

Town Receives Reward for Water Infrastructure Work

by Michael Bialowski and Doug McClure

HARDWICK – While the rest of the nation and state routinely get poor grades for its infrastructure management, especially among the rust belt communities of the northeast, Hardwick just received an award for its efforts to keep water delivery systems clean and reliable. The USEPA – Region 1 presented Hardwick with a 2018 Environmental Merit Award.

Hardwick was one of only two towns to receive this award, along with 28 groups of businesses and organizations in New England. Hardwick Town Manager Jon Jewett went to Faneuil Hall in Boston to receive the award which says “For outstanding efforts in preserving New England’s environment.”

A detailed statement from the USEPA was impressed that Hardwick not only utilized asset management programs to help budget capital and resources toward the long-term upkeep of water systems but also cut waste substantially without raising rates.

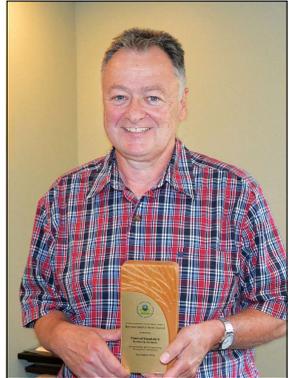
“Many New England towns are facing the problem of aging infrastructure,” he continued. “Hardwick moved forward with making improvements to aging infrastructure for its water systems, and it continues to improve and maintain its water treatment systems. We’ve done a substantial amount of work on improving stormwater conditions in the village by working on town roads

for a capital-improvements plan. The improvements cut water loss in half without raising rates.

The town has found many aids for a rainy-day fund that can double as loan collateral. It has developed relationships with the state and other partners, leading to co-located infrastructure for stormwater management. It also has collaborated with other towns and the state to get resources in a cost-efficient manner. Hardwick sets an example of a town using resources wisely to secure its infrastructure and improve water quality. Continuing to innovate, it is facing the need for new industrial parks and the town is planning ways to be sure it takes into account more stormwater and wastewater in long-term plans to reduce pollution.

Jewett said in an interview that the USEPA was impressed that Hardwick not only utilized asset management programs to help budget capital and resources toward the long-term upkeep of water systems but also cut waste substantially without raising rates.

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Hardwick Town Manager Jon Jewett holds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 1 Environmental Merit Award he accepted at Faneuil Hall in Boston last week on behalf of the town of Hardwick. The award nods “for outstanding efforts in preserving New England’s environment.”

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The new section of the Craftsbury Public House. The building offers leased space for a fully-equipped restaurant as well as private office spaces and an open floor space. The large beams on the trusses are reclaimed from a barn that was on the property but could not be saved.

Craftsbury Public House Brings New Life to Town

by Doug McClure

CRAFTSBURY – The old Craftsbury Inn situated directly across the street from the Craftsbury Green Center was not closed since 2012. Now, new owners and a community-centric vision for the building are on the way to becoming reality.

In 2012, Sung-Ho Chung and Wale Solomon purchased the property and then donated it to the Craftsbury Outdoor Center (COC). Chung and Solomon set up a new 501(c)(3) non-profit for the inn, now called the Craftsbury Public House (CPH), and the COC donated the Inn to that organization in 2016.

Chung said the project by necessity has been divided into two phases. The lack of long-term maintenance left parts of the inn in an expensive state of dis-

repair. While the original 1850 structure was in good shape, a barn and restaurant extension were “irreparable,” according to Chung.

Craftsbury’s village-center development facilitated investment of \$105,000 for restoring the building, which, along with another \$200,000 from the Vermont Preservation Trust and assistance from multiple other organizations, kicked the project into gear. Thus far, the project has cost around \$600,000 for the first phase.

Chung said several factors led them to choose this project, most including the nearly five acres of land the building sits on. The land is bisected by the Black River and as at a bulk property line with the cross-country trails from COC and Highland Lodge meet.

“It was really the land I fell in love with first,” she said. “And

then the building. My mother has always said every property knows its owner, and this one kept drawing me in.”

She said and she proved correct more trying than had anticipated owing to a bounty of Japanese knottwork that has nibbled over five years to mostly eliminate in order to prevent soil

SEE HOUSE, 6

Marshfield Gets Party Status on GMP Petition

by Will Walters

MARSHFIELD – The town’s notice of appearance and request for party status before the Vermont Public Utilities Commission have been put on file, and Marshfield subsequently has received party status from the commission. The request is on the application by Green Mountain Power (GMP) for a certificate of public good to do maintenance work on the Marshfield Dam at Molly’s Falls State Park in Cabot.

Select board member Rich Baker said GMP is asking for separate

approvals and operations. Baker said GMP infers a claim that the service spillway will remain operational while work is being performed. Both the Marshfield and Plainfield select boards have made known their concerns over the service spillway remaining operational while relying solely on the penstock and emergency spillway to manage water levels.

Baker advised GMP of the town’s concern over the spillway and the need to have a warning system for the village if there are issues at the dam. The select

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Plainfield Gets Party Status on Dam Work

by Will Walters

PLAINFIELD – Plainfield has filed a request with the Vermont Public Utilities Commission for party status on the Green Mountain Power (GMP) request for a certificate of public good to work on the Marshfield Dam at Molly’s Falls State Park in Cabot. Select board member Alexandra Thayer, who held the request for the town, said it was granted.

Hazard mitigation committee member Michael Billingsley said he has filed with the Public Utilities Commission to be one of the people representing the town. He and Thayer are consulting

on what they will request in discovery proceedings. Select board chair Ross Stoyed said if there are any questions of policy, the select board meeting should be consulted. Thayer is asking GMP about its protocol on alerting towns if there is a problem on the dam.

Marshfield has also been granted party status on the certificate application. Its select board is concerned over an alert system that there is a problem at the dam as Marshfield village has only minutes to prepare for a dam breach. GMP said the Marshfield select board that the service spillway will continue operation while

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An electric vehicle charging station stands ready at Marshfield’s First Stop. The device is giving \$2.4m in grants to expand Vermont’s electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Some Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in Area

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – In the U.S., although Vermont is one of the top five states for the number of EVs, it still is just above two percent. A main factor is the lack of charging infrastructure for EVs but that may change to a degree.

Governor Phil Scott just announced \$2.4 million to fund new charging stations. Funding for the grants came from a settlement between the Environmental Protection Agency and Volkswagen over misrepresenting emissions.

“Transportation is now largely electric for EVs but that is a critical strategy for Vermont to reduce emissions from the transportation sector and to achieve its goal of 100 percent renewable energy use by 2050. This new grant program will help expedite Vermont’s transition to cleaner forms of transportation.”

The program prioritizes funding in state-designated areas, like downtown and village centers, highway corridors, public transit stops, major tourist destinations, colleges and universities, hospitals, public park-and-rides, work, places and multi-family housing.

Mike Sullivan of the Hardwick Electric Department (HED) said the utility plans to apply for a grant under the program. “I will be applying for grant monies for sure we certainly have a perfect spot right here at the HED office for a station. I had a couple other stations that I’ll be discussing with the town as well,” he said, adding HED would investigate whether a DC Fast station is feasible as opposed to a Level 2 station.

Grant applications for the first round are due November 30, 2018. For information about the program or to apply, visit the Department of Energy and Community Development website at bit.ly/2ZdMm1A. Also see story on Page Two.

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