



CABOT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

A 501(c)3 non-profit corporation

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News Release

For release immediately

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Cabot Village Economic Development Study Wins Funding

The Town of Cabot has been awarded a \$20,000 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, to be used in support of the Cabot Village Revitalization Plan. Cabot was one of 38 communities funded among 70 applicants for the grant.

Municipal Planning Grants are awarded annually, and are intended to support local community revitalization and planning initiatives. Since 1998, the program has provided more than \$11 million to 234 cities and towns across Vermont.

Cabot's attention to economic development can be traced back to a community-wide survey conducted in June of 2010, which aimed to solicit residents' opinions about the town. Out of 85 respondents, 84 (98.8 percent) noted that "a healthy economy" was the number one factor in maintaining a high quality of life within the Town of Cabot.

The Town of Cabot and Cabot Community Association (CCA) worked together to submit the application. The funds will be applied to two main goals: To evaluate the constraints and opportunities for Cabot's Designated Village Center, and to create a detailed economic development plan designed to revitalize the village and solidify its place as the economic and civic hub of the community. The application requires \$6,000 in matching funds which will be provided by the CCA.

Bobby Searles, a member of the Economic Development Workgroup and owner of two village stores, is confident that the study will be a boon to the town and surrounding area.

"Being a business owner in a small town has changed a lot in the recent past. Any help we can get to keep businesses alive and provide services to community members is a good thing."

The CCA is well-positioned to address these development issues. The Cabot Economic Development Workgroup, a program of the CCA, formed in early 2016, is currently focused on efforts to revitalize the village center, a specific goal of the 2012 Town Plan. The grant funding will be used to hire an economic development or planning consultant to work with Cabot residents, business owners and town leaders.

Steering Committee members of the workgroup are: Select Board Chair Jack Daniels, Zoning Administrator Karen Deasy, Jan Westervelt, Johanna Thibault, Gary Gulka, Erica Burke, Rich Aronson, Niels Larsen, and CCA Executive Director Lori Augustyniak. The group is actively seeking a candidate with experience in small towns and rural communities. The committee will also seek assistance from the Central VT Regional Planning Commission in assessing candidates and making a hiring decision.

According to Cabot Zoning Administrator Karen Deasy, "We hope this project will tell us what we need to know in order to take action on some of the goals identified in our Town Plan and Community Visit Report and Action Plan, including state and local regulations and an objective look at improving community infrastructure to support development."

Specific project goals are to objectively review current conditions in the village, learn about strategies to attract and support businesses, and identifying the types of businesses that are likely to be successful in Cabot village.

To ensure that this plan serves the real needs of the Cabot community, all planning meetings and forums will be open to the public. Notes will be taken at all meetings and available on the town and CCA websites. The workgroup will also submit articles to *The Cabot Chronicle* to keep the public apprised of activities, upcoming events and progress.

Additionally, there will be at least two public forums to provide Cabot residents an opportunity to provide input on key issues and help ensure that the plan will benefit the entire community.

Community members willing to invest time to attend meetings and review documents throughout the project are invited to join the Workgroup. Please contact the CCA at 563-3338 or info@cabotvermont.org.

Cabot will have eighteen months to complete this project and according to Jack Daniels, volunteers are ready to get to work. "Within the next few weeks the Steering Committee will hire a consultant to launch this critically important initiative in support of fostering greater economic development in Cabot," said Daniels.

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