



WHEELOCK NEWS

Wheelock Community Initiative on the Web: <https://wheelockcmty.org/> and on Facebook!

Email: wheelockcmty@gmail.com Phone: 802-626-3109, leave message



Meeting notices are on the Town Hall message boards and the town website at <https://townofwheelockvt.org/>

You can also join **Selectboard and Planning Commission meetings** by phone or Internet.

On the town website click on the **"Government"** tab, then click on **"Agenda & Minutes"**

Each meeting agenda document lists **unique** phone numbers, Zoom links, meeting IDs, and passcodes

SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

Tuesday Feb. 3 6:00 PM

Tuesday Feb. 17

*Starts at the end of the **public hearing**, which starts at **6:00 PM***
see "Selectboard News and Notes" for details

Wheelock Town Hall
or attend remotely (see details above)

PLANNING COMMISSION

Updating the Wheelock Town Plan

Wed. Feb. 4 10:30 AM (special)

Wed. Feb. 11 10:30 AM (regular)

Wheelock Town Hall
or attend remotely (see above)

SHEFFIELD FOOD PANTRY

**Weds. Feb. 11 & 25
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

Sheffield Town Hall
Tammy Jacoby, Manager
call/text 802-397-4929



Wheelock Community Initiative

Thurs. Feb. 12, 2:30 PM

In person at Town Hall

All are welcome!

2026 Town Meeting @ Town Hall
Tuesday March 3, 9:00 AM



The Wheelock Community Initiative will have coffee ready for Town Meeting! We are a small group and a good turnout is expected, so we are seeking additional volunteers who are willing to contribute some goodies for the meeting. If you are willing, please drop us a quick email: wheelockcmty@gmail.com



Town Clerk/Treasurer: Erin Swigart

Hours: Tues./Thurs. 8:30-3:00; Wed. 10:30-5:30

Email: wheelocktown@gmail.com **Phone:** 802-626-9094

P.O. Box 1328, 1192 Route 122, Wheelock VT 05851



Selectboard News and Notes

The public hearing held by the Selectboard to **declassify of a portion of Welch Rd.** was held in Town Hall on January 6. The meeting fulfilled part of the town's obligation as outlined in statute (<https://bit.ly/3Zpfbqx>) to advise residents before a Selectboard vote. (See Nov. *Wheelock News* for details.)

Under the law, the town's options included either to declassify the road to a trail, thereby keeping it as an asset and a responsibility, or to declassify it in total, where it reverts to the owners of the abutting lands; in this case, to Peter Piper Timber LLC.

In their January 20th meeting, the Selectboard voted unanimously to declassify the entire .25 mile of Welch Road ("throw up the road") and will file notices of the change to the affected parties, town records, and VTrans.

The Selectboard is working with state officials to research grants and options to address the flood damage to **Fall Brook Road bridge**. Before engineering work can be considered, an understanding of the river corridor is needed with a hydrology study. A **Community Development Block Grant** application, due March 2, is being drafted to fund such a study.

Depending on the funding amount awarded, other village crossings and vulnerable areas could be added to it. The required **public hearing** for the \$60,000 application will be held on **Tues., Feb. 17 @6:00 @Town Hall**.

Planning Commission News & Notes

In addition to their regular monthly meeting, the Planning Commission will hold a second, special meeting on February 4 to complete drafting questions for a **community survey**. It will be available both in print and online, and at an information table during the 2026 Town Meeting.

Two community meetings related to the plan will be scheduled; one early in the process, the other later. To encourage attendance, food will be provided.



Commission:
Kim Hathaway, Chair
Carol Amos
Meaghan Rinehart
Theresa Stimpson

Coffee and Snacks at Town Meeting

GOT HISTORY?

There's no time like the present to learn more about Wheelock's past.

The Year Without a Summer

Two hundred and ten years ago a volcano eruption in Indonesia triggered a catastrophic worldwide climatic event.

Mount Tambora spewed volcanic ash causing persistent dark skies, killing frosts, and snow in Vermont during June, July, and August. The year was also called "Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death". It destroyed corn and staple crops, resulting in famine, skyrocketing food prices, perishing livestock, and massive emigration (15,000) from the state to the western U.S.. People relied on hunting, trapping, fishing, and reportedly eating clover and boiling nettles to survive.

Erastus Fairbanks, who owned the town's general store at the time, is credited with playing a critical role in saving his neighbors from starvation.

His one-time clerk, Zealots Hosmer of Boston is quoted in the **Congregational Quarterly of January 1867**:

"We had in June (1816) a snow storm of several days continuance, entirely destroying the crops of the farmers and there was every prospect of a famine. Railroads were not yet in those days, but he (Fairbanks) immediately dispatched teams (carts drawn by horses & oxen) to Boston and brought home large quantities of rice.

I well remember that a large part of my time was devoted, for some months, to dealing out rice to all his customers, far and near.

How it was paid for; I do not know, as there was no money, or next to none, nearly all trade being carried out by barter or exchange."

Fairbanks sold the store to Ward Bradley in 1818 to became a senior partner in the family business in St. Johnsbury. He was an organizer and first president of the Passumpsic and Connecticut Railroad. In 1852 he was elected governor of Vermont and again in 1860 (start of the Civil War). It is easy to imagine there were Wheelock residents who admired his later life, but were most grateful for his kindness in the 'year without a summer'.

"Town of Wheelock; Vermont's Gift to Dartmouth College" E.J. Hutchinson, 1961

Little Library Gets a Facelift



Our little library at Town Hall is quite popular. Hundreds of books have circulated since it was built, donated, and installed by Bradley Brewer (former resident) in 2023. Sitting outside in all types of weather has taken a toll. Pia Ward did some urgent repairs to the door, but she recommended a full replacement was needed. **Paul St. Jean** to the rescue!

Paul constructed a sturdy new door with all his own materials. **Tim Scott Realty** made a contribution to purchase a new bench. Town staff are keeping the library shoveled out.

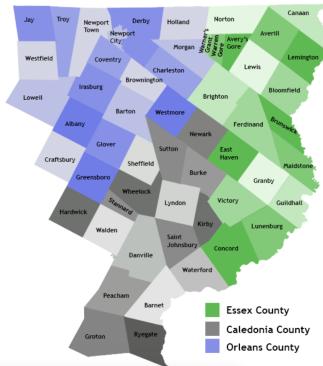
Linda Rhodes is the librarian; so please contact her if you have donations rather than leaving them in or around the library. linda1464@gmail.com



A New Regional Plan for the NEK

Our Planning Commission will be considering how our town plan is compatible with the NEK Regional Plan, which is being updated by NVDA (*Northeastern Vermont Development Association*). The purpose of the 2026 Regional Plan is to guide future growth and development in the NEK.

The Plan offers goals and strategies to foster economic development, preserve resources, guide development patterns, and address quality of life issues in our region. The focus is on land use, energy, transportation, utilities & facilities, historic & cultural resources, housing, natural resources, economic development and flood resilience. An interactive ["Future Land Use Map"](#) is available online now.



Similar to our town plan update process, NVDA surveyed NEK residents' for their ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future. Here's a sampling:

Challenges:

- Housing Crisis
- Employment
- Food Security/Local Agriculture
- Climate Change/Flooding
- Healthcare/Social Services Access
- Substance Abuse/Aging Population
- Environmental Challenges
- Infrastructure/ Public Transport Lack

Hopes for the Future:

- Economic & Environmental
- Balanced Growth
- Affordable Housing
- Redevelop/Reuse
- Climate Adaptation
- Healthcare/Wellness Access
- Regional Collaboration

Click [Here](#) for NVDA's complete slides and a recording that recaps the survey findings. NVDA planners are now in the final drafting stages and intend to submit a draft plan to the VT Land Use Review Board in April.

Questions? Contact Cathlin Lord, Regional Planner, clord@nvda.net