



Welcome to Smart Growth Vermont's October E-newsletter! This month, read about our recent Art Gibb award ceremony, learn about the village center of Guilford, and read highlights from our latest Toolbox additions on housing options. This month, we also wrap up our "Smart Growth 101" feature with Principle 10, public engagement.

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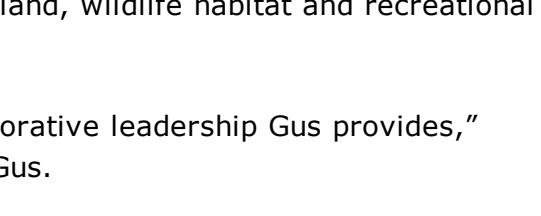
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Gus Seelig Honored With Art Gibb Award

Close to 140 people crowded the T.W. Wood Gallery in Montpelier a few weeks ago at a gala event to applaud the 2010 recipient of the Arthur Gibb Award for Individual Leadership, Gus Seelig of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.



Speakers from Smart Growth Vermont, the offices of Representative Welch as well as Senators Sanders and Leahy congratulated Gus on his creative, collaborative approach to leadership that has resulted in an organization that brings affordable housing and land conservation efforts under one roof.



Robin Scheu, Board chair; Gus Seelig; Noelle Mackay, Executive Director; John Ewing, Founder.

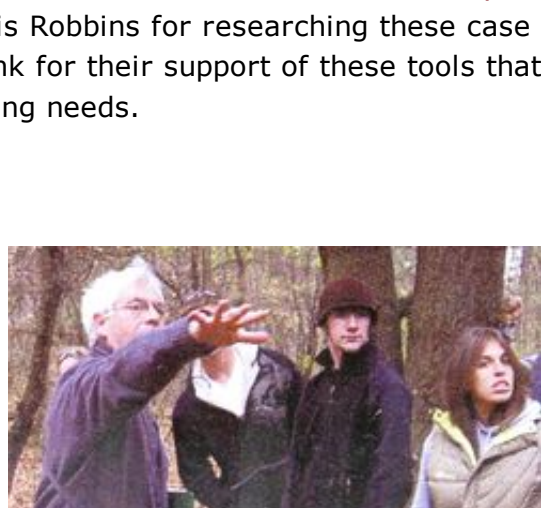
Since it was founded, the VHCB has funded almost 10,000 affordable homes and conserved over 370,000 acres of farmland, wildlife habitat and recreational areas.

"We need more of the kind of quiet, collaborative leadership Gus provides," said Steven Kimbell in his introduction of Gus.

The award, donated by Danforth Pewter, was presented to Gus by Robin Scheu, chair of the Smart Growth Vermont board. We thank all our sponsors for helping us make this a truly special night for Gus.

New in our Toolbox: Looking to Traditional Neighborhoods to Create Housing Options

Town leaders around Vermont struggle with how to provide people with safe, decent housing that is affordable in their communities. They are working on how to provide options for people with different lifestyles - empty nesters, young people just out of college, single parents, retirees as well as growing families - while at the same time ensuring that these new homes fit the community's character.



When Planning Commissions start talking density, set backs and building envelopes, meetings can become strained as citizens struggle with what these numbers mean for their neighborhood.

To help communities visualize what these dimensions look like on the ground, we have added a new tool, Vermont Traditional Neighborhoods, that outlines key features of Vermont town centers that are designed with a focus on people, not cars. We have also evaluated several blocks in four case study towns - Bristol, Burlington, Orwell and Vergennes. These case studies provide a list of the uses, average and net densities, square footage and lot dimensions. We have provided photos and maps to help you translate these numbers into how it works on the ground in real neighborhoods.

To learn more, check out these new tools and case studies in our Community Planning Toolbox. Thanks to volunteer Chris Robbins for researching these case studies and to Chittenden Bank and TD Bank for their support of these tools that help communities address Vermont's housing needs.

Member Spotlight

David Raphael, Middlebury



I believe in the importance of effective planning. Smart Growth Vermont gives the kind of support to communities that is essential to guiding their plans for the future. The organization also provides support when consultants might otherwise not be hired due to local funding. The organization's role supporting appropriate legislation and promoting programs such as the Downtown Program is very valuable.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns is hosting a Planning and Zoning Forum, which will be held at the Capital Plaza in Montpelier on Thursday, October 28. The Forum offers participants a chance to discuss pressing issues in municipal planning and zoning with officials from across the state.

Check out our calendar of events for more.

Smart Growth in Action: Fundamental Principles

Accomplish goals and strategies for smart growth through coalitions with stakeholders and engagement of the public.



We've all heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Similarly, it takes community involvement and collaboration to make good planning decisions for the future of a town.

Community forums and other means of outreach can provide neighbors, stakeholders and planning professionals an opportunity to address concerns and fears in the planning and implementation process.

Public participation has long been part of the planning process, but effective public engagement is not always easy to achieve. However, this process is important for many reasons. For instance, it gives residents an opportunity to learn about what their neighbors envision for their community. It provides a pathway to understanding and appreciating other people's values.

How do we achieve broad public engagement? Often, holding a meeting is not enough to capture the diverse groups that are impacted by the planning process. Reaching out to the underrepresented, providing child care during meetings and visiting local businesses are a few ways to incorporate diverse ideas and information and this will lay the groundwork for quality outcomes.

There are many tools for public engagement. Design charrettes and visual preference surveys are useful because they provide a range of design and visual elements, which can be helpful for people who are not familiar with planning concepts. Focus groups, surveys and community visioning are also great tools to encourage residents and stakeholders to share their visions and ideas for the future of their community.

The most critical piece is to understand your community and then design the public process around the needs of the residents and stakeholders. Work on ways to make public engagement as open a process as possible and collaborate with organizations that have access to diverse groups. To learn more about public engagement, and the tools that can be utilized, visit our Community Planning Toolbox section.

Community Spotlight: Guilford

Nestled in the Southeastern corner of the State is the quiet, scenic town of Guilford. Originally chartered in 1754 by Benning Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire, the town was transformed from a wilderness into an agrarian community. While farming continues to play an important role in the local economy, many residents also commute to work in Brattleboro and other nearby cities.



Guilford Country Store

Though small in size, Guilford has set big goals for revitalization in a Master Plan for Algiers Village, which received Village Center Designation in January 2006, through the State's Downtown Program. They are working to restore the historic buildings in the village and to create housing and business opportunities.

Guilford is well on its way, thanks to the efforts of Friends of Algiers Village, Inc., which has purchased three parcels with buildings, two of which are in need of loving attention. The other is the Guilford Country Store, which contains two apartments on the second floor. Funds are currently being raised to renovate and re-open the Store to serve the local community. In the meantime, the property is the site for a local farmers market.

Guilford residents understand the importance of creating affordable housing within the Village district, and the Windham Housing Trust is working with the community and the Friends of Algiers Village, Inc. to create more opportunities for affordable homes. The Trust recently renovated the Montine House into seven affordable apartments. Other revitalization efforts include the restoration of one of the one-room schoolhouses into a commercial space for a local surveying business in Algiers Village.

Guilford is a good example of a community, young and old, that has come together to make living and accessibility convenient for its residents.

VERMONT NEWS

Vermont League of Conservation Voters Releases 2010 Environmental Scorecard

Since 1982, VLCV has kept score of Vermont Legislators and their records on environmental issues. After each legislative session, scorecards are released to provide voters with a clear record of who does and does not support key environmental issues. Check out this year's scorecard.



Municipal Planning Grants Available

Once again, Municipal Planning Grants are being offered through the Vermont Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development. Two notable changes have been made in the program for FY 2011: 1. The emphasis of the statewide priorities is now more focused on implementation of the municipal plan; 2. A cash match will be required for grant requests between \$8,000 - \$15,000. Matching funds will not be required for grant requests of \$8,000 or less.

For more information, or to apply, visit, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs website or contact Wendy Tutor, at 802-828-5249.

NATIONAL NEWS

Wal-Mart Competes for Urban Market

It's true. Wal-Mart hopes to open two dozen stores in the San Francisco Bay Area region, featuring fresh food and prepared take-out. Calling it the "urban strategy," the stores will be in the 20,000 square foot range. Read more.



Urban Sprawl Threatens Animal Biodiversity

Federal Biologists just released a study linking sprawl and habitat fragmentation to genetic changes in populations of animals. The researchers studied four species - three types of lizards and one bird - in the Santa Monica mountains of California. Results showed the formation of "habitat islands," which can cause in-breeding and decreased genetic diversity. In turn, the lack of genetic diversity threatens the species ability to adapt to a changing environment. Read more.

