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Proposed Fire Station Property's Future Not Clear

by Will Walters

CABOT – The question of what to do with the property at 2466 Main Street, the former Gochey property purchased by the town for a new fire station, continues to go unanswered.

The property is in need of a new oil tank and other items, but member Matt Nally said the town shouldn't put any money into it "until we know what we are going to do with it."

Resident Sandy Pond asked who would be responsible if the property were sold. Chair Fred Ducharme said the voters would have to approve the sale, but first the board has to decide what it wants to do with the property. Ducharme and member Ruth Goodrich said that nothing has been decided yet.

Pond asked if there was a timeline on what will happen to the property. Ducharme said the board needs to see the status of the current station after the fire department makes the necessary repairs and improvements to bring it up to code and then go from there. Pond said there should be a timeline, and Nally said the first deadline is getting the building up to code and then a timeline can be set.

Susie Socks has actively seen to getting the skating rink on the

See STATION, 5

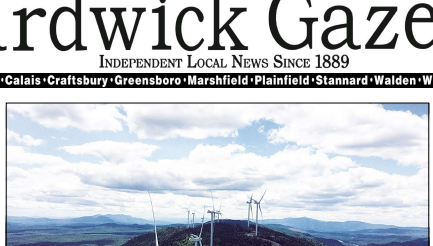

photo courtesy Green Mountain Power Company

At Green Mountain Power's Kingdom Community Wind site on the Lowell Mountains, an interim report to the Public Utilities Commission in January indicated a significant setback to installing an Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS).

Red Lights on Lowell Mountains Won't Dim Soon

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY – Green Mountain Power (GMP) issued an interim report to the Public Utilities Commission in January indicating a significant setback to installing an Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS) for the Kingdom Community Wind (KCW) site on the Lowell Mountains. The report was presented to the select board at its January meeting.

Preston Gregory, KCW supervisor, stated that recent "significant developments" warranted the update which appears to be another obstacle to installing an acceptable radar detection system on the mountain. The KCW site presents topographical challenges for a radar detection system, according to Kristin Kelly, director of communications at GMP.

Gregory stated in December that GMP had received a communication from Vestas, the manufacturer of the proposed ADLS, indicating that the current plan for KCW would not meet the required FAA radar standards. Vestas recently discovered that the planned turbine-mounted solution would have a smaller than anticipated radar range, and therefore would be unable to view the airspace required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), according to Gregory.

"Vestas also indicated that it could not mount its equipment on pre-existing cell towers or meteorological towers as had been planned," he stated.

GMP was surprised by the recent information, according to Gregory, since "we had selected this ADLS product specifically because we had been previously advised by Vestas that this type of mounting was possible and early radar models of the site had all been positive, though testing of icing impact has been ongoing and unsuccessful to date."

Kelly explained in an e-mail that the "knoll at the southern end of the site impacts visibility and is impossible to see through if currently available tech is mounted on existing infrastructure."

"It (ADLS) must be able to see 3 nautical miles from the closest turbine and existing technology is unable to do that with current radar options."

According to Kelly, the FAA first approved Vestas as a vendor for a system three years ago. "GMP has been working since 2015," she stated, "because that's when the FAA first started to approve technology that could be appropriate for the site."

"In follow-up discussions with Vestas," Gregory stated in his letter, "it has offered to deliver an ADLS system with appropriate radar coverage mounted on two new thirty-meter (90 feet) towers."

"However, the locations of these towers would likely experience

See LIGHTS, 6

Hazen Board Studying School Infrastructure

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Hazen School Board is mulling over what to do about increasingly critical infrastructure issues in the school.

The board is seeking information and strategies to address infrastructure issues with the nearly-fifty-year-old facility and questioning how to pay for the fixes. Freihofner said community involvement is a critical element and "the stars are lining up" to clear away past obstacles. Previously, divisions between the board and the administration of the school impeded progress, Freihofner said, but those issues have widely been resolved and everyone is focused on doing right by the kids.

Just last fall, the old heating system broke down and left students shivering in their classrooms. The boys' locker room is unheated except for space heaters and, according to one stakeholder, is in such a state of disrepair that students change in a classroom so visiting teams won't see the locker room's condition. "It's always freezing in there," said one student.

The Gazette obtained an August, 2019 "Mechanical Electrical & Plumbing Facilities Assessment" by Rutland-based Engineering Services of Vermont. In the 20-plus page document, the assessment identified approximately $2 to $3 million in infrastructure issues. The study strictly focuses on "needs," not "wants," and points out code violations, potentially unsafe electrical issues, and other factors that impact the safety and comfort of the students, faculty and staff.

According to the assessment, in 2016 "facilities put roughly $100,000 into the boiler for

See INFRASTRUCTURE, 4

photo by Elijah Lew-Smith

At my host grandmother's house. On the right is my host dad, Joseph Toure, in a traditional Senegalese boubou, in the middle and left are two of his cousins.

Report from Senegal: Importance of Tea

by Elijah Lew-Smith, Special Sub-Saharan Correspondent

DAKAR, SENEGAL – If you asked me what I thought I would spend most of my free time in Senegal doing before I left, I wouldn't have told you drinking tea. Tea, however, is an important part of family life here, and it is a Senegalese tradition that is the basis for other traditions within my host family.

On Saturdays, we invite over an eclectic mix of relatives, friends and close colleagues for a lunch. Afterwards, someone makes tea on the stove, and I help. The ingredients are relatively simple, but it takes up to two hours to prepare each of three teas, so there is a lot of time for lounging and talking in between, and the event often lasts until the evening.

On Sundays, I accompany my host dad to his cousin's house where he has been going every weekend for over 40 years to eat, talk politics and pray with a group of friends. There the tea is made over a bed of coals by the one person who is the eternally designated tea-maker. On Friday evenings I go to my host uncle's house and see my aunt and cousin while tea is made over a little gas stove.

Tonight it is Friday, nearly 11:30, and I find myself hypnotized watching my host uncle pour tea between cups in elegant, practiced streams. My host uncle

See SENEGAL, 4

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Hazen Coach Aaron Hill (center) presents Isaiah Baker (second from left) with the game ball for reaching his 1,000-point career mark January 31. From left is Isaiah's mom Erica, brother Jedon and dad Mike. Isaiah is a junior and has scored 327 points so far this season to reach the 1,000-point mark. Story on Page 8.

Governor Supports Rail Trail, Local Effort Continues

by Emmett Avery

HARDWICK – Governor Phil Scott proposed putting $2.8 million of state funding toward completing the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) at his annual budget address to the legislature on January 21. According to Scott, the money will leverage another $11.3 million in federal matching funds.

The LVRT is a multi-use, year-round recreation path open to snowmobiles in the winter and all kinds of non-motorized recreation in the summer. The trail is being built on a former rail bed. If fully finished, it will run from St. Johnsbury in the east 93 miles across the state to Swanton in the west. The Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) has been charged with the trail's construction up to now.

According to Ken Brown, VAST's project manager for the LVRT, the governor's proposal, coupled with the matching federal funds, should be enough to finish the entirety of the trial. Brown said that should the state money come through, VAST will hand off its trail building responsibilities to the Vermont Agency of Transportation, which he said would most likely result in some cost savings.

The availability of the state money is still uncertain; the governor's proposed budget is just the first step of many in the budgeting process. However, representative Chip Troiano said in an interview Friday that the governor's proposal appears to have legislative support. "I am optimistic that we'll be able to get this done," said Troiano, "and on a schedule that can really be a good piece of economic development for our area."

Senator Jane Kitchel (D-Caledonia) is also supportive of the measure, saying that "the general view is you really don't get the true value of [the rail trail] until it is complete." Kitchel said in an interview Monday that the state will most likely bond for the funds through the state Capital Budget, which is a budget specifically designated to deal with long-term infrastructure investments. "The trail is owned by the state of Vermont. It is a resource," said Kichel, "Something that Vermonters will have and be protected for years."

See TRAIL, 4

photo by Doug McClure

The 1970 Hazen Union facility has some challenges to address with aging infrastructure and the board and staff are working to find solutions.

Prudential Committee Proposes Water Ordinance

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY – The Craftsbury Prudential Committee (CPC), which manages the Craftsbury Fire District #2 water system on Craftsbury Common, has proposed a water-system ordinance to formalize its operations. Most people are familiar with the CPC as the Water Board.

The 17-page document, Craftsbury Common Community Water System Ordinance, is a comprehensive operating agreement that validates the functioning of the Craftsbury Common Community Water System.

Members of the CPC are Tim Patterson, president; George Hall, treasurer; Peggy Allen, secretary; Steve Smith, systems operator (ex officio); Norman Hanson, Barbara Strong and Laura Fox.

In an e-mail to the select board, town clerk and planning commission chair, Patterson said the ordinance was drafted "to standardize policy and procedures for the future, to institute best practices, and to ensure that the Committee has the paperwork on hand to successfully apply for grants and other funding as needed to maintain water service."

The proposed ordinance is based on the Hardwick water system ordinance and adapted to Craftsbury with the help of the Vermont Rural Water Association. Patterson stated the committee was looking for feedback from both the select board and planning commission.

Planning Commission Chair Farley Brown noted the commission would be reviewing the ordinance at its meeting on February 13. The commission will be meeting at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall.

The CPC board members serve as the Craftsbury Common Community Water System Commission; one of the three commissioners must be a property owner with a connection to the water system. The ordinance must be evaluated at intervals not exceeding every five years. The CPC meets annually to review water rates and fees needed for effective operation of the water system, as well as, prescribe rules governing the supply and use of water as is appropriate to accommodate water supply emergencies. The annual meeting was held on January 10 of this year.

In explaining why an ordinance was suggested, versus a policy document, Patterson said there are provisions that affect property owners who are not water system customers within the boundary

See WATER 4

Gun Resolution for Town Meeting Misses Warning Deadline

by Will Walters

CALAIS – A request to add a resolution to the warning for Town Meeting did not work out for a member of a Facebook group called Gun Owners of Vermont because the warning had already been approved and sent to the printers.

Tristan Joy, a town resident, presented a draft of a resolution "for the defense of the right to bear arms." The resolution was an attempt by the gun owners group to bring the opinions of those who feel their voice is not being heard by representatives in the legislature to the public's attention. The board told him the warning was already set but members responded favorably to his respectful manner in raising the topic and engaging in local government.

It was recommended that he reach out to the public through ways such as Front Porch Forum to get feedback and bring his request for a local resolution to Town Meeting under new business. A suggestion was made that he contact the moderator to learn about meeting procedures.

Highway Operations Manager Toby Talbot said he contacted the school bus contractor, First Student, regarding any situation where a bus driver needs to contact the road crew for assistance. It is not possible for the bus to contact a town truck, as was previously discussed, because First Student's radios are digital and will not work with the trucks' radios.

First Student bus drivers will contact their base and have a message relayed to forecaster Roger Hill, who will be able to contact a town truck with the message. Additionally, buses could reach someone in East Montpelier with a cellphone, who could call the town garage on the buses' behalf. Talbot said bus drivers have mentioned the town's winter road maintenance has been great.

Talbot said he listens to weather reports, anticipates events the day before and schedules staff ahead of time. He noted that

See GUN, 2

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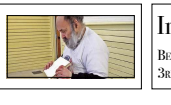
In Sports, *8*
Lady Cats Salvage Week

In Towns, *2*
Jaquith Holds Book Sale



In Arts, *6*
Benoit Exhibits at 3rd Floor Gallery