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TOP STORY

#5 Enosburgh rising

By TOM BENTON Messenger Staff

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Downtown Enosburgh Falls.


MESSENGER FILE PHOTO

ENOSBURGH – This community’s revitalization shot forward in 2019, through a downtown planning project, hiring an economic development director, planning new recreation fields and more.

The SE Group finalized its "Vital Village" plan this summer, its public input-based proposal to improve downtown Enosburg Falls.

Consultants identified five top projects consultants believe "would be good starting points for the Village because they have synergy with each other and potential to catalyze future projects."

Those projects are a unified community brand, streetscape improvements to the village's central Main Street, promoting tourist-friendly businesses and Canadian tourism, a welcome center and the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail crossing.



A \$54,000 grant from the Better Connections program, a joint Vermont Agency of Transportation and Agency of Commerce and Community Development initiative, funded the hiring of a consulting firm to design a downtown redevelopment plan for the Village of Enosburg Falls.

The village was one of three Vermont communities awarded the grant in March 2018.

But as both consultants and community members noted at Vital Village planning meetings, all the proposals in the world won't go far without people dedicated to making them reality.

Enter Sean Kio, Enosburgh's first director of economic development. His full-time position is entirely dedicated to economic development in the town and village.

Kio officially began in the position on Dec. 2.

"My view of this is if I'm sitting behind a desk forty hours a week, I'm probably not doing my job," Kio said. "I'm not out in the public. I'm not meeting with organizations. I'm not meeting with businesses. I'm not actively trying to increase the economic prosperity of Enosburgh."

First and foremost, Kio said, his job entails helping the town and village achieve infrastructure upgrades and similar capital projects.

"This is maybe the next evolution of all the things that are happening in Enosburgh right now," Kio said. "Not to say this is a catalyst, but it's maybe just the next step in Enosburgh's development."

And there are plenty of things happening in Enosburgh right now – for example, planning to enliven the community recreation fields across from the Hannaford plaza.

The SE Group is leading that planning process as well. The group's current design includes new roads and parking areas, a ski pond, a pavilion, tennis courts, a skate park and a quarter-mile walking path around an existing ball field adjacent to Vermont Route 105.

This design incorporated feedback from a public presentation of three possible designs over the summer. SE Group planner Tom Hand said those who showed up for that presentation clearly preferred specific design elements.

The *Messenger* continues regularly chronicling Enosburgh's development, which showed no sign of slowing down in 2019.