

# **TOWN OF KILLINGTON COMMUNITY VISIT REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**



**Vermont Council on Rural Development  
April 2008**

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## Introduction

The Town of Killington is a community that worked hard to position itself for a highly productive and effective Community Visit. **The Killington Growth Initiative (KGI)**, a community group composed of business leaders, local government and residents, identified key challenges before the town, including a depressed economy, decline in cultural activities, lack of a sustainable year-round economy, poor communication and a strained relationship between Killington Resort and community members. KGI saw the need for a neutral, outside organization to help residents move toward solutions and to engage a broader segment of the population in the process, and invited VCRD to consider producing a Community Visit process in town. Ultimately VCRD accepted the invitation of the Killington Selectboard to build this neutral process of public engagement. VCRD launched its Community Visit Program in the Town of Killington in January 2008 and worked with KGI, a representative local steering committee, and community residents to structure a program that would build on the considerable community development activities already underway.

The result was a program that saw consistently high participation, civil and constructive dialogue, and measurable success in bringing diverse perspectives together to work toward a stronger, more vibrant community. In the initial session, more than 250 residents reflected on the many assets in a place that lies “at the heart of Vermont.” In a community visioning session and in breakout groups, they identified strong name recognition, exceptional natural beauty, and a community where residents support one another. Participants also recognized a shift in the way visitors choose to recreate, acknowledged the reality of a new Resort business plan and its impact, and identified the need to adapt marketing strategies to build an economy and culture that extends beyond skier visits and a vibrant nightlife.

During the second phase of the program, participants selected four priority areas in which to begin their work. Underlying the entire discussion was an understanding that the guiding principal for success required building positive relationships that would support a unified effort toward common goals. Four working groups were developed to address the priorities established.

A task force formed around the priority to **Build a Killington Town/Mountain Partnership**. More than 40 people signed on to this effort, and agreed to help design the structure and mission of a smaller core of appointed representatives for a town/mountain partnership to support positive communication, build bridges, advance opportunities for common efforts and interests.

The task force to **Expand Four Season Events** was charged with developing attractions and events that extend beyond the winter season, and to work toward identification of the Town of Killington as a year round destination.

The **Comprehensive Marketing/Healthy Recreation Brand** task force will build on Killington’s strong name recognition and will refocus marketing efforts toward new markets, including healthy lifestyle vacationers, wellness retreats, and active retirees.

Killington's natural beauty, central location, and hospitality infrastructure position it well to be a premier venue for performing and visual arts. The task force to **Build an Indoor/Outdoor Arts Center** will explore the viability of developing an events center in visual and performing arts, and will work toward establishing Killington as a destination for the arts.

VCRD staff and visiting team members were gratified and sometimes awed by the number of community members participating in the program in the Town of Killington, by the level and productivity of the discussion and by the tremendous dedication to the process and the community. Thanks are due to the **Killington Growth Initiative** for the strong foundation they provided. Members of the **Selectboard and Planning Commission** provided consistent support and their efforts are appreciated. Special thanks to **Royal Barnard**, editor of the Mountain Times, for exemplifying the best spirit of community journalism, and to **Loren Pepe and Sheila Pilsmaker** of the Sherburne Elementary School for providing meeting space and logistical support. The **Town of Killington Community Visit Steering Committee** did an excellent job in their outreach efforts and contributed greatly to the success of the program. Finally, VCRD extends its appreciation to **M.B. Neisner** who brings his considerable skill to the process as Community Visit Chair.

In the end, real progress comes from local leadership. Killington's tremendous assets and wonderful people bode well for progress now and major accomplishments in the future. VCRD and the Visiting Team commend the community in its new initiatives, and will look for opportunities to help as the work goes forward.

### **The Community Visit Process**

The Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit Program is a structured process that enables a community to identify and prioritize goals, fosters local leadership and serves as a catalyst for the development and realization of concrete achievable action plans. The Town of Killington Community Visit consisted of three phases:

1. **Community Visit Day:** Participants opened the session with a community visioning session around the future of the Town of Killington. Following the session, participants met in focus groups with Visiting Team Members who have expertise in identified areas of concern. The meeting resulted in an initial list of challenges and opportunities.
2. **Community Meeting:** Participants review, discuss, and refine their initial list of challenges and ultimately vote on top priorities. Community members sign up to work on task forces that will create strategic action plans for the selected topics.
3. **Community Resource Day:** Task force members meet with a Resource Team to design action steps, and identify state, federal, non-profit and private resources that will allow them to advance toward solutions.
4. **Resource Team Members** (listed at the end of this report) agree to serve in an ongoing capacity as advisors, referral agents, and liaisons for the Town of Killington Task Forces.

## **Points of Vision**

*Approved by participants of the Killington Community Meeting February 28, 2008*

The attached list contains suggested vision elements from the community discussion of January 28 that were approved in a straw poll taken on February 28. Additional points suggested at this meeting can be found in the Community Meeting Notes on page 24 of this report.

### ***Residents of the Town of Killington Envision the future of the community where:***

Killington has developed a vibrant year-round economy. Sustainable economic development balances four-season tourism, small and growing internet-based businesses, a profitable commercial sector, strong ski resort and expanded outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Town has a vigorous and effective Community and Economic Development Department and an Events Coordinator whose efforts have supported the development of new businesses, and successful events have resulted in more visitors and profitability to commerce.

A strong town/mountain marketing plan has appealed successfully to families with children and Killington is a branded four-season destination.

Killington has built a large indoor/outdoor performing arts amphitheatre and music venue and developed year-round activities that make it a preeminent regional entertainment center. Growth in the arts has especially strengthened the summer economy.

Killington has found state and federal resources to expand on its investments in infrastructure. Because the town generates significant revenue to the state, it has been a priority of the state to support its capital needs and the future of its economy.

The Town of Killington has built a small village that serves as its town center. Signage throughout carries the town brand and unifies the district from Route 100 to the ski area.

Killington has been mindful of over-development, and has preserved key natural assets and the history and character of the community.

Killington residents have built and enjoy a comprehensive set of pathways that connect the outdoor assets of the town from the mountains to a park at Kent Pond.

A strong education system attracts families with children to move to and live in Killington.

The Killington community appreciates visitors, part time residents, newcomers and lifelong residents.

Killington fosters a powerful sense of community. Killington is a unified yet diverse community built on a strong positive relationship between residents, the town, businesses, and the ski area. An open, ongoing dialogue occurs between the mountain and residents, especially concerning the development of the village and promotion of the area.

All partners recognize the need for a common effort to secure a positive future for the town, community, and businesses, and together invest common resources to advance that effort.



Sherburne Memorial Library  
*Photo courtesy of Sherburne Elementary School*

## **Killington Community Visit Priorities**

### **Build a Killington Town/Mountain Partnership**

A small team of appointed representatives of the Town of Killington, Killington Resort, SP Land and the Killington business community could be set up to have a regular and systematic schedule of partnership meetings to advance common efforts and interests, work to build bridges between perspectives, and prevent or resolve inevitable points of conflict.

### **Expand Four Season Events**

Developing attractions and events that extend beyond the winter season is essential to building a vibrant economy in Killington. A four-season events committee could work to develop events, particularly destination and overnight events. There are many opportunities to create regional events in partnership with Rutland and Woodstock, and the State of Vermont could provide sponsorship, matching funds, and promotional support.

### **Establish Comprehensive Marketing/Develop A Healthy Recreation Brand**

Killington has strong name recognition, and would benefit from a well-planned advertising campaign promoting its many positive assets. The Killington community needs to establish its 'marketing identity' to comprehensively promote the area. A task force could work with residents and businesses to help define markets and goals, create a consistent message, and work to reach appropriate target audiences.

Changing lifestyles and the evolving way that people choose to vacation can open many opportunities to respond to visitors' desires to combine leisure and health. A healthy image committee could work to attract event sponsors who are associated with healthy lifestyles. Vacation packages could be developed in partnership with area restaurants, spas, recreational facilities, and lodges. A 'healthy recreation' theme could be implemented for family vacation camps, and wellness could be a center-point in the development of year-round tourism. Elder Hostels could cater to retirement recreation.

### **Build an Indoor/Outdoor Arts Center**

A task force could develop a business model for the development of a Killington Arts Center. The town's natural beauty, central location, and hospitality infrastructure provide the potential to attract artists, art classes and symposiums, and events at scale. Musical events such as the Jazz Festival have been successful and other genres of musical events could succeed in town. A task force could start by developing small signature events in visual and performing arts, perhaps in a temporary venue such as tents, and build Killington's reputation toward becoming a premier regional center for arts, culture, and music events. Ultimately, options for a sizable, permanent, performing arts center could be explored, with an eye toward productions such as dance, musical theater, and large capacity concerts. A movie theater could be considered as well.

## **Initial List of Challenges and Opportunities**

*Identified by community discussion on January 28, 2008*

### **Develop Outdoor Assets**

Killington has tremendous outdoor assets that could bolster a year-round economy while preserving the natural beauty of the area. Mountain biking could be developed and biking and walking paths could be constructed to connect outdoor attractions such as streams, wooded areas, and waterfalls. An outdoor interpretive center could be developed, and a skating rink could be built. Kent Pond has the potential to be developed for summer activities and could be linked to other outdoor venues. Residents could develop marketing strategies to promote Killington as a hiking destination, with access and amenities for day hikers to experience both the Appalachian Trail and the Long Trail. A task force could lead in planning and development of Killington outdoor assets.

### **Build a Killington Town/Mountain Partnership**

A small team of appointed representatives of the Town of Killington, Killington Resort, SP Land and the Killington business community could be set up to have a regular and systematic schedule of partnership meetings to advance common efforts and interests, work to build bridges between perspectives, and prevent or resolve inevitable points of conflict.

### **Advance Renewable Energy**

Communities throughout Vermont are undertaking innovative approaches to explore renewable energy opportunities. The Town of Killington could develop and promote its “green” potential beginning with an assessment of its wind and hydropower resources, and then work toward the development of wind and water generation systems. A task force could conduct public outreach to provide education on energy and conservation strategies, market the town as a “green development leader,” galvanize the town to use energy as a key economic development strategy, and work to attract or develop the renewable energy business sector.

### **Create a “Healthy Recreation” Brand**

Changing lifestyles and the evolving way that people choose to vacation can open many opportunities to respond to visitors’ desires to combine leisure and health. A healthy image committee could work to attract event sponsors who are associated with healthy lifestyles. Vacation packages could be developed in partnership with area restaurants, spas, recreational facilities, and lodges. A ‘healthy recreation’ theme could be implemented for family vacation camps, and wellness could be a center-point in the development of year-round tourism. Elder Hostels could cater to retirement recreation.

### **Create a New Town Center**

The town of Killington is both challenged and blessed with a dispersed geography that creates unique pockets of activity, such as a lively access road and a quieter river road, but the town does not include a traditional town center. Many residents express a desire for a ‘core center of energy’ and a Killington ‘downtown.’ A residential/commercial development district could be planned and grown over time to serve as the town’s center. The town and the mountain could then work together to create pedestrian paths, transportation routes, and events to tie together various areas around this new development area.

### **Establish Comprehensive Marketing**

Killington has strong name recognition, and would benefit from a well-planned advertising campaign promoting its many positive assets. The Killington community needs to establish its ‘marketing identity’ to comprehensively promote the area. A task force could work with residents and businesses to help define markets and goals, create a consistent message, and work to reach appropriate target audiences. Possible markets include international visitors, retirees, families, residents of a ‘sister city’ (a resort community with opposite seasons) and healthy lifestyles vacationers.

### **Improve Community Communications**

Many residents expressed an interest in building a sense of unity and common purpose between residents, second homeowners, the Killington resort, day workers, and businesses. In addition to an official Town/Mountain dialogue, an effective Communications Committee could structure opportunities for face-to-face exchanges of information and ideas with mixers or monthly gatherings. A community newspaper could be created, involving youth and schools and a stronger online presence could be developed through electronic newsletter, an improved website, and social networking programs. Killington could also create an on-line, virtual town center such as Front Porch Forum, that is user designed and populated with events, volunteer opportunities, and discussion sites to unite community dialogues. A “Meet the Town” tour could be conducted for new residents, seasonal workers, or part-time residents in partnership with the Resort, volunteer organizations, and area businesses.

### **Expand Four Season Events**

Developing attractions and events that extend beyond the winter season is essential to building a vibrant economy in Killington. A four-season events committee could work to develop events, particularly destination and overnight events. There are many opportunities to create regional events in partnership with Rutland and Woodstock, and the State of Vermont could provide sponsorship, matching funds, and promotional support.

### **Enhance Transportation Options**

Some public transportation is available; expanding that service beyond the winter season would provide increased mobility for visitors and residents. There could be greater promotion of the Rutland airport, and consistent transportation options from the airport to lodging. Some visitors are accustomed to travel packages that pick them up at their home. Tour bus routes could be developed both for the town of Killington and the larger region. Alternative transportation, such as improved bicycle routes could also be explored. Improved signage would increase awareness of the town.

### **Develop New Businesses**

Killington has an excellent infrastructure for e-commerce and is located just a few hours from the New England technology belt. A task force could work to entice people who work elsewhere to stay in Killington and telecommute, and could develop opportunities for home-based employment. Members could plan ways to diversify the Town's economy and develop year-round jobs, define key characteristics of successful businesses, provide opportunities to share strategies, set a welcoming atmosphere for entrepreneurs, and coordinate resources toward a more vibrant economy.

### **Build an Indoor/Outdoor Arts Center**

A task force could develop a business model for the development of a Killington Performance Arts Center. The town's natural beauty, central location, and hospitality infrastructure provide the potential to attract artists, art classes and symposiums, and events at scale. Musical events such as the Jazz Festival have been successful and other genres of musical events could succeed in town. A task force could start by developing small signature events in visual and performing arts, perhaps in a temporary venue such as tents, and build Killington's reputation toward becoming a premier regional center for arts, culture, and music events. Ultimately, options for a sizable, permanent, performing arts center could be explored, with an eye toward productions such as dance, musical theater, and large capacity concerts. A movie theater could be considered as well.

### **Expand Affordable Housing**

While there is a large base of seasonal rental units, Killington, along with most of Vermont, is experiencing a shortage of affordable housing for seniors, workers, and young families. Increasing the available housing stock is essential for building diversified economic development and supporting the town's sustainability. Killington could unite behind a task force effort to develop a range of housing, including starter homes, affordable rentals, and senior housing to meet the diverse needs of all community members.



Pico Ski Area

*Photo courtesy of Mountain Times*

*Bob Perry, photographer*

# Resource Meeting/Task Forces

March 25, 2008

## Build a Killington Town/Mountain Partnership

Co-Chairs: **Ted Oleneki, Kathy Judge**

Facilitator: **Chuck Ross**, *Senator Leahy's Office*

Resource Team Members: **Steve Jeffrey**, *VT League of Cities and Towns*

**Bob Ackland**, *Sugarbush Resort*

**Jo Ann Hollis Graffam**, *Rutland Economic Dev. Corp.*

A small team of appointed representatives of the Town of Killington, Killington Resort, SP Land and the Killington business community could be set up to have a regular and systematic schedule of partnership meetings to advance common efforts and interests, work to build bridges between perspectives, and prevent or resolve inevitable points of conflict.

*This task force elected to step back and review what brought them to the table, what opportunities could be developed through a Town/Mountain partnership, and what challenges might impede progress before developing actions steps. Participants worked to develop the structure and function of the Task Force.*

### **I. Review**

#### **Why are we here?**

- To improve relationships.
- To develop new ideas and a systematic structure to identify problems and solutions. Participants indicated that that wanted a more formal and regular communication process.
- To keep sight of the good and positive things.
- To encourage everyone involved to participate with an “open play book.”
- To reawaken a sense of pride in Killington.
- Remember that the destinies of everyone involved are linked. That includes: businesses, townspeople, the resort, village developers, visitors and second homeowners.

#### **What are the opportunities that can be developed through a partnership?**

- Grow together in harmony.
- Understand each other's objectives.
- Identify the negativity that motivated people to get involved.
- Utilize economies of scale between Town/Mountain.
- Work together on Mountain and town events.
- Use past models of success to encourage collaboration between all parties.

- Develop unified marketing between the resort, village, town, and chamber of commerce.
- Create a welcoming environment.

**What are the obstacles we need to address?**

- Attitude
- Recognize that what is good for one party may not be beneficial to others.
- Rumors and misinformation – inadequate communication.
- People may have expectations that may not be met.
- Coping with change is difficult.
- The committee is very large – more than 40 people. We risk losing momentum if we cut people out of the process. On the other hand, it is not practical or effective to have such a large working committee.

**II. Action Steps:**

1. A core committee of nine people will be formed. Membership will be representatives from each identified stakeholder group; selectboard, planning commission, chamber of commerce, ski resort, developer, second homeowner, resident and two chairs.
2. Representatives of the ski resort and SP Land will work with the two chairs to select the second homeowner and resident.
3. The core committee will provide opportunities for public input to hear suggestions, recommendations and concerns.
4. The task force will serve primarily as a communication tool, rather than a problem solving body. Their goal will be to facilitate communication between parties, encourage networking and provide a forum to air issues.
5. The committee will be responsible to report back to the community in an accurate manner and will investigate various methods of communication including the Mountain Times.

**III. Committee Members**

**Co-Chairs:**

Kathy Judge	422-3812	<a href="mailto:kathy@kathyjudge.com">kathy@kathyjudge.com</a>
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**Developers of Task Force Structure and Function**

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Keith Alper	422-3294
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Otto Iannantuoni	775-1575
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Visiting Team members Jenny Nelson, Senator Sanders' office and Chuck Ross, Senator Leahy's office prepare for a community meeting

*Photo courtesy of Sarah Waring*

## **Establish Comprehensive Marketing/Develop a Healthy Recreation Brand**

Chairperson: **Chris Bianci**

Facilitator: **Paul Costello**, *Vermont Council on Rural Development*

Resource Team Members: **Paul Kaza**, *Kaza Associates*

**Christine Werneke**, *Vermont Chief Marketing Officer*

**Valerie Rochon**, *Consultant, former Stowe Area Association*

Killington has strong name recognition, and would benefit from a well-planned advertising campaign promoting its many positive assets. The Killington community needs to establish its ‘marketing identity’ to comprehensively promote the area. A task force could work with residents and businesses to help define markets and goals, create a consistent message, and work to reach appropriate target audiences.

Changing lifestyles and the evolving way that people choose to vacation can open many opportunities to respond to visitors’ desires to combine leisure and health. A healthy image committee could work to attract event sponsors who are associated with healthy lifestyles. Vacation packages could be developed in partnership with area restaurants, spas, recreational facilities, and lodges. A ‘healthy recreation’ theme could be implemented for family vacation camps, and wellness could be a center-point in the development of year-round tourism. Elder Hostels could cater to retirement recreation.

*The task force identified actions steps in order of priority and potential resources to achieve their goals.*

### **I. Action Steps**

1. Develop a list of assets, including green attributes.
2. Work alongside Killington Resort to utilize elements of the Mountain’s brand.
3. Encourage the Resort to share market research to ascertain how customers find Killington and why they choose to come.
4. Analyze the marketing sets of the Town and Mountain, and determine the subset where they meet.
5. Build clearer definitions around identity, i.e. distinguish between Killington the resort and Killington the town.
6. Develop a cross-seasonal survey.
7. Develop a cross-season marketing campaign.
8. Develop standards of service for Killington businesses that can serve to attract guests and encourage repeat visitors. Include common product knowledge in the standards.
9. Create metrics to identify success.
10. Identify target market areas, differentiating between new and existing customers.
11. Work to flesh out the components and content of “healthy recreation”.
12. Educate committee members by bringing in experts to discuss brand development, marketing, and costs.
13. Review demographic projections to define future markets.
14. Explore the viability of conducting brand research.



## Expand Four Season Events

Chairperson: **Phil Black**

Facilitator: **Chip Evans**

Resource Team Members: **Steve Cook, VT Department of Tourism and Marketing**  
**Jenny Nelson, Senator Sanders' Office**

Developing attractions and events that extend beyond the winter season is essential to building a vibrant economy in Killington. A four-season events committee could work to develop events, particularly destination and overnight events. There are many opportunities to create regional events in partnership with Rutland and Woodstock, and the State of Vermont could provide sponsorship, matching funds, and promotional support.

*This task force brainstormed existing assets, themes and strategies that could be further developed in making Killington a destination for four season events. They selected four action steps as a starting point, and selected members of the committee to focus on particular areas.*

### **I. Brainstormed List of Ideas**

Keeping Killington Classic

Hiking

Wedding Destination

Golf Courses

Heart of the Green Mountains

Magazine, on-line presences, Town Events

Kent Pond Visibility

Hiking Center, Trail Clusters, Map

Seasonality vs. Event (i.e. hiking vs. wedding)

New Coordinator's Planning Role:

Vendors

Sponsorships

Special Permitting

Convention/Contracting

VT Convention Bureau

Summer Rentals

Elder Hostels

Welcome Banners on Telephone Poles

Conventions/Group Business

Skiing

Bars and Restaurants

Convention Bureau

Crossroads Partnership

Mountain Biking

Packing to Target Market

Visitors' Center

Select a Reputation

Sustainability – establish timeline

Bike Paths

Farmers Market

Festivals for VT Wine, Beer, Cheese,

Music and Film Festivals

Mountain Biking Park

Intermediate/Family Bike Touring

Market the Whole Community (logo)

Summer Camp

Perennials and Flowers Leading to Town

Develop New Attractions

Church of Our Savior,  
Killington, VT





## **Build an Indoor/Outdoor Arts Center**

Co-chairs: **Maurie Harrington, Deanne Grim, Steve Durkee, Jeanne Karlhuber**

Facilitator: **Jolinda LaClair**, *USDA Rural Development*

Resource Team Members: **Jim Saudade**, *VT Agency of Commerce*

**Sonia Rae**, *Vermont Arts Council*

A task force could develop a business model for the development of a Killington Arts Center. The town's natural beauty, central location, and hospitality infrastructure provide the potential to attract artists, art classes and symposiums, and events at scale. Musical events such as the Jazz Festival have been successful and other genres of musical events could succeed in town. A task force could start by developing small signature events in visual and performing arts, perhaps in a temporary venue such as tents, and build Killington's reputation toward becoming a premier regional center for arts, culture, and music events. Ultimately, options for a sizable, permanent, performing arts center could be explored, with an eye toward productions such as dance, musical theater, and large capacity concerts. A movie theater could be considered as well.

*The Task Force defined their desire to create a multi-season facility that could eventually host performance events on a large scale. The group agreed that a critical component of success is the ongoing recognition of the importance of volunteers. Members identified both short and long term action steps and potential resources associated with each goal.*

### **I. Action Steps and Resources**

1. Undertake a feasibility analysis exploring a variety of options, models and financing structures.

*Resources:* Jim Saudade, Agency of Commerce

Jo Anne Hollis Graffam, Rutland Economic Development Corp.

Apply for a VCDP planning grant (up to \$15K) and program grants (up to \$30K)

2. Create a Killington Arts Council.

*Resources:* Sonia Rae, VT Arts Council

3. Form a Facilities Committee to be composed of the four co-chairs and a working group to include members such as a lender, realtor, community leaders outside of Killington, and other key partners.

*Resources:* Jon Michael Muse, USDA Rural Development

4. Inventory available land both for rent, on a temporary basis, and for purchase in the long term.

*Resources:* Regional Planning Commission

Local realtors

5. As a short-term step, rent a tent. The committee will further discuss the type of event that could be held in a tent, and funding options that could support such a preliminary project.



Sherburne Elementary School  
*photo courtesy of the school*

### **Committee Members**

#### **Co-chairs:**

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## Resource Team Recommendations

Resource Team members represent a wide array of professionals from across the state and agree to serve as partners and advisors to Town of Killington Task Forces. Their recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs. It is hoped that community member will turn frequently to these pages for concrete ideas and resources. Resource Team members are eager to support the Task Forces as they begin their work. The following are recommendations compiled from the Town of Killington Resource Team.

### Build a Killington Town/Mountain Partnership

It is important for town residents, business leaders, and the Resort to recognize that there are both common and diverse goals and interests, and for all parties to know and accept that there will be hard decisions and bumps in the road that must not be allowed to interrupt the long-term partnership. The prevailing interest in positive communication, thoughtful negotiation, and long-term partnership has been identified as an overwhelming priority by participants in the Community Visit process.

The new task force should, therefore, look to foresee points of conflict, and work to resolve them, to consider the needs and point of view of each party in the partnership, and work to bridge them. The committee should work to build positive information on mutual directions, undermine innuendo and negative rumor, and be a vehicle to celebrate positive steps forward.

There are models of success in building positive relationships within a resort community. **Hank Lunde**, Chairman of **Stowe Resort**, worked collaboratively to develop a company philosophy and master plan that greatly improved both the resort's financial position and its relationship with employees and Stowe residents. [hlunde@stowe.com](mailto:hlunde@stowe.com)

**Valerie Rochon**, former Executive Director of the Stowe Association and currently a consultant with **Motion Marketing Group** is an excellent resource and could provide support in identifying points of common interest and positive communications strategies. She can be reached at 253-5070 or [motionmarketing@verizon.net](mailto:motionmarketing@verizon.net).

If the newly formed committee found it useful, the **Rutland Economic Development Corp** could facilitate a joint meeting for the committee or between Powdr, SP Land and the Town of Killington. REDC can also help find resources and can provide training to help groups find common goals over time. Contact **Jo Ann Hollis Graffam** at 773-9147 or [jgraffam@rutlandeconomu.com](mailto:jgraffam@rutlandeconomu.com) for her assistance or involvement in the work of the committee.

The **Vermont Chamber of Commerce** could share strategies that other resort towns have used in developing Town/Mountain partnerships that benefit whole communities. **Duane Marsh** is the Executive Director. [dmarsh@vtchamber.com](mailto:dmarsh@vtchamber.com) 223-3443.

The **Vermont Council on Rural Development** will remain dedicated to supporting the progress of each of the task forces established by Killington residents through the Community Visit Process. VCRD staff would be available to provide facilitation if there is a point in the future where the Task Force could benefit from outside assistance. (223-5763)

There are other mediative groups who could also lend support to future meetings if needed. **Woodbury College** has a staff of trained, professional mediators who provide services to a variety of business, community and non-profit groups. Lawrence Mandell is their president; he can be reached at 229-0516.

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### **Expand Four Season Events**

Killington could take bold leadership by inviting a few towns doing numerous events (Rutland, Brandon, Wallingford, Poulney, Fair Haven, Woodstock) to a common table to talk about cross advertising and marketing. The **Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce** could support this effort with staffing and funds. 773-2747 [info@rutlandvermont.com](mailto:info@rutlandvermont.com)

Competition for four season events is keen, especially in resort communities. Conduct a statewide inventory of existing events to see if there is a 'niche' opportunity for Killington. A complete analysis is critical and a good business plan needs to be in place to secure funding. Understanding what can be done in the short term is essential to building up to long-term success.

Develop a sense of arrival by creating an appealing landscape leading to Killington. The **Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program** offers grants for planning, planting and maintaining street side vegetation. **Kate Forrer** with the **UVM Extension Service** can offer advice on perennial planting and other roadway planting programs. [Katherine.forrer@uvm.edu](mailto:Katherine.forrer@uvm.edu)

The **Vermont Department of Tourism** can share information on market research and existing statewide activities. They may also have funds to strengthen or leverage the Town's plans. Contact **Commissioner Bruce Hyde** at 828-3649 or [bruce.hyde@state.vt.us](mailto:bruce.hyde@state.vt.us).

The Task Force should use the Department of Tourism and Marketing and other partners to get the word out about events. **The Vermont Convention Bureau** ([www.vermontmeetings.org](http://www.vermontmeetings.org)) can help you schedule events and can help attract events and conferences to Killington.

Work closely with the **Killington Chamber of Commerce** to develop events. They can provide insight around time required of staff and volunteers, cost, audience and return on investment.

The **Vermont Community Foundation** offers up to \$10,000 through its Sustainable Grant Round that could be used as a planning grant in support of a major community event. Contact **Pat Menduni**, Community Philanthropy Steward at 388-3355 or [pmenduni@vermontcf.org](mailto:pmenduni@vermontcf.org)

This Task Force should keep in close contact with the Killington group working to evaluate the idea of developing a major performance space in town. There may be start up events, or tented events that could start the ball rolling for this effort. Likewise, marketing events together, be they Town driven, or developed by Killington Resort, builds the perspective of the general public outside of town that this is a place with activity, excitement, and momentum.

Partnering with leading Vermont Companies (from Green Mt Coffee Roasters to Cabot Cheese) can emphasize the Vermont brand of Killington events, to mutual benefit. A good starting place for this kind of partnership is Roberta McDonald, Director of Marketing at Cabot Creamery, 229-9361.

Working in partnership with other communities along the Route 4 corridor from Rutland to Woodstock corridor will greatly strengthen the appeal of four season events.

Funding for outdoor recreation and trails is available through the State of Vermont **Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation**. The Department also has information through the **Vermont Trails and Greenways Council**. Call 241-3683 for more information.

College students can often assist with trail building, mapping or promotion. Contact area schools including **Castleton College** – 468-5611 and **Green Mountain College** – 776-6675.

The Task Force direction of working to build **Killington as a destination** for a particular market niche, such as weddings could be a very fertile tactic.

Think about the best structure for events planning, which may include limited paid staff and many volunteers.

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### **Establish Comprehensive Marketing/Develop a Healthy Recreation Brand**

A brand with elements common to both the Resort and the Town will benefit both parties and will strengthen recognition of the area as a whole. Members of this committee should work closely with Killington Resort to understand and utilize elements of the Mountain's Brand. This partnership should include shared market research, and an analysis of Town and Resort market sets to find points of synergy. The task force should remain aware that Killington Resort is already working from a brand strategy and that this new town-based effort is not designed to undermine or over-arch the efforts of the Resort.

The Town could consider contracting for brand analysis or strategic planning for a brand-driven marketing campaign. Clearly, there are a variety of contractors who could support this kind of effort, from Paul Kaza Associates (863-5956) to Kelliher, Samets, Volk (Linda Kelliher, 862-8261). **Valerie Rochon**, of **Motion Marketing Group** in Stowe could also lend strategic planning assistance for a major marketing effort. 253-5070 or [motionmarketing@verizon.net](mailto:motionmarketing@verizon.net).

The **Center for Rural Studies** at the University of Vermont can provide a demographic analysis that will inform a marketing campaign. Contact **Chip Sawyer** at 656-0892 or [William.sawyer@uvm.edu](mailto:William.sawyer@uvm.edu)

The **State of Vermont** has valuable market research already completed. Chief Marketing Officer **Christine Werneke** can provide assistance and can be reached at 828-2999 or [Christine.werneke@state.vt.us](mailto:Christine.werneke@state.vt.us).

The Task Force should work with local transportation hubs, including Amtrak and the Rutland Airport to develop tourist friendly transportation options, packages and other marketing vehicles. The **Vermont Agency of Transportation** can provide advice and connections to grant resources. **Amy Bell** is the coordinator; 828-0457. VTrans also offers **Enhancement Grants** to towns with a clear plan for adding sidewalks, walkways or other amenities.

One popular format for building an inventory of local assets that can help the Task Force focus a marketing plan is **Asset-Based Community Development**. Information about this method is online at [northwestern.edu/ipr/abed.html](http://northwestern.edu/ipr/abed.html)

Surrounding Killington is the National Forest as well as State Forests. The **US Forest Service** is willing to be involved in an on-going dialogue with Killington on the development of a healthy outdoor recreation brand. The Forest Service has a network of recreation planners who could share examples of places that have successfully branded along these lines. The Forest Service could also help Killington consider including place-based history and cultural themes. Trends in tourism and recreation show that people are interested in recreation experiences that are genuinely rooted in the history and culture of place. Many are looking for experiences where their tourism dollar helps contribute to development of history, learning, community cultures and/or "greener" activities or living. The Forest Service can also help identify specific recreation opportunities that might contribute to this future emphasis or their desire to be a four- season recreation destination. Meg Mitchell is the Forest Supervisor for the Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forests and would be glad to work with Killington; (802) 747-6704, [mmitchell01@fs.fed.us](mailto:mmitchell01@fs.fed.us)

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### **Build an Indoor/Outdoor Arts Center**

Building a major new cultural performance venue is an exciting idea and could provide a substantial contribution to the long-term development of Killington's four-season economy. It's important to hold to the positive spirit of this idea, while realistically advancing work to make it a reality, step by step. In some ways it is easier to find the resources to build a project of this stature than it is to build and implement a successful business case that can make it a sustainable and profitable venture. Killington needs to build up interest to a point where the market is developed and prepared to support such a venue and a new facility seems imperative, not just an interesting idea..

A strong business plan is essential to ensure that a facility will have the cash flow to make it sustainable. **Chris Herriman**, regional small business development counselor would be glad to review a business plan and provide advice. She is located at the REDC office at 773-9171.

**USDA Rural Development** has resources from a tool kit that can supply support for elements of strategic planning to funding for construction. **Jon-Michael Muise**, Area Director in Brattleboro is the point person for the Town of Killington. He can be reached at 802-257-7878 x106 or [jon.muise@vt.usda.gov](mailto:jon.muise@vt.usda.gov).

There are existing institutions that have worked through similar issues of seasonal limits, reliance on out-of-state visitors, and funding. The committee could set up site visits and meetings with leaders at the **Southern Vermont Arts Center** - 362-1405, **Hildene** in Manchester – 362-1788, and the **Bennington Museum** – 447-1571.

**Sonia Rae**, the Community Programs Director at the **Vermont Arts Council**, is a valuable resource who can advise on events, funding, and community projects. 828-5425 or [srae@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:srae@vermontartscouncil.org).

The **Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs** offers planning grant and program grants from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Director **Joss Besse** can be reached at 828-5212 or [joss.besse@state.vt.us](mailto:joss.besse@state.vt.us).

**Jim Saudade**, Deputy Commissioner of the **Vermont Agency of Commerce** has been a part of the Killington Community Visit Process and is willing to follow up with committee members with questions around a feasibility analysis. 828-3211 or [jim.saudade@state.vt.us](mailto:jim.saudade@state.vt.us).

The **Rutland Regional Planning Commission** and local realtors can provide assistance with developing an inventory of available land for purchase or rent. **Mark Blucher** is the RRPC Executive Director. 775-0871 [mblucher@rutlandrpc.org](mailto:mblucher@rutlandrpc.org).

There are national foundations that fund community facilities including the **W. K. Kellogg Foundation** – [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org) and the **Warren and Cecile Thompson Charitable Trust Fund** – 561-747-6612.



Killington  
Town Office  
ringed by  
mountains

*Mountain  
Times photo*

## Community Visioning Notes

*Presented in community discussion on January 28, 2008*

Participants began the Community Visit Program to the Town of Killington with an open session that allowed everyone to offer their ideas about the future of the town. Thoughts ranged from expansive visions to practical action steps, and covered topics such as how to strengthen the community, expand economic opportunities, improve channels of communication and develop infrastructure.

***Develop a welcoming and desirable environment that appeals to both current residents and visitors, and will serve to attract new community members.***

- How do we entice families to move here? We need a strong education system.
- The community budget needs to support the school system.
- It is important to recognize the recreational desires of people who come here, and to appreciate visitors and part time residents.
- Be more snowmobile friendly. It is an untapped market.
- We need to keep things affordable for people who live here.
- Understand our negatives in relationship to our positives. Plan to offset things tourists find negative.
- Think about sustainability. We need to grow the population of this town two or three times over. We need local teenagers for jobs. Affordability is a huge issue – stores, gas, local goods – are all needed.

***Create system, structures and programs that will encourage and strengthen the Town of Killington's economy.***

- Create a Department of Economic and Community Development staffed by full time personnel. There is a need for an events coordinator as well.
- We are a three-hour drive from the technology belt. We have the infrastructure in place to develop an E-economy. People who work in Boston could live here and telecommute, and home-based employment could be developed.
- Harness solar, wind and water. Develop a green economy so Killington leads the state as an economic center.
- Killington has excellent wind resources and that could be harnessed and promoted.

***Develop a vibrant year-round economy through the development of new ventures and four-season projects.***

- Bring Club Med to Pico. Many Europeans are interested in vacationing in the US due to the favorable exchange rate.
- Build a large amphitheater or performing arts center.
- Get involved in developing town projects. We have lost the Renaissance show and the horse show.

- Develop tours that focus on food and agriculture, artisan efforts.
- The Euro is very strong and there is a desire among Europeans to vacation here. Encourage Europeans to come.
- Build an outdoor interpretive nature center, similar to one in the Adirondacks.
- There is a potential to develop a park and pathways at Kent Pond to connect to other natural resources.
- In the summer season, focus on the development of cultural activities. Invite critics from premier papers. We need more shops – interesting shops, to appeal to consumers.
- Killington has great recreation and a great nightlife, but we need to have growth in the arts.

***Clarify the Town of Killington’s sense of identity, develop a unified image, and work to actively market that image as a unique brand.***

- We need a strong marketing plan directed toward families with young children.
- Change our image from the Kmart of the ski industry to Nordstrom. Up the brand identity a bit.
- Look at Killington as a four-season destination, not just a ski town.
- We could become a nationally recognized retirement community.
- Be mindful of overdevelopment and maintain the character of the community.
- Don’t undermine Killington’s natural assets.
- Look back and say “what brought you here?” A sense of history and why we are here now can help inform the future.
- We are the geographical center of the state, and we need to promote that.
- Become a Mecca for health and wellness.

***Proactively work to strengthen internal communication between residents, businesses, and the ski area. Work to develop positive and productive relationships within the community and neighboring towns.***

- There needs to be a good relationship between residents and the ski area.
- Foster the sense of community as a whole. Not just for a meeting like this, but all the time.
- Tonight is the first step toward becoming a unified, yet diverse community.
- An open dialogue needs to occur between the mountain and residents, especially concerning the development of the village.
- Include second homeowners in planning.
- There was a time when the ski area and the community worked together to promote the area. There needs to be continuity and partnership among the business community.
- We need to consider who is going to do the work from all these great ideas, and who is going to pay for them.
- There has to be relationship building with communities around you. Workers come from other towns; be sure to keep them in the loop.

- The ski resort is part of the community. This is a critical juncture in moving forward. The mountain will be involved.

***Create an infrastructure that is supportive of the Town of Killington's changing economic and social needs.***

- Build a comprehensive pathway in Killington that connects the outdoor assets of the town.
- Develop municipal water and sewer.
- Build a small village and start expanding it. We need a town center.
- Integrate the town center with the ski area.
- Signs on highways should show Killington as a destination.
- Help the new village succeed and be completed so Killington is the premier destination resort.
- Killington does not get enough money back for infrastructure. Resort towns that generate a huge amount of revenue should get special consideration for public dollars. The State should support Killington's future.
- Think about transportation. There is public transportation here and it is important to have it not just in the winter, but also year-round.

***Additional ideas submitted on ballots, February 28, 2008***

- Everyone needs to work in an integrative fashion so as to build a community that works to the benefit of all concerned, including local businesses, residents, the Town of Killington and the Resort.
- Have a youth hostel or backpacker lodge established here. This could bring in international travelers.
- Work to keep young families here.
- Killington community parents have developed a support and informational program available to local parents and teens to help educate them on how to become a drug-free community. This group can also work in conjunction with our educational system and the local teen center.
- Develop learning experiences with courses.
- The Town of Killington should host an international seminar for sustainable forestry that promotes the review of forestry issues worldwide. Some kind of international awareness needs to be developed.

# **Town Forum Notes**

*Recorded in forum discussions on January 28, 2008*

## **Resource Team A- Killington Community Life**

*Tricia Coates, Congressman Welch's Office*

*Steve Costello, Central VT Public Service*

*Jenny Nelson, Senator Sanders' Office*

*Sarah Waring, VT Council on Rural Development*

*Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council (facilitator)*

*Sarah Waring, VCRD, (scribe)*

## **Points of Testimony**

### **What are the Assets and Challenges in this Area?**

- We are sitting in one of the biggest assets right here. The school is one of the best in the state if not THE best in the state. The quality of education is parallel to none. Access to staff is fantastic and there are lots of people who support it.
- We're nestled in the Green Mountains, in one of the most beautiful states in the union.
- The library is one of the most wonderful I've ever been in. The resources are unbeatable.
- Volunteerism is very, very unique here. The crossover is great between different ages and different cliques, like tonight's turnout. There will always be someone to help out when there's a challenge. Without a town center, the people make it what it is.
- When unfortunate things happen, no one is ever alone. There's an open door policy here in many ways. Businesses have always tried to be considerate of the locals. They don't try to make their money off the people living here, and we take care of each other.
- The skiing! We all came here for that, and it's great skiing. We came up here to ski, and we have to remember that. When something goes wrong on the mountain, we all feel it.
- The access road is a huge asset. There's a lot going on – there's a bustling nightlife.
- We need more than nightlife. We want to build a vibrant healthy community. We want people whose kids want to come back and stay here. Too many times, kids tend to go away.
- The bar system is welcoming. For young people, the bars are the place to learn about your new Killington family. You meet people here, establish relationships and feel part of the community. We also want to take people from the bars and move them into the rest of the world and community.
- Attitude is an asset – it's about what your life is supposed to be. It's a community where you can walk in the door and volunteer. If there's an accident or bad luck people just show up. The playground here was built in three days and the people who

designed it didn't know what to do with the help that was here. The Futures Golf Tournament had so many volunteers there were no spectators.

- The community itself is positive, giving and overwhelmingly supportive.
- Church of Our Savior is an asset. You don't have to belong to the church, but the property itself at Mission Farm is wonderful. Everyone is welcome to roam and walk and hike and observe. The retreat house is open as well.
- There is a strong Recreation Department that uses town and school resources.
- The Long Trail and hiking are great assets.
- There is a lot of good land that hasn't been developed. Development could be done right.
- The local paper could be viewed as an asset or not, depending on what the community is doing. It is more of marketing tool for the mountain.
- We have an excellent volunteer fire department, fireman's BBQ and 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic. Those are great ways to get involved in the community.
- A lack of mixing among generations is a challenge. Once you have a family, then you're part of the community. But young people need to know all the other pieces of life.
- The way to make a small fortune in Vermont to come with a large one. It is a challenge to hold onto real estate here.
- All the assets are very far apart. We don't talk to each other.
- It's a very diverse community and it can be hard to communicate. There is no central place for this.
- It's hard to make a living here and raise a family. It's difficult for our community to grow because we can't afford to raise a family here.
- That's a statewide issue – there are no jobs here and they are being lost statewide.
- The tax structure is a burden. Until Act 60 is changed and until Act 68 is replaced, youth will not stay here and buy property. Neither the town nor the school that we like so well will have growth unless we keep young people in town. The State classified us as a 'distressed community' and until we can solve this, we don't have chance.
- We have two major investors in town and two different strategies – we need them to get in harmony.
- There is a lack of affordable housing: there is nowhere for workers on the mountain to live.
- The same is true at the other end of the age spectrum; many seniors have a fixed income and can't afford a place to live.
- We need affordable housing for singles, seniors, and young families.
- No one has the same schedule; 200 have Tuesdays off, 400 have Wednesdays off. Many things that don't get done because of this.
- The challenges presented by the tax structure means that families are lost, and the transient nature of newcomers makes it difficult to find support for town issues.
- There is not enough diversity in the economy.
- More businesses are leaving the state and finding jobs is a real challenge.
- The Recreation Department and others use this school, but a current challenge is that the budget has averaged an increase of less than 1.5% for the past nine years, and the State tells us we're overspending. Now fully 1/3 of our school population is tuition.

- People with children have a hard time finding things to do. If the weather is bad, there are not many options.
- Why can't we find jobs that aren't just seasonal, but come with benefits and produce a higher quality of life? The Vermont brand is hot right now, but Killington seems to be missing the boat on this, along with the business and lifestyle that comes with it.
- The nature of the town, being a resort town, is that there's no town center. Not being able to walk to places easily is a challenge.
- A business owner expressed the belief that Killington has enough skiers on weekends and there is no need for more coming up the road. The town needs better dialogue with the resort – especially because skiing is flat here and everywhere.
- Access to high speed Internet is not consistent.

### **Opportunities: What Should Be Done?**

- Ask people to 'parent' kids who are here – let them know there are a variety of things to do. Have an 'Adopt a Parent' program.
- Work on a better dialogue with the new owners of Killington Resort.
- Create a community newspaper that allows us to celebrate and recognize our local people and communicate with young people.
- The school sends the School News to surrounding papers and only Woodstock will print it.
- There should be staff on the paper that is dedicated to community news.
- The Mountain Times could be here in the room for sure; but we're in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We can post community events and social events and an electronic newsletter. Communication solutions could be found through means other than traditional print media.
- Killington could market itself to the 55+ age group. That could help the four-season economy.
- Put up posters in the bars that inform people about community events– not just who's playing where, but other community-based activities. We need someone to wake up the drunken people and give them some guidance. We need to bring information to them so they can participate without going out of their way.
- There needs to be a lot more communication between Killington Resort and Killington community members and businesses. There needs to be a connection between what's going on up there, and what's going on out around here. Build a better relationship, because right now it's a major issue.
- In the past we all had ownership in the success of one another – the resort wanted all the people, all the businesses, all the ski bums to be successful together. We need to have investment in one another's success. "There are pockets of community and we need a marriage counselor."
- The school used to open up the gym and provide community activities for adults – a drug free and alcohol free zone. That takes substantial effort to set up and keep going. Word of mouth is important, but so are advertising activities.

- We need a core center of energy, for information and other things. Over the years, we've separated ourselves. Our assets are spread out over a large area. We should bring in River Road and the town offices that are there.
- Let's have a 'Meet the Town' tour. Take people to town offices, to the school, to the library. Could we make this part of Killington Resort's orientation? Or provide it as part of their informational package?
- Young people need to be able to carve some of these things out themselves. I fear that we're developing something around a town center, but the beauty of not having a town center on River Road is nice compared to Killington Access Road. I think if you start with communication and get people to know where they're going that's good. But there are two minds here – the craziness of the Access Road, and calm of the River Road.
- Some towns have a 'welcome packet'. We have a Sherburne/Killington label issue; people are confused about what is the town and what is the mountain, but what if we did a welcome package? Or a welcome wagon, through the businesses and the real estate agencies?
- The community could buy land that is prime for alternative use. It could be a revenue-generating source for the town, and would reduce reliance on the ski resort. The potential village up there has been divisive. This piece of property could lend itself as a solution very well – it could be a town center here.
- The village center for most historic Vermont villages is the country store. You can't just invent that.
- Think about this 'core of energy' in New England: church, store, and town offices. Killington is too spread out.
- You can't move the things that you have; we've got all the assets here.
- "My assets are all in other towns – chess clubs, table tennis, dancing in Woodstock, and Manchester."
- A virtual center could be created with email campaigns to second homeowners, women's centers, and children. People wouldn't have to spend money on gas to drive somewhere.
- Newsletters are published and linked via the town website. But clearly organizations need to re-advertise themselves.
- Other resort towns have elder hostels and conference centers – these could work for Killington.
- Killington has a great sense of volunteerism and great events, but maybe the town needs to bring in professional people.
- We need events that aren't for other people, but for ourselves. We need to do this for ourselves.
- This town had a lot of events and we'd like to try to get them back. This requires some organization. Previously, Killington Resort acted as event planners.

## **Reflections of the Community Visit Team**

- There are lots of assets but we didn't hear much about other recreation besides skiing. 'Adopt a parent' is a great idea. People who are technically inclined could help you with your communications.
- In looking around the room, there are a variety of people from different age groups. In many communities you only have one group of people represented. You have an asset here among you that is something special. This is something to capitalize on. Your community spirit is great and you all should work on capturing this. The issue with the new owners of Killington is a challenge. Something has to be done with the resort. They have to be reached out to and brought into this discussion.
- One model of a virtual town center is the Front Porch Forum in Burlington that is user designed and populated with events, volunteer opportunities, etc. As a first idea on working with the resort, it might be important to focus on successes that require little or no investment for them. Focus first on goodwill efforts that are easy to achieve.
- You have a lot of pride around this community and its assets. You have a challenge with both younger folks and seniors in bringing them into the community. Partnership was a word and a theme that I heard. The town and mountain need to recognize their mutual interest – and be committed to working together on that mutual interest. By mission, we are all your partners representing federal and state government, and we're very happy to be a resource for you.
- There was great energy around the assets, but it was hard to pull out the challenges.

## **Resource Team B- Building a Four Season Economy & Sustainable Tourism**

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*Meg Mitchell, Green Mountain & Finger Lakes National Forest*

*Paul Costello, Vermont Council on Rural Development (facilitator)*

*Bonnie Smoren, VCRD (scribe)*

### **What are the Assets and Challenges in this Area?**

- Be aware of negatives, such as weather challenges.
- There is not a targeted approach to capturing the retirement market.
- We are not marketing effectively. We need to come up with a brand.
- It has become commonplace to close businesses in the spring. Businesses need to stay open, even during May and June.
- We are not developing a market for second homeowners who are currently here in the winter. With some effort, they could be encouraged to be here in the summer as well.
- One European participant appreciated the resource the Recreation Center provides and mentioned the effectiveness of international advertising in bringing her here.
- We need to manufacture a reason for people to be here. We need to create events.
- The 1% tax that is being considered is a challenge.
- Killington's central location is an asset.
- There is no visible town center. The town has many assets, but they are not visible.
- The State and the Department of Tourism are not working enough with the town to really promote it. Killington is an economic engine for the state.
- Vermont does not promote itself as a tourism state. There is a strong police presence on the highways, but they should be lenient and treat tourists as guests. There is excessive policing of traffic and speeding issues.
- We don't market summer activities enough.
- Transportation is an asset but it could be expanded upon.
- Killington needs to expand its population.
- Killington has a website, but it needs to be improved.
- The Rutland Airport needs to be better utilized and promoted, and needs to provide transportation to lodging.
- Killington is a widely recognized name and that name recognition should be built on.
- The Mountain needs to be a partner with the town. We are too fragmented.
- Signage is inadequate.
- More advertising in general is needed.
- There is a lot of anxiety in the town from the past. We need to work together and move forward. The attendance at this meeting tonight is a positive sign.

- It is a challenge for entrepreneurs to work together; they are by nature independent. This process, however, is a good start.
- Killington has an excellent tourism infrastructure. We have the basic tools in place and now need to build on it.
- Killington needs to make its story known in the national press. The succession movement got national attention – we could do it again around other opportunities.
- Everything here is based on car transportation. We need to expand and improve public transportation. There is also a need to improve the roads.
- How do we affect leadership? What is the next step?

### **Opportunities: What Should Be Done?**

- Hire a full time event producer dedicated to developing and promoting events.
- The golf course is an asset that could be built upon to make it a thriving business.
- Use open base lodges during the summer.
- Look at some towns that have resolved negatives and developed a huge tourism base for examples of success. The speaker provided examples of Wisconsin and Missouri who opened water parks and performance centers. Look at Lake Placid where there are events nearly every weekend there. Two million visitors are only two hours away.
- Our location on the Appalachian Trail and Long Trail could be leveraged.
- Mountain biking is an activity that could be expanded and promoted.
- Build an outdoor performing arts center.
- Another participant observed that there are already plans in place to build a performing arts center.
- Start with tents for an outdoor performing arts center, and build up from there.
- The Kent Pond area could be developed for summer activities and could be linked to other outdoor venues.
- Ask for a voluntary one-half percent tax from businesses.
- Killington could partner with other communities
- Weddings have become a very profitable industry in Vermont and this market could be targeted. It could draw large numbers of people, some of whom haven't been here before.
- Bus tours could be developed to encourage attendance at events.
- Advertising has to be increased.
- We need to fund a department of economic development. Money is the first thing.
- Leadership is needed prior to funding.
- Experience needs to come before the money. We have to be clear about what we want.
- We could have a staff person to write grants, and provide them with a percentage.
- We don't have water. We could dam the Ottauquechee River and build a pond.
- We could put a bike path in that would give us exposure on Route 4.
- We already have a successful wine festival. We could add a food festival tied in with that.
- Build a drive-in movie theater.

- Adopt a sister city, like Key West or another resort community that has an opposite season, so we could promote each other.
- More leadership needs to come from the Chamber of Commerce.
- Conversely, another resident praised the work of the Chamber.
- Numerous people cited the need for a communications bridge between the resort and the community.
- The Horse Show, Jazz Festival and other events used to bring people. The business community needs to develop a fund to create events. You don't build a facility before you have people coming to town.
- In Manhattan, jitneys pick people up and take them to events and lodging. We need to go after people.
- Pico is very visible. We could develop a six-week summer program with incentives for participation.
- We should market in Florida and develop Northeast tours with Killington as one of the stops.
- People love to shop. People will drive to shop and will come up the mountain road if we have more retail.
- If we all wrote a resume about what our talents are, we could use that inventory of skills for committee development.
- There is insufficient lighting between the site of Killington Village and the rest of the access road.
- Develop outward bound and teamwork activities.
- We need a mechanism to evaluate these ideas – what is an asset and what is a challenge? We could develop a vision statement and weigh ideas against that.
- We need to overcome the “us vs. them” attitude.
- We already have leadership; people have worked together for months to get to this point.
- The State of Vermont needs to work for the ski industry. The west now has greater ski power. Vermont needs to rebuild its ski power through a partnership with the State.
- We want to be a family area where there are healthy activities for children. Capture family loyalty through year round residents.
- Elder hostels could have programs tied to nature and the arts.
- Have healthy event sponsors, rather than beer promoters.
- Zip lines may promote activities.
- Banners should be hung up year round.
- Develop overnight events that will necessitate the purchase of food, lodging and expenditures associated with a longer stay.
- People need to do more than talk; they need to volunteer.
- 5,000 people come up in September for a motorcycle rally with a partnership between Rutland and the State. It can be done.
- Woodstock is only 20 minutes from here and is very successful. We can partner. We have a nightlife and mountain. They have a town center and shops. We need to work together.
- The jazz camp and ballroom dancing camp have been very successful at the Grand Hotel. We could have a different learning experience every week in the summer.

- Businesses could partner, as they will benefit from a four-season resort.
- Seniors like good food, good lodging, and shopping. Develop an antique market or indoor Vermont craft market.
- Businesses need to look to themselves. The State already does work for us. They have a great website with an event planner. Each of us individually needs to evaluate what we do.

### **Reflections of the Community Visit Team**

- You are not alone. The Mad River Valley has experienced the same issues. The greatest thing that I am taking away is a need to work with the Mountain. Many things are changing in the marketplace. I remember things that happened in the '60s too, but demographics have changed, the way people travel and vacation has changed. You need to work together as a community.
- You have so many assets and leadership. Leadership is not one person moving you forward; it is a group of people moving together. Partnerships are the key in finding resources, - not only financial resources, but skills.
- Rutland had a similar conversation around the need for leadership and wanted the State to give us what we deserve. We needed to be clear about what we wanted and we went after it.
- Resource providers want to know that there is consensus about what you want to do.
- Look at other conflicts and how they are mediated – such as the town/gown dichotomy some communities experience.
- Look at the ski industry as any other big business and overcome the history.
- You are well aware of your history and the contentiousness of past relationships. It is difficult to get state support when there is divisiveness in a community.
- There are some good themes around event planning.
- Killington's central location and ideas of working with other communities could be very productive.
- There are tremendous natural assets. Maybe there is an opportunity to connect arts with health.
- Advertising was a huge theme, and people clearly have concerns about how to improve marketing.
- The attendance at this meeting speaks for a great deal. It is the best of Vermont when people come together as a community. The tourism infrastructure is good and Killington is a well-known brand already.
- A community goal and vision statement could help.
- The community and mountain need to work together to be Killington.
- There is already a lot of leadership in this room. Perhaps a coordinator could help carry forward the vision.
- Best practices are important. There are many models to look at with Woodstock, Lake Placid and Stowe.
- Partnership is essential. Look carefully at the Regionalism piece. The Chamber or the State can't fix everything. Look instead toward what you can do.
- There is a good cross section of the community and a commendable lack of negativity and animosity. Work to build on the name recognition that you already have.

- Events are huge and it is essential to go after them. The State has a 50/50 match to sponsor events, particularly destination or overnight events.
- Many areas face the same challenges. It can't be done as a seasonal business anymore.
- The State can't do enough – it doesn't have the budget. The State can help distribute advertising, but you need to have other partnerships.

## **Resource Team C- Designing & Building Infrastructure for the Future**

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### **What are the Assets and Challenges in this Area?**

- There are many outdoor activities. Although Killington is well known for skiing, there are other outdoor activities and areas such as the golf course, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, River Road recreational area, and the Gifford Woods biking area. Some, like the Kent Pond area, are less well known and underutilized. In addition, two nationally known hiking trails intersect the town, the Adirondack Trail and the Long Trail. These assets could be combined with marketing to cash in on Killington's potential to become a true four-season resort.
- One of the great assets of the town is its tightly knit community and community networks. A related asset is the town's friendliness to out of town visitors, for example at the Fourth of July party and town pool.
- A huge challenge for local residents is affordability. The former Giguere property was noted as a potential site for affordable housing.
- Route 4 and 100: The proximity of two major highways is seen as a tremendous asset, especially when compared to other recreational centers, which only have one major road.
- The challenges posed by these highways include the awkward and dangerous intersection, and the difficulty of drawing people in from the highways. Developing businesses on Route 4 is difficult because it is a throughway, i.e. traffic goes too quickly. There may be a need for a rotary to slow traffic down.
- The area around Bill's Country Store could be a potential land resource for the construction of a travelers' rest stop.
- The lack of a town center is a major challenge, especially to the tourism economy. There is no distinct and visible town center.
- A distinction should be made between plans for the resort town and a town for the townspeople (including issues of affordability, autonomy and a less dependent local economy). There needs to be a place for folks to come together and talk, such as a diner.
- Some people expressed the desire for more services on Route 4, in addition to those on the access road. However, difficulties such as zoning challenges, setback requirements, speed limits and lack of resources to re-route Route 4 were noted, in addition to the current situation of large building setbacks and difficulty crossing Route 4, all of which encourage strip development.
- Large parcels of land along Route 4 are potential assets in future development.

- Killington has an excellent education system and public library: These are significant assets, especially when attracting more families.
- Student enrollment is in decline, which poses a challenge in terms of state funding.
- Private and seasonal schools in the town provide an additional resource: Killington hosts the Killington Mountain School, Green Mountain College, and the Summer Killington Music Festival.
- Numerous people cited the relationship with Killington Resort as a challenge.
- The town must decide whether or not to work in partnership with the ski resort or independently.
- Although there are problems with the town-resort relationship at present, there is the potential for mutual benefit through cooperation.
- The town's natural beauty is an asset, with the potential to attract artists and art classes.
- There is a lack of awareness of the resort location. The relative invisibility of Killington Resort from Route 4 is a problem that could be addressed through highway signs announcing its location
- The town's economy is largely based on tourism, and the challenge is to diversify the whole economy. Another economic challenge includes the lack of a shopping center to accommodate summer tour buses, which often stay in Killington and make day trips to other Vermont towns for entertainment.
- While rolling hills can be appealing, there is a need to preserve flat land as a future resource for attracting horse shows, car shows or art shows.
- The shops that are located on the Killington Access road suffer from a lack of public transportation.
- The availability of a high speed Internet connection is an asset. This could attract families with parents who want to work remotely and give their children a positive environment.

### **Opportunities: What Should Be Done?**

- The River Road drinking water supply is the resort's water supply. There is an opportunity to negotiate for access to that water: they want to build, we want to build; there must be some way to work together.
- Killington has a potential wind resource: There is a premier site for a wind farm here in Killington, on state owned land.
- Incentives for affordable housing in the legislature right now are geared toward large 100 unit projects, but we need to get them to focus on smaller rural projects so we can get access to money.
- The town can build on a history of large cultural events. They have been lost because there is not an appropriate venue for the performing arts, particularly things that require 500 to 1000 seats, like the Hartford Ballet and musical theater.
- There is an opportunity to use the world-class golf course, owned by the town, which used to have a premier tournament. We could try to build a whole new economy around a series of events.

- The land on Route 100 near the park is a potential resource for building a senior living or affordable housing area. It could also be used for the town center.
- Killington could pursue inexpensive town-makers such as hanging American flags on the telephone posts to make it more “townish” looking (i.e. improve the look of the highway).
- The town could be better advertised with road signs along Routes 4 and 7.
- Market the town as “green”, especially with a wind farm, which goes hand in hand with skiing – keep winter cool.
- We can market our expertise as a community with a rural, small scale but solid educational system: we need to market the education system as one of the best in the state, which will draw families.
- Package and sell from a central location like a website. Develop a coordinating entity to market the town and assets to target all of our potential visiting populations.
- There are some alternative power generation assets in Killington. There are several cascading brooks along Route 4 with good head (drop distance) i.e. Roaring Brook that could be developed for hydropower. We also have excellent potential to develop wind power.
- We do have a waste water system, but no domestic water supply, which would change development opportunities. The current system is private wells, but there is capacity in the waste water systems, for example, the Alpine Pipeline has capacity.
- There may be an opportunity to seek funding from the state for help building wind turbines.
- Expand roads to run parallel to the major highways; this could create a slower-speed area for shops and economic development.
- Expand the fire department, which is currently all volunteer to would create jobs and serve needs.
- Build pathways that can accommodate walking, biking and rollerblading to connect a four-season resort. These paths could compliment the natural four season assets by bringing out the beautiful streams, especially the waterfalls, as an accessible attraction).
- There is plenty of housing available for more visitors. There are 4,000 beds throughout community unused in the summer.
- Killington resort once advertised down in Florida to get seniors to come up here; a success story we could build on.
- The Adirondack Trail and Long Trail go right through town: we have the opportunity to position ourselves as a hiking Mecca for those who don’t want to do the whole trail. Parking is already set up for day trips for both beginner and advanced hikers and is available right at the trailhead. This could involve a partnership with the resort, but it could also be something bigger – a partnership with the State encouraging people to “come hike Vermont.”
- Grow a full time residential population. One way to achieve this is to market Killington’s great high tech remote working opportunities. Telecommunicating could become very important with rising energy prices. Combine beauty, good schools, be wired into the world, plus easy access (including an airport in Rutland). What a special package!

- Kent Pond is a 100-acre lake built by the State in the fifties that has been neglected. There is an opportunity to put a park on the westerly side that would enhance the pond as a recreational asset.
- To attract young people, develop a business incubator economy with small businesses and artists' lofts.
- Light industry could be developed. Currently there are no industrial buildings, although there is privately owned land zoned for light industry totaling 200 acres.
- Promote Killington as a healthy living town: The New Life Inn at Six Mountains is an example of our opportunity to create a rehab style healthy living facility. We already can provide lodging, food, doctors, dieticians, and walking paths. We do have some sports centers, spas, and workout areas in the condos. We could collaborate with the resort to build on this idea. Our goals are mutual, and the town, the resort, and private owners own the land and resources.
- Implement an Option Tax: There is the potential to raise up to \$700,000 per year to go into a separate fund to be used for the economic development of the town.
- The town has a fantastic day camp for kids, including a day trip camp for older kids that could be actively marketed. Killington could also market to out of state people to come up, spend a month here with the family for vacation, while the parents work remotely.
- The town pool, tennis courts, soccer field, etc. could help bring in a private or nonprofit camp. There is an opportunity to keep building up the healthy recreation theme using existing facilities. KMS would be a potential supporting resource.
- Killington used to have big tennis facility at the Killington Tennis School. We could bring a big tennis tournament back here. The tennis courts are gone, but could be brought back for a high profile tennis event.
- An entity could be established to solicit donations from people who love Killington and want to leave money to Killington. This entity could also pursue grant money. No one is currently employed to do this in the town, the Chamber or Regional Commission, but those are potential resources. The Freeman Foundation could help out on funding certain events
- The public television studio in Killington is another plugged-in-to-the-world asset that we could expand.

### **Reflections of the Community Visit Team**

- Routes 4 and 100 are huge assets. Killington could call itself 'the crossroads at the heart of Vermont' where the community connects to itself and to the region. It is also a crossroads of the Long Trail and Appalachian Trail. There is an opportunity to slow down the traffic here, possibly with the location for the town center. Killington also needs a link between the town center and the ski area to build commerce and trade. The crossroads could be a golden thread linking the natural assets and town assets, such as the town pool, providing a 'home base' for recreation. Make a connection between the center and the resort with both roads and pathways (like what Stowe has done). Transportation would be a great area for a public-private partnership (state, town, and resort all together)
- There seems to be a critical mass of community resolve to actually do something and move ahead. The option tax has great potential. As the resort moves forward, there

will be tremendous opportunity to work with them in the area of mixed-use development for commercial, housing, and retail.

- The transportation concept of crossroads has potential, however, getting them here is one thing, getting them around and having them park is another thing. Remember the public transportation system and the rail system would be great ways to avoid the problem of too many cars killing our assets.
- There is a great opportunity for marketing in the healthy body, healthy living and healthy minds ideas, especially for the older market. Explore ways to invest in the arts, especially in ways that are temporary. Look to New York City for people (like artists) who would love to get up here for a month or two. Basin Harbor, for example, brings artists up for a month or two and has workshops. Killington could even have world-class artists here from New York, Boston, and Montreal. I caution against the ‘if you build it they will come’ mentality. Look to other world-class resorts and pay attention to the extremely extended timeline that is necessary to build an asset that way.
- The number of assets in town is inspiring. Challenges definitely include rezoning, working in partnership with Killington resort (focus on the win-win), hard work and determination. The most important thing is getting involved and staying involved and making things happen. You are in control of your future – don’t let someone else create your future!
- The elephant in the room is the resort-town partnership. It is best to avoid hostility and build a relationship over time. You can make it a horrible challenge or a series of small opportunities. There is a huge opportunity to access developers from the large city populations to the south. We also have plenty of target populations (like tennis players, seniors, etc.) that have been here before. Get them back! Also, don’t reinvent the wheel – look to other resorts that have already done this for you.

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