

Concord Planning & Zoning Board Annual Report

2018 ACHIEVEMENTS

The Concord planning efforts continue to progress to promote recreation tourism in the town. It is an honor to have the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) present a case study to the legislature in 2019 (below) describing Concord's revitalization efforts:

Expanding Rural Opportunities

Outdoor recreation on trails, benefit residents and visitors alike, generating well over \$30 million in economic growth in rural Vermont. With significant new attractions like the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail coming on-line, Vermont's reputation as destination for year-round trail activity will only grow. Municipal Planning Grants are helping rural towns harness these outdoor recreation opportunities and build healthier communities, economies, and people.

Concord is a small town of 1,200 residents in the Northeast Kingdom. It has an active planning commission, committed to improving economic prospects for the community. With help from Vermont's Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) program, the community identified outdoor recreation as a key strategy to build long-term economic development and community identity. MPGs then helped the town identify key action steps to improve access to trails and recreation opportunities. Area towns are now focused in implementation, collaborating to market and expand trail access to the outdoors, attracting more visitors to town and boosting sales at local restaurants and stores.

The municipal planning grants have supported Concord's revitalization efforts in so many ways -- from updating the municipal plan, to identifying and designating the village center, to creating a strategic plan to promote recreation tourism. Each step built upon the other and gave us a solid foundation to improve the well-being of our residents and economy.

Cynthia Stuart, Chair, Concord Planning and Zoning Board

Action Steps

2015 Town Plan Update

- *Received MPG grant to hire professional assistance from the regional planning commission*
- *Town plan identifies opportunities to increase trail access as a strategy to sustain and retain individuals, families and businesses*
- *Town plan recommends village center designation for Concord village to stimulate private investment in buildings and business*

2016 Village Center Designation

- *Obtained village center designation that brings tax credits to renovate historic buildings and gives the town priority consideration for state grant programs*

2017 Strategic Plan for Recreational Tourism Development

- *Received second MPG to study and identify a strategy and key steps to improve access to outdoor recreation opportunities*

2018 Long Trail Bike Network Project

- *Received a \$25,700 MPG grant to identify, map, and market an inter-town long trail biking route*
- *The project will provide the 10,000 annual users of Burke's Kingdom Trails, easy access to villages and attractions in the four nearby towns*
- *Businesses begin to see an uptick in visitors and sales*

BOARD MEMBERS

The Concord Planning & Zoning Board includes dedicated members Judy Kurtz, James Gochie, Meagan Johnson, John Christman, and Cynthia Stuart. There is always room available for alternate board members who are welcome to join our efforts. If you are interested in serving on the Planning & Zoning Board, please reach out to Secretary Meagan Johnson at Meagan Johnson megjohnson0301@gmail.com.

BOARD DUTIES

The Concord Planning and Zoning Board is a group of local citizen volunteers striving to provide a variety of services relating to local growth and development including:

- Reviewing and inspecting construction for compliance with local and state zoning ordinances
- Facilitating the development review process and guiding applicants in the permit process
- Fulfilling requests for information on properties
- Applying and administering the grant process for opportunities relating to growth and development
- Developing and implementing the municipal plan
- Enforcing town zoning regulations

2019

The Planning & Zoning Board looks forward to focusing on the planning efforts in the year ahead including implementation of the Long Trail Bike Network Project where the town will be working with Burke, Kirby and Victory. The North Concord Park is scheduled to be renovated in the spring of 2019 to essentially clean-up the park, modernize the ball park dugouts and install new playground equipment. A grant for this project was received from the State of Vermont Parks and Recreation and we are waiting to hear about funding from the Tillotson Foundation for playground equipment.

Should you have interest in joining the Concord Planning & Zoning Board with our efforts, we welcome and encourage your participation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Stuart, Planning & Zoning Board Chairperson