

Richmond Area Creative Communities Prioritization Session

June 7th, 2007

Old Round Church

6:30 – 7:00 Snacks and Notes from First Forum Available

We will start the main meeting at exactly 7:00. Please leave time to arrive and read project possibilities list before 7:00.

7:00 – 7:30 Introduction & Review of Project Possibilities

- Anything missing?
- Major changes to current list

7:30 – 7:40 Top Choices

- Write down your top project choice – Helen marks each project that receives at least one #1 vote.
- Are there any in your top 3 that did not get selected as anyone's top choice?
- This round eliminates some low priority topics.

Reminder of Objectives

- ❖ Rallying participation from a diverse group of community members, including new volunteers.
- ❖ Projects that are most appropriate for a group of local volunteers (e.g. not clearly someone else's responsibility).
- ❖ Jumpstarting creative economic development – setting the foundation for leveraging culture and community to build a strong local economy.

7:40 – 8:10 Discussion

Championing of projects.

8:10 – 8:20 Final Decision

- Do any 3 projects rise naturally to the top? Can we decide by consensus?
- If not, final voting for top 3

8:20 – 8:30 Wrap Up, Adjourn

Richmond Area Project Possibilities List

June 7th, from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at the Old Round Church, will be a meeting to review, revise, and select 3 priorities from the list of possible creative economy projects below.

The project ideas lists here come from the comments of the May 22nd public forum. VCRD has organized the conversation into a coherent list, but we haven't selected based on our opinions of the "best" projects or intentionally omitted any ideas. Full notes from the 22nd will be included in a final report.

The following is a list of big concepts. Particular wording and details like funding, location, and timeline are addressed in the third forum. The goal now is to agree to projects in principle.

When related ideas appeared over the course of the forum's discussion, they were combined into single projects. There will be an opportunity to combine further or disaggregate if needed during the June 7th meeting.

Some statements in the projects discussion were general values without specific projects attached – for example the importance of an active community or of individual artists. These larger concepts should be represented in the concrete projects below. If they aren't adequately included, then there is an opportunity to add more projects on June 7th.

Establish a Learning Center for Agriculture and Sustainability-Related

Skills: Richmond should establish an educational center that offers hands-on learning experiences in agriculture and sustainability (such as green building, alternative energy, etc.). This learning center could include farmlands for experimentation and community services such as community composting; some of this activity could lead to opportunities for new farm-based businesses. Developing a local learning center not only responds to local interests but also attracts young people who may eventually settle in Richmond. This project could begin with tapping area residents to teach their skills and hold the classes in school buildings after-hours.

Provide Assistance for Start-Up and Home-Based Businesses: While the Richmond area can be attractive for start-up businesses, it lacks a central place for information to help the process of starting a business in town. Prospective business leaders should receive more assistance with locating in Richmond. A similar situation exists with the many home-based businesses that may not be new to the area, but which could make use of technical assistance, services, shared office space or other resources. This Project Team should look carefully at how Richmond can meet the needs of these start-up and home-based enterprises.

Restore Area Barns: Richmond's agricultural heritage is a strong part of its character. However, some of the barns that made up the infrastructure for this heritage have fallen into disrepair. At the same time, the Monitor Barns, which now house the

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, provide an example of what is possible with barn restoration. This Project Team should work with barn owners to identify buildings that can be restored and possible end uses.

Form an Alliance for Community Input into Development in the

Richmond Area: Richmond faces the challenge of having several groups in town that are divided by their views on development, including the central question of whether development should be strongly discouraged. Unfortunately, this situation can result in stalemates that lead to development without input from the community. A new alliance should specifically seek out the different voices in this discussion and build a platform for moving forward in future development negotiations.

Expand Use of Historic Buildings: Richmond is well known for its historic Round Church, but more volunteers are needed to promote conservation of other buildings (potentially the Old Hotel and Creamery) and to make it feasible to host events in these buildings. This Project Team should work with the Historical Society to identify physical projects needed for preserving historic buildings as well as what can be done to increase usability of existing building space. These types of projects should be used to flag Richmond as a place where things are happening – making it attractive to businesses while preserving historic structures where businesses might some day locate.

Develop a Multi-Generational Community Center: The number of activities happening in Richmond outpaces the space to house them. For example, groups such as the Hale and Hearty Club provide senior activities, but there is no senior center. At the same time, Richmond lacks a recreation center and a community center. This Project Team should create a space to meet these community needs.

Launch a Buy-Local Campaign: Richmond's location presents particular challenges and opportunities. It has retained a distinctive village center with viable businesses, but at the same time the "one stop shopping" of Williston and Burlington draws potential customers away. This Project Team should launch a campaign to make purchasing from local merchants and service-providers as simple as possible. A first step might be a directory of local goods and services. The Project Team could also provide buy local publicity, for example about local families committed to eating local foods or shopping locally. If some key shopping components are entirely lacking from the Richmond area, then this Project Team should explore creative solutions such as a cooperatively owned store to bring these goods into town.

Open an Incubator Space for Food Businesses: Richmond area home-business owners and community members would benefit from a commercial kitchen space to develop food-based businesses. This space could include canning and other preserving equipment for community members to use with their own homegrown foods. This next step of turning raw ingredients into new products is a key part of developing the Richmond area's food-based economy.

Reduce Town Government's Dependence on a Small Group of

Volunteers: Richmond increasingly has difficulty filling offices and board / commission vacancies. Partially, this difficulty results from having too much work for too few people. One participant suggested a full-time paid zoning position. The burden could also be reduced through bringing in more volunteers, for example with a Democracy Fair highlighting local volunteer opportunities. The 4th of July Parade is a center point of community spirit that this group could both promote and build from. Finally, a focus on the support structure for community projects could lead to a system for seeking grant funds to channel to local projects.

Start a Community Radio Station: A community radio station could tie together the Richmond area. One option is a low-watt radio station. Another option is to take advantage of an upcoming FCC window for applications to start community stations at a higher power. A radio station will help get word out about what's happening in the community and also be a way to invite *everyone* in the Richmond area to share their ideas and talents over the airwaves.

Tie Together Downtown Visually and Functionally: Richmond's village center is disjointed. Sometimes visitors aren't clear where it ends. Visual cues, like flower baskets, lampposts, etc. can tie together all pieces of the downtown. Enhancing walking and bike paths and creating more parking set back from the main street would make downtown easier to navigate. A more ambitious goal for the Project Team could be to arrange a public art installation that draws people into, and through, the village center.

Make Richmond a Public Transportation Hub: While Richmond has an excellent Park & Ride and stop for the LINK Express (Montpelier → Burlington), many pieces are missing from the transportation system. This Project Team should look at ways to bring travelers from the Park & Ride to downtown Richmond, connect directly with Chittenden-county points outside of the LINK's downtown Burlington stop, and bring residents outside downtown Richmond into the downtown. The last goal should help alleviate parking, traffic congestion, and delays caused by Bridge Street's single lane.

Highlight Arts in Richmond: Richmond has many great artists who don't always receive recognition. This Project Team should raise the profile of arts in the Richmond area. One specific suggestion is to hold an annual Art Hop that celebrates both arts and businesses through open houses. Another suggestion is to host an artist in residence as a learning opportunity for the community.

Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System: Richmond area residents have multiple needs for non-automobile trails. Some want a clear way to reach town on foot. Others want to use hiking trails and mountain biking trails for recreation. This Project Team should establish what trails exist, where the right-of-ways exist, and where more trails (for example connecting to the downtown) need to be developed. Furthermore, these trails should be clearly marked and some, like mountain bike trails, made known / available to visitors. This group can go one step past marking and develop

local discovery trails highlighting points of interest in the Richmond area. Finally, this Project Team should not overlook the river as a potential recreational trail.

Hold a Harvest Festival to Celebrate Local Agriculture: Existing community celebrations, such as the 4th of July parade, provide an important rallying point for different groups in the community to come together. Residents feel a need for more such events that integrate many different groups, including from areas outside of the downtown. At the same time, several people spoke of the need to support local farms through agri-tourism and visitor dollars. These two goals can be combined in an annual Harvest Festival to celebrate local agriculture.

Create More Performance Venues: Richmond has capacity for more performance venues. Music performances, in particular, are a way to provide activities for young people without children who often don't fit into the target audience for other community activities. Some simple changes could improve available performance space, such as reorienting the band shell away from the road. This Project Team should identify spaces available, identify what spaces *could* be available with a few changes, and then determine if new space needs to be created, perhaps through one of the building-oriented project ideas such as barn restoration or historic preservation.