

## New Mural at Town Parking Lot Gets Concept Art, Finish Timeline



An artist's rendering of art that will be proposed for installation above the wall of the parking area on Mill Street.

by Michael Bielawski

**HARDWICK** — A new mural called the Mill Street Project is planned for placement above the retaining wall at the parking lot across from the Village Market. An artist has now been chosen and concept art planned out. Those backing the project hope it will get completed by the end of this summer.

The organization behind the effort is the Grass Roots Art and Community Effort (GRACE), based in the old fire station, which is also near the parking lot. Local resident Gary Michaels has been asked to facilitate this project for over a year, attending select

board meetings and gathering public feedback.

Different samples of artwork by various artists were presented to the public at Town Meeting in the park and the public voted in favor of Tom Goreau. She is a native Vermont woman with an extensive resume of mural art, including work at High Moving Seeds, Jasper Hill, Pease Green, Sterling College, City Market and the Galaxy Bookstore in Hardwick.

The final plan called for painting the mural directly onto the retaining wall, but the town and the road crew were not sure it would be difficult to protect the artwork while plowing that area and it was not clear

if conditions on the wall itself were ideal for a painting.

"There are too many reasons not to paint the wall," Michaels said. "One thing they're wanting there would block to the wall, so you'd have to clean it when you're parked there."

The plan calls for five 6 x 6 foot panels, which will be mounted on top of the wall. The panels will be made of specially treated plywood mounted on pressure-treated 2x4s donated by Poulin Lumber.

The wall itself will be pressure-washed or cleaned in up and completed the new mural.

"The art includes imagery associated with different stages of the town's history. The first panel will depict native Americans and a lot of research is being done for this panel."

"There is evidence that there were Native Americans in this area some time ago," Michaels said. "So we thought in order to start at the beginning, we would reflect that."

Another panel will depict imagery of the textile industry and the railroad, which used to be an integral part of Hardwick life until the 1920s century.

Some imagery will include Spring Lake and the town's historic buildings, such as the Town House, the High School, and one of the first brick homes built in East Hardwick.

"There will also be depictions of agriculture, as that has been a cornerstone industry in this area. 'All of the things you think of if you lived here and somebody asked you, what represents Hardwick?'" Michaels asked.

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Brook Blackshaw (left) of the Plainfield Fire Department, Caleb Korman (center) and Jonathan Marrow (right), Plainfield firefighters, help transport Plainfield senior Shawn Matthews during a Mock Accident Scene held at Twinnick School for grades 7-12 on May 11.

## Town Announces Planning for New Manufacturing and Business Center

by Michael Bielawski

**HARDWICK** — The Center for an Agricultural Economy, the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, and the Town of Hardwick have released the Hardwick Business Accelerator Feasibility Study, outlining plans to revitalize the site of the Big Yellow Barn at the north end of Wolcott Street.

The study was conducted by Kitchell Table Consultants, based in Dover, New Hampshire. It includes input from residents and businesses on what they believe is

needed to drive the economic development of Hardwick. A copy of the consultants report can be viewed online at hardwickvt.org.

Town Manager Joe Jewett said the consultants spoke with various town leaders from various industries, including food producers, retail, grocery and manufacturing.

The report's findings identified issues and performing a survey of the property lines.

Initially, the consultants assessed three sites around town for the new business center. In addition to the Big Yellow Barn, the study considered Atkins Field and the former bank building at 21 Mill Street. Atkins Field was eliminated over flooding concerns and its proximity to residences. The former bank building cannot accommodate tractor trailers and poses zoning

plans to move forward," Jewett said.

"We've also been talking with some folks about the possibility of using the Yellow Barn [after construction is completed]."

Jewett said next steps include securing new funding sources, acquiring permits, assessing flood issues, highway access issues and performing a survey of the property lines.

Finally, the consultants assessed three sites around town for the new business center. In addition to the Big Yellow Barn, the study considered Atkins Field and the former bank building at 21 Mill Street. Atkins Field was eliminated over flooding concerns and its proximity to residences. The former bank building cannot accommodate tractor trailers and poses zoning

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## Gallison Purchase Re-Vote May 17

by Will Walters

**PLAINFIELD** — A recent informal meeting on the Gallison property in the upper village last night nearly two hours. Many people spoke on whether the town should purchase the property. The purchase was approved by a vote of 13 to 10 on May 17. However, the Gallison property is in the upper village and the town is not sure it can afford to purchase the property. The purchase was approved by a vote of 13 to 10 on May 17. However, the Gallison property is in the upper village and the town is not sure it can afford to purchase the property.

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## School Budget May Cut School Sports

by Will Walters

**CABOT** — A third version of the school budget was approved by the school board on May 9, one which the board hopes will be approved by the voters on May 29 in time to meet June 1 deadline. The voters overcomes the major obstacle in the vote since in the past two years cutting proposed spending to eliminate the state-mandated excess spending plan.

"Public comments at the meeting were more receptive to this version, now that the penalty was eliminated, but it will take the May 29 vote to determine whether a majority of voters agree. The Tuesday voting on May 29 comes right after the Memorial Day holiday and concerns have been expressed whether the timing will affect turnout. Absentee ballots can be requested at any time until the morning has been filed with the town clerk's office. Ballots can be picked up in the clerk's office and voted on the spot or voters can request the ballots be mailed. Ballot boxes are received by the clerk to be counted in the election tally.

Although the penalty tax is eliminated in the new version, the tax, which will increase as a result from the budget, but rather from action by the legislature to increase the state property tax action. The latest version projects an increase for Cabot taxpayers of a

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## Emerald Ash Borer Moving Through Central Vermont

by Will Walters

**CALAIS** — A highway sign has been set up on Route 14 warning motorists not to move ash firewood that attacks ash trees.

The emerald ash borer is a small, half-inch-long beetle that feeds on ash trees in all species of North American ash trees. It attacks only ash trees; the most common planted species are green and white ash. The EAB larvae tunnel through the wood just under the bark of ash trees, killing the tree by cutting off the flow of nutrients. Healthy ash trees can die within 1-4 years of discovering their first sign of infestation or by the time they are cut down by an EAB attack.

In mid-March 2018, Agency of Agriculture entomologist Judy Olson announced that EAB had been first sighted in the Midwest in 2002 and has since spread to 32 states and three Canadian provinces. It was first confirmed in Vermont in February, 2018, in Cabot County. The earliest sightings have occurred in two other counties. It was first identified in private property.

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