



FAIRLEE NEWSLETTER

August 2015

FAIRLEE'S VILLAGE CENTER

This newsletter summarizes the Selectboard's recent conversations about Fairlee's village center.

To gather additional information about the village center and as follow up to the recently adopted Town Plan, the Planning Commission commissioned a survey on the Village Center. There were 152 responses from year-round residents, representing 16% of the Town's 20-year-old-plus population. This response is statistically significant; it indicates that information gathered by the survey is nearly identical to what we would have gathered if *every* year-round resident over 20 responded. (The survey also had responses from 49 seasonal residents.)

A small town that has nice people,
yet a small town that is failing to
live up to its potential.

What did we learn? We learned that Fairlee is perceived as "a small town that has nice people." However, we also learned that respondents perceive Fairlee as "failing to live up to its potential."

Respondents would like to see "the addition of businesses, services, and events" designed to support a four-season recreation destination, and would like to have non-franchise restaurants, a coffee shop, and a bakery in the village center. The 15-page report of results with easy to read charts and illuminating quotes is available free of charge in the Town Hall.

OPENING DOORS

Local businesses recently opening their doors in the village center and interchange districts include 5-Oh! Pizza (relocating from East Thetford to the former site of Whistle Stop Café) and Moonlight Auto Repair (opening across Route 5 from Wing's). Dollar General, south of the interchange, is under construction and plans to open at the end of the summer.

Just as the input and leadership of residents is valuable as we plan for Fairlee's future, so too is the participation of our local business owners. Village center and interchange businesses have been personally invited to a **forum with the Selectboard on Monday, August 10th**. The forum, at 6:00 PM in the Grange Room in Town Hall, is public and open to all.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing can lead to a more vibrant village center. Affordable housing in Fairlee would help ensure that current residents remain here and that others, including young families, move here. The general definition of affordable housing is apartments or homes for which monthly payments are less than 30 percent of a person or family's income.

At the Selectboard meeting on June 29th, Andrew Winter, Executive Director of Twin Pines Housing Trust (TPHT), described their programs and its recent projects (including Gile Hill near Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Safford Commons across Route 4 from Woodstock Union High School). He indicated that TPHT has a serious interest in

pursuing opportunities to build affordable housing in Fairlee's village center.



Safford Commons in Woodstock under construction

FOR TODAY, A PATCH; FOR TOMORROW, A SOLUTION

Route 5 is a state highway, yet it is Fairlee's Main Street and perhaps the one venue used most regularly by Fairlee residents. Some of the visible results of our increased relationship with the Two Rivers Regional Commission is the recent paving on Route 5 from Gray's Field north to the Bradford town line, as well as the patching at Bridge St (the intersection of Routes 5 and 25), our gateway to New Hampshire and the town of Orford.

One of the main concerns of the Selectboard has been the deferred repairs on Lake Morey Road, particularly its north end, which has been hampered over the last number of years by frost heaves and large cracks. Eager to get to the root of the problem, Town Administrator Brian Hanson applied for an Agency of Transportation engineering grant during his first week on the job in April—and during his 3rd week on the job, Brian announced that the Town had been awarded \$30,000 for an engineering study of Lake Morey Road.

To temporarily address the safety issue, the largest cracks on Lake Morey Road have been filled, and the Selectboard is reviewing bids to repair portions of Lake Morey Road and Maurice Roberts Highway in August. When completed in 2016, the engineering study will provide a better understanding of the long term costs and solutions for Lake Morey Road. The repairs may need to be spread over the course of multiple years.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

On July 15th, fourteen campers and counselors from Aloha Camp had a community service day in Fairlee. They mulched trees and the bandstand garden on the Common and cleaned the kitchen in the Town Hall. After lunch in the Grange Room (that included Whippi Dip milkshakes), they painted the Library signpost and organized books.

On July 18th, Jay Barrett was a speaker at the Lake Morey Protective Association (LMPA) Annual Meeting. Nearly 100 LMPA members learned about what's happening beyond Lake Morey's shores

FOLKS IN THE TOWN HALL

Selectboard Chair Jay Barrett has said many times that the Town's positive momentum is due to the outstanding service, devotion, and energy of those who work in Town Hall. Our thanks to Brian Hanson (Town Administrator), Georgette Wolf-Ludwig (Town Clerk), Melissa Gahagan (Treasurer), Noël Walker (Lister) and Chris Brimmer (Zoning Board Administrator).

"If there was an Olympics for municipal staff, Fairlee would win the gold."

Selectboard agendas are warned at least 2 days in advance of meetings, and are posted at the Town Hall, the Library, on the Fairlee listserv, and the Town website. Please keep your eye on these agendas, because we may be considering a topic of special interest to you. **We invite you to our meetings at 6 PM every Monday.**

Comments or questions?

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