

THE Hardwick Gazette

INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1889

Hardwick • Cabot • Calais • Craftsbury • Greensboro • Marshfield • Plainfield • Stannard • Walden • Wolcott • Woodbury

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Volume 132 Number 40

Questions Remain as Co-Op Members Vote on Hardwick Village Market Purchase



by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Buffalo Mountain Co-op has opened its 2021 annual vote. From October 10 through October 24, members are being asked to vote on several items, with the one receiving being the most attention being “Do I support the purchase of Hardwick Village Market for an estimated cost of \$1 million to include purchase price, inventory, closing costs, renovations and relocation of the current store?”

The board held two meetings intended to bring the wider Hardwick community into the discussion with the hope of “blending” the co-op community and the larger Hardwick one. One member of the community who had been vehemently opposed to the co-op buying the Hardwick Village Market (HVM) said over the weekend that their opinion had moderated, but they were not happy with the way several co-op members described the wider community. At the last community forum on September 27,

one co-op member described people who shop at the Market as “lesser folk,” adding that they had formerly counted themselves as a member of that group.

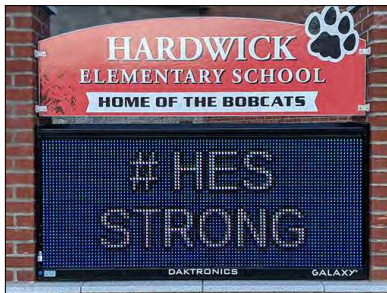
Some Co-op members have raised concerns about the accuracy of the Co-op’s feasibility study, with one member telling the Gazette they were “so sick of hearing about the feasibility study.” Questions remain about “blending” the communities and product lines and some are not convinced that the financial models will work.

At the Co-op’s annual meeting on Sunday, two members reported that its own accountant for decades, Michael Haveson, was not consulted about the feasibility study. Haveson posted to a public forum “Having watched the two recorded previous public meetings on the expansion: meetings that appeared more like pep rallies than nitty gritty, do the numbers really work [discussions], [it] is fair to say that few difficult

See **QUESTIONS, 3**

photo by Doug McClure
Buffalo Mountain Co-op members are voting on whether to purchase the Hardwick Village Market at the Co-op’s 2021 annual vote through October 24.

Multiple COVID Cases at Hardwick Elementary School



is fourth-worst in the state for COVID numbers, with north of 300 new cases in the past two weeks, Craftsbury and Greensboro have only seen a handful of cases since schools re-opened at the beginning of September, and neither Lakeview nor Craftsbury Academy have had active cases in the past week. Craftsbury has only had one case this school year, according to the state.

That is in large contrast to the overall statewide picture. Just two towns north of Craftsbury and one town north of Greensboro, the rate of new cases per town is the highest level in the state’s classification system. On September 1, only Barton was in that category, with 205 cases, but that number has now grown to 310. In the month since schools re-opened, the state is reporting 827 cases in schools.

Most of the schools in our coverage area have not seen more than a case or two. Twinfield Union started the year out on an inauspicious note due to the large COVID outbreak

See **CASES, 4**

file photo by Doug McClure
Over the weekend, Hardwick Elementary School reported seven new COVID cases after reporting three more the week before.

by Doug McClure

MONTPELIER – As the holiday season and colder weather approach, most of the towns we cover have seen smaller impacts from COVID than the rest of the state. While Orleans County



photo via SLR Consulting
The ball field off North Wolcott Road is one of two sites identified for flood mitigation by SLR Consulting.

Wolcott Board Gets Updates, Adjusts Transfer Station Rates

by Doug McClure

WOLCOTT – At the October 6 meeting, the Wolcott Select Board received substantive updates on long-running work to address flooding issues at two sites and progress on the Wolcott Town Forest. After much discussion, the board also came up with a new schedule for fees at the transfer station that it hopes could change the trajectory of that facility’s finances and get it back in the black.

Principal Water Resource Engineer Roy Schiff from the Waterbury office of SLR Consulting presented the board with a 24-page PDF detailing where the floodplain restoration plan stands. He said that a USDA grant and a

See **UPDATES, 2**

Hardwick’s New Town Manager Hits the Ground Running

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – At the October 7 select board meeting, town manager David Upson, Jr. updated the board on ongoing work in process after “a week and four days on the job.” The board also discussed next year’s paving, and COVID came up twice.

Upson told the board that NEK Community Broadband, the Communications Union District (CUD) Hardwick belongs to, was asking the town about locations the town owned where it could

See **MANAGER, 4**



courtesy photo

The thermometer fundraising sign for the East Calais General Store was created by E. Calais residents Syver and Mary Rogstad.



courtesy photo

The East Calais General Store's last Extra Row veggie giveaway of the season on October 2 featured live music by Goddard and Suzie Graves.

East Calais General Store Seeks Store Operator

by Mara Brooks

EAST CALAIS – The East Calais General Store is looking for a new store operator.

The East Calais Community Trust (ECCT), which owns the building that houses the historic Route 14 General Store and three apartments, is soliciting proposals for a store operator to help return the convenience store to its former glory, said ECCT Vice-Chair Denise Wheeler.

The store is currently closed for renovations and is scheduled to reopen in summer of 2022.

“We’re actively looking for somebody that wants to operate the store,” Wheeler said. “The store operator would lease the space from ECCT and hopefully open the store sometime next year.”

The ideal applicant would not just be an operator, but also a “creative partner,” Wheeler said.

A committee will be appointed to review the proposals and hold

interviews while store renovations are underway.

Wheeler said that the ECCT is looking for “somebody that wants to be involved in the community. Whoever operates the store is going to meet people from all walks of life, all socioeconomic backgrounds, and we want someone who is comfortable with that.”

The ECCT recently hired contractors EF Wall & Associates, Inc., to perform the renovations needed to bring the building up to code, Wheeler said. Construction is expected to begin early next year and will result in a building that is “energy efficient and ADA compliant.”

“Those things are important in the current day and age,” Wheeler added.

Wheeler said the community is eagerly awaiting the return of the General Store.

“We’ve had people drive by who think the store is open and

they stop, wanting pineapple juice or windshield washer fluid, or to get a sandwich and a cup of coffee,” Wheeler said. “Route 14 gets amazing traffic and is the gateway to the Northeast Kingdom, which is a destination point for a lot of folks.”

The General Store is the only market along a long stretch of road between East Montpelier and Hardwick. It was a popular community gathering place from the 1850s until it closed in 2019.

“We’re looking to keep its historic charm and uniqueness,”

Wheeler said of the renovation plan. “And we hope the store operator will have grab-and-go meals, coffee, homemade muffins, breakfast sandwiches, because people really miss that.”

The store will not have a full kitchen due to code restrictions but will feature an array of prepared foods, snacks and beverages, Wheeler said.

“That’s what people miss,” Wheeler said. “That’s what the community is looking for.”

For more information, please visit eastcalaiscommunitytrust.org.

CARD OF THANKS

The (14th Annual) Hardwick Area HUGS (Huge Used Garment Swap), was held last weekend, October 8th & 9th, at Hazen Union High School. People from the towns of Albany, Cabot, Duxbury, East Hardwick, Greensboro, Hardwick, Morrisville, Standard, Walden, Wheelock & Wolcott dropped clothing & rags.. and approximately 170 people came the following day and left with bags and bags of FREE clothing!

This event could not be possible without the tireless efforts of a very dedicated group of volunteers: Jen S., Emma P., Casey C., Megan H., Anna C., Rui P., Kathy C., Emily S., Carol S., Nancy E., Sandy S., Virginia L., Maggie Mc., Abrah G., T. G.,

Walker H., Marcy, Ansel P. You ladies are absolutely amazing!! Thank you ever so much..This would not happen without you:)

Thanks also to The Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op for providing some snacks and supplies; the very supportive and hardworking custodians at Hazen, Tod, Wendy & Dave; the administration at Hazen Union High School for giving us the opportunity to use the gym; and Tim Hartt for the use of his truck, trailer, afternoon and very hard work. Lastly, thank you to those who came and supported this community event. Here’s to less textiles in our landfills; Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose.

Peace, Deborah Hartt

Better together.

+ + = SAVE

Jennifer Bellavance CPIA
802-472-5721
31 North Main St.
Hardwick, VT 05843

The more you protect the more you save.

I can help you protect more than you'd expect. I also have lots of ways to help you save when you bundle your policies.

Get the savings you deserve. Call me or stop by my office for a free quote.

Allstate
You're in good hands.

We're always here with local advice you can trust.

Subject to terms conditions and availability. Savings vary by state and product line. Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Co., Allstate Fire and Casualty Insurance Co., Allstate Indemnity Co., Allstate Vehicle and Property Insurance Co., Allstate Insurance Co. © 2015 Allstate Insurance Co. 134923.07