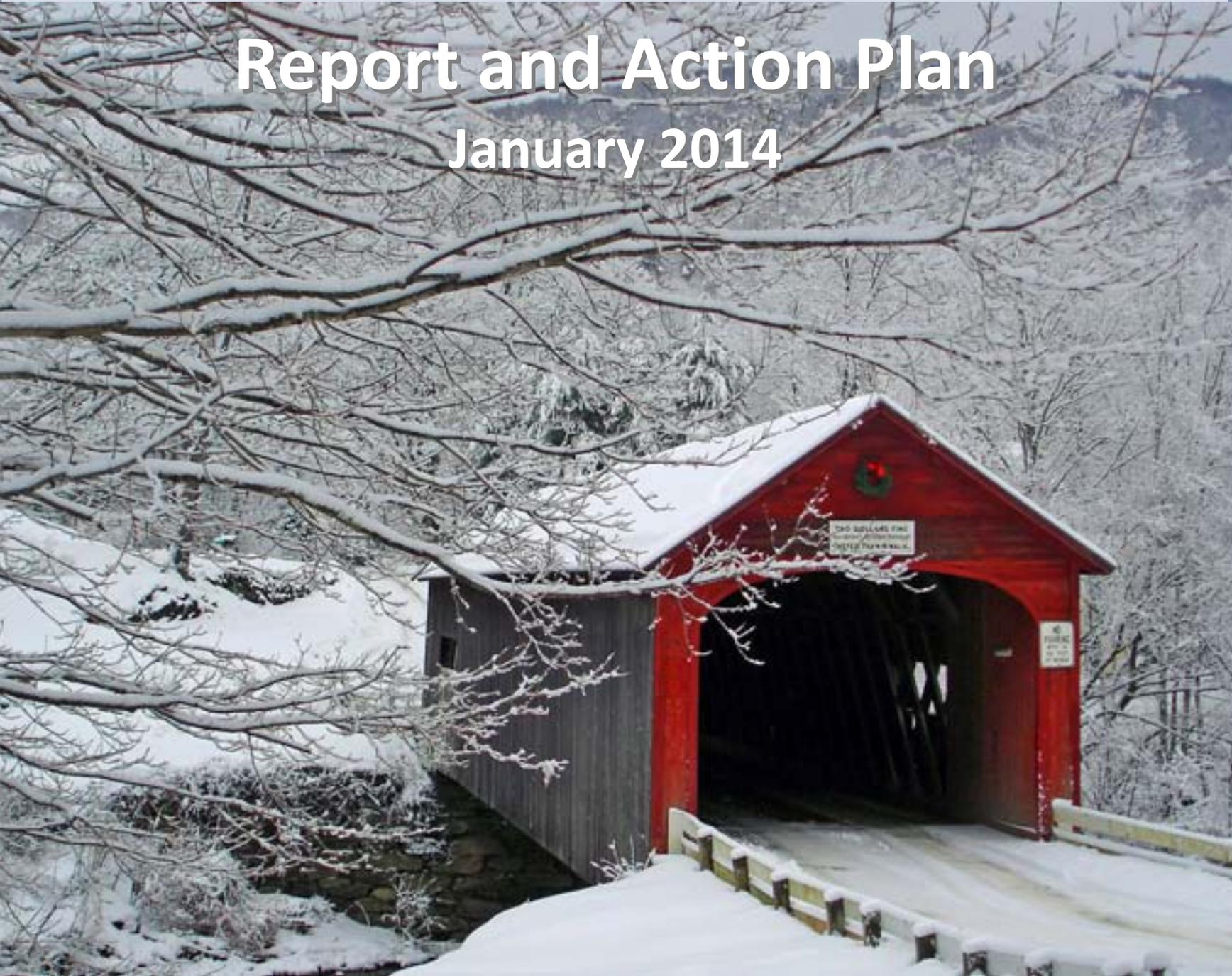


Guilford Community Visit

Report and Action Plan
January 2014



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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Participants shared their perspectives in **Community Visit Day** forums



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



Task force members gathered in a joint session on **Resource Day** before building their workplans

I. Introduction

The VCRD Community Visit team was so impressed by all that it saw and experienced in Guilford: the wonderful hospitality of the community, the hamlets and neighborhoods, the beautiful natural environment and working landscape, the character and dedication of the people. Guilford is one of the smaller communities where we bring our process: we were deeply impressed by the turn out at each event and especially the fact that so many people came, not just to observe, but to act, to join task forces, and to put their shoulders to the wheel to make Guilford a better and more dynamic place to live, today and for the next generation.

There were so many great ideas for action on the table, and it was not easy for the community to choose from them all to establish priorities for action at the Community Meeting. There are many other good ideas for action listed in the 'opportunities' section of this report that can inform the ongoing work of the Task Forces and be ground for the work of other groups in town over time. What we saw was a very thoughtful digestion of all the ideas, an incorporation of some under others (like the park idea being part of the work in refurbishing the Grange building and its environs), and a good sense of timing. Not everything can be done at once in a small town, but by identifying these priorities residents can build from current successes with the redeveloped store and affordable housing in Algiers, and continue the perpetual process of renewal and revitalization. No community is ever done. We were so impressed by the passion, will power and dedication of residents in identifying priority projects, and rolling up their sleeves for the efforts ahead.

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

- **Develop a Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford**
- **Redevelop the Grange Building**
- **Support the Development of the Church as a Community Center and Early Childhood Education Center**

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 Guilford consisted of three phases:

1. On the **Community Visit Day** on October 15, 2013, Visiting Team members heard testimony from Guilford 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 VII. Based on the testimony received, the Vermont Council on Rural Development identified an initial list of the key **Opportunities** before the community (Part III).

2. The second stage of the Community Visit occurred at the Guilford **Community Meeting** on November 12, 2013 when VCRD presented the Opportunities list and facilitated the review, amendment, and prioritization of these issues by town residents. The resulting list of **Guilford Priorities** (in Part IV) were then the focus for the formation of three Task Forces established to build and implement plans to address them (see bulleted list above). We also gathered potential points that could be included in a **Guilford Vision Statement**; poll tested them on December 4th, and based on public feedback, edited for the edition in this report (in Part II).
3. In the third phase of the Visit, the **Community Resource Day** on December 4, 2013, 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 could be available to support their work. The resulting **Task Force Work Plans** are listed in Part V.

Resource Team Members (listed with contact information in Part IX) signed on with a commitment to serve as sounding boards and referral agents for the Guilford 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 Guilford's efforts in each challenge area. Their **Recommendations** (Part VI) ***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, Guilford 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 Guilford'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 Guilford as it moves forward and to provide follow up help to Guilford Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Guilford 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 are so proud and honored to be able to work with Vermont's real heroes—the people who put themselves on the line to make their towns the best places they can be. We deeply appreciate the leadership in this process of the Guilford Selectboard, especially Richard Clark and Anne Rider, the Steering Committee who set the initial focus for conversations and led invitations, logistics, and putting together so much good food(!), Katie Buckley, your terrific Town Administrator, Sara Coffey who was so instrumental in building the

invitation to VCRD to come to Guilford, and the Task Force Chairs who are taking on serious leadership. We appreciate the dedication of the Community Visit Team members who put time, travel and heart into being with us in support of Guilford efforts and stand ready to help with future steps. We need to especially thank, though, Belinda Lashway, for her willingness to serve as the Community Visit Chair—she’s been a touchstone for the whole process and will be invaluable in helping to guide and coordinate efforts so that they work together for mutual success.

Small town life offers wonderful and unique opportunities for the highest quality of life; but many towns struggle and can be challenged to find heart and optimism. Guilford has direction. It has a wonderful and diverse human capacity in a unique and splendid place. It has wonderful people engaged in a community campaign with a locally-defined vision for progress. We commend you and look forward to following, and supporting, your success!



Community Visit chair, Belinda Lashway, serving cake (baked by her mom) at the Community Visit Day dinner.

II. Guilford Vision Statement

Compiled from vision statements we heard during the Community Meeting on November 12, and confirmed by the support of participants at the December 4th planning day. The statements represent broad hopes that community members have for the long term good of Guilford.

- ❖ Guilford is a town that retains its rural character but is an exciting place to live.
- ❖ It is a town with an agricultural future: A town that cares for its people and its land.
- ❖ It's a town that welcomes small businesses; and that has a strong identity and character of its own, not just a bedroom community.



- ❖ Guilford is a town that encourages young people to have a voice, and where they have a place at the table.
- ❖ A town that is known for the good school experience it provides the children.
- ❖ It is a place where our children want to come back to live and can live successfully.
- ❖ Guilford is a great place to grow up, but also a great place to come to for life to get better.
- ❖ It's also a good place to grow old.



- ❖ Guilford is a town where people talk with each other and address the issues that concern them.
- ❖ Where neighbors support neighbors.

III. Initial List of Opportunities and Challenges

Identified by forums with community members on October 15 2013

More than 100 Guilford residents joined with VCRD staff and a 17 member Visiting Team for the Community Visit Day on October 15. They took time from their workday and other commitments to attend forums and a community dinner at the Guilford Central 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 November 12 for voting and prioritization:

Build, Mark, & Map Guilford Trails

A Guilford Trails committee could use the Conservation Commission's mapping to lead in adding up the terrific outdoor recreational assets of the town. It could build a town recreation trails map that includes VAST trails, class 4 roads, neighborhood, fairground, and school trails and links to sites like Sweet Pond, Andrew Meeks Forest and other treasured outdoor assets. This task force could organize volunteers for trail work and to build signage, and could lead events to encourage running, biking, cross country skiing and other outdoor recreation for all ages. This map could be primarily for local use, but, depending on the decisions of the task force, could also serve as a tourism map that could link trails and natural assets with local farms and businesses.

Develop a Guilford Central Park

A taskforce of Guilford residents could develop a Guilford park across the brook behind the Grange with pathways linking to the town offices, library, and school. Young families are looking for a central place to go, a picnic park that could also feature a gazebo and children's playground.

Build a Guilford Farm and Food Network

Guilford residents would like to buy more local agricultural products but there are limited local markets and no local directory. A Guilford Agriculture Task Force could start by building and publicizing a buy-local guide (paper and on line) that can list all of the diverse local farms and the natural farm, value added food, and forest products in town. The Task Force could serve as a farmers' network and a clearinghouse to help producers market together, share resources, and help one another's businesses prosper. It could explore the redevelopment of a town farmers' market, and the possibility for an online farmers' market or a CSA that pools varied products from a number of producers, and possibilities for sharing in a delivery system for local products. Network members could build and label a local brand: "Guilford Grown," and also support local producers in reaching markets in Brattleboro and beyond. The network could also look into potentials for long term tax stabilization and potential tax breaks for keeping critically important local agricultural lands in production and also help land-rich residents connect to new farmers to keep land in production.

Revitalize the Recreation Commission

Residents could join the existing recreation committee to manage the recreational fields next to the fairgrounds. The expanded group could broaden its mission to expand recreational activities at the fields and fairgrounds and develop recreational assets and activities throughout the town.

Develop Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford

A Task Force could inventory potential building space, like the back of the country store, the bee barn building in Algiers, the barn at the fairgrounds, and other potential sites, for their suitability for small business development, and then lead in promoting the development of business incubation space in town. Guilford needs to incubate young businesses and encourage young entrepreneurs who will be the foundations of the next generation of the economy in town. Guilford may not be the center for industry in the future, but it could be the center for cottage industries. An incubator building could include office space, but also provision for light manufacturing, art studios, or food systems businesses, including community kitchen space that could be leased by the day to encourage small value-adding producers to grow beyond their home kitchen scale.

Develop a Guilford Farm to School and Youth Program

A Guilford Farm to School Task Force could work to systematically expand the supply of local food in the lunchroom, increase the emphasis on agriculture in school activities and curriculum, build after-school activities and, based on student interest and leadership, develop a club, like a Guilford 4 H, 'future farmers,' or youth agriculture club.

Start a Guilford Business Network

Guilford has a lot of small and cottage businesses without an organization or information center to support them. A Task Force could constitute itself to organize businesses, build a service and buy-local directory, link websites, share resources, and produce local and regional marketing. Networked businesses could support one another, buy supplies together, share knowledge, skills and services, and work to attract and grow new small businesses and support the economic progress of the community.

Advance a Guilford Energy Project

Developing the energy resources of the future is a challenge that Guilford could begin to address by building a local energy project. A Guilford Energy Task Force could evaluate opportunities and then frame and implement a community energy project, like a community-owned solar farm or biomass heat project.

Build a Community Transportation Committee

Transportation is a key challenge for seniors, parents and young people. A task force could evaluate possible ways for ride share programs, ways to best use current resources from bus services to the church van, and potential steps that could be taken to coordinate and/or expand services.

Build a Senior Housing Project

A senior housing project could answer the needs of aging residents who no longer want to manage a full household but do not want to have to leave their friends and community. A Senior Housing Task Force should be formed to lead in developing a senior living center in town. Such a project could be built in Algiers on land conserved for that purpose, to help seniors age in place and to help anchor the local economy.

Build or Bring Lifelong Learning Opportunities to Town

There used to be more lifelong learning classes in town. A Task Force working on lifelong learning could assess opportunities for local residents to share their skills and knowledge and could work to attract programs ranging from guest lectures to adult education classes to town.

Improve Community Communications

A Task Force of Guilford residents could unify community calendars, advance Front Porch Forum as a communication structure, evaluate re-starting the Gazette, help the town build and keep current content on the new Guilford website, provide welcome packages to folks who move to town, and be a bridge between young and older residents.

Build Community Connections

A Task Force could be developed to bring residents together, to coordinate volunteer activities in town, to advance intergenerational contact and to overcome isolation. This group could work to involve youth in senior meals programs, help bring seniors to school events, develop neighborhood potlucks, develop a community services directory, and in many other ways, bring residents together for activities and community service.

Redevelop the Grange Building

The Guilford Grange building is an irreplaceable community resource that can have a growing role as a community center and focal point for culture, youth activities and programs, entertainment and civic life in the community. A new Task Force, or new volunteers joining the Grange, could develop and implement an ambitious plan to improve and refurbish the building, improve the kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing and electric systems, improve parking, and advance handicap accessibility. A redeveloped Grange building could become much more central to civic life. To make it so, the board, and/or a community task force should evaluate the appropriate ownership of the building, the potential for 501c(3) status, state and federal programs that could be accessed for help in redevelopment, the potential activities and services that could be provided in what could become over time, a true Guilford Community Center.

Develop Pre-School, Early Childhood, and After-School Programs

As a small and dispersed rural community it is difficult for Guilford to afford the resources of larger communities for pre-school services, after-school programs and early childhood education opportunities. Without these services, however, education in Guilford is compromised, and it is extremely difficult for young families to manage under modern conditions where both parents are working. A Guilford Task Force could form to evaluate opportunities, and plan and implement steps to solve these critical needs. They could work to recruit a child care center to town, for example, or frame out a structure for an after school program in town, and then advance its implementation. If programs are closely developed in the school, the group could constitute itself as a non-profit "Friends of Guilford School" to raise money for needed programs and projects.

Added during the meeting:

Support the Development of the Church as a Community Center and Early Childhood Education Center

Convene a Broadband Committee to Bring Universal Service to Guilford

IV. Guilford Priorities

Determined by Guilford residents at the VCRD Community Meeting, November 12 2013.

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Guilford residents whittled down a list of 17 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 75 participants chose three issues that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the November 12 meeting by signing up for one of three Task Forces in the selected areas.

Guilford residents selected three priorities for future action:

✓ Redevelop the Grange Building

The Guilford Grange building is an irreplaceable community resource that can have a growing role as a community center and focal point for culture, youth activities and programs, entertainment and civic life in the community. A new Task Force, or new volunteers joining the Grange, could develop and implement an ambitious plan to improve and refurbish the building, improve the kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing and electric systems, improve parking, and advance handicap accessibility. A redeveloped Grange building could become much more central to civic life. To make it so, the board, and/or a community task force should evaluate the appropriate ownership of the building, the potential for 501C(3) status, state and federal programs that could be accessed for help in redevelopment, the potential activities and services that could be provided in what could become over time, a true Guilford cultural and civic center.

✓ Develop Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford

A Task Force could inventory potential building space, like the back of the country store, the bee barn building in Algiers, the barn at the fairgrounds, and other potential sites, for their suitability for small business development, and then lead in promoting the development of business incubation space in town. Guilford needs to incubate young businesses and encourage young entrepreneurs who will be the foundations of the next generation of the economy in town. Guilford may not be the center for industry in the future, but it could be the center for cottage industries. An incubator building could include office space, but also provision for light manufacturing, art studios, or food systems businesses, including community kitchen space that could be leased by the day to encourage small value-adding producers to grow beyond their home kitchen scale.

✓ Support the Development of the Church as a Community and Early Education Center

As a small and dispersed rural community, it has been hard for Guilford to afford the resources of larger communities for pre-school services and early childhood education opportunities. Good work has already moved forward to redevelop the church in Algiers to serve many of the needs of a community center which can provide early childhood education resources. A Guilford Task Force can support and expand on existing efforts to plan and advance steps to develop community center resources at the church especially in the area of child care services and other enrichment opportunities for youth in the community.

V. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, December 4 2013

Guilford 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: ✓ Redevelop the Grange Building

Chairperson: **Sara Coffey**

Facilitator: **Steve Ames**, Recently of River Arts

Resource Leaders: **Paul Costello**, VT Council on Rural Development

Robert McBride, Rockingham Area Museum Project

Fred Schmidt, UVM Center for Rural Studies

“The Guilford Grange building is an irreplaceable community resource that can have a growing role as a community center and focal point for culture, youth activities and programs, entertainment and civic life in the community. A new Task Force, or new volunteers joining the Grange, could develop and implement an ambitious plan to improve and refurbish the building, improve the kitchen, bathrooms, plumbing and electric systems, improve parking, and advance handicap accessibility. A redeveloped Grange building could become much more central to civic life. To make it so, the board, and/or a community task force should evaluate the appropriate ownership of the building, the potential for 501C(3) status, state and federal programs that could be accessed for help in redevelopment, the potential activities and services that could be provided in what could become over time, a true Guilford cultural and civic center.”

Action Steps

1. A warned meeting of the Grange membership to review the new energy around redeveloping the Grange building.
2. Frame the list of the redevelopment needs, including a building assessment (assessment of the building and its needs and budgeting for improvement).
3. Evaluate opportunity to maintain a Grange building but hold ownership in an incorporated entity that can receive grants for redevelopment. Review other Grange building redevelopments.
4. Map the property and plan for what could be done outside and on the adjacent town properties toward the potential development of a park.
5. Inventory of community volunteer skills that people are willing to do to support the building.
6. Have a subsequent meeting to plan for a New Year’s dance!
7. Hold a community work day.

Resources

1. A dance committee is formed.
2. Grange members will form a meeting to inform grange members who aren’t here.

3. Paul Bruhn of Preservation Trust of Vermont.
4. Mapping team and talk to the town – Tanya Palency / Andy Rain, Michelle Shaw, Eric Morse.
5. Windham Regional Commission.
6. Volunteer work crew – call a work day.

Task Force Signups

[Chair: Sara Coffey](#)

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Task Force: ✓ Develop Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford

Chairperson: **Steve Redmond**

Facilitator: **Pat Moulton Powden**, Windham Regional Commission

Resource Leaders: **Sharon Combes-Farr**, Vermont Digital Economy Project
Lars Torres, VT Office of the Creative Economy

“A Task Force could inventory potential building space, like the back of the country store, the bee barn building in Algiers, the barn at the fairgrounds, and other potential sites, for their suitability for small business development, and then lead in promoting the development of business incubation space in town. Guilford needs to incubate young businesses and encourage young entrepreneurs who will be the foundations of the next generation of the economy in town. Guilford may not be the center for industry in the future, but it could be the center for cottage industries. An incubator building could include office space, but also provision for light manufacturing, art studios, or food systems businesses, including community kitchen space that could be leased by the day to encourage small value-adding producers to grow beyond their home kitchen scale.”

Action Steps

1. Conduct initial Feasibility Study including:
 - Inventory of existing business and types
 - Inventory of buildings and other spaces – vacant or underutilized indoor space and land
 - Identify assets and resources: infrastructure (physical, virtual, or both)
 - Assess regional resources to learn and as competitors
2. Get more people involved through an event like a “small business day in Guilford” or an evening business reception.
3. Create the vision and mission of the Small Business Incubator: What types of business do we want?

Resources

1. Bob Johnson entrepreneur meetings
2. Brattleboro Development Credit Corp
3. Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS)
4. Small Business Development Center
5. Windham Regional Commission
6. Greenfield Kitchen
7. Listers
8. Other incubators in Vermont and the region
9. Guilford forum.com – real time/arts focused
10. Vermont Community Development Program
11. USDA = value added producers grant, RBEG, RBOG
12. VT Economic Development Authority
13. Economic Development Agency
14. Working Lands Grants
15. VT Council on Rural Development
16. VT Telecom Authority where there is no broadband
17. Marlboro College, Center for Creative Collaboration for facilitation
18. Friends of Algiers
19. National Business Incubator Assoc.
20. Arts Asylum – Somerville MA incubator
21. Venture Capitalists that residents know of: North Country Angels, VT Venture Forum, Jeff Velcher’s company
22. Existing businesses; Country Store

Raw Notes:

- Inventory of existing business and types
- Inventory of buildings – vacant or underutilized indoor space and land
- Identify actions with multiple benefits
- Open houses to connect
- Identify assets and resources: infrastructure (physical, virtual, or both)
- Assessment of business needs
- Assess surrounding business opportunities
- Assess ag land as an asset
- Identify actions with multiple benefits
- Resource tax implications and those that can benefit
- Assess regional resources to learn and as competitors
- Feasibility study
- Educational opportunity
- Consumer survey – needs and interests; what would people like to see here?
- How many home based businesses; how to reach?
- Identify potential new businesses
- Get more folks involved? i.e., small business day in Guilford
- What types of business do we want? Mission/vision

Task Force Signups

Chair: Steve Redmond

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Task Force: ✓ Support the Development of the Church as a Community and Early Education Center

Chairperson: **Carl Hirth**

Facilitator: **Greg Brown**

Resource Leaders: **Jeff Nugent**, Windham Regional Commission

Andrea Ansevin-Allen, USDA Rural Development

Reeva Murphy, Deputy Commissioner, VT Department of Children and Families

“As a small and dispersed rural community, it has been hard for Guilford to afford the resources of larger communities for pre-school services and early childhood education opportunities. Good work has already moved forward to redevelop the church in Algiers to serve many of the needs of a community center which can provide early childhood education resources. A Guilford Task Force can support and expand on existing efforts to plan and advance steps to develop community center resources at the church especially in the area of child care services and other enrichment opportunities for youth in the community.”

Action Steps

1. Do a site plan for the church property.
2. Business plan for how it will sustain itself for the long term and for building the programs that go into the building; marketing plan; needs assessment.
3. Fund development and fundraising.

Resources

1. Windham Regional Commission, Chris Campany can help with know what goes into a site plan.
2. Vermont Community Loan Fund.
3. USDA Rural Development low interest fixed rate loans.
4. Community Development Block Grant – maybe a planning grant.
5. Municipal Planning Grants for designated village plan; will help inform town investments and everyone in town that has a building.
6. Small Business Development Center can help pull together business plan.
7. Windham Regional Commission can help with Charrette (intensive planning session) for Algiers.
8. Brattleboro Development Credit Corp.
9. Vermont Community Foundation.

Raw notes:

- Add to description as written that the food pantry and Guilford Cares is part of the description, social services, emergency center, meeting space, training space
- Grant seeking / fundraising
- Feasibility study / financial analysis – raise \$10K
- Build a building (and condemn the neighboring trailer)

- Master plan for Algiers; how to move through the space and define the character of the place. How does the addition relate to the surrounding place?
- Needs assessment of families with young children in Guilford and surrounding area.
- The Sprouts Program (7:30am-9pm) ages between 6 weeks and 8 years old wants to move to the space at the church. They are currently housed at the Canal Street School in Brattleboro.
- Buying the neighboring property.
- Master plan for the church site and consider phasing it in with or without the adjacent property.
- Research temporary housing / mobile classrooms
- Form 2 subcommittees:
 - Site plan
 - Funding resources and business plan. How will it sustain itself over the long-term?
- List resources for grants for the other functions like: Guilford Cares, Foodbank, Medical Supplies. Can plans leverage each other or are there other restrictions.

Task Force Signups

Chair: Carl Hirth

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VI. 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 Guilford 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.

✓ Redevelop the Grange Building

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

With such a strong dedicated Grange and a strong interest in the community in the revitalization of the Grange building, there is a huge opportunity to bring new life to this wonderful Guilford asset. It can be the cultural center of town, and it can retain its history and character as a Grange even as it opens itself to multiple community purposes.

Everyone seems to understand that the Grange board holds the cards and the community looks to the board to have a serious "internal" talk about the future of their legal structure, the ownership structure for the building, and the possibility of maintaining Grange control with a non-profit community partner that could effectively raise and manage funds for the renewal of this treasured property. It seems that a community-oriented agenda and involvement in the renewal of the uses and physical structure of the building is compatible with the Grange's existing structure, but the relationship need to be clarified. If change is necessary, just what that entails needs to be specifically laid out and well understood by everyone. These issues need to be addressed before any major fundraising is initiated.

While this strategic conversation is essential to the future, no one needs final answers before they chip in to improve the building or its environs, and the Grange membership seems more than open to having community events in the space...the building will come to life in practice and in on-going community/Grange dialogue, not as a static strategic long-term plan.

The Visiting Team was encouraged by the short and long-term thinking and goal setting of the community discussion and endorses key action steps:

Holding a Community Workday to celebrate the building and engage the broad community in cleaning, painting or other things that can be done today to improve the building and grounds and infuse the space with community energy;

Building a sub-committee to set up for events in the near term—such as a community dance with a local live band;

Setting a sub-committee to look at ties to town property across the brook that could be a family picnic park and playground associated with the Grange building;

Reviewing and renewing the assessment of the building status and developing an inventory of needs and potential improvements to revitalize the space; budgeting for these needs; and framing a capital

fund development plan to meet them. A critical first step here is to get an engineering or equivalent skilled appraisal of just what is needed to bring the building up to standard on all fronts – structural assessment, plumbing and especially electrical systems, heating (and insulation), and handicap access.

It is important for the task force to develop a master plan for the site to determine highest priorities for working on the condition of the building, but also involve the full community, starting now, in advancing practical improvements that can be accomplished with volunteer energy.

As the committee works on the master plan for the building, it may want to hold additional public forums to ask community members about their vision of what the Grange building could be, what functions it could perform, and what community partnerships could be leveraged to increase usage and public benefits from the space.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE GRANGE TASK FORCE:

Preservation Trust has some capacity to support assessment grants and Paul Bruhn is the indispensable leader in Vermont in preservation and redevelopment projects of this nature.

USDA Rural Development (Jon Muise in the Brattleboro office) can play a strategic role when it comes to addressing the larger issues of the Grange capital improvements/accessibility challenges.

If the Grange can develop or associate with a group with 501c3 status, the project could have access to VT Facility Grants, and seed funding from Vermont Foundations. The Vermont Community Foundation (Scott McArdle, 388-3355) and Windham Foundation (Bob Allen, 843-2211 x 16) will be the best places to start.

The VT Agency of Commerce may be able to provide access for a State Historic Preservation grant (http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/strongcommunities/historic/FUNDING_DIRECTORY_2013.pdf) and could potentially be helpful through a Community Development Block Grant. Paul Bruhn at PTV or Pat Moulton Powden at the BDCC could advise about any possible tax credits available.

If and when the emerging organization tackles fundraising, a team from Guilford might benefit greatly by visiting Ferrisburg Grange. After a tragic arson destroyed their landmark Grange hall on Route 7, the community rallied and raised funds to rebuild it quickly, and they effectively reproduced the character of the historic structure.

While local select board and other town officials are well plugged into this community initiative, keeping state reps “in the loop” is important as well.

Contact Next Stage in Putney (Maria Basescu or Billy Strauss) or visit River Arts in Morrisville or Catamount Arts in St. Johnsbury; they can give advice about operating a cultural performance space in an historic building.

It will also be important to involve the experienced leadership of Friends of Algiers Village for advice on redevelopment.

✓ Develop Small Business Incubation Space in Guilford

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

Incubating small businesses, attracting young creative entrepreneurs, developing value added food products, helping home businesses take the next stage of growth—these are powerful economic development strategies for small towns and are being advanced in communities throughout rural Vermont. Guilford won't be a global headquarters for corporations, but it can be the cottage industry capitol, and developing space for small businesses to start up and grow in Algiers seems a highly strategic next step for this community.

That said, the work toward developing a site should proceed with thoughtful deliberation. You can't rely on a "build it and they will come" aspiration alone. It's critically important to ensure commitment to a transparent, pragmatic process that drills into the real opportunity but is willing to scrap any part of the idea if it doesn't meet the needs of the potential customers of an incubator. No project like this can succeed without a business model. The upfront work is going to take a significant amount of volunteer brain and work power; it will be essential to expand the conversation to draw in additional voices, insights, and - most importantly - raw, skillful power to the effort—especially from the small business folks that may be attracted, ultimately, to the building.

The Task Force should take time in future meetings to further frame its vision and mission for the small business incubator, one that is consistent with Guilford's scale, opportunity, and sense of community.

As you crystallize the purpose/function of the business incubator here are some questions to consider:

- Is it to bring existing cottage industries into a shared space? Is it to enable start-ups or support young entrepreneurs? Is job training/education a component?
- What are the precedents and models for business incubators in the region and elsewhere?
- Identify needs for a business incubator. Are there areas that could spur growth, e.g. a community kitchen or a computer and other digital services?
- What existing assets in the town can enable/support a business incubator?

A clear starting point for the Task Force could be to do a survey of home-based businesses looking to expand and to inventory their space needs. To start to gauge interest and to expand the circle, the Task Force could do something small and practical, for example an entrepreneurship roundtable (look to StartupVT.org for ideas) or an open house/meet and greet reception that would get new people attached to the effort as a result.

The Task Force could also survey existing businesses - including home based businesses - and the "independent workforce" (self-employed service providers, tele-workers, free-lancers) to understand the "need." The expected outcome of this survey would be a better definition of the kinds of services an incubator could provide. Have a look at the report available here for options on models: <http://local64.com/coworking>.

Ultimately, it will be important to tell the story of the incubator in a way that captures attention and articulates Guilford's comparative advantage. In other words, answering the question: Is Guilford the

right fit for an incubator and why? For example what makes it advantageous over Brattleboro or surrounding options? How can Guilford amplify its advantages? Helping Guilford to understand its strengths and limits will help to define the appropriate model and focus of an incubator.

Incubators thrive where there is already an entrepreneurial ecosystem that can be amplified. So what are Guilford's "successes" that others will be attracted to—who can form the core of an incubator's mentorship base, recruitment, champions, and partners?

A delegation from the committee could visit several locations including the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies in Middlebury and Burlington, the Vermont Technical College Innovation Center in Randolph, the Poultney incubator run by Chuck Colvin (cwcolvin@myfairpoint.net) and Local 64 in Montpelier led by Lars Hasselbrook-Torres. Co-working space may be more achievable than traditional incubator space (depending on whether the space will actually provide services to tenants). While some of these operations will be out-of-scale for a Guilford model, there will be things to learn from each.

The task force should identify potential micro sectors of interest to the community, that fit the criteria for the community and catalysts and partners who will seek out, invest, publicly support these ventures... State agencies may be the first go-to partners (like the Agencies of Agriculture or Commerce). The task force could tap into current work of sector activity in ag/sustainable food systems or the health sector. But Guilford will need to find its own niche, and the collective leadership of the task force should consider arts and studio space, crafts, light manufacturing, software or information systems businesses, food production or wood working and other areas that surface from surveying new and young business start-ups in the area.

The Task Force will also need to evaluate appropriate sites in the community. In addition to the bee barn and the unfinished parts of the store in Algiers, residents mentioned the fairgrounds buildings as potential space for development. Try not to let the space or other assets drive the mission too early in the process. Start from the vision for what you want to achieve and then look for spaces that can match or achieve the vision.

Depending on the developing shape of the project, the committee might want to evaluate the option for tax credits and other incentives/benefits for the redevelopment of a property. There could be potential funding for planning/implementation through USDA community development rural business enterprise grants.

In any redevelopment, make sure to partner with Efficiency Vermont to make the incubator space most efficient from electric, thermal and transportation perspective and get all you can from their resources and expertise.

So much depends on leadership. In Poultney the incubator succeeds because a property owner decided to devote his building to incubating small businesses, and he has made it work as a business model. It's not a coop! The Task Force should think about and communicate with individual property owners and entrepreneurs who might provide leadership for a viable incubator project led by a private sector landlord or investor.

Another alternative to consider would be to put the incubator project under an existing non-profit enterprise that serves the community of Guilford, so that the project can be better positioned to receive grant funding, including planning funding, in the future.

Ultimately, the Task Force will need to create a business model for developing and maintaining a business incubator; look for help from VtSBDC and your local development corporation, BDCC.

RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP THE BUSINESS INCUBATOR TASK FORCE:

Connect with Lars Torres (lars.torres@state.vt.us) at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. In addition to leading Local 64, he's the Director of the Office of the Creative Economy. The Task Force could review the "Co-working in Vermont Starter Guide" – co-published by Local 64 & VCET (Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies) – a step by step guide to getting started. As a member of the Visiting Team, his contact info is listed in the back of this book.

USDA Rural Development Brattleboro office covers the Guilford area and can be very useful; Jon-Michael Muise is the Area Director, (802) 257-7878 ext. 4. Jon is a great facilitator and could be able to help the task force access funding to move the project forward.

David Bradbury at VT Center for Emerging Technologies could be a good advisor. He can be reached at 656-3880.

Pat Moulton Powden, at the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation is a wise counsel: she could be reached for advice at 257-7731.

If there is time and inclination, survey a range of incubator models – from Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, the Mad River Food Hub, The Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick and Karma Birdhouse in-state to Artisans Asylum, MassChallenge, and Cambridge Innovation Center out of state – to understand their role, operations, and impact.

CDBG Planning Grant might be available for a feasibility study. Contact Lucy Leriche, Deputy Secretary at the Agency of Commerce (828-5204).

The US Economic Development Agency could provide a planning grant of \$40K-\$100K for incubator development. Contact Matthew Suchodolski at the EDA at 215-597-1242.

Work with the VT Small Business Development Center for help on the business model, call Pat Ripley at 595-3388 to connect to their services.

The Center for Creative Solutions at Marlboro College may have the ability to help with project development. As a Visiting Team Member, Dolores Root's contact information is in the back of this report.

Some sites for reviewing potential funding sources:

- USDA Community Facilities Loans & Grants: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HCF_CF.html
- Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation: <http://www.brattleborodevelopment.com/>
- National Business Incubation Association: <http://www.nbia.org/>

✓ Support the Development of the Church as a Community and Early Education Center

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS:

It is hard for a small town like Guilford to support the range of services that modern commuters and two bread-winner families need to thrive. It's wonderful to see the movement to answer challenging gaps in child care, early education, after school programs and community services that Guilford residents are trying to address. This priority emerged as leaders in an already-developing project and community residents pulled together to support the redevelopment of the church in Algiers as an early education and community services center for the town.

It may be challenging, at first, to bridge the community enthusiasm and the new volunteers with the existing development effort, but we commend the decision to strengthen this project with broad community participation.

In the interests of clarifying civic and church roles in both the educational offerings and community center services, careful articulation of religious and secular lines in programs (for example in the early childhood curriculum) will need to be transparent and well communicated.

The Community Visit Team suggests a number of avenues that the Task Force may choose to explore as it advances this project:

It will need to develop a business plan for developing and operating as a center and explore state and federal funding for developing the space and subsidizing the center.

Toward this end it could explore 21C Federal Grant for After-school and extended learning opportunities funding (3 year increments) via Vermont Agency of Education. It should also evaluate the state's current (and anticipated in 2014 Legislative session, expanded) statewide publicly funded preschool program and explore how to access these resources.

To some on the Visiting Team it seems important for the Task Force to clarify its focus – is it to create a community center with multiple services including a day care, or is it to create a center for a community daycare?

It should research models for daycare and early education centers and potentially explore partnering with an existing day care program/services in the region.

To prepare a business plan for the programs that are or could be held in the church it will be essential to determine how they will be sustained over the long-term. The study should include the following:

- a. In cooperation with the Guilford School, complete an assessment of the need for child care services and early education services in Guilford and in neighboring communities.
- b. Complete an analysis of the need for space to house programs already in operation in Guilford, as well as for potential new programs to address unmet community needs. The analysis should include the Church's possible acquisition of a neighboring property, and the possible construction of new senior housing in Algiers near the church building.

- c. Create a business plan that will demonstrate the cost of such programming at the church, and identify the sources of revenue that will be used to cover their cost.
- d. Complete a marketing plan to inform the Guilford community and neighboring towns in the tri-state area about the programs available in the church and related properties.

The redeveloped church could serve as a focal point for envisioning the next stage in the redevelopment of the Algiers village. Depending on its ambitions, and its ability to connect to Friends of Algiers, it could complete a site plan for the church property and a broader design study for the Algiers neighborhood. The site plan could include, but not be limited to:

- a. Current traffic patterns in Algiers and the ways in which they might change based on increased use of the church and possible new senior housing in Algiers.
- b. Possible ways to improve parking at the church to accommodate increased programming.
- c. Improved pedestrian facilities such as side-walks and cross-walks that may be needed to accommodate increased programming at the church and generally more intense activity in the Algiers neighborhood.
- d. Possible sources of funding for any new facility construction or facility rehabilitation.

The project ultimately will need to design and implement a fund development program that will help support both capital and operating needs of community programs offered at the church.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE CHURCH COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION CENTER TASK FORCE:

The Child Development Division of the Department for Children and Families at the Vermont Agency of Human Services can assist with needs assessment techniques and information about program design and coordination.

The Vermont Data Center based at UVM, the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union and the Guilford School can help with population forecasts on which to base projected future need for child care and early education services.

The Windham Child Care Association based in Brattleboro and the Windham Regional Commission can provide information from earlier needs assessment projects.

The Windham Child Care Association can assist with information to support cooperation with existing child care programs and providers.

The Task Force could apply for a “Municipal Planning Grant” from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs to cover the cost of a design study for the church property, and for the larger Algiers neighborhood. The Windham Regional Commission can assist with preparation of the application.

The Community Development Division of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the Windham Regional Commission can assist with information about using Community Development Block Grant funds for brick and mortar community facilities projects.

The US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program may be able to assist brick and mortar projects with one of their Community Facilities grants. They have a district office in Brattleboro. Contact Jon Muise at 257-7878 x 106.

Contact the VT Agency of Education for their help: Emmanuel Betz Emmanuel.betz@state.vt.us or 802-828-0557 (http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_federal/21st_CCLC.html), and Manuela Fonseca Manuela.fonseca@state.vt.us or 802-828-3850
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_earlyed.html

The Small Business Development Center based at the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) can provide information about preparation of a business plan.

A Marlboro College Graduate Student in the MBA program could help with research and business plan as part of their practicum work. Contact Pat Daniel, Director of Managing for Sustainability pdaniel@gradschool.marlboro.edu or Sean Conley Graduate School Director sconley@gradschool.marlboro.edu.

For help with space design: Center for Design Engagement at University of Massachusetts Amherst, contact Joseph Krupczynski at josephk@art.umass.edu.

Dolores Root at the Center for Creative Solutions at Marlboro College (contact info at rear of this report) is interested in helping to support this effort and the overall progress of Algiers Village. There are potential synergies between a business incubator, community day care center and senior housing located in Algiers that could enhance the larger goal for Algiers to be a vital and sustainable economic center. While the senior housing is not one of the 3 priorities decided upon through these community meetings, it is a high priority for Friends of Algiers and they already have the land. The Center for Creative Solutions could work with community to look at the big picture and to create a master plan that finds the interconnections and interactions between these different projects, which in turn will inform function and design. This action step would build on the work of the task forces and provide an integrated plan framed within the larger goal economic viability as well as opportunities and efficiencies of their interactions programmatically and spatially.



VII. Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 100 Guilford residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on October 15 2013

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.

Guilford Parks Trails & Outdoor Recreation

Resource Team: Bob Allen, Chris Company, Paul Costello (facilitator), Margaret Gibson McCoy (scribe), Lars Hasselblad Torres, Lucy Leriche, Fred Schmidt

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Sweet Pond (State Park). The dam was condemned and the pond was drained. A lot of people in town are interested in saving it and there's an active committee working on it. It's a popular attraction for residents and visitors for swimming and hiking. There's a nice beach, a lovely trail where Eagle scouts rebuilt the raised walkway, and parking. The State Park is still open. It's an emotional and cultural issue for the community.
- Property behind the grange on the other side of the brook was recently acquired by the Town. It's deeded to the town along with the parcel on the corner. The Town is wondering what to do with it; the Planning Commission is wrestling with it. We could create a picnic park or something like that.
- When kids were little there was an active recreation department in the rec area (next to the fairgrounds but separate from them) with tennis courts, ball field, basketball hoops. The rec area has gone dormant. The Guilford recreation club is looking for younger families to be involved. No ball teams with the school so no games there anymore.
- The Fairgrounds is great place to take a walk. It's off the main road; don't have to worry about traffic. It's connected to the recreation fields. People walk and ski there. It's a separate non-profit.
- VAST system of snowmobile trails all through on private property. They have maps showing the trails. It's used by walkers, runners, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, and horseback riders. Trail use is by permission. The network goes all around Guilford and hooks to Vernon and Halifax. Maybe other places from around town could hook into it; could tack on. The Guilford Pit Stoppers, the local snowmobile club, is amenable and helpful.
- Class 4 roads that aren't currently being used by recreationists.
- Playgrounds in town: one at the Welcome Center and one behind the church. Maybe need playgrounds in other places.
- The abandoned schoolhouse in W. Guilford has swings that aren't being used but could be.
- The sportsman's club has 40 well-maintained acres with a fishing pond, archery, rifle range, pistol range, trap range. It's private.
- Guilford School has active sports teams; a good soccer field, basketball court, walking trail, nature trail, horse trail.
- Nice trails on some dirt and Class 4 roads: Josh Road, Green River Road, top of Potash Road (on private property) was a nice trail network but has recently been logged so not good now, top of Cemetery Hill Road has trails on private property.
- Conservation Commission has been mapping the roads and doing an inventory of the natural resources. They are also looking at invasive species. Weatherhead Hollow Road has pond swimming but it's getting filled in and isn't as good as Sweet Pond. It's dangerous a dangerous road, cars go fast, but it's heavily used by cross-country runners, etc.
- President's Day Cross country race used to go through Guilford.
- Green River swimming under the bridge.
- Algiers swimming hole at Broad River Brook.
- Andrew Weeks Forest on Carpenter Hill Road (old Spring Farm land and trails) is private, along the Broad Brook. Ski trails have bridges, beautiful. Big area, a few hundred acres.
- Linda Burkes is an asset with her deep knowledge of all the trails but she's leaving in November.
- Brook Trout fishing is good.
- Steve Smith trail from stable through woods and through his property so horses don't have to go on the road. It's a land trust property. Can cross-country ski there. Top of mountain has unique biota savannah. It's hard to get there.
- Fort Dummer State Park is the other state park in town. It's more conventional with a ranger and you pay a fee to get in. Used for mostly camping. Cut off from rest of town 'hard to get there from here'. People from Guilford don't have reason to use it.
- Packers Corners has old cemetery and old foundations. Top of Potash Road has old foundations; cool old ancient areas.
- A lot of historic cemeteries.
- Possibility for mountain biking trails to get to the school. Someone was working on creating a trail from school to Algiers and other places.
- Guilford Country Store is a great asset. Would be great to figure out how to let bikers know it is there.
- Complete Streets program passed in the legislature which requires municipalities to consider multi-modal transport as

roads come up for repair. There's the opportunity to get at some of these things piece by piece. Would be helpful to have a group in town to keep the issue alive.

- Bike trail destination – create a nice one for families in town might be easier than figuring out how to make roads bikable.
- School has resources that could be used more broadly by the community.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Trails are pretty hilly and challenging for some people. The roads have no shoulders.
- People don't know where they can go to walk. Limited number of designated trails. For cross-country skiing people know how to access the VAST trail from their house, but don't know where else you can ski. Create a brochure for the town to show all hiking trails and recreation activities.
- Do people want to share spots with out-of-towners or are we talking about it for own residents. Residents sometimes don't want people walking through, or their love their neighbors walking through but don't know about tourists. There aren't a

lot of places to stay in Guilford so don't think we'll be inundated with tourists.

- Separate hamlets with hills in between.
- Too dangerous for kids to bike to friends' houses. Would be nice to have a bike lane but would be a huge task.
- Town doesn't want to take land off the tax rolls.
- Property liability; property owners sign an agreement with VAST but it's troubling when it gets misused. Biggest fear is opening property to some that may trash it or use it dangerously.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- People from each neighborhood could walk their trails and create a map of the trails they know to collect all the trails we have. Conservation Commission does some of that now, they do trail walks around town. Every walk has a GPS.
- Improve or build a recreation department with a Director to develop programs for adults and children year-round.
- Need a budget line item to fund things like that. Look at how we're funding current commissions.
- Recreation Club is a small group of officers to manage the recreation fields. They don't have a town overview. Need some empowerment from the town to become more active. Could turn it into a Recreation Commission or working group. Currently have active group that is looking for new members. The Commission could look more town-wide for recreation opportunities.
- Form a collaboration between rec club and fairground committee to come up with projects in that area.
- Encourage events besides the fair at the fairgrounds. Dog agility, etc.
- Small farm field days was there a few years ago. Have stables and viewing stands, etc.
- The fairgrounds can be rented for evens and weddings. The board's plate is full. That doesn't mean it couldn't be done with more input or volunteers. Maybe a recreation commission could work to bring activities and hold them there, for example. Make more of the facility.
- Races in town like the 4th of July race – could be enhanced if there's a recreation committee.
- Guilford 250 was a year-long celebration. Had a 5K race, then tried another one on the 4th of July, this last year was hottest

day of summer and only 10 people ran. Grange sponsored this year. Snowshoe race at the fairgrounds on Guilford 250.

- Need a vehicle to share the information that a recreation committee does.
- New town website: guilfordvt.net links to commissions and their reports. Also a good source for information about events. Maybe build a town Facebook page. Front Porch Forum is new community networking vehicle.
- Tie in the assets we have by building a park of some kind with gazebos in case of weather. Young families are talking about where to go. The land behind the Grange as a possibility; tie in with the library and build a playground.
- Could have Andrew Meeks Forest with acres of land connect. Define a trail system that starts behind the old school house, build a playground, connect to the school to the library to the walking trails in the whole village center.
- Landowners need some answers: Does the state protect private landowners who open up their property for recreational purposes? What about permitted use for private property; don't want horses on my property but wouldn't mind walkers or cross-country skiers.
- The Vermont Edition episode on landowners rights aired a couple weeks ago which had some info about that.
- Sweet Pond is in the budget and was slated to have work done last legislative session. The agency has kept it on their budgetary items. Will take help from others lending credibility to the effort.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Playground is a great idea. People more apt to use it if it's seen.
- A community mapping exercise is helpful. Have maps out where people can mark things important to them. Can be a good resource for the planning commission or recreation commission.

The Windham Regional Commission has amazing mapping capabilities and can help carry out those technical pieces.

- The town could utilize and coordinate the assets that are already here such as Sweet Pond. It's ripe for coordination. VAST can be a very good partner. In Grafton a bridge went out

- and VAST split the cost of rebuilding it. The Complete Streets program could happen but would need good local energy.
- Home-to-school Biking Program got money from VTRANS, in 5th years, now a bond issue. There's a lot to do. Be mindful and respectful of those with private property; don't put them on the lists. Be in it for the long haul; maybe generations before the children and grandchildren free up their land for trail use.
 - Great turnout and ideas. Encouraging to hear low-hanging fruit ideas; lots that won't cost any or much money. A good starting point. Get an organizational structure together and will be able to tackle some of the easier projects.
 - Welcome Center I-91 could be a great asset moving forward to advertise Guilford recreation activities.
 - Water resources here, can't take them for granted. People have to understand where they are and keep them protected.

- List of about 20-30 places that are priceless; a conservation commission mapping them; a recreation committee that needs help; a fair committee ready for other use; school assets; tremendous opportunity for momentum. Tying them together makes it such a rich community. In Morrisville they established a trail committee through the CV process. Rutland built a multi-million dollar bike trail to interconnect bike trails and hub to get people to shop downtown. Are there new people or new leadership that can be encouraged to step up? This is an opportunity to energize new leadership.

Guilford's Agriculture and Natural Resource Economy

Resource Team: Bob Allen, Chris Campany, Paul Costello (facilitator), Margaret Gibson McCoy (scribe), Lars Hasselblad Torres, Lucy Leriche, Fred Schmidt

What are the Assets in this Area?

- The Gaines corn maze is a great local attraction.
- Dairy farmer transitioning into Angus beef – could sustain 80 cows; looking for how to best market it.
- There are 3 dairy farms left each with between 50-75 cows.
- CSA's, maple, flowers, farmers market in West Guilford, berries. A lot of syrup produced in town, pork, lamb, chicken, duck, turkeys, grass-fed beef.
- History and heritage of Ag here. Kathy Rapan's class at the school inventoried all the farms.
- Dairy farms being turned to other ag uses.
- Hay
- The Blueberry House.
- Sheep and wool products.
- People use other people's land through rentals or haying landowners land so they don't have to brush-hog it.
- Don't know of value-added producers.
- Commonwealth Dairy – a huge market right next door.
- No access to local community kitchen.
- 90 acres with beef cows.
- Horse farms.
- Loss of dairy over the last generation.
- The Brattleboro school has a buying club.
- The Brattleboro farmer's market.
- 2 years ago had the Guilford Farmer's Market.
- The Country Store is actively interested in selling things people are raising and growing in Guilford.
- Kerbers Saw Mill.
- Planning Commission survey showed that people want to support the ag community in this town. It's one of the big mandates of the planning commission.
- Logging firewood; a lot of properties in town in land use which need to be serviced. A lot of times the lumber companies have their own folks doing it.
- The main product at Sunrise Farm has been lumber, run saw mill for flooring. Only do wood they cut themselves.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Need more people involved in ag; it's nice to be able to make a living off the land but the margins are small so it's hard and there aren't a lot of incentives.
- Hard to hang on to the land and want to diversify to make it possible.
- Technology has changed. Gone from small farms and fields to more sophisticated equipment and technology is now faster and bigger.
- Land availability and land insecurity; hard to afford it. Leasing land is an option but the security is a concern. Older landowners will transition off of it so it's hard to feel secure with investment in the property.
- Land going into conservation through the Vermont Land Trust has problems for farmers. If VT Land Trust helps with preservation deal, the farmer can't add enough housing to populate it at a level you can afford it. So only wealthy people from somewhere else can afford it. We have 3 families living at our place which makes it doable. For smaller younger people that want to get started it's one way they can get access to land. The Land Trust recognizes that and is starting to look at solutions. They recognize that you need to be able to add value so you can keep that land in production.
- Difficult to keep up with cost of processing and grain and all that goes into raising meat. End up pricing per animal rather than per piece. At least 1/3 of cost is slaughter for a lamb. No USDA slaughterhouse for ducks so the only way to get permission to slaughter on the farm is if you sell to a restaurant that tells the customer up front how the animal was slaughtered.

- No 4H or youth group that teaches young people about animals or farming.
- There is an animal therapy farm working with disabled kids. She wants to have a class.
- In the school, at least 3 classrooms are matched with Guilford farmers and will visit them. The program is about food

systems in general but not necessarily linked with Guilford. No volunteer to run a club in Guilford.

- Lost critical mass because so few farmers left. People in town support farmers.
- Good land has been developed, not a lot of road frontage that is ready for a house. But there's a lot of hay land and corn fields that farmers rent that could be built on someday.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Would be helpful to have a list of what products are available and where they are available.
- Have a volunteer to run a club in Guilford like 4H or an ag club for young people.
- Organize a clearinghouse or organization to connect people that grow with people that want to buy local ag products.
- FPF has just launched in Guilford and is a good place to communicate what's out there.
- Farmers to work on research to find things that work in our area and a possibility to get grants to do that. i.e., how to remediate whey grant. Should be focused more at farm level to develop new topic area to apply for grants to do research at the farm to improve Vermont products. Have specific climate and terrain issues here, solves energy problem or waste problems. Epscor (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) would be interested in working with people interested in doing it.
- There used to be a business that developed a directory of farm products but he stopped doing it.
- UVM Extension is great resource.
- Long-term tax stabilization and break for keeping parcels together and supporting the long-term viability of farm operations.
- Local bottling plant could support small farmers and anyone who wants to buy local milk. It would give everyone in Guilford the ability to support local farms.
- Look at what are the high expense items for farms and see if it can be localized or part of a startup business. Who would be willing or interested in starting something like that?
- WLEB has grants available to kick-start small operations. Who will take leadership; is there an entrepreneur? Who will develop a slaughterhouse or bottling plant?
- Have to look at critical mass to entice a business person to start something like that. Need to regionalize it to a larger area and think beyond Guilford; not enough critical mass here.
- Post Oil Marketing thing is larger veggie farms not in Guilford and Guilford farmers have to compete. What about "Guilford Grow" to support local ag. Could create a label that everyone could use and the Guilford Store could be a hub for that.
- The food hub. Local food gearing a lot for schools but doesn't include meat. An untapped resource.
- Create an annual publication that lists all the local farms and what they sell.
- Start something on a small scale it builds on itself and can attract interest.
- Guilford website could have a page that lists producers of food and forest products. Could also do it in print. They new website has a directory of businesses and could easily add a page for ag products.
- Have something ready for people who move to town – like a "welcome pack" with information.
- Guilford people who have booths at the Brattleboro farmers market could pass out the list there to help boost Guilford ag products.
- REAP grants at the federal level that pays for renewable energy systems for farms. Cow power, manure mixed with food waste to create a gas that you can burn to help offset costs.
- Look at what currently exists in town and think about how we can use our current resources to reach out into the community. i.e., when a new baby is born, send them a book and invite them to the library.
- Transition team talking about sustainability fizzled out.
- Cooperative vending opportunities. Guilford people could share space and sell other peoples products.
- Now that the water line is in we could look into a local farmer's market again.
- A local pub.
- Online sales and online farmers markets.
- A farm at the school supplying food for the lunchroom.
- Buy local, live local.
- Start a delivery service that works with all the farmers to bring food around to the people.
- Guilford fair put more emphasis on agriculture; serve people more locally grown food.
- After school activities at school related to ag.
- An umbrella CSA of producers.
- Local school buys a lot of food; can we make an inroad of Guilford serving Guilford food. Major Farm to School program in VT that helps schools build farm policies.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Interesting that the planning commission found that people support local ag. Building policy of local food in the school is interesting; and creating a directory could be easy and lead to other opportunities beyond what you can imagine now.
- Guilford Country Store came up a lot and lots of opportunities there in terms of a products clearinghouse location. Regional approach could be a good way. A lot of assets here already. Have a variety of farming operations from small organic and

veggie farms, meat production, CSAs, maple. Bring together some way to share resources.

- Diversity of what's happening in this small town. Extension agents came from this area; UVM extension has failed you and there's a disconnect. FPF can help with visibility and connection with markets.
- Tension between wanting to stay local and the economy of scale and the need to think about larger region value-added processing, etc. Might be helpful to look at them in the 2 categories. If decide want to prioritize may choose projects from both worlds. Markets in Mass, and NH. Incubator spaces for value-added ag. The good news is that there are businesses in place that you can learn from. Learn from others challenges and mistakes. Marketing and tourism in the ACCD agency. Keep in mind that VT has an incredibly powerful brand in the nation and region. The VT brand has a lot of value. There are state and larger resources that small operations can tap into. The WLEB grants are

interested in making strategic investments in infrastructure that will leverage other businesses.

- A creative list of ideas. Can't do them all today. But there are things that people can do. The Grange buildings used to give moral support and mutual support where people would work together. The food systems are a new version of that. 20 new businesses in the Hardwick downtown in the last few years and they are there because Hardwick is cool. There is a revival of interest and excitement around youth. Have to think about how to turn the dime on relationships that are global or local to share lists, tell the story, capturing everyone in your neighborhood. VT is first in the nation for direct sales. The new consumers don't know how to connect to your food right now. There are ways to make it happen that won't cost a lot of money.

Supporting the Guilford Economy

Resource Team: Bob Allen, Chris Campany, Paul Costello (scribe), Margaret Gibson McCoy, Lars Hasselblad Torres, Lucy Leriche (facilitator), Fred Schmidt

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Close to Brattleboro and Greensboro.
- Interstate slow.
- *Water and sewer infrastructure in Algiers.
- Our roads are well maintained.
- We have a native form of optimism.
- We have village designation for Algiers.
- We have an active grange.
- An active green river preservation trust—keep historic values in that hamlet and protecting the swimming hole.
- Community people willing to keep that area working.
- Five hamlets.
- We have a good fair—from the leader of the fair....fundraises for lots of community needs.
- We are close to major markets—Boston and NY.
- Most people have broadband access, not good. DSL=deathly slow link!
- Uneven service and intermittent cell service.
- A great group of people in the town.
- Positive and solve problems.
- A great snowmobile club and gun club.
- A strong artistic community—arts, crafts and literature.
- Good creative tension between people who grew up here and people who moved here.
- Lots of entrepreneurs.
- Video game development
- We have technical writers and editors.
- Education level is higher here than in the county.
- Non-profits here; we have a full spectrum of them.
- Friends of Algiers advanced housing and other development in the village.
- Active church in the village.
- Good fire department/public safety...30-40 members.
- We have a welcome center—laughs—we can't access it without driving to MA.
- Very responsive town government.
- Untainted landscape.
- New country store.
- Good water.
- Our biggest asset is our people.
- Active and fit population—lots of runners and bikers.
- Land available for agriculture.
- People know how to live off the land and are relatively sustainable...
- Close to everything but off the beaten track...so we don't have the development pressure.
- Very cute children.
- All above average.
- Low crime rate

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- We need to do something so our kids can return here home after college.
- Kids haven't returned who went off to college.
- We have home businesses, small enterprises some of whom are invisible. Lots of cottage businesses, but we have no network.
- No information center or organizing of businesses.
- We don't barter and trade between small business...we don't even know who is here and we don't have an organization.
- We just started a list of businesses on the website...but not linked to their sites and not inclusive.
- Be great to have a more expansive list.

- Guilford fair program had a list that we gathered.
- It would be great if we could invest in a solar project together.
- Challenge is that we are short on energy and the cost of energy is growing.
- How can we earn a living and reduce costs.
- Young people need more affordable housing...young people can't afford to live here except with their parents.
- Cell service is a major challenge.
- People have a hard time working from home...we can't attract tech jobs and small tech development because of broadband and cell gaps.
- Universal service would attract new businesses—I do game development and know others who would like to move here if we had infrastructure
- We have to be careful...these things keep us from being overcrowded.
- We lack industry...we don't want much but we could use a couple of small industries it would relieve tax burdens which are high.
- No industrial park.
- The seasons when you can't get anywhere without going to Brattleboro first. Mud Season and tough winters.
- We have an aging population and don't know how we will be supported.
- Need to bring youth back.
- We lost Sweet Pond State Park...no funding for it but it needs to be done.
- Taxes.
- We don't have much for adult education opportunities. Many adults who don't know how to use the internet. We don't have anything geared to our needs here.
- There's no zoning, no land use regulation. In some ways this is bad for development and in other ways may be good.
- We did have blighted sites that we have turned around, because of the Algiers group that wants responsibility.
- To attract industry you need a place ready for it, and there is no location in town that is ready.
- Could a nursing home or senior living, doesn't make anything, but doesn't bring in taxes.
- Find industry at the scale of community.
- Agriculture—loss of farms...we need to stop the slide...we have a huge land base owned by older people who could leave leased land and undermine the farms that are left.
- Brattleboro bus comes to Algiers.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- We could build a community owned solar farm or renewable energy project could be developed.
- We have major untapped forest resources and could do a thermal heat project.
- Educational effort on developing a biomass capacity in town.
- We need to come up so that we stop going to Brattleboro and do it ourselves.
- Businesses need networks to better advertise, buy supplies together.
- Town website could have a buy local directory to encourage local sales and services.
- A Guilford Exchange.
- Could do it online, a buy local directory and we could work together to advance local sales.
- How many have something they could sell? Almost everyone has a skill or business here and we could all be connecting with each other better to exchange services, skills and products.
- We have so many skills we could be sharing.
- We could do this around time sharing...Brattleboro Time Trade exists now.
- Is there a way to put links to businesses and services on the town site? Yes!
- Guilford Fair Book is the only local directory...I use it to source local but we could be more organized.
- A senior housing project could be located in Algiers and help our economy and answer the need of our aging citizens.
- We want to help seniors age in place or at least nearby.
- Apply for village center designation for the Village Center.
- Bee barn building could be made available—its for sale and could be like an incubator if an investor bought it.
- Can Guilford develop a way to reduced farm taxes in exchange from development rights?
- There used to be interesting lifelong learning classes here, if we had them.
- We don't have a lot of available buildings for small business development. Bee Barn might be a good incubator building...maybe there are others...
- The barn at the fairgrounds could be available...fact is, we don't have an inventory of existing businesses that could be redeveloped.
- Is zoning also an answer? NO! Though the absence may make it complex for small businesses to predict the future.
- There are other incubation sites...that might draw investment.
- We have stock that we just don't think about as business. Property in the store and a building next to it that could be broken up for small business development.
- New businesses could help indigenous businesses start up here in a positive way for the neighborhood.
- There are more home businesses than we realize.
- Some of us work remotely.
- We have many lovely and historic buildings in this town...some places capitalize on it...could we build a crafts or arts tour—a weekend a year with art and crafts.
- We could do more with tourism, looking at our assets, map trails, rent bikes.
- We foster events at the fairgrounds...car shows, all kinds of other activities.
- We could tie on to Strolling of the Heiffers as a site on their strolling bike route.

- There's little minority population...diversity is a new market to attract. We could attract more diversity...draw youth, new tourist sector, etc.
- High Speed internet so people can work from home—15 megabits or up.
- Broad way of thinking about it. Tension between need for economy and care for community.

Quality of Life for Guilford Seniors

Resource Team: Greg Brown, Paul Bruhn, Sharon Combes-Farr, Caitlin Lovegrove (scribe), Susan McMahon, Doug Racine (facilitator), Jill Remick, Tom Roberts, Dolores Root

What are the Assets in this Area?

- The people: the generosity of spirit, the strong sense of community, how kind everyone is. If anything happens anywhere, you can be sure that people come to your door and help you out. There's a sense of welcoming and acceptance, even for people who come into the community new.
- There's already an organization called Guilford Cares that has helped people in the community. It's a volunteer organization that tries to help quality of life for seniors in town by providing transportation, food, etc.
- There's also a Food Pantry that is tied to Guilford Cares. Early motto was neighbors helping neighbors. A member of the community came to the selectboard and asked around town for help to set up a food pantry and ended up at Guilford Cares asking if they could help, which they did and then it took off on its own.
- Active church that does not restrict itself to helping members of the church. It's active at Thanksgiving, and there's a senior lunch twice a week at the church. There's also the van, and other events and meetings (such as AA) are held at the church.
- There is a lot of integrated work between a lot of the different agencies. The library works with the church, with historical societies, with the school.
- Used to have the Guilford Gazette – it started at Guilford School, largely because community members wanted the school kids to get to know the seniors in the community.
- The School is also an asset for seniors.
- The community is in close proximity to Brattleboro and a major hospital, and people don't have to devote the town's resources to maintaining something like that.
- Two recent online developments to help community discussions: Guilford Online forum where events can be posted, and Front Porch Forum.
- Within each community (hamlet) in Guilford, people are looking after one another.
- There's a very responsive town government. The fire department just shows up, the road crew does a marvelous job taking care of the roads (especially if you live far away from one of the central hamlets), and if you go to the town government, you get an answer.
- Guilford Country Store!
- The town report is helpful for listing social services.
- The statewide 211 number is a helpful resource, particularly for seniors.
- There is land available for development for senior housing (it's been put aside for it by Guilford Preservation Incorporated.)
- A caregivers' support group meets in Brattleboro at the Gathering Place to support people who are caregivers.
- Choices for Care, run through Medicaid, is a program for seniors over 65.
- Poor elderly are being served really well, as are the rich elderly, but the middle class elderly maybe aren't being served as well.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Getting the word out: for Guilford Cares, calling and getting help from them is a barrier to get over.
- Isolation: it takes the person who delivers meals on wheels, if asked to do so, two hours to do the circuit in order to deliver to four people (the town is very spread out).
- The Emergency Center is on one end of town, which is difficult for those living on the other end of town.
- There's no real center of town; there are three distinct villages and a lot of other hamlets, but there's no one place where everyone goes. Algiers is the economic center, whereas Guilford Center (where the Grange is located) is the cultural center.
- Keeping warm in the winter is a challenge for older folks. They try to save money and use wood, which is a lot of work. Seniors sometimes close down the whole house except for one room, and often will sleep in their chairs instead of going upstairs to their beds (where it's still cold).
- There's no real public transportation.
- Nobody seems to have all the facts about Guilford. You can't go to one source and find out, for instance, how many retired people live in Guilford, the different ages, how many on Social Security etc. Knowing this kind of information would make thinking about life in Guilford a lot more realistic.
- There is a lack of communication, and people aren't sure how to reach out to people. There is not an accessible database or list for a town wide mailing or town-wide phone numbers.
- It's hard to find out from people what they want to know, and when they want to be included.
- Internet access in the town is atrocious: slow or nonexistent. There is also limited cell phone access.

- How many facilities and recreational facilities are equipped to support people with disabilities? With canes, wheelchairs, etc? Not many? Overall it is not an accessible-friendly town for access for seniors, though the store has done a good job of inviting people who need access.
- Guilford is not the easiest place to get involved in unless you're pushy, or a "native Vermonter." It can be really lonely when you're out in the "hinterlands" and you don't have children.
- Thinking of the seniors that are home and getting older every year, when the town's seniors are at the point when they need a little more assistance and can't live alone, they have to move out of town to find assisted living and that's pretty sad. It's difficult for the seniors to be able to stay in their homes: aging in place.
- If you live outside of one of the town centers in your own house, you don't go anywhere in the winter.
- People don't always know what's going on: "I live in this community, and I work in this community, but I feel that I only know 1/10th of what's going on."
- Hard to find people in their 40's and 50's to stay in Guilford; the same people who could potentially end up helping seniors, and taking up leadership positions in the town.
- Basic needs sometimes are not met – for instance if somebody with a disability needs an air conditioner put in, or a light bulb changed.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- If every organization in town that has a newsletter budget could pool them the town could put a Guilford Gazette out again (the library is already working to republish the Gazette.)
- Make the Guilford Gazette intergenerational (involve high school students and kids at the elementary school in the process.)
- Create a directory of social services (including services beyond the town of Guilford, such as those that could be helpful that are located in Brattleboro) as part of the town report.
- Have a lot more intergenerational contact. The different generations need each other and need to get to know each other.
- Get to know your neighbors. For instance, by taking people peaches! (Peach diplomacy). Talk to people.
- Potluck party for the entire street, so townsfolk could meet each other. Have food available.
- Develop some of the things in Guilford that are available in Brattleboro, so people can stay in town to have fun. We need to make our own fun here in Guilford.
- Work on getting kids involved in senior meals.
- It would help to have an older person designated to help out to connect senior citizens to high school events. We need to know what's going on at the high school.
- Follow up on affordable senior housing. Create some sort of shared living space, perhaps with something intergenerational.
- There are already whisperings of a plan for senior housing in Algiers near the country store, and walking paths.
- Create a working group to develop the land put aside by the Guilford Preservation Incorporated to become a senior living center.
- Create a regularly scheduled route for the 14-seater bus that is parked at the church (also to go on trips, like to the butterfly museum, etc.) There is already a similar bus in Vernon, and the two towns could coordinate and work together to increase their reach and helpfulness.
- In the past seniors have been invited to the school for events (such as for interviews, meals, etc.) Perhaps there could be one night a week where kids could be hooked up with seniors to teach some computer skills.
- Community walks: having a "meet at the grange and go for a walk on Saturday," event.
- Try to collaborate with other towns in terms of community resources. For instance, share bussing between towns.
- Hold regular small group meetings/forums to get input from some of the people who are more isolated to see what their needs/wants are (similar to the community visit program).
- Ask church group or high schoolers (maybe during a school concert) to help with some of the interactions with Guilford seniors.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- There seems to be an energy in this community to help each other. People do care about each other in this community.
- Common thread: communication. In rural towns across the state among people who live "out in the boonies" this is really a day to day challenge. But, there are a lot of functioning tools that Guilford is already using, or is planning on using, to help with communication. Creating and using these tools is something that the community needs to keep working on.
- Everyone talked about the spirit of "we're all in this together;" that seems to run throughout the town. Powerful and encouraging attitude to have. You have it, cherish it, nurture it.:
- Was impressed with the number of concrete examples, from peaches to senior volunteers. Hears the beginning of weaving everything together.
- There is an issue of Supply and Demand: no lack of energy or resources or people. It's just a matter of connecting people. Create a Guilford Gazette, maybe as a subsection of the Brattleboro Reformer.

- For many people what brought you here is the rural nature of Guilford, and as one ages, it's still an attraction, but it does become more challenging. Isolation is a big challenge.
- Heard some of the ideas around connecting people with different ages. It's easy to go to school kids, but somebody identified the middle-aged group as a group who could help, even if they have the most pressures on their time and are hardest to reach. Find ways to incorporate this group.
- There was the idea of the middle-class seniors having the most challenges or need to get connected.
- The postal service has a new service wherein you mail to every box-holder in a town without everyone's address, and it's a great way to connect the community (for 16 cents a letter.)
- On having fun: there is a wonderful group in Brookfield who rescued their old town hall to make it a community center. This may be a good inspiration for Guilford.
- It's important to emphasize how lucky you are to have a local government that really is a positive force in the community.
- The community has a wonderful asset with Guilford Cares, which is an amazing lynchpin here.
- Katie spoke about the school concert as a way to connect into a demographic that might be harder to connect to otherwise. This is an important idea.
- Potlucks are another idea that surfaced: make community potlucks more of a regular thing.
- Keep up the energy of the 250 anniversary.

Guilford Community Buildings

Resource Team: Greg Brown (facilitator), Paul Bruhn, Sharon Combes-Farr (scribe), Susan McMahon, Doug Racine, Jill Remick, Tom Roberts, Dolores Root

What are the Assets in this Area?

- The Guilford Library is a wonderful asset. It doesn't only have books. It is small. There is not really a meeting room there. It is half the size of this room in the Grange. It is used for small gathering up to 10 people.
- Historical Society. Is also very small.
- The Grange. That is where we are meeting. It is a great building. There are monthly meetings here. It is used a lot. There are seasonal suppers. Dancing. Voting. Headquarters for Green Up day. Fair planning was held here. For the Grange you can just give someone the key and they can have their event here.
- The School. Town Meeting is held there. It has a large gymnasium, library, and cafeteria. These assets are not used tremendously for non-school related meetings. Not used as much as Vernon Town School, for example. But is available to be used.
- Town Building. Maybe up to 25 people can be hosted there. Use for select board meetings.
- The Meeting House. It is next to the library. It was a church. It gets used. There are pews in there. It is good for concerts. It seats 300 people, but there is no bathroom.
- Five church buildings in town.
- Guilford Community Church is used for gatherings. It has several buildings and meeting spaces. It is used for senior lunches. It is the Red Cross designated building. Town bus is in the parking lot.
- We have the oldest Episcopal Church in Vermont and used once each year as a church so that it can keep its active status.
- Guilford Store. The café seats 15-20. Privacy is at a minimum, but it's a great place to meet.
- Fire Department. Has training meetings there. There is a meeting room that holds probably 40 people. There is inadequate parking there to accommodate a meeting and have space for the firemen to park if there is an emergency.
- There is a club house and handicap access at the Sportsman's Club. Although it is private, you don't have to be a member to use it.
- The Fairground has many open spaces and open buildings. There is nothing that is really inside. The office seats maybe a dozen people. There is a large open bingo building. Weddings and large outdoor events are held there outside.
- Hinesburg has a church in the old school.
- In terms of repairs: We have people who can do stuff. We don't need to pay people to do these things – we can do it ourselves. We dug a thousand feet of water line in one weekend.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- There are at least five places on the list that have parking issues. The Grange, the Meeting House, the Store, the Fire Department, and one other.
- Many of the existing meetings spaces are too small.
- Anything in the Guilford Center can use the field to park. The field was just donated to the Town so that it good. More for fair weather parking. All the downtown venues use this spot for parking.
- The Grange is one of the only meeting places that has water, etc. in the winter.
- Grange and the Store have issues with handicap accessibility. Most of the places have these issues. Only the church and the library do not. The bathrooms on the first floor of the Grange are not handicap accessible.
- How can we better utilize the buildings we actually have? There are problems with sharing these resources.
- Some of these buildings are very old and the cost of maintenance is high. Lot of repairs need to be made to this building, the Grange, for example.

- Who is maintaining the old school houses? They are all privately owned except for the brick school house which is owned by the Historical Society, a nonprofit.
- There is the issue of maintaining the historical aspect of some of these buildings. It is both a desire and a challenge.
- Churches are not qualified for some sources of funds for maintenance and repairs.
- Guilford doesn't have a center of gravity. There are several different neighborhoods. Are there meeting spaces or public buildings that are distributed such that there is access for each neighborhood or do people have to travel to get to them? Geography is a challenge. Narrow roads. Some neighborhoods do have community spaces and some don't. The Grange is pretty much the geographical center of town. But only a few people actually live here.
- Guilford is so spread out geographically that the separate neighborhoods are more defined than is our "whole sense of the town."
- Energy efficiency is poor so there is great cost to heat these buildings.
- The small scale of the active membership of the community is another challenge. It may not be unusual, but we have a challenge of trying to engage more people to carry the load of the work and to participate.
- ADA access is more than just handicap accessibility.
- The management of the space is a challenge. Someone has to look after it. Pay the utilities, coordinate the ongoing maintenance, the scheduling calendar, and the volunteers.
- We're rich in buildings and character, but we are short in funds to keep them up with improvements.
- There is a lack of communication in Guildford. We have been living here for 7 years, and we didn't know until this past Sunday that the Grange was a fraternal association that we could join. People don't meet to exchange ideas.
- There seems to be an idea that others are taking care of these things. Until it vanishes, like the Fair did at one time or the Rec Club might soon.
- Neither the Church nor the Grange allow alcohol at events.
- The spaces we have may not be able to meet the needs people have.
- Only two of the spaces we talked about have kitchens. Are the kitchens adequate? Are the restrooms adequate for the space? All the meeting places need restrooms. All of them also need to have the ability to offer food and hospitality.
- My perception is that, watching the Guilford Store, that this is not a community that has very deep pockets. Newfane raised half a million dollars in three months and the thermometer at the store is painful – it is not going up.
- The Art organization recently got grant money. However, they cannot hold their events here at the Grange, because of lack of ADA accessibility.
- There are resources you can go for, but organizational structure is needed, in order to apply for this funding.
- There are three main issues with the Grange are three: ADA accessibility, heat expense, and not enough volunteers.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- We need to communicate more. We have several groups with very similar problems. We need to get the word out.
- We could really use the Guilford Gazette again. We have our different identities, but we do not know each other. We have to breakdown the silos in our community. The church does more than what you would expect and the Grange does more than what you would expect. The Gazette is a great tool to communicate that to everyone.
- Can some of that same information just be posted on the town website? The organizations are already on the new website right now. We have links to other organizations' websites.
- The Town used to have a mailing to all new residents. They used to mail that out when people moved here, but it went by the way side through the years.
- The Gazette is particularly important for the aging population. There are a lot of people who don't know how to use the Internet or don't have Internet service availability.
- The Town plan comes out every 5 years and it has a lot of good information in it.
- New service from the U.S. Postal Service allows you to mail to every address on a postal route for 16 cents apiece. Guilford does not have a zip code.
- It would be interesting to see what people are actually looking for meeting spaces for. Sometimes there are all kinds of restrictions that are just there for no reason.
- There are a host of issues related to upgrades. How organizations do their business in order to rent out to various parties – licenses, renting out. Affordability to keep the rates down. Liability issues. It's increasingly complicated for what is a volunteer organization. Management issues of a space.
- The Community Church dealt with its accessibility issues.
- People have said "I would have come, but I cannot get up stairs."
- There is so much going on at the Church that there is not enough space. We have to keep taking the movable partitions down and back up, etc. We are thinking about making an addition and also adding child care. Facility upgrades.
- Wireless access. Internet access. Where can people go to the public Internet access. The Vermont Digital Economy Project is going to assist with Wi-Fi hotspots in Guilford.
- Town Meeting is the biggest annual meeting. It is held at the school.
- With this conversation, it seems that it is all about the Grange. So how do we have better support here, better repairs, have more events and give it new life? How can we, as a community, help the Grange, help this building?

- Food Pantry. We are a 501C(3). Submitted a grant to the Vermont Community Foundation. Looking for a generator. The food pantry is here.
- Partnerships with other organizations would be helpful.
- Dummerston Center uses the Grange Hall and it brings in traffic and it brings in money.
- As a Grange, we are subjected to restrictions as a fraternal order. Can it become a community center so that it can become a 501C(3)? The building belongs to the organization and they need to work through it.
- Nonprofits need legal and financial assistance (literacy). That's tough for organizations. How do we access free advice? That would be very helpful.
- What are the activities people want to have that they don't have the space for?
- I don't think it's confined to the meeting space. What are the activities that the community would like to support? Small play groups.
- The year of the 250th, there were so many activities. So why cannot we do that all the time? The interest is here for the activities.
- Do we need one central space? Not sure. I think we need the Grange to be more accessible.
- Place to play music and to dance. Something that attracts all ages and all walks of life.
- Quilting guild to meet once a month. Sewing lessons.
- Yoga, Qigong, and other exercise classes. We need a better space for that. Also AA. Need lighted, accessible space with good access.
- Need a training room. Possibly one where you could show movies.
- It seems that everything we want to do, we figure out how to do it. That may be, but is it really in the best space that we could be doing them?
- Dance hall seemed to be the only thing during the 250th that we wanted to do that we didn't have the space to do.
- I am a carpenter and there are a lot of us in town. There are enough of us who would volunteer to do what you needed if we are organized. Just figure out the insurance, etc. That is something that we want to do. It is a dream of mine.
- Card night every Tuesday night. Open mic night. Something on regular schedule that happens without fail.
- Parties and weddings – there isn't anything you can rent. You need a catering license.
- How come our school is so unavailable? We pay a lot for it and it doesn't seem available. Issues of security. The custodian has to be present, etc. More strict policy since New Town. Lock downs, cameras, etc. and harder to use.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Grange as the focus and the upgrades to the facility would be worthwhile. Other towns have done it. You don't need to serve alcohol to get people to come. If you have a program people are interested in, they will come!
- Idea of a community endowment – borrow this from Putney. Get many groups to come together.
- The good news is that all of the things you talked about are solvable. Many communities have dealt with these issues and have been better for it. The Preservation Trust is very glad to come back and talk about the possibilities and what you might do. For emphasis – existing organizations that might take on a job like funding multiple buildings in the community. Need to channel the energy.
- Inventory idea of all of the spaces and what the pros and cons are of each space. You can do that pretty easily on your own.
- "I think somebody mentioned the idea of the Gazette." Good idea to figure out how to resurrect.
- Algiers is a designated village center. If you did that here near the Grange, you could get access to other funds.
- Brookfield rescued their old town hall and have a wide variety of events there. (Ludlow also).
- There are a number of assets, but none of them are close to ideal.
- We never heard a compelling need for a different space. But if there was a better space, things would happen.
- There are a lot of options for money that other communities have taken advantage of. You will be able to explore that for parking, kitchen, ADA access, better bathrooms, etc. There are mechanisms for doing this. It will take a number of organizations coming together to make it happen.
- The Grange is the building. The room upstairs is beautiful.
- You have demonstrated a lot of creativity to make this building and other work. You will want to tap into that creativity to take it to the next level.
- Take an inventory of the buildings and also take an inventory of what you want to do.
- Create a "Friends of the Grange" organization that is a nonprofit.
- Give up the fraternal order to save the Grange to make this a vibrant community center.

Guilford Youth & Education

Resource Team: Greg Brown, Paul Bruhn, Sharon Combes-Farr (scribe), Susan McMahon, Doug Racine (facilitator), Jill Remick, Tom Roberts, Dolores Root

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Schools' emphasis on "placed base education." Guilford as a basis for education. The best way for kids to learn in through their local environment and through information about their local community and our natural environment.
- The town library. Story time.
- We still have a pretty strong agricultural base which is an asset and is one that should continue to be supported.
- We have some great parent and senior volunteers in our schools who support our children. They come in to do different programs within the school.
- The museum / historical society.
- Friends of music supports music education in the community. It's a nonprofit. 48 years old. Emphasis on community based – it's an enrichment program.
- Science program in the program. Statewide program. "Four winds."
- Youth soccer program. 70% of the school was doing soccer. Run primarily by volunteer parents.
- The school is such a welcoming place to volunteers. They let you send a note home in the newsletter or participate in clubs, etc.
- The Guilford Fair is a big resource. People love it.
- Openness. Flexible.
- Welcome baby program in Brattleboro – but they come to your home in Guilford.
- Pre-school program.
- Free camp at the library for one week. Literacy based.
- Food pantry for kids for lunches for the summer.
- Church has a summer lunch program and summer youth employment program.
- Inter-faith youth group that does a lot of mission stuff, like picking apples.
- Rec Center.
- Guilford school kids put many hours of volunteer time into the community. 8th graders move on to high school and they still volunteer here in this community.
- Green-up day is huge in our town.
- The kids come back after they go to high school.
- Farm Camp at Deering Farm and another.
- Swimming holes.
- Guilford Community Church has a lot of programs.
- Camp organized that includes everyone.
- Cub scouts merged with Vernon, but still available.
- Local club soccer, includes Brattleboro.
- New England Youth Theatre – also in Brattleboro.
- A lot of assets in Brattleboro. Rec Center, etc. which means that it may not make sense to duplicate here in Guilford. Brattleboro has a lot of programs for our students.
- Grange is a wonderful space for activities.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- There are no early childhood education programs.
- Middle school just closed last year.
- Not aware of Girl Scouts.
- Once kids start going to Brattleboro, they are there all the time and driving there for activities which becomes a challenge for parents.
- A lot of H.S. kids may hang out in Brattleboro after school.
- Transportation is a huge issue.
- We don't have an after school program.
- No place for middle school kids to hang out, so they get invited to go into Brattleboro.
- I don't know what I am going to do for my kids, when they get out of school before I get out of work.
- Before school care, after school care, lack of pre-school, only one child care available in Guilford.
- Pre-driving aged kids – what to do for them? You can't get there from here. Your parents have to drive you around. And now we don't even have a middle school for kids that age.
- Transportation for kids without cars is a huge issue. After school – the only option is to go home on the bus so you have a social economic issue for kids who don't have a car or someone to pick them up. If you are in town, you have to just hang out there with nothing to do, until someone can pick you up.
- The schools have different times. The older kids aren't able to take care of the younger kids, because their school times don't match up. Elementary School different times than High School; this is hard for parents.
- A small substitute teacher pool affects the quality of life for our students.
- Our library is too small to be a place for kids to gather in a cluster. Need a meeting room.
- I don't want my kid to go on a bus to hang out in Brattleboro. I would rather have her ride her bike to the Grange.
- Our greatest gift and biggest challenge is that we value the community, but we want a bigger world. We want the kids to be part of the bigger world, but we still want that sense of community in the small town.
- It's a slippery slope to keep thinking that we don't have enough for our children here.
- This is our first year with no middle school.
- How can new farms sustain themselves if we cannot attract youth to farming as a viable occupation? Our children are gone from Guilford during the day.
- How do we help our youth even care about Guilford and feel connected to Guilford?
- There are some really great programs in Brattleboro that kids in Guilford aren't able to get to Brattleboro to take part. It is key to take part in these things and give them access to those opportunities
- The Gazette is gone.
- My daughter never wanted to be a farmer, even though she was schooled here. What we lack / need are programs outside of the school.

- Many of the programs that are in Brattleboro are expensive, so a lot of kids cannot take advantage of them on cost, not just access and transportation.
- There are also a lot of kids from this town who don't come to the school. However, the only way for kids to connect to other kids is through the school.
- Why is it that so many kids go to private school or receive home schooling?
- The same people volunteer, but it is not a huge pool.
- Huge need for infant care and care under 3 years old.
- In the past, after school programs failed, because either there weren't enough kids to make the numbers work or the parents couldn't come up with the extra stipend that was needed to pay for the program. Need to let the programs last longer than a year – give it time to take root, rather than giving up after one year. There was never enough money invested.
- Transportation.
- Both parents have to work.
- There are a lot of young families who are willing to pay something for these programs.
- Satellite programs run in cycles. Funding gets dicey when you cannot guarantee the program's existence over time.
- We need more volunteer coaches to have more sports locally. Most parents are working when you need the programs to happen, in order to be there for the kids to fill in the time gap .
- Some people still don't have Internet service. Also need to put up posters, not just rely on the Internet.
- The school board meets twice a month, but the same one person shows up every time. Need more minds and more people at these meetings.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Program room in the town library.
- Children activities at the Grange, so they have a place to hang out in town. Homework. Shoot hoops. Play games. etc.
- Create a recreational draw in Guilford so that youth will stay here – like a pond or something like they have in Marlboro. (or pool)
- Kids go to schools in other places, because the mothers aren't home. That's why pre-schools are used in other towns and then the follow-up schools are also used because they want to keep their friends. That's why the church wants to have a long time child care from 6am until 9pm for flexible schedules. Maybe also after care. (Why not base it at the school? Why ask the kids to move from school to the church? You cannot have kids at the school under 3 years-old. It wouldn't replace after care at the school for kids at the school.)
- Transportation is the key. Connecticut River Transit is being extended. If the parking lot is improved they can come further into town.
- Having a center for care for kids 3 years old and under would be a major asset. Universal pre-K initiative at the State level will help the 4 year olds.
- Can there be satellite programs in Guilford for the programs that exist in Brattleboro, such as the New England Youth Theatre?
- If we could tap more volunteers, we could have more sports programs that are part of an after school program for kids.
- Grange – do more agr programs at the Grange, such as 4-H.
- Fleet of vans to offer transportation on a daily basis.
- We need more youth work opportunities through the summer. Funding for the critical age when they don't want to be in camp, but want to do something with people their age that is not negative. Youth work that is helpful and an awesome opportunity. Possibly add this as an extra week or two to the library program.
- Post when community service hours are available with nonprofits, etc. to tap the kids who need volunteer hours and also hire opportunities. Post things in several different places: Middle School website. Front Porch Forum. Gazette. Town website.
- Great diversity of people in Guilford. If people in town who were interested in having real help, but willing to mentor people to learn various trades. Post what they do. Help train the youth.
- It's cute to think of the vans for transportation with both children and elders in the van rubbing shoulders at the same time.
- Regarding inter-generational connections, we can also hook-up teenagers to take care of the younger kids.
- Facilitate play groups with adult supervision in the background and space provided.
- Recreation Commission. Have a group of people with an eye on the recreational opportunities in town.
- Energy – how can you put it all together here in Guilford?
- How could I get my 14 year old to be interested in local politics? Maybe recreation commission allows student age kids to be involved politically in the commission as student members.
- Future farmers association. Future business association. (Get around workman's comp insurance issues; general liability insurance).
- Incentives to get more residents to attend the school board meetings.
- Create a "Friends of Guilford Town School." Tap into a slush fund for 501C3 to support more activities.
- We wish for a hand's on learning space science lab at the school in the unused space that we have. Want to be spectacular.
- We can build a committee for transportation and another one from recreation. But you where does funding come from?
- Massive phone trees with one message. Send to a lot of phones at the same time with the special topic for the school board meeting. Get the message pushed out to people.
- How can the school communicate to people who don't have kids in the school?
- Refrigerator calendar with the main key events for the school-year that is mailed out to every resident.
- Knock on people's door or call them directly – personal connection.
- Your local community church does all of these things. Use it. It is your community church. We have a rocking middle school age group at the church. Babysitting. A band.

- Who is going to run the after school program?
- Early care and education at the church. Get funding for it.

- Fire Dept. volunteer program to get kids to do things. Bonding with other good kids.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Transportation and communication issues we are hearing in every session today. Ditto.
- Bring back the Gazette.
- 21-C Grants are great opportunity. Apply for one. It is fully funded for 3 years. It's a competitive process.
- Take an inventory of what you have and what the things are that you need. This can also be done for education and youth. The simple process of taking stock of what do you have and what do you need.
- Inequities in resources in access to transportation for youth.
- Communication is a great way to harness youth. We may not like some of the new technology. But harness youth in addressing some of the communication issues.
- Bring the youth in. Why aren't they at this meeting? They don't want cars, but they want a ride. They can help you solve the problems. Set a bench mark and include them in the process.
- Break out of the habits and silos. Start with something small like film night to start with an organized center. Your goal is to

- get more volunteers and create new partnership. And build it as a habit. Magic card game night.
- Don't have a narrow definition of youth. What about attracting people in their 20s and the 30s to the community?
- If everyone who had a newsletter gave up their funding and their energy and put it into the one tool – the Gazette – to communicate to everyone with one tool.
- Consistency of the broad issues of transportation and communication. This is distracted by the geography of the place. The population is dispersed.
- Need to think strategically about how these things inter-relate.
- I didn't hear anything about the downside of what the school does. Most of the comments were about things outside the school. What do you do with kids before school, after school, in the summer, etc. I heard no negatively about the school itself.

Visiting Team Debrief

Seniors: Positive energy; mostly seniors in the room. Spirit of community, willingness to help. A feeling of we're all in this together. Communication a huge issue. Have "The Gazette". A loss without communication contributes to sense of isolation. Geographic challenge a common theme. Geographically large community with lots of roads and few people. Transportation and communication are barriers. New van in town. Connect the generations, connect with other towns, i.e. share resources with Vernon for example. Senior housing not available. A piece of land owned by non-profit near country store just needs a developer. Need for aging in place and putting volunteer resources into it. Intergenerational connection, an example of some sharing peaches and peaches became the theme. Everyone feels positively about local government. Unlike many communities local govt is a positive force.

Guilford Parks and Trails: A whole lot of unconnected resources and trails. 2 state parks here, Sweet Pond dam wanting to be reopened. Possibility to create inventory of trail resources.

Community Buildings: A long list of existing meeting spaces within the town and each has some limitation or physical issue that needs to be addressed. Not many people know how many they are or where they are. Consistency of issues around transportation and communication. People have the feeling that "we can do better so what can we do". Challenges they have around the buildings are all fixable and manageable. A few little things can be done quickly "village designation" so eligible for tax credits for elevators and sprinkler systems. Creating an organization that might have an interest in fundraising for all of the buildings. There are a couple that are here and could build on. A lot of talk about all that happened during the 250 celebration and people are missing that.

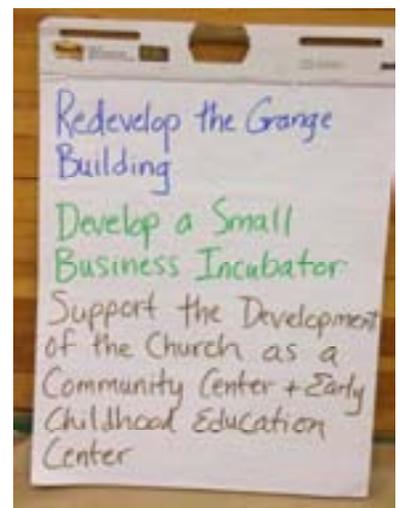
Farm and natural resource economy: Assets outweigh the challenges. No coordination between farmers or a list of products. The Guilford Country Store came up a lot as a real asset with great potential. The online distribution point. Issue of no critical mass so need to look to regional solutions.

Youth and Education: This school is well liked but it's the first year without middle school. Talked a lot about what they don't have and why they don't have it. Lack of volunteers, people don't show up at the school board meetings. Lack of communication, not much for kids to do. Now middle school kids are heading to Brattleboro to do things. No youth in the youth group. No child care center, no preschool, no afterschool program. No supports exist in town. The church is starting a child care. The leadership at the school should do more to bring the community in. Poverty wasn't mentioned. A lot of families don't have access to transportation so they can't do afterschool programs in Brattleboro because they have to come home on the bus.

Economy: Lots of assets and enthusiasm, positive energy. Lots of cottage industries. Generally good infrastructure but gap with cell and broadband coverage. Their idea of ED was very broad and included community devel, the environment, broad thinking and sophisticated. Lack of tax base and lack of scalability. Lack of communication came up again. Adult education, develop tourism, aging population, attracting young people, lack of diversity. Ideas on networking and working together, survey of existing businesses to work toward growing businesses that are already here. Zoning an issue. Water and sewer here now will put some development pressure.

VIII. Guilford Community Visit Participants

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Photo credits:

Front cover: Lois Pancake

Back cover and inside pages: Margaret Gibson McCoy

Printing by Minuteman Press