the Red Cross emergency shelter for the Town of Burke.

Burke Town School Principal Stacy Rice said the town's school board has been talking about the need for a building project and said having a citizen-led group working on the school facilities needs would only help the effort.

On the description of concerns around the school campus, the council summary stated, "Burke residents are proud of their strong school system, dedicated educators and volunteers, and active and engaged administration. However, many feel that new and expanded facilities are needed to ensure Burke children have what they need to learn and engage in constructive year-round activities. Facilities needs include a gym, middle school classroom space, and a location for a full-day preschool program. A task force could come together to identify and quantify the needs, build a plan for redevelopment, and connect with the community at large to share the opportunity new space could provide, and gauge feasibility for funding and development."

Revitalizing village infrastructure was combined with the idea of possibly creating a trail to link East and West Burke, and the focus group will be tasked with looking at the two issues.

Under the description of revitalize village infrastructure, the council wrote, "Burke residents are eager to see village revitalization, new businesses including restaurants and bars in their village centers, and increased access to affordable housing. However, water and sewer capacity limit the ability to grow East Burke and deeply undermine the restoration of historic buildings in West Burke. An infrastructure task force could form to work with residents and outside experts to develop a comprehensive plan for water, sewer, and resiliency improvements, inventorying needs and costs, and identifying funding sources and experts to advance infrastructure goals."

Source URL: <http://www.vtrural.org/programs/community-visits/burke/press/20170818>

Links:

[1] http://www.caledonianrecord.com/news/local/village-infrastructure-traffic-safety-school-needs-top-priorities-in-burke/article_07381ee1-7d9a-5b2f-abb6-b7c5e18a7e65.html