

# COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

## BURLINGTON

### Community Forum Day Notes June 19, 2008

The following notes were collected from focus group meetings and forums throughout the day spent in Chittenden County. These notes are in raw form – reflecting much of the inflections, quotations and feelings of the attendees at these meetings. Below is a list of the meetings that occurred during June 19:

- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- Community Economic Development Office
- Big Heavy World
- Refugee and Immigrant Service Providers Network
- Ben and Jerry's
- LGBTQ associations
- NRG Systems
- South End Arts and Businesses Association
- Association of Africans Living in Vermont
- Burlington Legacy Project, Social Equity Committee and Planning Commission
- Public Evening Mtg at Contois Auditorium

**Facilitators:** Paul Costello, Sarah Waring, Bonnie Smoren, Catherine Dimitruk

**Scribes:** Wanda Hines, Bill McMeekin, Charlie Smith, Catherine Dimitruk

**Listening Team members:** Greg Stefanski, Emily Stebbins, Elizabeth Ottinger, Laura Marlow, Joe Merone

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission**

Scribe: Bonnie Smoren and Leslie Bonnet

**I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- There really are no common values
- There is an ideal Vermont that is not the real one.
- The environment
- Access- to each other and to government
- People identify with their community. Even through Chittenden County is the most metropolitan area, people still relate to their community.
- VT thinks of itself as separate from the US and there is a pride in that difference.
- Pride and independence. We like being a “quirky” state.
- There is a mythic quality, however, to the way people think about Vermont. A romanticized understanding.
- Size. Vermont is at a human scale.
- Vermont politics have a face-to-face nature, and there is a pride in civic engagement.
- Town meeting is the root of the notion that ever person has a say.
- Neighborliness
- VT is friendlier and kinder than other places. For example, drivers are more courteous.
- Tolerance
- There is a balance of independence and interdependence. People will help if you need it, but don’t interfere. It is the embodiment of “Freedom and Unity.”

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Energy – both the cost and the availability. We are rejecting options like wind
- Opposition to wind is primarily from newcomers and is based on the vision of a bucolic Vermont. It is an aesthetic rejection.
- VT’s way of life is in danger. We need to figure out how to move forward, but keep what we love.
- The small size is a value, but we also pay a penalty for it in loss of aggregation. The school consolidation issue is an example of this.
- We have a mythological understanding of VT and its history. Historically, there were no trees or dense forests in Vermont. We need to think clearly about planning and land use.
- The loss of agricultural land. We need to work on food and transportation issues and to support local agriculture.
- There is an opportunity to develop rooftop agriculture.

- The transportation infrastructure is a challenge. We need to develop light rail and stop turning rail beds into bike paths.
- We are losing some businesses as they leave the state. There needs to be better employment options for young people and for an older demographic.
- The built environment. There has been a pattern of growth away from town centers. We need clustered housing and nearby employment. We need to think about the consumption of open space.
- The current public transportation system is a disaster. Both Amtrak and buses have inadequate routes and are unreliable in following schedules. Mass transit in Europe is a model, where things run efficiently.
- A better agricultural infrastructure could lead to more creative jobs; more diversified agriculture and the export, rather than import, of food.
- We have a versatile population that can work with their hands. We can create our own jobs. We are self-reliant
- Industrialization removed people from independent agriculture. Rather than bigger centralize applications, we need numerous small farms.
- The Internet can support decentralization through e-commerce.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- Energy independence
- Reorganize state government. Develop new models of government beyond taxes and upper level organization
- Set priorities to expand resources.
- Education and jobs related to education. Jobs that relate spiritually to Vermont, like green jobs.
- “Real” broadband, not what currently passes for access.
- We need to think about the basics – about food and shelter.
- We have to be sure we “retain our souls” and remain authentic. That is why we are here.
- Look forward and don’t hold on to the ideals of the past.

### **IV. We’ve been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- When legislators plan and develop legislation, Chittenden County is not included in their thinking. They are not thinking of Chittenden County as part of Vermont.
- Chittenden County is the employment center of the state. That is a unique role and we need to offer realistic options
- The built environment is crucial. We need to embrace smart growth.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Community Economic Development Office**

Scribe: Wanda Hines

**I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Sense of shared destiny, get along, shared resources, cooperative
- Safety in a number of ways, physical (no check point at statehouse), economic (no check-cashing centers/payday loan)
- Scale works for getting things done, value the small
- People care for each other, common good is equal to personal gain
- Open minded because of diversity and change and progress
- Participation in and sense of ownership in government
- General awareness of common good, whether one participate in that common good or not
- Can be protective of status quo and reluctant to change because of concern about losing specialness (seen in housing proposals)
- If Vermont value is scale and small is good, Burlington struggles with how to build as a city in Vermont
- Strong neighborhood sense, distinct identities
- Regional identity of Vermont is weaker than individual areas' identities
- Burlington and Vermont are 30 years ahead of the rest of the country on food policy
- Quality of life and community and valued by Vermonters, vs. career, job, status
- Children, health, natural environment
- In Burlington, infiltration of different values from away is evident
- Slower, saner pace of life
- Burlington as a model city, creative economy, food systems, social capital, coo-op of the year...
- In 25 years, the city has grown not based on traditional government and economic models, but on local values and local/citizen ideas
- Generosity of citizens is overwhelming; VT has generosity of good will
- Youth energy is Burlington is a huge plus
- When travelling elsewhere, people are impressed by Burlington and its accomplishments

**II. Looking ahead though our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Sustaining high level of social capital, understanding what is behind those indicators
- Value of diversity vs. value of civic engagement- no data yet on how increasing diversity in Burlington effects civic engagement
- How do we spread culture of ideas to the next generation?
- Sustaining youth programs through challenges and conflicts between participants
- Challenge to create capacity and tools to enhancing participation

- Growth of tax base is a challenge as Burlington works to meet the needs of affordable housing, especially as not all towns around Burlington help to provide those services
- Opportunity with legislation to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections
- Constantly exploring and pursuing the next generation of quality jobs; Vermont should address these more strategically
- Identify clusters of businesses that could be the future of Vermont: software developers alliance, life sciences group
- Challenge of access to capital for growing businesses that are innovative and creative, other examples nationwide include Oregon smart growth fund
- Identify core strategic areas for business growth and match it to our neighborhoods
- Housing
- Transportation
- Energy
- Health Care
- Challenge of no regional identity and capacity with the lack of county government

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- Need to address energy issues- long commutes, home heating needs- or VT will die
- District energy should be explored, such as waste heat from McNeil
- Don't fight over scraps of federal dollars, but be more strategic about the allocation of resources
- When Burlington goes to Montpelier, there is a negative reaction: liberal ideas, tension over resources. This can cloud decision making and increase differences
- Distinct difference between Burlington with its scale, diversity, density etc. Than the rest of VT, as diversity increase, this divide could continue to grow
- There should be more dialogue about the above items
- Health care: Catamount barely touches the need and is not affordable for young people
- Ensure everyone can access higher education and that it is not priced out for people
- Focus on local sustainable resources, food transportation, and energy
- Burlington is a master at leveraging federal resources and has used that to focus on building a strong local economy, therefore there is a strong foundation as federal \$ shrink
- Work on using wood heat technology
- Look at what VT government has for purchasing policy to try to bring that back to VT companies/resources and look at the multiplier effect benefit to the Vermont economy
- Caron offsets, look at economic and social impacts outside VT and the US
- Use purchasing decisions at state and local level to support sustainability locally and worldwide
- Ensure benefits and burdens of development are shared equally
- Tension between density and development vs. affordable housing and preservation
- Great opportunity for redevelopment within Burlington
- Examine criminal justice system; look at youth engagement as a tool.
- Diversity is a hopeful trend
- Internet based community sites are helpful

**IV. We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

Answered above.

# COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

## Scribe notes

### Big Heavy World Youth

Scribe: Bill McMeekin

#### 1. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?

- One 7<sup>th</sup> generation VTer said he is from Huntington and has “nothing in common with young people growing up in Burlington”.
- On the music scene, VTers have a heightened sense of pride in the state. We stay, even through rough winters. One person said “9 out of 10 who leave, come back later”
- We “love our state – all the natural, outdoors stuff”.
- One person moved here from upstate NY three years ago. He is an individualist, and VT is more accepting of that.
- One person described VT as “a love-hate thing. Maybe that’s what holds us together!”
- One person said Burlington is “one of the few places he could work for city government”. going on to say that he had limited education and “I look like an ex-con, but I am accepted”.
- An ongoing struggle with the music scene is the small scale. But we have a music scene that rivals larger cities. We can compete, largely because of the extraordinary effort put in. We are the constant underdog.
- The younger set, 14-20 years old, have more drive, less bitterness.
- Charlie Smith asked if the Burlington music scene is “recognized” in the industry. Response was that Burlington has better turnouts to concerts or bookings than some much larger venues – Vt is now “worth stopping at”. International recognition as well. The so-called “underground” music scene in VT has served as a model for other localities.

#### II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?

- One person, a student at UVM majoring in Journalism said there is “not much opportunity. . . . many must go away to make it. I hope to come back. Not a lot of opportunity for anything”.
- VT not offering much of anything for young adults. VT is moving toward a place where people leave to get established, then come back. We should be able to provide those opportunities internally, (so people won’t have to leave).
- Mostly underground music artists. Art and music in VT is very economy-based. There are restrictions on noise levels, locations restrictions, etc.
- The North End is being gentrified, but it is a façade.
- “Socialist economy” in Burlington has declined. The tax base is more separated. Low class or upper class – no middle
- Transportation is an issue. VT is very spread out – hard to get places. One person said even getting to Burlington from Essex Junction was difficult.

- Too much urban development, more condos, more development, affecting what we value here.
- A Champlain College student said enrolment is positive, and could grow more, coming from all over the world, bringing different cultures and diversity.
- One person said, “ As a musician in VT, if we keep thinking we can make it big, we have a chance”.
- VT is closer, smaller. We can start here, and later go out.
- VT is a very good place to start anything. Cited Burton Snowboards, and Ben & Jerry’s.
- “I work 4 jobs in Burlington”
- “I like how safe it is. Not a whole lot to worry about”. Another person said that was an illusion, that, per capita, crime is not lower in VT.
- “IBM is an opportunity for internships, but there may be layoffs coming, so they may bag the internships” Big businesses like IBM are going downhill.
- There is dependency on oil. “VT is a sustainable place”, not so dependent on larger businesses and industry.
- Drugs – very easy to fall into. Easier to get cocaine than marijuana.
- Broadband dead zones are a problem. One person said he doesn’t like broadband – like the peace and quiet of VT.
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### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

The responses below refer primarily to the music scene and, in many cases indicated how these respondents got acquainted with Big Heavy:

- “Everything we do is based on principle – not economy-driven. Our product has to have ‘meaning’, not just a result”. Interest is in preserving the music scene, and at the same time supporting musicians at all levels.
- Building a place to experience the real world – proper skills, contribute to community, and pass a legacy on to the future.
- You can learn all you need for audio, video and radio production/business management right here – at no cost.
- “I heard about this place (Big Heavy World Youth) – it was perfect”. I got a lot of help.
- I was looking for an internship. Took a community service course, learned about BHWWY on a job posting site.
- I went to BHWWY at the fair, saw some shows, began volunteering 3 years ago.
- When looking for internships many unpaid internships are available, but this is difficult because of living cost. Many have to hold down multiple jobs in addition.
- “When I started listening to this station, I stopped listening to any other station.”
- I was able to volunteer here at age 13. They were very accepting.

### **IV. We’ve been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

Again, these responses centered around the music scene in Burlington:

- The city, from within, has produced some improvements.
- There is no outright ban on any type of music, but the rules for bars are difficult and expensive. In order to have people under 21 yrs, an establishment must staff 1 security person for every 25 people that attend. This is expensive, and limits exposure of music for the 16-21 yr. group. Even though Burlington's record has been good at these all-age events, there seems to have developed a mistrust that has brought in rules (7 or 8 yrs ago). With limited events for the younger age groups, they must seek alternative venues.
- There was a public forum on this a few years ago. Nothing happened.
- The 16-24 age group got "pushed aside" . They are deprived of this social experience.
- Changes in types of music:
  - Music used to have a moral message – perhaps to change society. That is disappearing.
  - Majority of 18-24 play instrumental, hard-core punk. The current younger generation is mimicking what they hear on the radio.
  - People make music locally, respectful of our proficiency. The music scene recognizes talent, and there is lots of room for crossover from one form to another.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Refugee and Immigrant Service Provider Network**

Scribe: Bill McMeekin

**II. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Vermont means family life. Safe, good place to raise kids
- Taking care of one another. One person told a story (she is 7<sup>th</sup> generation VTer) about her husband being ill, and she was faced with gathering 1,000 bales of hay left in the field. When she returned home from her sick husband, neighbors had picked up all the hay.
- Acceptance. One woman had lived in Connecticut, with a racially-mixed daughter, and was concerned about what sort of welcome she would get when they moved to VT. In fact, they she was warmly welcome, which gave the mother inspiration to get involved in community. People were willing to look beyond race.
- Another woman (African American of foreign descent) came to VT in '96, and said it wasn't always that way – improvements have been made.
- One respondent views VT as two parts. First, a place where environment and food are good. Second, there is a naive VT, meaning that due to the small number of people of color in the state, we haven't had to face diversity issues on any scale. We don't really know how to approach diversity. Others in the group agreed with this view.
- One person came to VT from Arizona, among other places. VT is perceived as “a bunch of Wacko's”. Are we preaching to the choir here? VT is the whitest state. Many people may give a different view, but are not in this room, and probably not choose to come to a meeting like this. He also said when he first came to VT, he hated it, mostly due to climate change. But – he liked the friendliness – even if there were disagreements. Acceptance, and the Value of Yankee Independence.
- A person very new to VT said he senses the impression of self-reliance. Striving for self-sufficiency, but at the same time wide support from formal and informal sources.
- One person agreed that VTers show tolerance, but not acceptance. She is from Canada (12 years ago), and was made to feel “different. “I feel like a VTer, but not really”.
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**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- The French Canadian woman told of instances where people coming from Canada often changed their names and worked to eliminate accent in order to “fit in”. She said it would be good to be able to just come to VT and be accepted more readily. She said the situation is improved, and is better in Chittenden County than it is in Washington County (Barre/Montpelier).

- Youth coming here from other countries are encouraged to “become American”. This attempt to adapt is confusing to the family because, at home, they have a different culture. Kids come home with ideas the parents don’t understand, and this sometimes causes tension.
- Another person said “That’s the way it’s always been in this country”. He spoke about the struggle of the first generation to arrive in the U.S., but the hard work and other difficulties were overcome, and it is the children of those people who reap the benefits. He cited the influx of Irish and Italian immigrants in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- One person said that is a challenge. She wants to keep her native culture in some balance with integrating into the new society. Doesn’t want the “melting pot”, but rather wants her children to be proud of their heritage.
- Another agreed, but said “we do need integration”.
- One person said, “How do I think about new people?” She recognizes the tension between cultures, but how can she provide support or guidance. Is this the responsibility of community? Adults?
- One person cited difficulty during after-school hours. What do you do with the children who have no place to go, or have problems in joining groups?
- There is an opportunity to take young kids, even pre-kindergarten, bring together those from different cultures. This brings the parents together, too.
- Economic challenge. This was stated in relation to education. Kids have a difficult time “fitting in” and, as a result, don’t get the same opportunities as some of their peers. One person said “sports elevates”, meaning that if your child is good in sports, he/she is more accepted in the group.
- Challenge: Housing is scarce. The permitting process is lengthy. We have a high tax rate.
- Self-sufficiency is our goal (for immigrants) . We will take any jobs, and we do them well. (Cited UVM, hospital, restaurants). But housing is a major economic issue. Some immigrants may be using 90% of income on housing. These people want to work hard, but the money is low.
- Another person said that increased income is important, too, and not just housekeeping jobs.
- The person from Arizona again referred historically to immigrants that came here under drastic circumstances, but mostly for the children’s benefit. We need to support the parents more, to make the transition easier.
- Challenge: Networking is difficult, because immigrants are not aware of the resources available.
- Housing and jobs were cited by many as the most formidable challenges.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- “Hold each other accountable, interpersonally”.
- Educating the community. Don’t just accept stereotypes.

- “Societies that succeed” are accepting. Tolerance. Newcomers are essential to the success of Vermont. In VT, “people are indifferent”. We need “Enlightened Leadership”. Immigrants bring valuable assets. We need to change the way we see people in the world.
- Education: Many people coming out of high school are not qualified to go on, or even to function in the outside world. We should not “promote to fail”. We are not doing anyone a favor if they are continually advanced in school, without merit. Keep them in school at the appropriate level.
- One person spoke about a person who came to America, 15 or 16 yrs old, having very little formal education. He was placed in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- We need to revise the “system” Remember, “immigrants” will be “Americans” tomorrow. There is a lack of leadership – “They don’t care”.
- Promote Citizenship: Immigrants want to contribute. We must support them.
- There are “hidden faces” out there. Unwilling to come forward, perhaps here illegally. We can’t forget them.
- Scale makes it easier in VT to access information. “We know each other” One person compared VT to Washington DC
- Small scale also means, however, that funding is more difficult. National sources of funding, grants, etc. don’t often pay attention to VT.
- Another person said that although there is a benefit to being small, we should look at best practices elsewhere.
- With refugees coming, communities are breaking down, isolated. We need to maintain Community.

#### **IV. We’ve been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

Most of the comments above reflect the situation in Chittenden County and, specifically, Burlington, so many of those comments are applicable here.

- We need to make a lot of changes.
- We need to be more of a city. One person said she was “exited” about the future.
- One person said she felt VT was at a turning point with regard to support of refugees, but “it could go either way, either positive or negative”.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Ben and Jerry's**

Scribe: Catherine Dimitruk

**What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Sense of pragmatic independence
- Unique because it incubates innovative social, environmental, non-profit, arts and economic ideas
- Place where we are working out modern life on a human scale- example, no stadiums so large that you cannot recognize someone on the other side
- Counter to the mass culture of the rest of the US, once people are here they recognize it, even if they did not come for it
- Scale, small, rural, accessible, and intimate
- Green, state cares about preserving its natural state, business and nature can coexist
- Self-government: participating in local government, know legislators, government is not them but us
- Great place to raise a family, supportive community
- Calm
- Skepticism that comes from a culture with real grounding

**Looking ahead through our lifetimes and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Creating infrastructure to supply energy and economic stability that we need
- Challenge to create a work-life balance to support families and strong communities
- Values are based on rural nature and accessibility, low population, farms, clean- could say Vermont is a theme park- a calm oasis of farms. VT can play to this strategy and develop an economy that fits with this notion: pure, honest. Challenge: as we lose the farms we will lose these values.
- Challenge is self-sufficient, opportunities around new agriculture and growing our own food
- Vermont is well poised to be self-sufficient and deal with impacts of peak oil
- Need to take a 60,000 foot view and plan resources and growth
- Keeping Vermont so our children can afford to live here and want to come back
- Challenge of culture trends we are already fighting with and getting stronger: Reduce electric demand, do more with less, less media saturation.
- Good to be behind trends so the bad ones fall away before they get here.
- Potential with technology, but we need to be sure to stop and ask about the downside
- Health care challenge to look at long term vision vs. fighting about the details
- Education financing/property tax. The funding system does not work; teachers should be evaluated based on performance, not tenure.

- More and more people moving to VT to escape the city could lead to a degradation of the smaller scale.
- Opportunity to rework the model, and recreate what sustainable means
- Need to look at 10, 20, 50 year plans rather than a 2 year biennium

**What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- State needs to be more proactive to support new diversified sustainable agriculture
- Be sure that our young people can afford to stay here and not leave the state
- Sustainable community development
- Fostering local economies
- Keeping citizen participation in government
- Public transit needed from Alburgh to Burlington
- Maintain the focus on the environment, counter to the idea that the environment works against the economy. Need to build those businesses that benefit from the strong environment, value added agriculture is one key area, pure air, pure water, pure food.
- Build reputation and economy around renewable energy resources and conservation/efficiency
- Maintain our civil public discourse to allow us to talk about our common future together
- Need to focus on job opportunities for recent grad, the 'right' kind of jobs
- Quality of life- community oriented activities, potlucks, etc.
- Sense of community throughout the state
- Choosing to come or stay in Vermont should be seen as a winner
- Accessibility- build on the connectedness as a selling point.

**We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of our community?**

- B&J company values- employees try to bring those back to their communities
- VT businesses aren't just in it for the \$, but care about other things as well.
- Groundwater is a huge issue in East Montpelier
- B&J has a tremendous amount of \$ tied up in the image of Vermont. So B&J must care about the future of VT and make decisions that support this.
- Always a place for a diversified economy even for a state that focuses on local sustainable businesses.
- Burlington ought to continue to be the urban hub, instead of sprawling development, but this needs to be done in such a way to support the rural economy.
- Stowe has a huge issue with affordable housing, and it has gotten worse.
- Look to ways to further utilize Vermont resources and products, by coop ideas such as combined farms for biodigesters. What role should B&J play in this?
- Perception that Vermont is not business friendly and does not want to grow
- Richmond knows what they don't want, but can't figure out what they want to be.
- What is protective and cautious, can be seen as resistance to growth and fighting progress

- Infrastructure is a huge issue, focus on our existing roads and bridges, existing villages and centers, and figure out our energy future
- Intervale compost is an example of what we don't want to happen- contradiction of a good Vermont business that was hammered by the state
- Federal government is out of step with our priorities and we need to exercise political independence.
- Greatest thing about Vermont is that we can do something like this

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**LGBTQ Associations**

Scribe: Kara DeLeonardis

**III. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- A state that is moving forward, importance of small community, grassroots
- Home, always lived here, hard to imagine living anywhere else – the smallness
- A great transitional space, for students
- An intense pride in being a Vermonter whether you're a "flatlander" or a true Vermonter and a deep caring for community of different kinds
- A quality of life that seems to be lost in other states, places, "I can just live and have a quality of life that would be difficult to have in other places."
- "I like the pace of Vermont. I didn't grow up here but I always thought I should have. There's still interesting things to do here but you don't have to live on the fast lane if you don't want to."
- Strong work ethic, people take pride in whatever it is they do
- The only place I've lived where people take pride in being a Vermonter regardless of other identities they may have (different in other places)
- The accessibility of the legislature and legislators, being able to walk in to the Statehouse, meet with legislators over lunch, etc. without metal detectors, for example

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- JOB Opportunities, varied choices, only industry really is IBM, hard to find a good job
- Limited resources for people with disabilities in state, lack of public transportation, lack of community of other blind people, for example, Lack of economic, state and other supports for visually impaired
- Lack of affordable housing, priced out of buying a decent home, high taxes - for low and middle class
- So white, Inclusive values but only in theory – ex. Mexican workers on farms – where are they? Their culture? Families? Also refugees – children – cycle of poverty
- Need to move forward to gay marriage; civil unions are not enough, it is separate not equal and Vermonters are tolerant of same sex couples, no reason to not pass gay marriage
- Opportunities – support/incentives for developers to create modest, single family homes – shifting values around environment to support more housing (ex. "we have so much open land, why can't we house the homeless and all Vermonters?")
- No public transportation within VT and to get to other places, for example so have to live in Burlington where apartments are so expensive
- So locally focused but not as connected nationally (ex. Know about Governor's race not President race)

- Health care challenges: lack of options – 2 major hospitals, if problems with FAHC for ex. have to go to Dartmouth NH (transportation problems are huge!), and local care providers not knowledgeable about HIV for example and getting to health care is really challenging
- Another health care challenge: coverage is limited for trans people to cover hormones and/or surgery (considered elective) for transgendered people, and in VT there are few providers knowledgeable about trans health care so people have to travel far or more often not get care at all
- It used to be that every 16 yr. old Vermonter would get a car but it's not affordable now – TRANSPORTATION is biggest issue – how to get youth to services and events – ISOLATION is huge for marginalized “non normative” groups, especially for LGBT youth – they need to connect with others, especially healthy role models

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- Equal Marriage! Vermont is no longer the first – Mass and California have it; “There’s one place where discrimination is still codified in law and that’s marriage, let’s do it! It’s why I moved here”
- Let’s build on our values of independence and our values of small community – how can we all live together with our diverse needs and desires, balance all the values; as we address one issue and include everyone in increasing ACCESS in all ways for all people. For ex. figure out how to help all fully participate, like curb cuts for wheelchairs, also helps families with strollers, bikers, etc.
- Work with/support individuals like the landlord in Burlington who supports low income to live in his brightly painted houses and trains youth to learn skills to work on houses
- Create more affordable supportive housing like for elders, single moms, etc.
- Connecting people more – Front Porch Forum as model, can help with commuting, housing, etc.

### **IV. We’ve been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- LGBT elders challenges – services for elders do not consider needs of LGBT elders – housing, services, etc. no training for elder providers, policy issues
- Need to provide more for LGBT survivors – ex. no housing support for LGBT survivors (ex. only lesbian survivors can even stay in a shelter if they are comfortable staying in a battered women’s shelter primarily for heterosexual women)
- No gay bar
- We need to protect our families – we need gay marriage!
- Non gay people feel like they’re evolved on gay issues but generally they’re not aware of the struggles even here in Vermont
- In the urban center of VT tolerance has grown since civil unions (2000) but not as much outside
- “The layer of safety for LGBT people is thin in VT”

- “It is still not safe for people to receive mail even from LGBT groups/organizations or to be out in communities”. There is still job and housing discrimination in VT and domestic and sexual violence.
- Hate crime enhancement law is ineffective (only adds to sentence) and is not enforced enough

# COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT

## Scribe Report

### NRG Systems

Scribe:Paul Costello

#### **1. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- I moved here because of the ideals of the state.
- Independence. My folks were “Vermont Republicans”, not just in thought but in value of economic independence to “do it themselves” – fixing cars, gardening. A sense of self-reliance.
- We are not a throwaway society. We fix things up and are resourceful.
- Yankees. Vermonters are unique in terms of pride.
- We love nature passionately.
- “Comfort and beauty” – not too crowded. Able to relax and be in the open. where else could you live in such beauty?
- We can also take discomfort. You earn your summer.
- Safety. You can walk on a country road without fear.
- Small town community and family businesses. Farms are owned by families. People know everyone else in town. When something bad happens, people rally to help a family.
- But they stay out of your business!
- Vermonters are private. It can be hard to break in.
- The Vermont environment builds character. There is a difference between Chittenden and other counties. There are two Vermonts – urban vs. rural.
- Hinesburg has lots of community spirit
- I moved here in '79 and saw this as a place of opportunity. Vermonters can do whatever they want. People respect your independence.
- VT is a way of life. NRG is working to protect those values.
- Vermonters want trust – can seal the deal with a handshake.
- Vermonters seem to be different and “seem weird from the outside.”
- “Damn right!”
- I’ve traveled around the world and when I tell people I’m from Vermont, they are always excited about it.
- The government is open and accessible. You can see and talk to officials.

#### **II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Food and transportation – becoming self reliant.
- Peak oil. It is prohibitively expensive to truck lettuce from California.
- People are reliant on driving and that will be unaffordable
- Deeply concerned about community development and planning – the lack of investment in growth centers and walkable, livable communities.

- Growth
- We value farms and seeing fields. We are letting people build out into fields.
- Loss of farms.
- There is a fundamental challenge around energy and a way of life – where you live, what you eat. Our way of live will change.
- People don't know it's happening, but it is happening right now. Oil and transportation are an historical aberration.
- I am optimistic. Vermont is prime for localism – like it used to be. No commuting.
- We need to feed each other.
- Energy and Transportation problems can be balanced by communications improvements.
- There will be a dramatic transportation change. The car culture will end. We will struggle because we aren't putting in the infrastructure to respond to the end of personal transportation.
- VT still has opportunities to create.
- It could be a catastrophic change. “We are wired not to react until there is a crisis.”
- This is a civilization changing event. This is a crisis change and it's going to be hard.
- Wind in Vermont. We want to have our cake and eat it too. Denmark is an example.
- Keeping young people here. “Vermont doesn't appear to walk the talk of what it supposedly stands for.” Disconnect from rhetoric of the Vermont Brand and action.
- There is a conflict between our values around independence – contradiction. We celebrate local control, but it also causes problems.
- Vermont is a small state. We can do it – we can lead. We have leadership in thinking, but not in action.
- We do recycle.
- We don't want outsiders to do big wind.
- We don't build a strategic vision for our kids and their kids.
- IBM and Entergy control too much of the agenda.
- Tourism is a big opportunity
- Independence and self-reliance can be the foundation when we do set a new direction. This is tied to our Yankee ingenuity and value of self-reliance.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- Priority of working together – community solutions that don't leave people behind.
- Energy drives everything – our food, our social net. “We need to realize this to invest in the best way. It has to be renewable, not nuclear and not carbon based.
- Energy needs to be the foundation.
- What is the mission statement of Vermont?
- Community planning for energy self-sufficiency.
- Make the world unfriendly for private cars.
- Our zoning is “old hat.” We need to start over to get out of car-centrism.

- One side of the coin is that an overall plan and vision can be in direct opposition to the rights of private landowners. There is a tension. You can't tell Vermonters what to do, but maybe they'll go with a new opportunity.
- Preserving prime agriculture. Making it easier for people to farm.
- Keep small local schools and strong education.
- Look at how money for education is used locally. Unfunded mandates.
- Community based job development.
- People need to live closer to the land and eliminate waste.
- Remove Walmart. The irony is they are the largest and will change fastest. "We'll see."
- More education in renewable energy – people dig in their heels are things that are needed.
- Shut down VT Yankee in 2012. Unless we do, we won't work hard enough on renewables.
- Public Power Supply to authority to purchase power for VT – like Burlington for the state as a whole in the public good.
- Dams on the CT. River. Faulty short-term financial analysis. The priority is to show viable alternatives to the shutdown of VT Yankee.
- We have to maintain small town community feel in businesses and in towns and in Burlington.
- Do we really want more development, more population? How big do we want to be? Quality of life. Consumerism age can maybe be over in Vermont.
- People forego financial gain for the quality of life.
- We can't grow for growth's sake. No growth could equal prosperity in a new paradigm.
- If we get more plugged in, we will be able to keep more kids here.

#### **IV. We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- The building: wiring, solar. Do it yourself to make this place.
- We take care of things here.
- We lead and aren't afraid of leading.
- We are an example and people have to pay attention.
- We are about education.
- Everybody wants to work here
- We have to limit hours. NRG is a culture and a model for Vermont.
- We are struggling with contradictions. We all have cars and live in a paradox of our times. We will all have a hard time to get out of the car culture.
- Do it now, personally is a motto here. People are going to pellets. We are a think tank.
- We have a community garden here.
- We are the good apples in the bunch that helps others.
- We don't band aid problems – we look at the roots and hit the issue head on.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**South End Arts and Business Association**

**Scribe: Marie Houghton**

- **What does VT mean to you; are there common values that Vermonters hold?**
  - Not a VTer; trying to figure it out – from NY. Like values – progressive politics, countryside, access to nature, feels safe here; good place to raise kids; schools are OK; arrived here by “kismet;” hard place to run a business
  - We will probably value heat this winter
  - Came here originally for college; stayed because of quality of life; what VT offers vs. other places: safety is number one; high regard for environment;
  - 5<sup>th</sup> generation BTV VTer – left for college, came back. Big difference between Chittenden County and rest of VT. Clean place, a little pure-er, fresher, better – lake, mountains, air – no billboards – it’s a cared-for place, pretty safe place – not all Walmarts
  - Common sense of community; people may have different views on politics; but have same sense of community; people participate; safe for families; people care about one another. SEABA was created thru community action 22 years ago.
  - No sense of anonymity – nothing is anonymous in VT. Can’t hide. If you disagree with someone politically it’s not a problem – still have good relationships/friendships. People gather around basics like heat, good tires, etc. Togetherness transcends things. All have same basic needs.
  - Act 250 / Davis story – “affluent meeting the effluent” at a ski areas – common value regardless of political boundaries.
  - Respect for and love of real independence. Very unusual that people don’t always declare political party affiliation.
- **What challenges/opportunities do you see for VT?**
  - Heat! Real challenge for everyone.
  - Children will have to move out of state in order to get good jobs, pay off student loans, make more money than here. Need job creation. Good jobs with benefits, etc.

- Feels optimistic about daughter's future (kindergarten). New to VT; wife grew up here. Leaving VT is part of process of growing up. It seems that many return to VT after having experiences/jobs in other places. Daughter has good school that is connected to neighborhood, grandparents close by
- Concerned about rising cost of education (k-12)
- We've had negative job growth for 7 years. If IBM lays off, rumor is 400, if plant is sold, what does that mean for VT? Some people think it won't have an impact – lack of jobs is a threat to our values and threat to our way of life.
- Must have revenue that exceeds cost. We are out of control with education costs. VT is hurting. How many store fronts are closed in Rutland? It's like 1979. VT may be only for tourists.
- Number one thing about VT is that it is in the US.
- Need to be more proactive to attract business and help them flourish. Have to grow jobs. FAHC/UVM are filter feeders. Starts with businesses – not with government. Revenue from business matters. Business is a foundation for the community
- VT is a very entrepreneurial state. i.e., VT Software Developers Alliance – cluster of 400+. We aren't going to get a Toyota plant, a Merck pharmaceuticals. Within state we have a lot of smart entrepreneurial people. They need access to capital. VT has a sense of scale. Need to grow more small companies. Lack of capital is barrier – VT can build a “better mousetrap” Oregon is model – state diverted portion of lottery revenues to support business growth. Need to be more creative in raising money for new businesses/individuals.
- **Is job creation problem due to workforce – are skills available? Or jobs not there?**
  - Art gallery – can get people to work for her. Huge supply of artists. No one here who shops for art. Creative economy may work in developing software. In terms of retail, and production of fine art/craft – it's impossible. VTers love to look at art, make art but will not buy it. Virtually impossible for art gallery to stay in business in VT – can't afford employees if no one buys art. Good place to produce art – beauty, great people – but need to be able to sell. Need to educate people to buy local and to support local artists. BTV is focused on downtown only; hinterlands (southend) ignored.
  - Transportation and telecom, energy are issues. Need to re-think rail, alternative energy opportunities
  - What can community do to address fuel issues? 100 years ago community came together to build water lines; need to figure out what to do for the future. McNeill generates 250 mw, uses 50, loses 200 – up the chimney. Can we find a way to use

that wasted energy/heat. Other countries addressed this issue years ago. Denmark, Finland, Use co-generation. Enough heat generated at electric stations that is distributed to heat homes, etc. We need to pay for generation system but payback in 20-30 years.

- Sense of safety – sense of community – caring for one another – high regard. When we had job growth we seemed to have higher sense of community. We may be losing social capital.
- **What are the priorities to support your vision of the future?**
  - Embrace future. VT is generally forward thinking; look to other countries that have been doing this like Scandinavia; they are intrigued by open participatory government
  - Back in 1988, first COFV generated list of things; need to separate things you can change from things you can't change – important to do that with this exercise or it's just words. This process must be serious – or it's just words. COFRV must make recommendations that have meat on them.
  - Negative impact of social diversity on capital; influx of refugees – lack of language, cultural identity. Need to develop strategy for diversity – needs serious attention/funding for community integration for new arrivals/refugee population.
  - Priority for everyone – judge success and interest based on what the masses do; i.e., if no one rides the train – waste of \$. Need to base decisions on what people will do/accept. Airlines burning cash, they will be broke in 6 months. What will we do when the BTV airport isn't open? Used to get a few job applications at his restaurants. Has a huge stack – has never seen anything like this. Masses are not represented on the COFV. People are looking for jobs. May not show up in unemployment statistics. Problem is here and NOW!
- **How does this discussion concern the future of BTV?**
  - Hospital and colleges are stable in community – stabilizing economic factor. Some advantage in BTV.
  - Discussion/process appears to lack goals – worry that we are going to talk about all the symptoms and not set goals. It's a conscious effort to build things. We aren't having a clear discussion on the economy/community we want. Until someone talks about what we want, we will continue to flail – not change. We are in a resource constrained world – increasing – we aren't having conversations about those resources and what we want the community to look like in 20 years. We are talking about what is happening now – not where we want to be.
  - Need to set goals, develop strategies – i.e., use of heat generated by electric utilities

- CEDO now working with life sciences people to develop that cluster;
- Propose – maybe because VTers talk to their neighbors – media atrocious – no place to read/learn about what’s going on – media is asleep at the wheel. Feels like VT is asleep. Some people like it that way!
- Douglas has spent \$ on economic development – no job growth. No results from CEDO efforts – hardest thing is cost. Biggest problem in the state. Taxes too high, cost of education is too high, worst tax state in the country; housing cost too high due to permitting costs; business won’t come here. Hundreds of restaurants/ workers out of jobs, but legislature raised tip minimum wage.
- CEDO works to keep businesses here too.
- Creative economy also brings \$ into the community – we need to focus on those who bring \$ into the state.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Association of Africans Living in Vermont**

**Scribe: Marie Houghton**

There were two translators for this listening session, so the questions were more pulled apart by facilitators to help ease of communication.

- What is it like to be in VT?

No problem; opportunity for education for kids; jobs

Feel welcome; opportunity for jobs; education for children's future; live and share with neighbors; viewed as human beings

VT is different than other states; VT is peaceful; some have moved here from other places (Idaho, Mass)

Appreciate living where there are laws. If you do something wrong, you get punished.

No specific difference – moved from original resettlement location to be together as a family

- What do you think about VT values?

No differences in values

Have no problems with values; culture is complex. Women and children have more power here than where they came from. Children selfish in America; lived more as a community in Africa; children are losing respect for elders/community

Some racism; some good/bad neighbors

Difficulty finding jobs due to language barriers; miscommunications

- What are opportunities/barriers?

Was a doctor in Africa; can't practice here; feels the profession is "protected;" won't let outsiders in; finding other ways to help his community even though he can't practice medicine.

Neighbors want to be their friends; helpful; language is a challenge

Would like ESOL classes to have instructor fluent in Somali

We are refugees; we don't speak English; were told it was not a problem; English is not easy for everyone; assistance is available when they are learning English; no one helped with getting a job. Funds exhausted – no way to pay rent, buy food, etc.

Since arriving here; not healthy. However, grateful for food stamps and Medicaid. Language barriers. Have been here 4 years, husband has difficulty keeping job due to lack of English.

- What concerns you most about your children growing up in VT/.US?

Kids have same chance as children born here/US; want to preserve/communicate their culture

See problem with higher education for their kids due to cost; parents don't have jobs; children will be stuck with low level/low paying jobs without education. Government helped us to come here and does provide some assistance like food stamps; is the government going to help our kids have access to higher education? Kids are working sometimes full time to help parents. Kids drop out of school. Sometimes their choice; sometimes encouraged by parents due to no/low jobs.

Conflict between school and jobs for kids;

Young people don't have access to foodstamps, Medicaid, etc – no support. Where is support for them? They choose jobs rather than education because it's the only way to survive.

Are kids finishing high school? Some – about 50/50. Ahmed stopped school for a while to earn money to help family; when father got job he went back to school. Had to leave school when father lost job. Hopes to go to college. Cost is a barrier.

Kids work part-time, go to school part-time.

Sometimes they feel powerless; don't have any say with their kids; challenge parents authority; don't want to loose relationship with their kids so don't push them to stay in school. Parents focus on future but kids want better life NOW. Parents unfamiliar with how things work here. At home (Africa), community helps everyone; teachers support families. Everybody disciplines misbehavior. Not the same here. Kids more in control in the home.

People don't have enough English to get job; can't keep job due to poor language skills; live in public housing; have no money – what is next?

Went to statehouse; testified in Judiciary Committee – how can you work with no/poor language skills; need to work after 3 months. Need assistance to learn English for at least year – would improve employment prospects. Need more intensive language instruction.

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Scribe Report**  
**Legacy Project and Social Equity Committee**  
**and Planning Commission**

**Scribe: Wanda Hines**

**IV. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Chittenden has the stark contrast to the rest of the state, which is rural.
- Downtown looks different than the rest.
- We value smart growth downtown.
- We are concerned about being an urban center
- We care about being an urban center
- We value independent mindedness – going our own way, bucking the conventional wisdom.
- We value that a person will and can weigh in on different situations
- We value the expectation of access to people
- Participation is values, is very strong within Burlington and within the state.
- Community; knowing your neighbors and having a sense of neighbors.
- We value safe neighborhoods where you can be outside
- The mayor is accessible – we value the many resources.
- There is a value in the hardship over generations and that fact that many Old North End families are one step removed from being farmers, which is valued.
- We love being one step away from being a farmer
- The hope and vision – we can do better.
- People relate more on a personal daily level here.
- VT can do or be different when addressing the inner city problems it deals with.
- We get in on the ground floor.
- VT is an amazing experience to raise kids in; we get support and are heard.
- We can change things before they get out of hand.
- There's a value in being open to listening – toward specific goals.
- Civic engagement is very dear to Vermonters.
- We do not want our children to lose their farm roots.
- A lot of refugees have resettled
- We've come across a lot of racism and that's really disappointing.
- We believe we must put faith in our children
- Value; people want to be engaged.
- VTers show more humanity when it's a smaller state. We value the personal element.
- Regional planning is about policy and it shows more emotion because we are a small state – everyone knows everyone.

- We value some place like Burlington.
- This is a great place to raise kids.

## **II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- Racism is a challenge that is alive today in vt. And there is the opportunity that people are doing things about it.
- How can Burlington be includes to all parents? We need to address ALL the ‘isms’.
- We need to talk together about the ‘isms’ before things ‘blow up’
- We need to make real commitments not just lip service.
- Telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas is a challenge.
- People can live in rural areas and still be connected.
- We cannot be another suburb
- Letting everyone benefit is a challenge
- There is an economic opportunity; being a small state makes us fragile, being able to provide jobs is the challenge.
- We need to be sensitive of the effects to all people.
- Right now there is no economic opportunity.
- For some there is economic opportunity (speaker was able to move from lower class to middle class).
- Opportunity – this is a great place to raise children.
- Challenge – the landscape and doing more things in a smart way – thinking more globally.
- Challenge – climate change and global warming.
- Burlington is engaged in a great opportunity to deal with and address this – there is a lot of resident participation.
- Opportunity – non-profit, civic engagement, valuing input.
- Energy, electricity and finding sustainable sources are all opportunities.
- 

## **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- Workforce housing.
- Exclusive communities are NOT for Burlington.
- Not have an expensive city
- Housing expense and cost
- Making Burlington more affordable
- The state of infrastructure is old, we need affordable housing and maintaining both ‘existing and new’
- The infrastructure in Burlington is working hard and its necessary.
- Healthcare, Dr Dynasaur needs to be expanded to adults – there are many values for people in this system.
- Transportation is a priority.
- Criminal justice system is a priority; we need community participation, community justice centers, drug programs, etc

- Work, housing, food, costs, gasoline...these are priorities for us.
- There is no back support or safety net for people and services are not accessible.
- We should establish a safety net for families
- There is racial profiling – Burlington is the initiator of a more diverse Vermont.

**IV. We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- This is an urban area and I'm not sure what that means.
- There is uniqueness and the need for it to be valued.
- How do we insert the values of Vermonters into Burlington?
- Value the pace of life like small communities.
- Our resources must be properly used here; we should have safety nets (as example)

**COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VERMONT**  
**Community Forum**  
**Evening Mtg. Contois Auditorium**

**I. What does Vermont mean to you? What common values do Vermonters share?**

- VT most rural of all states. Small communities characterize the state. Size means Vermonters can get to know each other.
- Beauty. Unique – “something in the air” that is different. BTV all the good things of a city, but still all the good qualities of a small town. No fear here. “I didn’t experience community until I moved here.”
- Government is accessible.
- VT has become home. That is an important thing to have . Having the opportunity go participate in community.
- There is a strength of character for the people who survive here. It is sometimes surviving, not thriving.
- Natural resources – Lake Champlain and the mountains.
- Sense of independence. As a young Vermonter we value creative independence such as the arts.
- Interdependence. Mad River Glen cooperative ski area. City Market cooperative.
- Mix of urban and rural. Small city in an rural state.
- An environment that fosters participation.
- Hopefulness that things can be accomplished because of the small scale.
- Love of the natural world seems to be a shared value.
- A sense of moral and ethical value.
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit. People are into interesting and different things.
- Try to convince family to come because it is the “last place left”.
- Good tolerance, but should be more people of diverse background and ethnicities. Would like to build on that
- Passion among the people of the state. However there is a tension between newcomers and oldtimers. People choose to live here.

**II. Looking ahead through our lifetimes, and those of our children, what challenges and opportunities do you see for Vermont?**

- **Tension** to find employment. Need employment opportunities for young people and an attainable education level
- **Tension** around supporting elders. Development guidelines make elderly housing a challenge.
- Previously people wanted to integrate into VT. Now people bring their own sensibilities and don’t want to adopt VT values. Challenge to hold onto VT identity.
- Climate change and resource depletion. May affect foliage, ski industry – if not in our lifetime, in our children
- Affordable housing.

- Development patterns need to happen thoughtfully. Don't want VT to become New Jersey.
- Peak Oil and energy future. Energy future could be a serious challenge, but there is an opportunity there to create energy independence. How can we reach 100% independence.
- Wood pellet industry. VT has a wonderful forest industry. Need to look at wind. 75% of Vermonters have expressed interest in commercial scale wind. Could create jobs as well.
- Do suburbs make sense? Should we look more toward density building.
- Encourage hybrid cars and wind.
- Affordable housing produced housing which nobody can afford. Should be housing for everybody.
- Boston is a catch all for VT youth. Graduates who have lived here forever are leaving . If I can find a job will guide my choice.
- Telecommuting possibilities are an opportunity
- Strong spirit of community involvement. Challenge is to keep that going and build on it.
- Social capital is an opportunity. Need to be social entrepreneurs. Forest provide energy opportunities, economic growth issues, quality of life issues. The whole image of VT is tied up in the forest. How to socially organize ourselves to make decisions.
- There are competing uses of the forest, so we need to make sound decisions. Embracing the complexity. Our society has gotten to where it is by making very simplistic decisions.
- Heritage of Town meeting is a foundation, but we need to reactivate and rejuvenate that.
- Participatory aspects of government provide opportunities.
- Challenge is to keep that as the city grows and competing forces move in.
- Environmental concerns – there is a perceptions that everyone has access to decision making bodies and clean water. There are 47 languages spoken in VT. People in mobile home parks don't have a voice. Decisions are made and issued on one language
- Environmental justice policy is an opportunity to provide equity. VT is one of 8 states that do not have one.
- **Advertising** bombarding us to consume, consume, consume. We are no different than Los Angeles or New York in that respect.
- Opportunity to grow and consume our own food and energy.
- "Leaky Bucket" – exporting dollars that could be spent in VT.
- We need to be mindful about our consumption. Sometimes there is an arrogance that we are different in our consumption patterns. Not to fall into identity shaped by what you buy.
- We need to unlearn consumerism and think about assumptions behind advertising.
- We have been so mindlessly wasteful with energy. We can be happier and do with less. That's not a popular message. There is lots of room for improvement.
- Amount spent on election is almost a billion dollars. VT has opportunity to do something about run-away spending on presidential elections.
- Preserve historical values, but move toward a shared future. Challenge as we become more ethnically diverse. Beyond the assumption that "we all want the same thing."
- Second homes. We have an ethic to keep VT farmland. VT land is cheaper than other states and there is a challenge in being able to keep the state in farmland.
- Divide between rich and poor, particularly in politics. The ability to work in local politics requires people to be upper and middle income. Lower income people are not in a position

to be decision making. Challenge to earn a living and participate in government. How can we give political influence to low income people.

- Link agricultural base and sustainability issues into healthcare. What we eat affects our health.
- Investment in technology. Telecommuters and business need latest in technology.
- Transportation is a challenge. Rail system could be improved.
- Universal single payer health care system. US is out of sync. HMO cost has tripled. Inefficiencies of privately run insurance causes tremendous cost.
- Package VT brand.
- Mass Transit to NY and Boston is missing. Local shuttle could be improved if routes were changed.
- Use sense of volunteerism to do more with less money. Cited homelessness and substance abuse.

### **III. What should our priorities be as we work together to realize your vision and prepare Vermont for the future?**

- How decisions get made. Should be a very intentional process. “ Democracy is in a crisis.” People feel that what they say doesn’t matter. People who are not at the top need to be more involved. Preserve and rebuild democracy.
- Transparency in Govt. How do give people a voice and make them feel they are being heard. Need to get people involved. Important to not sit on the sidelines.
- Need to plan for energy future. Replace oil, transportation future.
- Liveable wages. If people could pay their bills on 40 hours a week of work, it would free them up to participate in Govt.
- Two classes. Disappearing middle class. VT is in danger of becoming a playland to the rich.
- Sustainability of who we are and what we are. Paradoxes in state, individual and community, planning and development. Build ourselves on natural enterprise. We have the opportunity to build a sustainable future. Participation and understanding the issues allows for opportunities in every sector.
- Natural capital. When we use a resource we renew it. We don’t overuse them to the point of depletion. From our water to our forests. If we use all of forest for woodchips we will be in a different crisis. Difficult to do as an individual state and isolate ourselves.
- Look at how to make economic logic match environmental logic.
- Need to think about shared values, generational values, institutional values and pass it on to the next generation.
- Look at the triple bottom line. Any given business creates social, economic and environmental returns. We are capable of this kind of holistic thinking.
- Concerned about implications of technology of current generation. WII allows you to interact with computer, but is a detriment to social interactions. People interact with screens, ipods, technology. Educators find technology easier, but students are missing something – a human capacity to engage and experience the world around them. Think the pendulum needs to swing back the other way. Need to use technology as a means and not an end.

- Look back for answers. Grandparents did things that were low tech and simple and environmentally friendly.
- Complex problems look at what we are doing, think about what works and what doesn't.
- Ask questions about the status quo, e.g. health care and look to the future. No quick fix
- Elected officials need to make sure that our vision is being worked on. Change of approach.
- Education; elementary schools – social economic integration is a big item in BTV
- Divide between rich and poor carries over to education. US worst in terms of affordability and access to college. Very expensive public universities. Not sure how Canada manages to do it so differently, but it is worth looking at.
- Stewardship of land is part of transportation, sustainable food, energy. Need to come together on how we use land. Needs to be compromise
- Education – crisis in schools is that we don't know what we are doing. We don't have a clear sense of what a human being should be. Schools are becoming an extension of market economy. Turned them into a competitive situation. Portfolio evaluation was a human move in schools.

#### **IV. We've been talking about Vermont, but how does this discussion concern the future of your community?**

- Growth. Pop has grown to about 650K. What is the ultimate population of the state of VT? What influences will determine that? Will external forces shape the population? We need to plan for infrastructure for anticipated population.
- Strong grassroots resistance to more people and more density. "Maintain the rural character of our community." Pattern of addressing growth by resisting it. In BTV do we engage and address change or try to resist it.
- What attracts people to VT is farms and tourist attractions. Tourists bring a lot of money into BTV and tourism should be designed with public input.
- About 1/3 of VT economy related to tourism. Tightly clustered village centers are what attract tourists AND Vermonters. Not suburban sprawl.
- Link between local food, health and insurance would be great. Health Care, not sick care could be a model for the nation.
- Leadership and planning. Planning horizon is 5 – 10 years. Should be 50 – 100 years.
- Business and economic opportunities – development of entrepreneurial spirit.
- It's hard for people to show up and talk. Change expectation that people will come to us.
- Other countries have heard of the BTV farm to school programs. We have program to mix local food, commodity food.
- Climate change will affect life as we know it. We need to listen to what we need to do now.
- Need to adjust to changing aesthetics – i.e. wind farms.
- Communications landscape. For example this particular forum will show will air on CCTV Channel 17, which is very accessible and easy to access. Perhaps CFV process can think about a broader audience.