



Cabot Community Visit

Report and Action Plan

December 2012

Vermont Council on Rural Development

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*Community members and the visiting team had a chance to mingle at the **Community Visit Day** dinner prepared by volunteers*



*Participants read the list of opportunities on **Community Meeting Day***



*Task force members met together on **Resource Meeting Day** to frame out their workplan*

I. Introduction

The VCRD Visiting Team to Cabot was impressed by three things: the committed talented people of the town, the beauty of the working landscape, village, waters and diverse neighborhoods, and the young people. Cabot is what much of New England was, and what much of Vermont still wants to be. Residents wisely chose three priority areas for action where practical work will lever the strength and prosperity of the full community.

We look forward to working with the Cabot Task Forces as the priority projects identified in the process move forward:

- Develop a Cabot Agricultural Network
- Develop a Community Arts Center
- Improve Community Communications

Cabot's farm and food producers play a crucial role as economic foundations for the open and forested land that is so vital to the town's identity: it is fitting that the town chose to prioritize this area as a crucial point for common effort—expanding markets, building connections and boosting prosperity of the farm and food sector as one of the best foundations for the future.

Balancing agriculture, the artistic resources of town are also tremendous. By working together and leveraging from each other's talents, Cabot's artistic community can be a significant driver and inspiration for the future—whether that entails events, group shows, work with youth or a full blown Cabot arts center.

The third key priority, advancing communications, will help build the glue between neighborhoods, parts of town, and discrete groups of residents in ways that will help Cabot maintain its strong feeling as a community. Their work will connect over time with the other priorities and all the key directions the town takes to move ahead, and will help link efforts so that they add up to even greater accomplishments.

The Task Forces working to advance these issues are organizing today—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (listed in the work plan section of this report).

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 program in Cabot consisted of three phases:

1. On the **Community Visit Day** on September 25th, Visiting Team members heard testimony from Cabot residents in six focus group areas that had earlier been identified by the local steering committee. Notes and issues raised in these sessions are detailed in Part VI. Based on the testimony received, the Vermont Council on Rural Development identified an initial list of the key **Opportunities** before the community (Part II).

2. The second stage of the Community Visit occurred at the Cabot **Community Meeting** on October 25th when VCRD presented the Opportunities list and facilitated the review and prioritization of these issues by town residents. The resulting list of **Cabot Priorities** (in Part III) were then the focus for the formation of four Task Forces established to build plans that would address them (see bulleted list above).
3. In the third phase of the Visit, the **Community Resource Day** on November 27th, the Task Forces met with a second Visiting Team to get organized, build Action Steps, and consider state, federal, non-profit, and private resources that may be available to support their work. The resulting **Task Force Work Plans** are listed in Part IV.

Resource Team Members (listed with contact information in Part VIII) signed on with a commitment to serve as sounding boards and referral agents for the Cabot Task Forces. Many of these visitors can be partners in the work before the committees; others can be great sources of advice or connection to other resources. **Call on them for help.**

Members of the Resource Team listened closely to the issues brought forward by town residents and have made suggestions in support of Cabot's efforts in each challenge area. Their **Recommendations** (Part V) ***are not prescriptions; community members are in the best position to make decisions about their next steps and strategies.*** Recognizing existing local efforts and the leadership of the Task Forces, these recommendations are offered, rather, as suggestions for potential next steps, and as lists of potential resources as the Task Forces make their way forward.

In the end, Cabot has established solid priorities for action, built a new umbrella for coordination, and set momentum toward the achievement of short and long-term goals that will lead to a great variety of successes in improving the Cabot's life and prosperity.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is dedicated to helping Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Cabot as it moves forward and to provide follow up help to Cabot Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Cabot projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Call on us, and on Visiting Team members, when we can be of help.

At VCRD we deeply appreciate the leadership of the selectboard and the Steering Committee that came together to frame out the key issues and starting points for the Community Visit process. Gary Gulka from the Planning Commission was extremely valuable in lending counsel and energy to help the project keep on a good path. The Cabot Creamery has been an active participant with Ed Pcolar and his staff attending each step of the process. We really appreciated Hugh Burke's efforts as one of the key touchstones for the project, and for being an ambassador to folks at the school. VCRD is a non-profit that tries to raise support for each of these projects—we appreciate the support from the UDAG

committee covering some of the costs of the process in Cabot. The project would have been enormously more difficult without all the help that Jeanne Johnson from the Cabot Community Association put in at each stage—and the interest that she’s shown in helping the committees succeed in future.

Cabot should be extremely proud of its young people. VCRD, and our entire team, was so impressed by the thoughtfulness, intelligence, community spirit and poise of students in town. Cabot youth have to be seen as the greatest asset of all—Task forces should be diligent in inviting young folks to take leadership and be partners in the work ahead.

Finally, we are especially grateful for the leadership of Jan Westervelt for stepping up to serve as the chairperson of this process. Jan’s wry humor and practical sense of how to get things done will be invaluable to the Cabot Task Forces and all who are working to advance the ideas and action plans begun in the Community Visit process. With the strong chairs for each working group, Jeanne’s help and Jan’s coordination, Cabot is lined up to make real progress on the three priorities which will leverage progress in many of the other areas people would like to see move forward. At VCRD we commend and congratulate all who care, who put themselves on the line for Cabot, who work for the common good: in building community, every step forward is a victory and a success!



II. Initial List of Opportunities and Challenges

Identified by forums with community members on September 25, 2012 and middle and high school students on September 21, 2012

More than 90 Cabot residents joined with VCRD staff and a 25 member Visiting Team for the Community Visit Day on September 25, filling meeting rooms in the Willey Building. They took time from their workday and other commitments to attend forums and a community dinner at the Cabot School, and to begin to work together in shaping the future of the town. The following issues emerged as initial challenges and opportunities. This list was presented back to community members at the Community Meeting on October 25th for voting and prioritization:

Build, Mark, & Map Cabot Trails

Cabot residents of all ages point to the variety of trails that connect the town and offer recreational opportunities and healthy activities for residents and potentially for visitors. School students celebrate the trails as an asset and express interest in helping to work on them. Existing trails are mostly unmarked, unmapped and some are in bad condition. A Cabot Trails Task Force could actively improve trails, build new ones, hook in to the Cross VT Trail, improve access to the historic Cabot village up the hill from the current village center, connect ski, snowmobile, bike and walking paths, map them, and build signage to encourage their use by residents and as attractions for visitors to enjoy.

Improve Community Communications

Some residents complain about communications gaps and the lack of knowledge about all the good things going on in the community. A Cabot Communications Task Force could advance community communications by linking all local activities into a common calendar with an on-line portal like Front Porch Forum's calendar widget inserted into the websites of all municipal and community groups. This team could also put all the gathered information into a Cabot bulletin board in the village and share it in the Chronicle.

Expand Academic & Athletic Opportunities for Cabot Youth

Cabot residents and students care deeply about the school, and the community has been consistent in supporting the PreK-12 school program. While there are natural limits to the capacity of a small community and small school, all students need the opportunity to excel. Students understand the limitations but would like to see expanded opportunities for sports, physical education, electives, and academic enhancements along with physical improvements to facilities and playing fields. A Cabot task force could be formed to work together in support of school enhancements and investments to ensure that though Cabot has chosen to maintain a small school, the community does all it can to provide opportunities for excellence to all its young people.

Grow a Community Garden

A community garden in the village center could support healthy food for Cabot residents, and connect to the school to provide fresh nutritious food for school lunch program, serve as part of the curriculum, and potentially provide service learning to students who could grow fresh foods for the Cabot food shelf.

Develop a Volunteer Coordination System

Several residents point out some key facts that link together: Cabot students have a 200 hour community service requirement; community volunteerism is not well coordinated; there are a variety of local, community, and individual challenges that volunteers could tackle that would greatly benefit the needy and improve the community. A Volunteer Coordinator who tracked needs and helped coordinate student and community volunteers could help the school and its students meet their requirements, but also help adults in town lend a hand to community projects and to neighbors who need help.

Build a Cabot Business Network & a Buy-Local Directory

A local business guide could help residents locate and purchase local goods and services ranging from food and arts to furniture and insurance. A Task Force of Cabot businesses and residents could act like a local chamber of commerce; businesses could network to support each other's sales, and work together to get all services and products in a guide and directory for the use of local folks and visitors alike. This group could work with Cabot and its Annex store as a cornerstone business, and consider ways to expand sales, share resources, and cooperate for mutual benefit.

Develop an Arts & Agriculture Tour

Cabot farmers, artists, and creative businesses could work together to develop a map and tour with the Cabot Creamery as the anchor and starting point that makes Cabot a 'window into rural Vermont' for visitors. A map, tour, and a package of linked activities could bring tourists into the village center and on a tour of the town where they could sample local views and wares, while participating in a real rural Vermont community.

Complete the Baking Oven at the School

Cabot students would like to see the baking oven finally completed and would like to use it as a center point for community and school activities and events for the future.

Expand Public Transportation

A Cabot Public Transportation Task Force could work to attract or build a regular public transportation link to the St. Johnsbury to Montpelier bus line that would benefit residents who work out of town and workers who commute to the Cabot Creamery. This link could work by modifying the existing route of the shuttles or planning for a connector service from the village center.

Bring the Community into the School

Cabot residents have a wide variety of skills and experiences that could enrich the educational experience of students. A Task Force of volunteers could be formed to define ways that residents could share their expertise and knowledge, their vocations, businesses, crafts and hobbies with students. Contributions could include anything from a series of speakers to musical performances or physical education activities. Members of the team could provide leadership help building project-based learning activities for small groups of students or enrichment courses and workshops to extend the range of the curriculum.

Share Heating Resources

Some residents worry that some of their neighbors may be cold in the winter; others want to promote heating efficiencies as a good community energy policy. A Heating Task Force could evaluate ways to improve home heating efficiencies and provide heating assistance to Cabot residents who need it.

Build a Cabot Agricultural Network

Cabot has deep agricultural traditions and assets, but the farm, food, and value-added producers in town do not get together in any systematic way for mutual benefit. Cabot could build an agricultural and food system network that could eventually help aggregate, market, and distribute products, act as a producers circle, address infrastructure opportunities, connect Cabot farmers and producers to the Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick, encourage or incubate new small farm operations and value-added businesses, and work together in other ways to support a strong agricultural future in the town.

Develop a Cabot Community Arts Center

Cabot residents celebrate the diversity of arts, crafts and local products in the community. Many believe that a Task Force of Cabot residents could come together and expand the use of local venues or redevelop new space in town as an arts center. A Cabot arts center could include an outlet and showplace for local art and products, studio space, and space for youth to gather, and for local music, movies, or theatrical performances to occur.

Develop Community Events

Many residents would love to see more events happening in town, from talent shows to movie nights, to bandstand concerts and family pizza nights at the middle school pizza oven. A Cabot Events Task Force could be act as the spark plugs for events on the green or in the school that bring the community together.

Develop or Attract a New Anchor Store or Restaurant in Cabot Village

Residents would like to see more commerce, food, and energy in the village center and there are underused properties that could be improved. Some promote the idea of a Task Force to attract or develop a new downtown anchor business. Ideas range from attracting a pizza restaurant or pub to an outlet that could feature Vermont products including Cabot, NECI, the Vermont Country Store, King Arthur Flour, and local products, arts and crafts and foods.

Develop a Neighborhood Watch Program

Support the Cabot Church in the Village Center

ACTION In Process

Evaluate & Address Transportation Needs

The Cabot Transportation committee has a scoping study underway today. They will have the ideas of residents to consider as they come to their conclusions and build their plan of activities. Cabot does not need to build a new task force at this time; the committee can evaluate ideas contributed during the Community Visit for a bridge to the recreation fields, a trail or link from the Cabot plant to village center, sidewalks, parking, truck traffic and other issues including the idea of developing a Cabot Capitol Transportation Budget to ensure the ongoing provision of the resources that will be needed to ensure safe vehicular and pedestrian transportation into the future.

III. Cabot Priorities

Determined by Cabot residents at the VCRD Community Meeting, October 25, 2012

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Cabot residents whittled down a list of 15 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 50 participants chose three issues that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the October 25 meeting by signing up for one of three Task Forces in the selected areas.

Cabot residents selected three priorities for future action:

✓ Build a Cabot Agricultural Network

Cabot has deep agricultural traditions and assets, but the farm, food, and value-added producers in town do not get together in any systematic way for mutual benefit. Cabot could build an agricultural and food system network that could eventually help aggregate, market, and distribute products, act as a producers circle, address infrastructure opportunities, connect Cabot farmers and producers to the Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick, encourage or incubate new small farm operations and value-added businesses, and work together in other ways to support a strong agricultural future in the town.

✓ Improve Community Communications

Some residents complain about communications gaps and the lack of knowledge about all the good things going on in the community. A Cabot Communications Task Force could advance community communications by linking all local activities into a common calendar with an on-line portal like Front Porch Forum's calendar widget inserted into the websites of all municipal and community groups. This team could also put all the gathered information into a Cabot bulletin board in the village and share it in the Chronicle.

✓ Develop a Cabot Community Arts Center

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Community members took part in a dot-voting exercise to select their top priorities

IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, November 27 2012

Cabot Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. On Resource Day committee members worked closely with a facilitator and small resource teams to develop step-by-step action plans and to devise a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. This final phase of the program marks the time when residents truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.

Task Force: ✓ Build a Cabot Agricultural Network

Co-Chairs: **Chuck Marian** and **Richard Hourihan**

Facilitator: **Jolinda LaClair**, Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Resource Leaders: **Tom Stearns**, High Mowing Seeds

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Action Steps

1. Communication: monthly meetings of the Cabot Ag Network
2. Ag stats: survey / inventory of Cabot farms and agribusinesses; businesses that could buy local.
3. Cold storage – pursue possibilities
4. Cooperative equipment sharing / purchasing
5. New market opportunities: matchmaker events; take advantage of Cabot brand, tell the story

Resources

1. Ag stats / survey – Farm to Plate to lead discussion. Erica Campbell, Farm to Plate Director, ericacampbellvt@gmail.com, 828-3745.
2. Cold Storage – inventory of what exists in region:
 - a. NOFA recent assessment
 - b. Erin Buckwatter / Abbey Nelson
 - c. Grant money: Working Lands Fund; USDA Rural Development
3. Equipment leasing:
 - a. Castanea
 - b. Working Lands Fund
 - c. USDA Rural Development
4. New market opportunities / aggregations:
 - a. Farm to Plate aggregation working group (Erica Campbell)
 - b. Abbey Willard
 - c. Agency of Ag

Raw Notes:

- Ag Stats: Survey / Inventory: how many farms; businesses that could buy local
- Explore other models
- Farmer's market – physical
- On-line farmer's market
- Aggregation – cooperative selling and producing
- Cold storage facility
- Community of interest
- Cooperative equipment sharing /purchasing (Castanea)
- Food security – goal. Where are vulnerabilities; solutions.
- New market opportunities: food funders / VCF farm & food fund; Export; Matchmaker events
- Vermont brand; Cabot brand; tell the story
- Workforce needs
- Land access / sharing
- Think big – what do we do best?
- Producer coordination; diversity of product
- Communication: Cabot producer's circle for monthly meetings? Where, when, who convenes?; mentoring, cheerleading, referral, sharing
- Dairy must be included
- Soils – what can grow?
- Greenhouses / high tunnel grants
- Agritourism possibilities. Cabot visitors center. 30K people; how to take advantage of traffic?



Task Force Signups

Dawn Andrews	563-2029	dunri49@yahoo.com
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Task Force: ✓ Improve Community Communications

Co-Chairs: **Christine Frieze** and **Anne Walker**

Facilitator: **Sean Sheehan**, Community Director, e-Vermont Community Broadband Project

Resource Leaders: **Susan Clark**, author of “Slow Democracy” and Middlesex resident

Some residents complain about communications gaps and the lack of knowledge about all the good things going on in the community. A Cabot Communications Task Force could advance community communications by linking all local activities into a common calendar with an on-line portal like Front Porch Forum’s calendar widget inserted into the websites of all municipal and community groups. This team could also put all the gathered information into a Cabot bulletin board in the village and share it in the Chronicle.

The group asked that we add their individual “community communication goals” to the round of introductions:

- Reaching everyone in town
- Coming up with a plan that doesn’t exclude technophobes
- Connecting folks who work out of town and don’t have kids
- Foster more healthy communication which will lead to a healthier community
- Solve the problem of existing communication channels not reaching everyone
- Better communication and publicity of the communication tools and events that do exist
- Expand the small core in town that does everything
- Integrate/connect municipal, school, community websites
- Minimize missed opportunities for communication
- Capture and spread the enthusiasm of Cabot’s youth to the rest of the population
- Incorporate communication strategies into school projects
- Combine new (online media) and old (phone trees) ways of communicating

Action Steps:

1. Use two existing powerful tools – Front Porch Forum and Chronicle – more effectively

- a. Replace Chronicle Calendar with FPF community calendar
- b. Tap a committee member to take the lead in reminding folks in town to post events to calendar
- c. All committee members commit to making regular questions, announcements, and other posts to FPF (frequency of each person’s post TBD – at least 1/wk?) – and one committee member will be responsible for holding committee accountable to this commitment
- d. To accommodate people for people who don’t want to use computers, Chronicle can run stories about FPF themes and discussions and the library can print out daily FPF and have on-hand

2. Give people reasons to interact with those outside of their existing circles

- a. Rally around the bread oven with an emphasis on using it as a means of convening folks from all across the community, both in the end uses (cooking classes, community baking nights, etc.) as well as in the process of building it (tapping folks with fundraising skills, design/build skills, etc)

3. Develop external communication plan for promoting apple pie festival and other events that could take advantage of creamery visitors and other out-of-town tourism

Full list of ideas (not prioritized):

- More food-related events
 - Chili cook-off could be another way to connect people via their stomachs
 - Monthly potlucks, with extensive promotion
- Identify people in town who are focal point of information and networks
- Tap someone to beat the bushes to get info for the Chronicle
- Revive old-fashioned phone trees, with team leaders appointed for each road or neighborhood
- Identify and address mechanisms to reach everyone and obstacles to those mechanisms (geography/topography, people not online, etc)
- Ask people in town how they want to be reached
- Involve students (maybe a specific grade) in updating communication structures, calendar, etc.
- Link from school website to town (vice versa already exists)
- Crosspromote events and calendars (*ostensibly covered in priority task #1*)
- Streamline – do fewer things and do them better
- Annual communication plan that includes: 1) a survey asking offline people where they get their information, and 2) a promotion plan for apple pie festival and other annual events
- Analyze how we can use real-life tools to promote online resources – for example, can the post office and Bob and Steph post the town URL in their storefronts?
- Use placards and posters to promote events
- Tap a committee member to write a “this week in Cabot” post with links to events and local websites
- Drag innovators in town to participate in this committee (alternate suggestion was not to ask them to join the committee, but rather identify one discreet task and ask for their help)
- Develop an image map or community portal that displays and links to major online resources in town
- Develop a Cabot app that includes a map, historical info, and geocaching data to engage visitors and residents

Resources

1. Community calendar section of e-Vermont website – e4vt.org/calendar – for information on embedding FPF community calendar
2. e-VT partner section and community story section for resources for expanding FPF and to see videos on how other towns are using it.

Task Force Signups

Christine Frieze	563-2832	christine.c.frieze@gmail.com
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Jan Westervelt	563-2489	jrwcabot@yahoo.com



Participants joined together with visiting resource team members for dinner prepared by Butters Restaurant on Resource Day before they set to work building their workplans

Task Force: ✓ Develop a Cabot Community Arts Center

Chairperson: **RD Eno**

Facilitator: **Alex Aldrich**, Executive Director, Vermont Arts Council

Resource Leaders: **Michele Bailey**, Program Director, Vermont Arts Council

Cabot residents celebrate the diversity of arts, crafts and local products in the community. Many believe that a Task Force of Cabot residents could come together and expand the use of local venues or redevelop new space in town as an arts center. A Cabot Arts Center could include an outlet and showplace for local art and products, studio space, and space for youth to gather, and for local music, movies, or theatrical performances to occur.

Action Steps: IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

1. Invigorate the Cabot Community Association

- A. Identify leadership, next steps forward of arts council working group - 12/31/2012
- B. Marry with the "arts center" agenda - 1/31/2013
- C. Create Mission/Goals for arts center initiative - 3/31/2013

PROCESS: working group meets at least monthly

2. Inventory of places, people, assets, interests.

- A. Develop/distribute community-wide "art council survey" - 2/1/2013
- B. Work with school on development of map identifying "arts" in Cabot - 3/31/2013
- C. Marry Cabot Creamery with local artists - 6/30/2013

PROCESS: working group meets at least monthly

3. Build a performance series to use the 3 existing performance spaces in town

- A. Initiate Performing arts series now - 2/28/2013

PROCESS: working group meets at least monthly

Resources

- 1. **Vermont Arts Council**, Alex Aldrich, Executive Director, 828-3293, aaldrich@vermontartscouncil.org
- 2. **USDA Rural Development Grants**, <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/NH-VTHome.html>, Rhonda Shippee, *Community Programs Director*, 828-6033, rhonda.shippee@vt.usda.gov
- 3. **Cabot Community Association**
- 4. **Cabot UDAG grant**

Raw Notes:

- Café next to the art room at the school - publicize availability
- Bread oven - work with school to complete project
- Lower Cabot store / hardware store (explore as use as art centers)
- Church on the green - explore for use as performance space
- How to get tourists to stay longer than a visit to the Creamery
- Middle school map - work with school to complete; incorporate local art community
- Invite artists to become known. Use multiple formats (rat them out!); engage those who want to be engaged.

- Identify leadership
- Identify and connect teachers and students
- Identify markets for artists and craftspeople
- Brand mobilization: “Creative Cabot”
- Performance series: Willey Bldg, CSPAC, United Methodist Church
- Students – served by CSPAC – not necessarily for visual arts
- Need after-school activity space
- Support the arts where they happen:
 - Identify, support, bring more recognition
 - Inventory: census of buildings and assets; what and who is in our community (artists)
 - Create mission (form follows function)
- Small workshop space is needed, e.g. kiln supporting pottery work
- Inventory empty buildings explore possible usage
- “critique groups”
- community calendar: discipline with Cabot at the center
- Classes: pottery
- Movies, plays, music
- Cabot community assoc; Methodist Church
- Talk to school about space
- Get people together to talk to each other

Next Meeting Date, Place and Time: Tuesday, December 11th at 6:30 pm, Willey Building

Task Force Signups

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V. 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 the Cabot Task Forces. Their recommendations below encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs. It is hoped that community members will turn frequently to these pages for concrete ideas, resources and support. Resource Team members are eager to support the Task Forces as they begin their work.

✓ Improve Community Communications

Recommendations for improving communication listed below range from very specific technical fixes to ideas around developing a common project to rally communications around. In any rural town there are community circles that do not intersect, people who feel left out, and glitches in the ways the community invites folks together. Don't make 'the perfect the enemy of the good'—no one solves every single problem—but take confidence in the fact that you will move the mark if you concentrate on bringing people together and work step-by-step to improve communications and invite all to participate.

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

Integrating municipal and community sites

The cabotvt.us site does a very nice job of integrating Cabot Chronicle and Cabot Facebook news via feeds. Many sites across the state could learn from Cabot in this regard.

The links to the school site and other local resources, on the other hand, are hard to find (tiny font on the bottom of a very long page OR by going to a pulldown and selecting "useful links"). Currently the "About Cabot" link on the navbar only offers one option, the Cabot Historical Society. Could that be expanded to include the school, Chronicle, Cabot FPF, and maybe a catch-all "Other local resources" which could dump to that "useful links" page?

Few, if any, of the local sites listed on <http://www.cabotvt.us/links.php> link back to the Cabot municipal site or to this local directory. Outreach to invite them to do so would seem to be a task for the committee.

Whatever you do on-line, try to have it professionally managed and maintained. Groups like the Snelling Center have a lot of information about how to produce an excellent town website. There is a danger if you have a volunteer designed/maintained site that it will quickly become bogged down or out of date. If you don't keep a site up-to-date, people won't return to it and it becomes useless.

There was some talk in the Communications breakout group of tasking students with updating websites and online calendars. That hasn't worked in other towns, maybe partly because teachers are reticent to assign overly administrative tasks and because this updating work needs a constant effort. In Middlesex (middlesexvermont.org), the town clerk does this work. In Moretown (moretownvt.org), they hired a part-timer to spend a few hours per week on updates.

Information on maintaining municipal websites can be found at <http://e4vt.org/programs/e-vermont/toolkit/municipal-government-toolkit>

Community Portal

There may be too many underutilized existing communication outlets which can confuse info seekers. Identify one centralized space for all communications.

Regarding the group's discussion of a community portal, you can check out one option (albeit more robust than a simple portal and not finished) at <http://www.welcometocastleton.com/>

Alternatively, based on the group's discussion, a very simple mobile-friendly site that might consist solely of links to the municipal, school, Chronicle, and "other local resources" – along with maybe a weather widget and the embedded community calendar could do the trick. A community portal isn't necessary if all the sites can integrate on their own, but if there are turf issues, a portal like this would have the advantage of 1) easy set-up and zero need for maintenance (while the weather and FPF community calendar would always have the feel of being up-to-date) and 2) one common URL that could be hung on storefronts, placards, bulletin boards, etc.

Community Calendar

Add the Front Porch Forum calendar feature to the FPF service the town already has. It could be the "glue" needed to set things off there. Adding the community calendar to Cabot's Front Porch Forum requires a one-time payment of \$500 to FPF. Contact Michael Wood-Lewis at 802-540-0069.

Once it is set up, visit the e-VT website for instructions on embedding the calendar on local websites at <http://e4vt.org/calendar>. You can see examples of how the FPF-integrated community calendar can be embedded on any site at <http://www.discoverbristolvt.com/community-calendar/> or <http://www.welcometocastleton.com/> or <http://vergenesdowntown.com/events/>

In addition to the Cabot Facebook page and FPF, consider having a Cabot twitter feed for announcing events and meetings and posting items for discussion.

Getting the most out of Cabot's Front Porch Forum

Get a critical mass of Cabot on Front Porch Forum; this really makes it work as a center point for town communications and energy. Tactics:

- Read FPF's tips for local promotion at <http://frontporchforum.com/about-us/pitch-in>
- Staff a table at several key Cabot events in the coming year where people can sign up on-the-spot for FPF (e.g. school concerts and basketball games, art events, Town Meeting). Personal contact is key; have someone there to answer questions. (Most frequent might be: "If I sign up, will I be spammed?" "Is this really free?" "How many emails will I get?" "If I don't like it, can I get off the list?" People will be very reassured by the answers that they get. After all, FPF is staffed by real people in Vermont who will respond personally.)
- Coordinate a series of interesting posts from a variety of people over the coming 6-12 months. They can offer information (e.g. recipes, gardening advice); inspire curiosity (ask the historical society to do a monthly quiz question); offer a fun read (Ben Hewitt can serialize a novel!); and/or can also ask questions ("Does anyone know how to get rid of gout weed?") Over time, people will say "did you read yesterday's post?" enough times that more people will sign up.

Make sure that FPF materials are available to those who don't use the internet. Possibilities: the library can print each edition and put it in a binder; the Chronicle can "harvest" the best posts and print them (7 Days newspaper does this from its blog).

Use FPF and the Chronicle strategically to inform people about other great Cabot communication resources (such as the town website and Facebook page). For instance, post/print links to things like a new map or survey on the town website, or a great bunch of photos from a town event that were just posted on the town's Facebook page.

Run articles in the Chronicle that tell stories of how local people in Cabot have used FPF. You can pull stories together from looking at the archives of past FPF posts by community members.

To see how two other Washington County towns are using Front Porch Forum, see <http://e4vt.org/programs/e-vermont/stories/fpf-calais> and <http://e4vt.org/programs/e-vermont/stories/fpf-middlesex>

Involving students in web projects

While having classes do general web maintenance hasn't generally worked, tapping a specific grade for a less administrative class project can be a great idea. Go to <http://www.vermontsugaring.com/> to see how grades 6, 7, and 8 at the Fairfield Center School participate in "Project Sweet Talk."

The students in town could assist seniors with computer literacy. Students might also form a focus group to look at the communications platforms currently in use such as the town's facebook page and Front Porch Forum and how people could use them better. Student suggestions could really help the town communicate through the internet—it would be an interesting class project! Can students help drive users to these platforms?

To increase communication/interaction between the school and the community, consider addressing pressing local needs through student service-learning type activities. Could be project-based learning opportunities for students and community members to expand communications with particular, specified, or sought skills.

Making the community's sites easier to find

Taking an hour or two to be sure that Cabot's town site, school site, and Chronicle site are all "on the map" with Google Places, Wikipedia, and other key sites would be well worth the time. To get how-tos on registering with a few of the biggies, visit the "Wikipedia, Google Places and You" webinar: <http://e4vt.org/programs/e-vermont/newsevents/webinars>.

Building Communications around a Specific Community Project: the Cabot Pizza Oven

At the end of VCRD's Community Visit in Johnson a team was formed with a very similar mission to that of the Cabot Communications Task Force. They decided that talking about integrating all the communications would be much more powerful if they did it around a project. So, they invented a "Concerts on the Green" series for the summer and integrated all local communications resources around promoting the events for all the diverse community groups in town. It was a huge success!

The Cabot Task Force has identified finishing the bread ovens at the school as a project that might be a similar rallying point. The group could use the project to connect the school, students, teachers,

parents, community groups together to finish building the oven and then producing community events in the village center for everyone in Cabot.

Use the development of the pizza oven and community parties and musical events at the oven as a way to bring people together. And use the process of developing the oven, and producing events where it is used, as test cases for how to use all the possible communications tools of town to invite everyone to participate together. Bridge all social networks, neighborhoods, parts of town in one common call to help, to contribute, and then to participate in events.

Communications techniques are hugely important: rallying together to get things done, makes all the vehicles meaningful!

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNICATIONS TASK FORCE:

Cabot creamery may be able to assist in marketing a centralized communications outlet.

Visit Snelling Center's "e-Government Help Center for Vermont Towns" toolkit for town websites: <http://evermontbroadband.org/>. Their template for municipal websites is Wordpress-based and is flexible, portable and follows state and federal standards for handicapped accessibility and usability. They may be able to help: 802-985-3321 or 802-238-0800.

When staffing tables to increase FPF signups, contact FPF (www.frontporchforum.com) and they can send you sign-up sheets where people can signup on the spot rather than having to go online at some later date. They also have flyers and other materials to help when staffing tables. Have copies of the article from "Yankee" magazine (March/April 2010) about Front Porch Forum by Bill McKibben available when tabling.

There is some great information for getting people involved in the Susan Clark / Frank Bryan book: "All Those In Favor: Rediscovering the Secrets of Town Meeting and Community." (the Cabot library has probably has a copy!) Chapter 11 "Ten things you can do now to improve your town meeting," Chapter 12 "Ten things you can do over time to improve your town meeting" and Chapter 14 "The other 364 days" offer a lot of tips for getting people involved. Some will be more relevant than others to Cabot's communication issues, but it would be worth taking a look. Furthermore, it will hearten folks, since it will become clear that there is so much Cabot residents are doing right!

To learn more about Project Sweet Talk (the grade 6, 7, and 8 project up in Fairfield), you can visit <http://www.vermontsugaring.com/> or call Principal Jen Wood at 802-827-6639.

Contact VCRD for advice if there is a need for funding for the FPF Calendar structure: 223-5763.

If you're interested in the community portal at <http://www.welcometocastleton.com/> - it is a wordpress template that was commissioned by e-Vermont and can be shared with Cabot for free, provided someone on the team is comfortable with setting up a wordpress site (or is willing to learn it). Contact Townsend Belisle at Haystack Digital at t@haystackneedle.com. To hear the Castleton perspective, contact Jan Jones at 802-468-5574 or castletonfreelibrary@gmail.com.

✓ Develop a Cabot Agricultural Network

Community based agricultural networks are forming throughout Vermont by farmers and food producers and processors working to expand links to markets, work cooperatively to build local markets, or to store, distribute or sell together, share best practices, and provide mutual support. Often customers, neighbors and community leaders also get involved to help—everyone loves good local food, and building a partnership can ultimately build a local marketplace, as well as an atmosphere of mutual support and innovation. Have confidence, welcome young folks, and work together on a couple of projects, and the Cabot network will grow and add up to make a real difference!

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

Don't duplicate efforts happening just up the road at the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CEA). See if your group can be an associate group of CAE. They could serve as your fiscal sponsor while you figure out more about your vision and mission. Down the road you may want to be an independent non-profit group, but allow yourself time to develop and figure that out before creating a whole new duplicate structure just down the road from an established success story.

Contact Mary Peabody of UVM's Extension program to ask about running a few "Women in Agriculture Network" training sessions for women (and they accept the occasional male) in small business management. The focus of that Leahy-supported program is upon agricultural and natural resource related commercial activities. Their materials are good and they encourage low income and newcomers to the labor force to develop the skills that will make small businesses succeed. Some of their work is in the service sector as well. All in all they would be fine for Cabot, and interested parties might catch a course sequence offered down in Montpelier or at Extension headquarters in Berlin. Another strength of Mary's program is their recognitions that seasonal and part time work are appropriate for their training, an added dimension that would fit Cabot's needs. Mary can be reached at 802-223-2389 x13 or mary.peabody@uvm.edu.

Michael Moser and others at UVM's Center for Rural Studies can help with surveys, program evaluation, community planning and outreach. Also, their online portal has links to all kinds of data and information resources: <http://www.uvm.edu/crs/>. Contact Michael at 802-656-0864 or mmoser@uvm.edu.

For help with developing community and school gardens, contact visiting team member Fred Schmidt who has been working with the Friends of Burlington Gardens and the Vermont Community Garden Network. He can be reached at 802- 985-3053 and fschmidt@uvm.edu.

Another visiting team member, Jenny Nelson of Senator Sanders' office, is a farmer and is happy to answer questions or help. She can be reached at 802-748-9269 and Jenny_Nelson@sanders.senate.gov.

Develop a farmers' market (outside in summer, inside in winter) that can enable the early development of this network. This increases agricultural awareness in the community including between producers. The farm market also increases communication opportunities.

The Farmers' market concept pairs incredibly well with the community arts center. These sectors (arts and agriculture) share common characteristics (small-scale, entrepreneurial, independent...). Build or develop an arts/agriculture centered facility (or facilities) and events.

To address the issue of lack of available volunteerism for this type of effort, use a community-based holistic approach of pairing the school with local experts in a project-based learning opportunity.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE AGRICULTURAL NETWORK TASK FORCE:

Vermont Community Foundation's "Small and Inspiring" grants program could help you launch with a small project grant. Contact Christopher Kaufman-Ilstrup at 802-388-3355 and cilstrup@vermontcf.org for more information. This could also be a source of funding for the pizza ovens project.

In addition, other food funders include the Harris and Frances Bloch Foundation of Marshfield (www.blockfound.org/) and the Ben & Jerry's Foundation (<http://www.benandjerrysfoundation.org/>).

Try Cabot Creamery for an assist, or VT Community Foundation or numerous other start-up grants/funding opportunities for this type of initial network development through establishment of a farmers' market.

Call VCRD for advice on funding specific projects: 223-5763.

The Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick would be a great technical assistance resource. Contact them at <http://www.hardwickagriculture.org/> and (802) 472-5840.

Green Mountain Farm to School in Newport could help if farmers wanted to deliver more produce to the school; call on them at <http://www.greenmountainfarmtoschool.org/> and 802-334-2044.

Two Rivers Center in Montpelier helps with school nutrition programs and can be reached at <http://foodworksvermont.org/> and 802-223-1515.

UVM extension (<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/>) offers technical support for groups working to increase access to wholesale food produced in their communities. Contact Hans Estrin, Local Food Network Coordinator at hans.estrin@uvm.edu or 802-257-7967.

✓ Develop a Cabot Community Arts Center

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

The committee might consider partnering with an existing facility to start. River Arts in Morrisville is probably the best opportunity for a partnership or fiscal sponsor.

It's great that Cabot wants to have a local arts spot; it seems important that the committee start with a realistic programming plan that doesn't try to overdo it or cannibalize from other nearby resources (like River Arts or Unadilla). What can be done that's unique to Cabot? Or serves a need that will encourage others to come to Cabot? Alternatively, what can be done that people aren't going to drive a half hour or more for because they can already do it somewhere else? What's the Cabot niche?

The committee could travel to visit some of the other new or emerging community art centers like those in Plainfield (at Goddard) or the Art House in Craftsbury. Or visit some established places and find out how they became sustainable – River Arts in Morrisville and Island Arts in North Hero come to mind. Also, perhaps SPA in Barre would be useful. In Peacham, there are some folks working on slightly different concept with some similar elements – a Peacham Community Store. You might want to visit them as well.

If at some point the team decides to look for a building to be the center point of a community “Arts Center” you’ll need to develop a cost analysis for renovating a current space that would meet code and be heat-able. A space that is down-home and artsy is more affordable and easier to do with community involvement than something glitzier or more sophisticated. Think in stages – a front gallery/sales area with studios in the back or upstairs now, a big group studio for teens and/or classes next, a theater space after that? What are the priorities? Will the Arts Center buy equipment like kilns or easels? Plan how to support the space. What will the rent, utilities and operating costs be? How will consumable art materials be handled if there is a public studio space?

Once the committee has made a decision on its first events or a to develop a particular space, it will need to come up with a marketing plan on how to publicize the space and recruit members/participants and how to drive customers to the gallery in the absence of existing foot traffic or tourists downtown.

The team could also start the entire effort with a special event.

There could be a set of lessons and classes developed using existing talent in the community (or even on the committee) to get the ball rolling.

Cabot could start with a special show in a public space, or with a “Cabot open studio weekend” to begin to get attention and develop a local partnership.

There is no one best thing to do first—instead, find the activity that sounds the most doable, inspiring, and fun! Once that is under your belt, decide what’s next and keep building momentum!

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE ARTS CENTER TASK FORCE:

River Arts, a community arts organization based in Morrisville, formed as the result of a community planning forum that set creating an intergenerational community arts center with a mission to enrich the community through the arts as a top priority. When they formed in 1999, there were no arts programs available to most residents of Lamoille County. Since then, they have offered classes, workshops, exhibits, concerts, and other special events to the residents of Lamoille County for free or at affordable costs at multiple venues in the area. Recently they have renovated and have moved into an old building in Morrisville. Steve Ames, Executive Director, would be a great first contact; he’s ready to come tell his story to the Cabot team or entertain a visit. Steve can be reached at 802-888-1261 and steve@riverartsvt.org.

Check out Frog Hollow (www.froghollow.org) and a few art cooperatives in other parts of the state and country. Here’s a link to some: <http://shelburneartcoop.com/sac-other-coops.html>.

G.R.A.C.E. in Hardwick (<http://www.graceart.org> and 802-472-6857) has studio space and offers classes/studio opportunities for the community.

Elizabeth Trail, a UVM graduate student that came to the Cabot forums, has personal experience in starting and running both cooperative galleries and a for-profit space rental gallery. She would be happy to help and can be reached at Elizabeth.Trail@uvm.edu.

If you are interested in rehabbing an historic building to put the center in, you should be actively engaged with folks at Preservation Trust of Vermont. Paul Bruhn can be reached at 802-658-6647 and paul@ptvermont.org.

Other funding sources might include the Vermont Community Foundations “Small and Inspiring Grants” and possibly the “Vermont Arts Endowment Fund.” Contact Christopher Kaufman-Ilstrup at 802-388-3355 and cilstrup@vermontcf.org for more information.

If there’s a physical space to be developed, there could be resources from and Arts Council Cultural Facilities Grant. Contact Sonja Rae, Vermont Arts Council Community Development Manager, at 828-5425 and srae@vermontartscouncil.org. Alex Aldrich at the Vermont Arts Council can be reached at 828-3791 and aaldrich@vermontartscouncil.org.

A Side Note on the Transportation Discussion

Several folks brought up the idea of advancing public transportation in Cabot. The Selectboard, Cabot Works, or the Transportation Committee could reach out to the regional transportation system to encourage a route in town. Contact Rural Community Transportation located in St. Johnsbury to work something out in terms of a Cabot bus connection or two with a run north of Joe's Pond and loop through Cabot and then out south back to Route 2. Mary Grant is the Executive Director and can be reached at (802) 748-8170 and rct@kingcon.com.



*Visiting team
members met for
lunch before the
Community Visit Day*

VI. Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 90 Cabot residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on September 25, 2012

Although the prioritization work of the Community Visit Program requires a town to decide what is most important as it moves forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.

Arts, Culture & Recreation

Resource Team: Alex Aldrich (facilitator), Sierra Poske (scribe), Patricia Coates, Carlen Finn, Christopher Kaufmann Ilstrup, Michael Moser, Doug Racine, John Tracy

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Outdoor recreation opportunities include: 26 acre forest, several farms, cross country ski trails, snow mobile trails, youth sports programs.
- Amazing number of artists living in town and in the surrounding community.
- The town is very accepting of people's creative abilities and appreciates local artists.
- The school is very involved in the arts, and has many student projects including 6th graders making walking sticks.
- Three artistic courses offered in the school, with most students choosing to participate in the programs.
- The library and its many programs is a great resource.
- The new community performance center with professional sound and lighting is good for performances.
- The town has several community dinners and festivals that are looked forward to: Maple Fest, Foliage Fest.
- Musical performances are arranged from visiting artists from around the world.
- Theater and musical performances organized for children.
- Outdoor movies held in various places in town.
- A historic building that residents would like to see used as a theater.
- Cheese making at Cabot Creamery.
- The historical society and museum associated with it.
- The small size of Cabot itself and its natural beauty.
- Cabot Commons, the senior citizens, home that brings a lot of programs and initiatives into the town.
- The UDAG fund of roughly 2 million dollars for town resources.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- No communication, lack of knowledge about what is going on in the community.
- In need of a way to get artistic talents showcased.
- A commuter town, with time being an issue for citizens to become involved in activities outside of their jobs.
- Too few people involved in most of the town committees causing burn out.
- Town initiatives fall on few shoulders, there is a need for new people to step up.
- Most of the year if you want to see a performance or a movie you have to drive thirty minutes to an hour.
- A very small pool to raise money for the arts exists in the town proper. As far as local businesses are concerned, there is a need to expand the concept of Cabot to outlying communities and access those parts of the communities for support of the arts.
- What the town has to offer for young people is lacking.
- No specific place or space for the youth to gather in a constructive manner.
- A community house or space for youth to gather in the afternoon and share.
- The after school programs cater to mainly elementary school aged children, not high school aged.
- Transportation from town center is an issue, commutes take up to an hour and a half to school or work from surrounding villages.
- Lack of organized activities for children on the weekends outside of school.
- No public forum of communication to get ideas out.
- A lot of ideas coming through the Recreations department and suggestions but no one person taking initiative to get it started.
- If you want to get something done then you have to start the committee and do it yourself.
- Lots of talk about the half-finished trails all around town, but no committee to finish them off.
- A lot of resources to do things; need to find the energy and people to execute them.
- Recurring issue of people who have started programs moving out of town and then the programs falling by the wayside.
- Not a lot of financial resources to pull from, the UDAG fund of around 2 million dollars is hard to access and makes asking for other funds difficult.
- People come to the community, see Cabot Creamery, and then leave without visiting the rest of town.
- Incorporating Cabot Creamery into Cabot town.
- The Facebook page, community websites, and Front Porch Forum are not linked or united in any way.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- A historic building that residents would like to see used as a theater.
- A community house or space for youth to gather in the afternoon and share.
- To find a space in town or open a local crafts shop for all of the town's artists to display their wares.
- A compiled list of artists that live in the community and what type of art they create.
- The UDAG fund should be easier to access.
- Students expressed the desire to increase the education capacity of the school.
- The school is an underutilized aspect of the community that is not used during after school hours or in the summer for arts programs or to expand educational opportunities.
- Cabot Creamery can only engage the town so much; they need the town to actively engage in disseminating information about the town as well.
- A town bulletin board of information about places to visit in the community and community events.
- To fix the condemned historical building and make it into a community arts center.
- There are a lot of community spaces that are restricted spaces and not specifically designed for the arts to be taught.
- Adult/ older children options for community art classes and space.
- A classical music series brought to Cabot.
- Opening up the church for more concerts and performances because it is an excellent space with great acoustics.
- Getting the word out about the community chorus and encouraging people to come and participate.
- More community based events such as the talent show.
- The rec field and the field behind the school utilized for facilities such as a tennis court or skate park and as a general area for kids to hang out after school.
- A farmers market brought back and someone willing to organize it.
- Bike and footpaths that loop through Cabot to get bike and foot traffic off of the narrow roads.
- A really great system of letting everyone know what is happening in the community.
- A way to link all of the online forums about Cabot together and improve communication of community events in the town.
- Incorporating the high school students in a community based learning project to help link together the online forums.
- Utilize funds and hire someone to coordinate these ideas about communication within the community because other community members need to work themselves.
- Income from the UDAG fund used to hire a communication coordinator.
- Community involvement in other spaces outside of the school for residents that do not have children or aren't connected with the school in any way.
- A program to organize and monitor the children volunteering in the community for high school requirements.
- The eco village plans on renting out the school for the summer to bring in speakers and instructional classes for the community.
- Establishing home stays for people coming to the community to attend events put on by the Eco village at the school.
- A way for newcomers to access information about who has what resources in the community.
- A way to do community inventory and asset analysis in a respectful manner of how involved people want to be in the community.
- More people involved in the community theater to put on better, more quality plays.
- An old movie series that could happen once or twice a month to get the community together rather than be isolated in personal homes with Netflix.
- Possible movie nights at the high school student opened café.
- The middle school brick oven could also be tied in with a possible movie night.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- A challenge is how to bring people into the center of the community, while working hard to support your family. The good positive energy of the community and willingness to organize is a great start to solving this issue.
- There is an impressive amount of knowledge and practical scale within the community, especially on the artistic level.
- The community is at good launching off point for community opportunities and classes.
- The library can be used as a place for intergenerational meeting and sharing.
- There could be an emphasis on teaching others due to the vast amount of knowledge held by the people of Cabot. Activities could involve food; cooking, canning, gardening.
- The development of outdoor trails and paths will bring people into the town.
- There is great infrastructure in place in the community, and a need to be creative about how to best utilize them.
- It is a good idea to visit towns in the region on field trips to see what they are doing to organize in their communities.
- Model yourselves after other communities, for example the CSA (Community Supported Arts) in Bennington that sold shares to bring in better musicians for Contra dancing.
- The communication issues are essential and the impact of Front Porch Forum is a way to start solving them.
- Marketing and communication are a specialization at Cabot Creamery and hopefully the town can become linked to the

- business through different programs and make use of these assets to the community.
- The town would benefit from one space as a focal point for community members and tourists to go to gain access to the community.
- The amount of impressive, positive, focused teenaged youth in the community are a reflection of the community and a great resource on how to build it.

- The idea of Cabot as a regional hub with resources that can draw people in from surrounding towns with events is an idea that needs to be promoted.
- What does Arts and Culture mean to you:
 - Other aspects of yourself that expand and broaden your life view.
 - Relating to a larger community

The Challenge of Poverty

Resource Team: John Tracy (facilitator), Meagan Pharis (scribe), Alex Aldrich, Patricia Coates, Carlen Finn, Christopher Kaufmann Ilstrup, Michael Moser, Doug Racine

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Cabot is a caring community.
- The community is small with only one school, so the school and its staff know the children and their situations.
- Having Cabot creamery here is an asset.
- There is an organization to help the elderly: Faith and Action.
- Twin Valley Senior Center.
- Cabot has a good library with a good staff.
- The Cabot mentoring program is an asset.
- The town has a lot of diversity.
- The church is an asset; it has a kitchen.
- High School graduation rates are good.
- There is an actively engaged young population.
- Several after-school programs exist – game day in library, etc.
- Cabot Worx – community organization looking at which projects the community wants to do, brings people together to work on projects, i.e.,: map of Cabot at the creamery, Front Porch Forum.
- UDAG funds are available to Cabot.
- Cabot is located in VT! A good state to be in. State government is accessible.
- The school serves breakfast and lunch and has a semi-weekly fresh fruit and vegetable snack.
- Faith and Action food shelf.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- A definition for poverty in Cabot – low income, older people.
- Twin Valley Senior Center – not enough resources, can't be open as much as they want.
- High crime rate.
- High % of kids on free/reduced lunch (50-60%).
- The creamery is hiring a lot of people, why aren't the residents applying?
- How does the problem manifest? Elder community receiving state services – how many of those folks are there?
- People who do not know how or are not motivated to deal with their bad diet and poor healthcare. Where are those people?
- What are the mental barriers people in poverty are facing and how can we know who is struggling with these issues, and how can we reach out to them? How can we get the facts?
- How do people make use of the money you can save by living in Cabot? Are people doing this?
- People's unwillingness to go out and look for a job may or may not be a problem.
- Federal cutbacks on resources available to the state and local communities and populations in poverty.
- The shame of people in poverty; people don't want their neighbors to know how much they are struggling. It's a challenge of a close community; keeping pride is a barrier for many in poverty.
- Too much substance abuse keeps the cycle going; not just drugs and alcohol, but sugar and tobacco and lottery tickets and junk food creating more problems. How do we educate people to stop some of this cycle?
- It's a whole lifestyle change to spend money to buy good food and prepare food – people don't have the knowledge.
- What diet do they teach in school? Can the school have high-quality, low-cost food? How are we teaching the children to eat? This is an opportunity – how do we use it?
- Farm-to-school includes teaching to incorporate nutrition into the classroom and then bring it into the cafeteria – the spearhead person retired, can this still move forward?
- Efforts are led by a person who may leave, and then the project fails.
- There is a lot of food insecurity in the community.
- The food shelf is not enough – it does not have enough food for everyone
- Cabot has a large working population whose wages aren't enough to support the family decently.
- Some people can't see the food insecurity or the people struggling to pay bills.
- Once all the community can see the poverty, people don't know how they can help.
- Faith and Action is also serving people from outside of the community, many people from Hardwick come for example.

- So many of the elderly can't afford enough oil or gas which causes more expensive issues later on in the winter if they run out of fuel with burst pipes etc. – low income heating assistance is needed.
- Many in poverty are in single parent families without adequate, affordable childcare, so how can the parent get a job?
- A widely publicized panel on poverty is going on right here and now. But are we the people who we're talking about or are 'we' talking about 'they' – and who is 'they' and why aren't 'they' here; perhaps they are ashamed to come here and admit to being poor.
- Poverty is a mindset sometimes or it can be a tough situation that you are temporarily pushed into.
- There is a stigma to being on food stamps.
- Nobody knows how to cook – it is becoming a lost art.
- Parents have to choose between fuel or food for their families.
- It's a huge struggle, and the people are like all of us – it doesn't have to be a 'you' and 'us' thing.
- Some statistics: child poverty rate is 7.6% in Cabot, in VT it is 13.7%; overall poverty rate of 9.7% in Cabot, VT at 11.1%; unemployment rate is lower than VT rate; average annual wages in Cabot is lower than nearby areas; median household income is at \$47,000.
- The statistical story leaves out information.
- There are many community stories, anecdotes of crime and burglary; where is this crime coming from, how can we understand it? – There is absence of a police force.
- CSA in Cabot only had 6 people join in last year. Does that mean everyone is farming or not buying local food?
- Traveling within a local community: if you don't have your own transportation, how can you get to your job? Affording the gas, getting to food are all barriers.
- The school is underutilized.
- Who is the 'we' who will get things done? Does Cabot have to rely on the 'gray-haired' part of the community to do things?
- Twin Valley in Marshfield is or feels too far away for the elderly people in Cabot to reach.
- In a rural community it is hard to be anonymous, so how do you get an accurate, honest picture of the poverty in the area?
- Seniors often don't ask for help because of pride.
- There has been a problem keeping things going over time, when the leader, or point-person, leaves.
- Heating, food, and prescription drugs are necessities that the elderly often have to choose between.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- A Reach Up program with job training – needs volunteers.
- Examine the programs that assist people dealing with poverty – making sure they're helping.
- More work-force training.
- Hunger Free Vermont has a program that teaches how to do nutritional programs on a low budget (grocery bag program) – in Cabot, let's get this information out to everyone.
- Getting kids to eat healthy food they haven't had before.
- Communication and Information needs to get out.
- A town bulletin board.
- Getting into the transportation network already in place in nearby areas.
- People in the Community support national philanthropic opportunities; they need to know where in the local community they can donate their money.
- Cooking is easy, but people don't have the knowledge.
- How much taught in the school are things that can help the kids survive as they get older? – Let's get this into the educational system – into Cabot School.
- If the High School was no longer in the town, that money could be put into the community.
- People need to learn how to do things for themselves – need knowledge sharing, transfer.
- Getting useful life skills into the school curriculum.
- There is a need to develop leadership and get more community people involved.
- School system needs work – need to identify what areas need work.
- Summer program tried before – preparing food in school cafeteria, providing meals, bringing those meals into the community.
- Organize the 200 hours of community service required by the Cabot School students – deliver meals maybe.
- Is the information about state programs available to those in poverty getting to people in Cabot?
- If we can figure out how to keep people warm, they can spend their tight resources on food – getting those people to come out so that we can help them weatherize their homes, get cheaper heating fuel, etc.
- Encourage volunteering – again, utilize the students at the school – get a coordinator.
- There is a need to know where the volunteer opportunities are.
- Gain information on who is in need – anonymous community outreach.
- A food shelf for Cabot residents only.
- Let's find out the specific problems of the people in poverty in Cabot.
- Energy retrofitting homes, group to energy audit houses, gets people into the homes where this project is needed.
- Hunger Free Vermont: film series, school and library could bring programs into their facilities.
- Educate the community as a whole, not just those in need – Helps get the conversation going.
- Fuel assistance programs – Fuel drop or somewhere where people could get heating goods for free.
- Home-school coordinator and other people who are involved with people in the community can identify those at risk.
- Find a mechanism through which to share what the community has with everyone – there are examples for food – drop off food at the shelf or the grocery store. How can we do this with heating resources also?

- Butters could have a free meal night where the food is donated from the community.
- Pairing teenagers with an elderly person to cross-educate.
- Maybe an elder person has land for a garden, and a few families can do the gardening there, and they all get the food from it (including the land-owner).
- Volunteer gardens where the food goes to the soup kitchen.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- It is good for community to address the issue. Many people in VT have been working on this so you don't, necessarily, have to invent something new. Can't do it all maybe, but set some realistic project goals. Look at successful projects from around the state. There is a need for understanding what the community is dealing with in respect to Poverty – it seems important to this group. This is an important conversation.
- It is impossible to reflect on what it is to live in poverty, but I am probably only one or two paychecks away from dealing with issues of affording life, food, heating. Not about 'us' vs 'them' but 'us' and 'us'. How do we break down the barrier between those who are accustomed to living with poverty and those who aren't? Break it down into manageable pieces. More and more we turn to schools as places where we have the best, easiest access to help with problems in our communities, but we can't put too much burden on them, because we're also cutting funding and services to schools. There is a challenge with a population who may want to preserve their pride in the midst of poverty. Setting up a program where people can learn how to get food, prepare it, and then bring home the food to the family. If done in schools, where the whole class participates, then no one is singled out. It is ennobling to have people help themselves out of poverty.
- Something that wasn't discussed here: letting the government off by not talking about the federal cuts that trickle down to our communities. There is an underlining of our government undermining the programs and supports put in place to mitigate the challenges families in poverty face and educate people to help them move out of low income. Talk to your legislators and say, this is not okay what's happening federally and in the state with our priorities.
- Poverty is clearly a difficult issue bigger than Cabot and VT, but part of the federal government as well, we are still paying taxes. This is a caring community, and that's how things get done. There are struggles to understand the numbers here. The numbers suggest that there is a lot of working poor in this community. They are eligible for programs and they need to be getting that food for the kids. There is a lot of hidden poverty – don't see elderly folks and people with disabilities and mental health issues and substance abuse issues and other at-risk people that are out in the country often hidden from view. Talk of how to get them involved in the community was good. Low participation in food stamps by elderly people, so reach out efforts talked about may be really important to this community. Food and fuel insecurity is a real issue, so this conversation did well to address that. Sensed there is more of an appreciation for what the elderly are facing.
- Give locally, that's very important. Biggest observation is about a flaw with the community process – really utilized by those who are comfortable with the process, but there are many other people out there who need to be heard. How to involve more of them, like single moms and elderly, into this conversation. Think big but start small. There is so much you can do that doesn't take very much. Work on schools with community gardens that may be able to involve many people, save pride, and attacks many sides of the problem. Deal with those issues of kids not being in school in the summer time and needing food. Use resources offered around the state.
- Poverty may be hidden, but you probably know someone who is dealing with poverty, and maybe there is a way to have a one-on-one. Look for direct interaction you can have with that person. Drop firewood off at your neighbor's house or extra produce if there is not a good distribution program in place.

School & Community

Resource Team: Patricia Coates (facilitator), Patrick Scheld (scribe), Alex Aldrich, Paul Costello, Carlen Finn, Christopher Kaufmann Ilstrup, Michael Moser, Doug Racine, John Tracy

What are the Assets in this Area?

- The school is an asset; brings learning to the community.
- Music program brings concerts to the town and music to kids.
- Having the school in the community brings people together.
- The fact that the kids don't go off to a union HS, but are here in the community.
- From a parents perspective, we get to know a lot of parents in town by standing on the sidelines of soccer games and other athletic events.
- A lot of students play sports, if you want to play you can play; no cuts for sports.
- NYTimes article mentioned... "The school is a part of the community identity that goes back generations."
- People come to graduations even if they don't have children graduating, showing pride in the school and community.
- School offers a chance to show respect for each other.
- Connecting to other community members because the school community promotes a sense of each other.
- Creates a sense of confidence in the children. Kids feel ownership in the school because it's so small.
- If there was no school the kids would be spread out across the area and not know each other.

- Without the school the kids wouldn't know their neighbors.
- School brings a gym used for arts festival, cafeteria for community dinners, CSPAC for concerts, facilities that the town would otherwise not have.
- The school brings economic activity, employing 44 people.
- Generational aspect and the fact there is one school in town makes it unifying. Everybody comes to the sporting events because it's Cabot's team and not just the schools.
- Students have a graduation requirement of 200 hours of community service.
- Connections of kids of different ages because it is K-12.
- Sense of people looking out for each other because they're all in the same building.
- Small school allows for students to try many different activities.
- Cabot is a "family-style" school.
- Love, caring and family. Whole town rallies for its residents because of the connection that the school provides for all the residents.
- Musical instrument collection.
- Technology has improved and using more computers.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Economics of the school.
- Difficulty of providing a wide breadth of education.
- Economies of scale, much less cost efficient to run a small school.
- How do people connect to the school without having children that attend the school? Seeing where their money goes with the school budget.
- Some large buildings coming to the end of their lifespan and in need of repair.
- Some of the buildings are falling apart and dilapidated.
- Field trips that the 8th grade takes to DC can be a burden on the community because it is an expensive trip.
- Difficult to locally raise money for different programming.
- Transition of leadership, changing the dynamic of curriculum and assessment.
- Some anxiety in the community about the direction of the school.
- Will the HS continue?
- How do we understand the NECAP scores fluctuating with a small school?
- How do we support professional development?
- The scope of the transition is challenging to parents. What is my child's career going to be as they move through the system? Will this transition happen fast enough for the children to benefit?
- Cabot as a community has long-valued its preK-12. How can we afford to continue with this tradition?
- Closely held self-image with a lot of pride in K-12. Do we have the courage to step back from this so as to more objectively assess merits and demerits with no particular model in mind?
- Having no High School like some of the surrounding towns that have no schools or only elementary schools changes the dynamics of the community without having a school.
- Marshfield is a great community but with no school it's a different kind of community.
- Does the community have the interest to let go? Must be willing to step back and take a hard look.
- Adding another 50 students would help to solve the financial issues.
- In spite of property tax reports and other community costs, there are a growing number of people finding it difficult to support the school.
- No direct line of communication to community members without kids in the school.
- Online physical education.
- Resistance to new ideas that involve the school.
- Very small pool of potential High School students from surrounding towns, very competitive with private schools and union schools.
- Difficult to connect with students, how much emphasis is put on new age/project-based education versus boring them with grammar every day.
- Different insurance issues prevent certain on-the-job field trips.
- As standards increase every 3 years with the NCLB Act, many VT schools are falling into the "failing" category. Cabot has been labeled as a failing school for two consecutive years:
 - Two years ago the school failed in 5 areas.
 - Last year school failed in only 1 area.
 - There has been improvement but community didn't know about the "Failing" status.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- 268 students is the most cost-efficient school size in VT. Cabot used to be there.
- Cost effective model that would allow for bringing in these students.
- Effectively use technology to provide more forms of education.
- Improve communications within the school community.
- Designate somebody as strictly a PR person.
- Reaching out to the community to bring the community towards the school.
- Direct outreach to the community.
- The school as a learning center for lifelong possibilities and not just limited to K-12; extending the programs for adults and community members.
- Children learning trades from local community members.
- Move away from computers and get back to books and paper learning.

- Curriculum is no longer making sense, it's become to "gamey" and trying to relate video games back to curriculum. Lots of review with little to no new learning (from an 8th grader).
- Entered a grade without knowing multiplication tables when they should have and felt behind. There needs to be more focus on teaching kids earlier (from 8th grader).
- 20 years ago Cabot made a push to make the school an educational center for the whole community, but the idea fell by the wayside – common problem in Cabot history.
- The 200 volunteer hours required of students needs to be better tracked – a good record keeping system is needed because it is a requirement for graduation.
- Community member outside of the school to help coordinate community service hours.
- Project based learning that addresses community needs – Service Learning.
- SEED? Program has been a big success (project based learning) and other programs/projects have been very beneficial for the students.
- Marketing for the school to show there is a unique arts curriculum – show surrounding towns and advertise the great programs to attract regional students from outside of Cabot.
 - Kids have friends in surrounding towns that choose other schools because they don't know about the curriculum (8th grader).
 - Maybe those kids will choose Cabot High School if they have more information (8th grader).
- Physical education credits that take place at the school/outside and not online.
- School board has already met to address community concerns.
 - Every faculty member must handout syllabus in each class.
 - Developed a structure for project based learning.
- New website that provides good/timely information could help to alleviate communication issues.
- Shadow days that bring students into Cabot to experience the school – Open House Days.
- Home school students want to be more social as they get older might be able to integrate into extracurriculars – use the website.
- Not just marketing the school but the whole community.
- Bringing community forums to other schools to present the Cabot curriculum, essentially recruit 8th grade students from surrounding towns.
- Continue to post great test scores.
- Transparent decision making that is open to all community members so that community feels a part of the decision making process that involves the school.
- It's difficult for students to go to businesses because of insurance reasons, so bring businesses into the school.
- Bring in trades and crafts and technical job training that is relevant to the students' needs of learning job skills.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Biggest thing is just wanting all of the students in the room to be involved in the action steps for all the other forums. Lots of older people in the community would like new leadership, and the students could be that new leadership. Great overlap between forums.
- Show the value of the school by getting the school out in the community with mentors and project based learning.
- Started with how wonderful the school is, and it's a place where the kids get to experience life skills, but tension is that learning itself has been changing, education has become so expensive that the cost has outstripped the ability of the community to pay for it. Must have the courage to play with the service-learning opportunities, and courage to have them fail so that lessons can be learned from mistakes made in order to better the curriculum. For example, one small school in Maine teaches Math in Spanish, cutting edge.
- Years ago asked kids about Kids Count... because playgrounds would be empty. (from a kid) "Where would the community be without our school?" Seemed to be a theme throughout the session. Making sure there are ways to communicate the school programs to the community.
- School is clearly a hot subject in the community. Communication and School both came up in all the sessions. Communicating seems to be a community issue, so share resources. Use the school throughout the year. Kids are not afraid to speak up and have offered spectacular and thoughtful insight, shows that something is going right in the school.
- These are some of the most thoughtful kids in all of VCRD history, great poise. What's the best way to help the young generation articulate and put their best selves forward in the world? Recognizing that it's a small school and can't offer the same things as larger schools, but the kids didn't raise the alarm about the school and continue to have tremendous faith in what the school can and will provide.
- In Chelsea, the community made the decision to keep the HS, but had to be devoted to be excellent in ONE thing. Can't focus on being OK on many things, so Chelsea focused on curriculum – so pick one thing that the school can excel at.
- Community has a bit of a dilemma, school is a tremendous community asset and appears to be the heart and soul of the community, but the dilemma is around finances and providing programs without a high cost.
- No matter what is decided about the school/HS, this is a strong community and the kids are wonderful and thoughtful and well-spoken... so you're doing something right; keep it up.

Transportation Infrastructure

Resource Team: Paul Costello (facilitator), Michael Kirk (scribe), Erica Campbell, Ann Cousins, Monty Fischer, Jennifer Hollar, Jolinda LaClair, Kate McCarthy, Jenny Nelson, Fred Schmidt, Brian Searles, Gus Seelig

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Currently have committee on Transport Scoping Study that has received a grant for bike and pedestrian scoping. They are looking at issues mostly downtown - from Creamery to intersection at north end of town.
 - Great to have traffic, numbers going through town.
 - Sensitive to having trucks coming through town from Cabot Creamery.
 - Cabot Worx pulled the grant together.
 - Several groups support of the study.
 - A lot of bikes come to the plant to tour, usually summers.
 - 50-60,000 people coming to plant every year; cars sometimes come up and over Danville Hill and through village.
 - Some area advertisements in the Creamery for visitors to check out.
 - Public transit between Montpelier and St. J is great – does not come through village though.
 - School buses.
 - Fixed roads quickly after flooding.
 - Good sightlines in town.
-

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Need to improve pedestrian access as well as bike access.
 - Pedestrian access to rec field.
 - Safety.
 - School with recreation field that isn't directly connected – students safety is a concern as they get to the rec field.
 - Make village more aesthetically pleasing.
 - Have had one public meeting on it.
 - Noise from truck traffic is a concern.
 - Speeding from most traffic through the village. It's also a concern with school being there. How to control speed and calm traffic?
 - On street and off street parking is a challenge; Willey Building has extremely limited parking for example.
 - Angled parking in front of village store has been a concern of safety.
 - Bridge at edge of town no longer has sidewalk. Not best for pedestrians to use.
 - Very old road infrastructure, in terms of what it consists of.
 - Cabot has 12mi pavement, 54 mi of dirt.
 - Some pavement hasn't been touched in several years; pavement is very narrow as of now.
 - Roads are manageable as passable.
 - Sometimes school buses can't do their route because of mud season.
 - Flooding was an issue in May 2011.
 - Look at the storm water runoff from roads that got decimated in late May 2011.
 - Intersection by rec fields has been identified as dangerous. In need of improvement in regards to safety.
 - In regards to the Cabot Plant:
 - People there throughout day and night;
 - Shifts starting all the time. Leaving at all times too;
 - Tried to make some accommodations of start times to avoid school times etc.;
 - Constantly have truck traffic going to and from;
 - 26 milk trucks;
 - 5 waste trucks doing 5 trips a day;
 - 10-12 trucks bringing in product and leaving several times a day.
 - Bus between Montpelier and St. J isn't linked to Cabot Village; Public transit access?
 - Flooding has been an issue every so often.
 - Longer term – need to anticipate climate change, more severe weather.
 - Need to include pedestrian transport in plan.
 - Senior housing near town, up a steep hill. No sidewalk or other facilities from senior house to village. How do they walk into the village?
 - Municipal garage is falling apart and needs to be renovated.
 - No walkway from Creamery into town.
 - Sheriff's only contracted until 4 or 5pm.
 - Dirt bikes recently on Main Street unlicensed, un-muffled, no safety equipment; a potential hazard.
 - Recycling collection and wastewater treatment – with weekly collection there, road has been stressed due to increased traffic.
-

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- How to move forward with the suggestions from scoping study? Good ideas will come from it but the next step is moving forward and how to incorporate those suggestions. Could use assistance in this area:
 - Acquiring land
 - Expenses
- Make village more attractive and accessible.
- Widen paved roads with shoulders.
- Viable suggestions for traffic calming.
- Multi-purpose parking.

- Look at ways to divert water from drainage ditches on road also look at the land use above and below.
- Network public transit? Aggregate transportation?
- Survey at Creamery for transport preferences of employees.
- Divert water that comes into town in creative, less costly ways.
- Survey of commuting needs in and out of town. Who is traveling where?
- Cemetery commission owns land off Elm St. that could house town garage, fire and ambulance.
- Pedestrian bridge for rec. fields.
- Pedestrian access across bridge.
- Network of multi-use trails, tying potential trails together and making them more accessible
 - Seasonal winter trail?
 - Curious to see what interest is?
 - Getting younger people in town involved that they can potentially benefit from.
- Working on bridge on Rte 215 where truck went off road few years back.
- Re-working intersection brought forth at the Scoping Study meetings.
- Bridge issue right outside of village must be brought up.
- Transportation infrastructure fund that can allow community to plan.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Scoping study sounds terrific – hopefully it will capture issues that are on the forefront of people’s minds.
- Watershed planning is a good idea. Resources or guidance on that. Help with erosion on the hills.
- Hopeful clarity on scoping study – don’t rely on that study too heavily, though.
- Community members have specific study, they know best about what is going on in town.
- Does scoping study have a vision of the community in 25 years?
- What is the core of the community? What holds this valley together?
- Sounds like the hills have a lot to say about town of Cabot.
- Division between infrastructure and safety.
- Scoping study as long range? Balance needs to be found between nitty-gritty and long range planning.
- Scoping study outlined many problems that are associated and should not hesitate to identify as many of them as possible. It ideally becomes a plan to implement.
- Bike and pedestrian facilities – are they for local use or more towards attracting tourism?
- Commuting – need for park and ride, people coming and going. Sort of all fits looking at the functionality of 215. Can either spend money fixing Rt 215 or reduce the use of it. What are the plans for 215 going forward?
- Money – what do you do about local system?
- Automatically look at downtown and economic vitality.
- Primary area of concern seems to be flooding.
- Connect tourists from Creamery to get them downtown. Seems like a great opportunity.
- Energy from students around trails. Link Cabot within downtown. Also a natural progression from visiting Creamery into biking trails around town.
- Needs assessment around commuting – idea from Upper Valley, look into Upper Valley Smart Commute (needs based commuting plan).
- 1000 year flood – can’t be business as usual, 1000 year flood is now 500 year flood etc. Crisis facing in state about infrastructure and maintenance. Need to look at resiliency. How do we re-establish our towns? Culvert solutions are great but need to look broader.
- Grafton is thriving with things to do – interesting parallel here for Cabot and ties to economic vitality, etc.
- Trails systems – look at other communities that have done fantastic trail networks. Grant writer can help move forward effectively.
- Community has a lot of terrific community spirit. How do you get the community to make the big investments?
- Hills here are beautiful – whether creamery or other business. Seems like there is long term potential to connect village to the hills.
- People seem really invested in this community.
- Take on a few projects at a time, as opposed to getting overwhelmed trying to deal with all projects.
- Transportation as important means to an end.
- Where do you want to go with economic development?
- Packaging idea is a great idea – linking visitors to creamery with town and the beauty that surrounds it. Cabot is an amazing asset.
- Aggregating and looking at potentials on public side to reduce traffic.
- Think there is economic opportunity downtown.
- A lot of amazing assets here in town that you don’t want to lose but at the same time don’t want to over glamorize.
- Great enthusiasm from students.

Economic Vitality & Tourism

Resource Team: Paul Costello (facilitator), Elizabeth Trail (scribe), Erica Campbell, Ann Cousins, Monty Fischer, Jennifer Hollar, Jolinda LaClair, Kate McCarthy, Jenny Nelson, Fred Schmidt, Brian Searles, Gus Seelig

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Cabot Creamery is an important player, contributes to the vitality of the community.
 - The creamery gets about 30,000 tracked visitors a year, most between July and October.
 - Creamery is good at trying to send people into town. When possible they engage tourists in conversation and recommend travel routes, attractions. Have posters on the wall, information about sugar houses, community bulletin board.
 - Cabot Cheese draws an additional 100,000 visitors to Waterbury outlet, 60,000 to Quechee. If tourists ask at either site, they can get info about coming to Cabot.
- Cabot Worx is a group of volunteers working for community and economic development; has the potential to act as an umbrella organization
- Many small businesses scattered all over Cabot. Cabot has a high number of farms (almost 50% of the land is in current use). 12-15 dairy farms. 30-35 agriculture-based businesses. There are many cottage industries
- Other assets are location, open land, views, natural beauty for tourism.
- There is an old village center, with rock foundations of historic interest, historic society could provide details. Possibility of walking paths, self-guided tour of these ruins.
- Reservoir and other water assets for recreation.
- Headwaters Institute, a for-profit center with a nonprofit educational component. Brings people into town for workshops and courses relating to tiny houses, permaculture, gardening.
- Headwaters is sending visitors out of town to motels and B&Bs. They would like to encourage and partner with local homestays or local B&Bs.
- Cabot Community Association is a 501c3 which could write and receive grants.
- Cabot Chronicle is a monthly publication which serves a function in disseminating community information.
- UDAG Fund -- block grant money given to Cabot Creamery, now used for community loans and grants to subsidize economic development.
- High number of skilled and expert people who live here.
- Cabot branding -- people know the Cabot name.
- Burt's Orchard is a local business that draws large numbers of visitors. Residents speculated that they must be excellent marketers. How do people find them? How do they market?
- Cross-Vermont Trail is in Marshfield. How could a local trail system connect with that? How could local businesses tie in with offerings in nearby communities (Unadilla Theater, Goodrich's, etc.)?
- School is an underutilized resource, nice campus with great buildings, used only 9 months of the year (and only during the day the rest of the year).
- Major transportation study is also underway.
- Town has DSL and WiFi in the library (this building). Good cell access around town for AT&T users.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Cabot Creamery visitors. How to get the visitors to the Creamery into the village to help all of the businesses in the area.
 - Does not count the motorcoach/tour trade because of the size of their facilities.
 - Visitors can't walk safely from Creamery to downtown.
 - Visitors arrive with a schedule, so need to be reached earlier in their travel planning process.
 - Town doesn't have a destination downtown.
- Town sees a need to be more deliberate in drawing tourists, for example having something on the calendar every day in October so that there is a reason for tourists to come.
 - The town has had success with three annual events -- Fourth of July, a Maple Festival and a Leaf Festival. Perhaps festivals or special weekends are the way to draw visitors.
 - Coaches need to plan up to a year in advance so the town would have to plan events and get them onto the coach company calendars well ahead.
 - Why do people not come downtown, even when they are at the visitor's center? People may be on a schedule, or may have used GPS and come over on a dirt road, so they feel as though they want to just take the straightest path back to Route 2. Also Cabot does not have a "destination downtown."
- Packaging -- what could be packaged in with the Creamery tour? How can the Creamery visitors be encouraged to stay longer?
 - Inflexibility -- people are not going to be able to decide to do things in Cabot on the spur of the moment, especially if they are on bus tours. The information needs to be gotten out there
 - Dirt roads intimidate some people.
- Size of Cabot means that they need to draw from beyond the village limits to support Main Street businesses.
 - How to convince locals to buy local? How to promote local purchasing?
 - UDAG invested in a monthly ad (in what publication?) for 6 months. No one knows whether there was any effect.
 - Local people say that they don't know what the local businesses are, and what can be obtained locally.

- Do we need a "buy local" directory?
- Is there a group which acts like a Chamber of Commerce?
Group of businesses trying to make this process more deliberate?
 - When farms or businesses have a brochure, the Creamery will put it out, but not all have brochures.
 - Chronicle runs a monthly feature on local businesses. How could Cabot merchants get more out of this?
 - Could there be a Cabot page in the Hardwick phone book?
- Cabot Worx is only 1 year old. Many potential ideas, visualized itself as a steering group, has had difficulty reaching critical mass. Resources are limited and people are dropping off.
 - Group has had difficulty prioritizing and defining a direction.
 - Small business owners are not attending Cabot Worx meetings because they are busy.
- Short term needs have taken over before long term and strategic planning.
- So far has worked on marketing ideas for the restaurant, ideas for the hardware store, online Farmer's Market, Front Porch Forum, UDAG grant for signage.
- No formal link between backroads businesses. No way to find them or know what is there.
 - No place to display work/products.
 - No guide, directory, or tour map.
 - Local people don't know what is here or how to find food, businesses, and services.
 - Right now they may be on the Cabot Creamery map, but there is no guide, directory, or web showcase.
- Many historical and beautiful buildings around the square are for sale and/or deteriorating.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Does the interest in food, cooking, eating suggest that the customer base is interested in these things? Does it point the way to food tourism as an especially promising area?
- So you've got them at the Creamery, then what?
 - No central downtown place for them to go even if they did have a sidewalk.
 - Map was tried, put on everyone who wanted to be on it, but as posted it was too small to be effective.
- Is there collective energy for a craft outlet? Or a craft tour?
- 300,000 visitors to Ben and Jerry's in Waterbury. Ideas for how to drive visitors from the outlets in Waterbury and Quechee to the town?
- The historic site is a beautiful walk up a picturesque old road (or drive up Danville Hill Road). Could that become a second destination?
- How about a regional map, with a loop drive and designated birdwatching or photography spots? Maybe put sugarhouses and farmstands on this map too so that backroad businesses could benefit.
- Non-tourist economic development could focus on developing a stronger downtown and drawing people from the extended local area for shopping, maybe a couple of restaurants, live music or a film series.
 - 215 is a state-numbered town road. Thus signage is not limited to the state program. People are not sure whether they want to make the investment, but better signage could be a great way to let people know where the businesses that want visitors are.
- What could local businesses do to create niches or hooks in order to have a unique niche rather than competing with the chain stores?
- How could Cabot become an extended part of the Hardwick food scene?
- What are ALL of the sources of income in the community? (Local businesses are not the only source of local economic vitality.)
 - Think of ways to save businesses and homeowners money by lowering their costs (such as energy costs) rather than just focusing on revenue.
 - Consider the nonprofit sector's contribution to economic vitality.
- Northeast Kingdom Online Store/online farmer's market/online mall for area.
- Need data and information to bolster the efforts of Cabot Worx group.
- How do you attract something as big as Vermont Country Store or Positive Pie (or Parker Pie) to the downtown?
- Events and festivals are successful at drawing people to town.
- The town has a history of launching local events which people then don't attend. People say they want more community activities but then are busy.
- Time banks, BBSR marketplace can add value to local economy without it costing anything.
- Grants available for WiFi zones -- if the entire downtown were a WiFi zone, visitors with SmartPhones could access maps, promotions, and events as they walk.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Target three things, not ten.
- Need leadership and capital.
- Don't focus too much on tourists -- try to think of ways to bring people from ten miles away.
- A lot of assets, great people, Cabot Creamery, working landscape, natural beauty. Need to be proactive and plan/coordinate to maximize opportunities.
- Lots of rural villages are struggling like this one.
- Flip side of underutilized buildings is that they are opportunities. Go one at a time to find a use for them.
- How can people support rather than compete with one another's businesses?
- It may be people from the wider local area who are needed rather than the tourists.
- Need to have a destination downtown that is attractive to go to.

- Community supported arts center?
- Must solve the Cabot-downtown problem (Horse and buggy?).
- Historic village on the hill sounds like someplace special. Walking path with a little interpretation.
- Online farmer's market could be expanded to an online list of businesses with cross-marketing opportunity.
- High school offers a great opportunity for integrating learning about economics and expanding local economy.
- Seed grants for bringing people into village center.
- Again focus on increasing local traffic rather than just on tourism.
- How do we go beyond just tourism and agriculture? More places for local people to work.
- Pick two or three things out of all of these ideas. So many good ideas.
- Think regional on advertising, there are many marketing opportunities within our figurative backyard.
- Planning grants. Rural business enterprise grants
- Think outside of the community walls.
- Building a local campus.
- 150 employees who could pick something up in town on their way home.
- NECI/Cooking with Cabot.
- So many moving pieces and some of them aren't moving. Cabot is a worldwide brand. This may make it hard to think small and niche. Photographic spots, mining, wood products, Cabot as investors in local businesses.
- Cooking with Cabot idea has been done successfully at King Arthur, Stonewall Kitchens.
- What is the obstacle to local businesses coming together?
- Trails, tours (food trail, wine trail, crafts trail, need good brochure.)
- Use the Creamery as a willing partner but don't rely on them, focus on bringing in regional customers. Biking, birding, sugarhouses, views.
- Huge asset is the track record of senior housing project.
- So many pieces in place that need to be added up.
- Choose a focal point, perhaps a building.
- Be bold, celebrate Vermont, use everybody. Build an expectation of success.
- Local leadership that pulls strings for others.

Agriculture, Food & Energy

Resource Team: Jolinda LaClair (facilitator), Margaret Gibson McCoy (scribe), Erica Campbell, Ann Cousins, Monty Fischer, Jennifer Hollar, Kate McCarthy, Jenny Nelson, Fred Schmidt, Brian Searles, Gus Seelig

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Cabot's small size and beauty with a variety of trees, hills, small farms.
- Many diverse, small businesses.
- Small farms emerging vegetable, goat farmers. Not just dairy anymore. Used to be active dairy farms.
- Lot of organic dairy farms.
- Cabot has an open landscape and has been able to retain it all these years and now we're catching on to this ag revolution. The remaining farms kept the land open. But the landscape is changing use with more vegetables, greenhouses, maple production.
- Amount of small scale innovation, experimentation, invention. Cool people here; do-it-yourselfers, i.e., being able to weld and fix things. Perpetual experimentation. Growing rice paddies, etc.
- Inventiveness of farmers. A traditional thing that happens in a community like this.
- Example of a farm that is diversifying by offering an incubator plot for young couple growing vegetables (helps young people get into farming), a commercial cider press, commercial welding shop. Lives off the grid.
- We can grow rice in Cabot! A cold climate rice. Next week, 3,000 plants will be harvested.
- High quality producers.
- Rhapsody is a food processor.
- Meat farms, such as Maple Lane Farm beef.
- Blackwell Roots Farm does sauerkraut and tea.
- Cabot serves a variety of scales, from the International to a local farmers market ~ unusual for a community this size.
- Cabot creamery is a huge asset.
- Hydro power plant. Have lots of cows which could be an asset for methane.
- The dam is in Cabot even though called Marshfield dam.
- Solar producer.
- Water here is an asset, best tasting.
- Ben Hewitt is an asset.
- Ed Smith with his great gardening books.
- Unusual mix of working farms, commuters, and small businesses. Our fields are hayed and fed by organic farmers. If don't take care of it going to lose it. We are now a commuting town but we've kept the values of an agricultural town which is our longest lasting and most important asset of all.
- Airstrip in town.
- Concentration on food and local buying. More people are recognizing the value in that. Buying happens word of mouth; people going to the farm to buy. Some social media gets the word out.
- Local food in the school; farm-to-school program.
- Decent ag soils compared to surrounding towns.
- Cabot Worx could help with connection.
- FPF is an asset and a way to connect.
- Cabot school overproduces heat; they release it. But it's an asset.
- Couple CSA's in town.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Getting too old to farm. No succession plan which is why I started an incubator to find young people interested in farming.
- Need for small business space is a challenge. Can't find a place in town to rent space for my upholstery business.
- Each of us is going it on our own, not connected. Maybe all too busy.
- Electronic age, don't have to meet with people face to face.
- Hardware store closed where we used to go to catch up with people. It was the social club for the self-employed. It closed April 5th. It's really missed. It is going to reopen under new ownership.
- Lacking forum for producers to convene.
- Getting capital is a challenge.
- Start up business hard because have to do own distribution.
- People without internet connection (poverty level, low income farmers).
- No grants for people in the fields, for tangible objects. Always studies or consultants.
- Access to laborers.
- Price of milk is a challenge. There are 11 organic farms and 2-3 successful commercial farms. All depends on the price of milk. If dairy farms don't make it, all the other animal businesses won't have the acreage for their operations. The vets will leave. It's wonderful to have diversified agriculture but we have to keep the dairy industry and it has to be kept at a living wage. Competing with people in areas milking 3-5,000 cows with illegal labor. They set our milk price.
- Can't compete in a commodity market in a place the size of Vermont so we have to look at other ways. Jasper Hill is an approach to make farms viable in VT. Also, value-added products. Cabot is a brand; VT is a brand; both well respected brands. We have opportunities to create high quality products for good prices. It's a strength we can build on.
- Lacking infrastructure. Investment in equipment is too great for 1 farmer. But if do it as a community then only need one machine. Could build infrastructure for local food system that works. Use draft horses. Become more self-sufficient food wise. Need to think long-term, build an infrastructure that will last.
- We're on the edge of Washington County and the Northeast Kingdom so sometimes people don't know which.
- Farmers don't do long range planning, things just happen by accident.
- Farm isn't at its potential. A farm might have a need for farm workers but they're not set up for employees. People don't want to work part-time, etc. labor is always tight.
- Washington Electric is expensive. But it's not that reliable because of storm outages. It could fall away for a day or a week. We have a generator. Energy is going to be a long-term issue. Need a self-sufficiency plan for the long-term energy.
- Food access issue. Farmer's market is like a novelty but expensive. It feels good to buy there because you're supporting local ag but it's unfortunate that it's more of a high-end thing rather than an affordable food source.
- Specialty marking has to come down. Modify the approach of food as a specialty product.
- We're used to paying low prices because of subsidies to food producers. We have to get used to paying more for food in general.
- Cabot store carries local stuff. Supply is a big issue for retailers. How to aggregate supplies so a number of small producers could get what's needed for the retailer.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Match making between farmers, producers, specialty food manufacturers, restaurants and chefs, etc.
- Create guaranteed sales for people. We're going to buy all their cabbage. It doesn't have to be so hard.
- Producers circle in Hardwick. Would be nice if Cabot worked more with Hardwick.
- Directory of skills is an opportunity.
- Being part of a region.
- On consumer level, so many people growing stuff. Should have a seed exchange.
- Agri-tourism could be a good opportunity, such as Haycations where people get a dose of what farm life is like; tours; weddings.
- Foot paths could be a great opportunity. Don't know how it gets organized. Involves landowners. We have beautiful vistas.
- Old village where there are ruins. Have a path to experience the real thing. Should connect the walking paths.
- Map farm, food and art. Can walk to certain places. Can bicycle. Cycling in VT has become part of our destination tourism. B&B's on farms.
- Ag and tourism opportunities about exercise, mapping.
- Have a simple drawing map of roads, trails, places in town. Something that could be a hard copy and posted online and on local bulletin boards.
- Marketing what we have is an opportunity.
- Tell the story of the creamery.
- Cabot Creamery wants to participate and be part of the community.
- Town portal for people who are planning their trips to see all the things they could do when they are here. Have a link to it from Creamery webpage. The consumer will make the choice about what businesses they want to go to.
- Find people with land willing to lease or sub-divide so people can start farming. Matching people up.
- We could be our own consumers. The residents could be the consumers for the Cabot producers.
- We need a pub or someplace where we can gather in the evening and have a beer.

- Online store concept. Trying to bring something like that here for the producers to use.
- Inventory of farmers, producers, businesses.
- Cabot page in the Hardwick phone book.
- Town Hall should become energy independent and in case of emergency we'd have a place to go.
- If town had access to its own dedicated marketing specialist that would work with all the small businesses in town.
- Hardware store will reopen in Nov. hopefully people in this community will support it.
- Would be nice to have a building for studios and workshops.
- Thrift shop, space available that could be used for that, with micro-businesses in it.
- North Country Farming Network.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Networking opportunities. Branding – you are already known internationally for food and cheese, try to capitalize on it. Look toward Hardwick and Newport. Farm 2 Plate network is thinking of starting an independent grocery store network. Lots of good resources for leasing. Land for Good offers leasing workshops.
- Huge amount of energy and good ideas. Great community spirit here. How to get it organized and use local businesses in the hills to support each other and with the village revitalization projects. Trails and connectivity would ultimately be helpful in regards to ag tourism. Then market it.
- What role do you want your community to have in the future in terms of being an ag cluster? Then determine the systems you need to make that happen. Lots of ways you'll have to work together.
- Let's get together; lots of creative entrepreneurs, great products, just need to harness what you have to move forward. FPF, portal.
- So many assets here. Bring them together with an informal gathering place like the hardware store, recycling center. Municipal planning grant.
- Looking internationally to the UK with a tavern and walking trails. Need an ombudsman to represent all of the farmers. New kingdom tasting center. Not everyone is comfortable going to the local farm to buy things.
- We like to be small, small is good but it has its issues. People as an asset and labor as a problem.
- Sense of place. So many pieces that are moving in Cabot but they aren't moving in the same direction. There is a role here for a community developer. General store selling local goods. Parking issues. Get behind the local merchant to expand it to a real community meeting place and maybe into a pub. There is someone in town making beer.
- Capacity limitations even though there is lots of energy here. Figuring out role in regional food system and that tension between having a premium on them but also making them accessible.

Resource Team Debrief Session

Arts, Culture, Recreation

Lots of artists and assets. Need to connect what's happening in the schools and community to the resources that are here. Opportunities to connect parts of town with trails. Marketing, communicating what's happening. Look at how people get info about what's going on, how to get involved and support each other. Also try to figure out how to use the Creamery to get visitors to come to town. Discussions about sidewalks so people can get to town safely.

Transportation

Some issues include: can't walk safely; a problem with speeding; parking in DT; connecting with rural transit. There is concern about flooding and infrastructure; don't feel that culverts will solve the problems; feeling of vulnerability in the village still. There was discussion about trail network potential. Crime came up: cars and homes broken into. People wondering if a need more sheriff coverage. There's ambivalence regarding what it would really look like if more tourists come to town. Cabot Creamery is very sensitive to the village regarding their traffic patterns and timing.

Poverty

How to involve people in poverty in the discussion. 60% of students are on free and reduced lunch. Food insecurity is challenging. Some saying jobs are available, but people not taking them. Others saying maybe some people not capable of taking them. Increased crime. We can't solve the big picture, so let's break it into smaller chunks that we can gain traction on. Heating and fuel insecurity was also an issue especially among the elderly. People don't want to ask for help so they are struggling. The working poor is not really visible. Significant work to be done around what it means to be poor.

Economic vitality and tourism

Creamery, the hills of Cabot full of small cottage industries, trails. It's a challenge that can't walk from Creamery to downtown. The issue of empty buildings and how to use them; many parts of community not working together. Farm and food trails to pull ag interest with economic activities. Pizza came up a lot, positive pie, barton, pizza oven. "Cooking with Cabot" and bold leadership and capital investments. Enhancing economy with local purchase rather than through tourists.

School and community

The school and kids are assets. The challenge and tension is what to do about their school, particularly the high school. The community needs to figure out what they will do, but whatever they do they have to do with excellence. Really look at what they have to offer and what the students and kids have to say about it. What didn't get said and what I heard before the meeting that the big elephant in the room is the school and that Cabot has to realize they have to close down. But I didn't hear that tension in the conversation. There are strong feelings to not close down the high school. Conversation with students was profound; most around how to keep the school going. Market it, different ways of learning, keep what's unique.

Ag, Food and Energy

Diversity of agri-business. Of 14 dairy farms left, 11 are organic. Value added is critical to the future. Innovation and inventiveness. Hydro-dam in Cabot. People are an asset, a

wealth of expertise and knowledge. Lack of connectivity, kept coming back to how can we better connect our resources in and out of the community. Feeling of disconnectiveness, edge of county. Labor, and marketing. So busy doing what they are doing every day they don't have time for business planning. Cabot brand is international and ways to capitalize on that. The hardware store was the gathering place in town and it closed. The idea of a Farmer/producer network. Enhanced website. Better way to drive people to what's available in terms of ag and services. Land lease opps. New farmers. Social media. Consensus that they need community devel organizer networker. Land in Cabot is expensive which is an issue in regards to intergenerational transfer. Now mostly non-residents work at the Creamery. Are most of the farms shipping to Cabot? On bridge building between community and Creamery there is work to be done. They have made an effort to be involved but don't see that commitment from upper management.

Cabot School Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with Cabot students September 21, 2012

7th and 8th Graders

What assets do you care about most when you think about the future of Cabot?

- Structures and buildings.... Need to improve the way buildings look and their safety.
- Assets for tourists are needed for the local economy.
- Health of people in the future - especially concerned about how climate change may impact local agriculture.
- More healthy food available at Cabot School and for the Cabot community.
- Sustaining local businesses...buy local as much as possible at the town store, local orchard, as examples....or towns in the area like Marshfield and Hardwick
- Need better advertising for businesses like the Cabot Creamery and new restaurant that just opened in Cabot.
- Sustainability of their school is important. Want to keep their K-12 school in town.
- The Cabot watershed is very important.
- Help keep businesses in business.
- Help keep the Cabot Library open.
- Want more things to do in town. More community events to socialize at.
- Town can be boring. Need more year-round sports for kids and adults.
- Right after spring flood, baseball field was ruined. It has not been fixed, yet. Needs to be repaired - drainage and bank stability issues need to be addressed.
- There is a very good music program at Cabot School. Students feel strongly that should continue.
- People should go door to door to tell Cabot residents to come to the Community Visit or use other methods to spread the word.
- Noted how the library in Marshfield has sponsored bandstand concerts...should do the same on the Common in Cabot.
- Need more people to sign-up to participate in and attend shows.
- Wildlife and Nature are huge assets for Cabot...must preserve wildlife (animals, plants, rural landscape, forests) in the community.
- Food shelf....increase distribution of food to people in need.
- Creamery needs to be more careful about environmental issues. Discharges from Creamery are a concern.
- Safety for cats and dogs. Need more signs to warn people of pets crossing roads.
- School is an asset for people thinking about coming to Cabot, especially in the arts.
- Trail in the woods would attract tourists... Only one now – the Cabot Winter Trail

Actions to Move Cabot Forward

- Potential to develop trails and attract people to visit old cemetery off Common Road.
- Library is great place for people to meet and socialize.
- Make a map of Cabot to advertise activities happening in town such as trails, picnics.
- Behind the Willy Building there are cars that need to be moved to clean the area up (noted that these are crashed cars that eventually get moved). Need more parking rather than place for wrecked cars.
- Montpelier more socially connected than Cabot. Want to bring more social connections to Cabot.
- Want picnics on the Common for community members to attend.
- Montpelier has places where people can gather and hangout....need something like this in Cabot.
- Need more transportation for Cabot sporting events. May need a bus for sports. Right now parents provide transportation for Cabot School sports.
- Make a video, web page to promote Cabot and tell people what is good about living in Cabot.
- Lots of houses have junk (cars and appliances) in their yards....need to move these eyesores.
- More open gym hours in the Cabot School gymnasium.

What can the students do to make Cabot a nice place to live? What is the most important thing for Cabot to do?

- Space outlined with granite walks is supposed to be a community parking area (around Willy's I think)
- Connect with community more, especially middle school and up. Do not lock gym so early in the evening.
- Walk around Cabot and pick-up trash in town.
- Complete the Bread Oven....structure there but have not purchased oven, yet
- Need more buses for the school.
- Build a community garden. Eat healthy food. Use garden at school as part of the curriculum.
- No handicapped parking spots in Cabot.
- Cabot should grow (economic development). Tourism can support local businesses.
- Create a Cabot radio station.
- Positive Pie in Montpelier is great. Should have their Positive Pie in Cabot (use the Bread Oven space....community supported bakery or business).
- More motel, hotel, hospitality space in Cabot. There are not many places to stay in Cabot.
- Community garden could supply Cabot Food Shelf.

High School Students

What you care about most when you think of Cabot's future?

- That the Cabot School and Cabot Creamery are still going....they are two very important parts of the community.
- That there is a "good town" for their little siblings to live in.
- School is a really important thing - provides greater sense of community.
- That Cabot remains attractive and the river is clean.
- Might not be enough kids to support the school long term. There are thoughts of closing the high school, combining with Twinfield.
- Transportation - there is not enough money to support bussing at Cabot School. No buses for school sports.
- Only Freshmen can take PE, everyone else must take PE online. Students want it, need it for graduation but school cannot afford to offer it.
- Budget cuts in school make it difficult to get credits they need to graduate.
- Food - want bigger servings and more variety in school lunch room.
- Sustainability of local businesses is important. Better advertising and buying local would help.
- Lot of crime in Cabot - cars and other things stolen (inspection stickers, scrap metal) sheriff gives out tickets for speeding but not around at night to fight the biggest crime issues.

Ideas for Action to Move Cabot Items Forward

- More community based activities, Memorial Day celebration as an example.
- No baseball team - baseball supported only up to 6th grade. Another student mentioned driving to Twinfield to participate in high school baseball.
- High school only has 50-60 people (only 9-11 students in the Senior Class).
- There are advantages of being a small school, though -- whole school went camping for three days (would not have been possible in a large school).
- Filmed different Vermont students, created a song...this was done a couple years ago in middle school.

- High school does a lot of small projects / community events based on what they are learning in class. These events bring community together. "Playing for Change" is an example.
- They know teachers better in a small school.
- Want more classes. Shop or tech ed classes as examples. They currently have very few electives - cannot pick classes they want.

- There are online classes ("but everyone does not learn best that way")
- Would like to see more AP classes. They are allowed to go to another school only for foreign language classes.

Ideas of practical actions and they would help with

- More community based stuff....community service requirement is currently 200 hours...should do more.
- Bread Oven Project. "Actually get it built".
- More community events and festival. They have an annual Cabot Festival.
- Café operating on campus as a small business.
- Need to follow through on projects so they are sustained. Too many projects are not continued long term.

What is in their power, how can they make a difference? What would they like to do?

(No response)

Anything we should know about Cabot?

- School has changed a lot - more technology, more project based learning. It's getting better. It was not well organized last year. When it worked, it worked well, though.
- Cabot has many nice, smaller businesses that should be patronized more. Buy local.
- There is conflict / tension between school and community. Some people do not like decisions made in the school. Cabot keeps raising taxes but things are still cut at school. Next thing to go will be PE.

Worried About....

- No one comes to Cabot School games.
- Worried about gangs, crime.... getting sucked into bad activities.
- Poor communication in Cabot. (they have Front Porch Forum, but not enough people have signed-up)
- Parents grew-up here. Students know everyone. Everyone helps each other out, but the community is too insulated.



In addition to attending school forums, many students joined sessions on Community Visit Day

VII. Cabot Community Visit Participants

Julie Ackermann	Daniel Grosvener-Hoyne	Kassandra Morse	Chuck Talbert
Karen Alexander	Cecilia Gulka	Madeline Morse	Michael Taub
Susan Alexander	Gary Gulka	Clara Mueller-Harder	Anson Tebbetts
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Lori Augustyniak	Shannon Harvey	Matt Nally	Kitty Toll
Wendy Barnett	Wendy Heilig	Rebecca Nally	Chris Tormey
Elizabeth Bean	Ben Hewitt	Clementine O'Connor	Mary Ann Tormey
Ted Bermingham	Rob Hirss	Sharon O'Connor	Lars Torres
Ellie Blachley	Curt Holden	Lisa Olson	Jeannine Valcour
Lee Blackwell	Brittany Houghton	Ed Pcolar	Janet Van Fleet
Rebecca Blaisdell	Richard Hourihan	Chris Pearl	Joanne Vecchiola
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Walter Bothfeld, Jr.	Cecile Johnson	Lynn Rockwell	Anne Walker
Jane Brown	Jeanne Johnson	Tara Rogerson	Megan Walker
Bob Burke	Todd Jones	Sally Rushman	Will Walters
Erica Burke	Frank Kampf	Helen Sawyer	Elysha Welters
Henry Burke	Daniel Keeney	Patrick Scheld	Jana Welters
Hugh Burke	Michael Kirk	Dave Schilling	Oliver Welters
Laurie Callahan	Roman Kokodyniak	Fred Schmidt	Sjon Welters
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Cia Considine	Theresa Lay-Sleeper	Dave Shilling	Jan Westervelt
Terri Dailey	Amy Levine	Allyson Sironi	Janet Westervelt
Jack Daniels	Nick Managan	Gage Sironi	Mary Westervelt
Roz Daniels	Chuck Marian	Rand Sironi	Dominique Witham
Peter Dannenberg	Lynn Maxfield	Leonard Spencer	Elizabeth Witham
Ken Denton	Deb Maxwell	Paul Stecker	Dylan Wright
Carlton Domey	Isabella McCallum	Karen Stewart	Alex Yu
Marvie Domey	Gialadriel Morse	Peter Stratman	
Ted Domey			
Fred Ducharme			
R.D. Eno			
Jackie Folsom			
Sue Freeburn			
Susan Friedland			
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