

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



An artist's rendering of a wall street view for the Mill Street parking lot.

By Michael Bielawski

HARTWICK — 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



Work is being done on the wall street view for the Mill Street parking lot.

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 Gorens. 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 Hartwick.

The final plan called for painting the mural directly onto the retaining wall, but the town and the artist 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 working on there would block to the wall, so you'd have to either cut them out or 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 Hartwick 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 Hartwick.

"There will also be depictions of agriculture, as that has been a cornerstone industry in this area," Michaels said.

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Brook Blackshaw (left) of the Plainfield Fire Department, Caleb Korman (center) and Jonathan Marrow (right), Plainfield firefighters, help transport a fire truck. Plainfield firefighters helped transport a fire truck from a truck accident scene held at Twinnfield School for grades 7-12 on May 11.

Town Announces Planning for New Manufacturing and Business Center

By Michael Bielawski

HARTWICK — The Center for an Agricultural Economy, the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, and the Town of Hartwick have released the Hartwick 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 Hartwick. A copy of the consultants report can be viewed online at hartwickvt.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 business. For example, Jewett said, a build-out of a new structure will be the first phase of work.

"We have potentially some people lined up who might be interested in becoming tenants of the facility if we built out from the Yellow Barn."

We're moving ahead with a plan to ask for a grant from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) to help with a site plan and some preliminary architectural

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.

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

related concerns due the downtown location's restrictions on use.

After settling on the Big Yellow Barn site, the study worked to identify which businesses opportunities were best suited for the area.

"The consultants' report states that the site "has the potential to become a hub of innovation and small-scale manufacturing that could generate jobs in multiple sectors, including manufacturing, education, distribution, logistics, and management."

This property has the ability to leverage local resources, talent and the existing local business ecosystem to create high-quality unique products and services and export them to urban markets."

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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 2. However, the question of future use and the cost of what could be done with the property arose during the meeting.

Cost was the major point, with a purchase price of \$70,000 for about 13 new parking spaces. Estimates of the cost of rebuilding for the town hall and Open House across Route 2. However, the question of future use and the cost of what could be done with the property arose during the meeting.

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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 revised version overcomes the major obstacle in the past two years: cutting proposed spending to meet 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 still takes 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, but the worst-case scenario 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

the current budget has offset non-discretionary and discretionary increases in the budget with reductions in spending and reserve funds to fall below the statutory increase or change in the common level of approach.

The discretionary increases are \$100,000 for an elementary center, \$89,000 for a 0.2 PTE high school education position. Reductions include eliminating high school education position, 1.6 PTE to 0.6 PTE, reducing a high school counselor to 0.2 position and deferring replacement of the air handlers.

While eliminating high school sports was the topic of considerable debate among board members, the District Superintendent has been asked to make up those items. Athletic Director Greg LaRue has been asked to meet with those schools. Cooperative teams, with students from both schools in the agreement, could be fielded under such school may not have enough staff.

Non-discretionary changes in the budget include a 12.5% increase in special education spending and a \$40,000 increase in

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Main Street Eateries Getting Refurbished

By Michael Bielawski

HARTWICK — Havana 802 has closed its doors, but work is already underway by the next tenant. Across the street, the Village Bonanza is getting a face lift.

The former Havana 802 on Main Street will get its fifth coat of paint in as many years, as new owner Sven Olsen takes the helm with plans to open a seafood and taurant called the Scale House. He hopes to have an opening by mid-June.

Olsen, the owner and manager, is familiar with the space, as he worked at Friday Fish Fridays at Havana 802.

Kristina Michelson, consultant captain of business matters, shared some details. She was one of the partners who ran Claire's, the first and only restaurant to make a run in the space in the middle of Main Street. Olsen's restaurant is years.

Every other restaurant since Claire's closed up in 2013 lasted a year or so. These include The Supper Club (2014), The Vermont Place (2015), and most recently Havana 802 (early 2016 to a month).

Cuban-themed Havana 802 changed the restaurant layout, including removing the bar, which had been installed since Claire's. The new restaurant will bring back the original bar, re-stainwood and expanded beyond its original size by Matt Geraghty, who built the original for Claire's.

A lot of the renovation work is currently in progress, including painting, rebuilding the bar, mowing walls and re-doing the lighting system. Some improvements to the restaurant's structure will include sound mitigation.

"One of the things that we are working really hard on as part of the renovations is soundproofing materials in the space," Michelson said. "Because one of the perennial

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

The emerald ash borer is a small, half-inch-long beetle that feeds on the cambium of trees in North American ash trees. It attacks only ash trees; the most common planted species in 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 on an EAB attack.

In mid-March 2018, Agency of Agriculture entomologist and deputy director of the Vermont State Forests said that EAB sightings have occurred in two other counties. It was first identified as a private property.

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A sign on Route 14 in Calais warns against transporting ash firewood beyond the town. Three counties have had confirmed sightings of the Asian emerald ash borer, an invasive species that attacks all types of ash trees.

Towns with confirmed cases are Plainfield, Green, Grafton, Barre City, Hartwick, East Montpelier, Marshfield and Marshfield.

Vermont has joined the United States Department of Agriculture Barre City, Hartwick, East Montpelier, East Montpelier, Northfield, Whitehall, Berlin and East Montpelier.

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