

Town of Vershire Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Special Topics Forum on Education

Wednesday 5/24/23 at 7pm at the Town Center.

There will be a remote option for this meeting via Zoom or by phone.

Attendance: Gregory Wilson, Eleanor Zue, Tonya Gunn, Nate Thames, Seann Cram, Andrea Herrington, Peet Pearson, Gretchen Harvey-secretary.

The forum started at 7:00 PM.

- **Early Education:** Options are hard to find. Long waiting lists and staff reductions have reduced hours available. Anecdotal—there used to be more home daycares. With respect to the children's library at the Church-Orr house, story time has restarted 1x/month, and Saturday library visitation is good. One aspect that used to be more robust and is now missing are enrichment activities such as field trips.
- **Adult Education:** The existing Town Plan does not mention adult ed. Field trips (group trips) for adults would also be positive. A successful model for adult ed is Strafford's Cabin Fever University.
- **Home Schooling:** There is a significant group of homeschooling families in Vershire. What are their curricular needs? Are there materials that could be loaned?
- **Westshire Afterschool Program:** This program has finally moved beyond pandemic protocols and has begun to return to a more normal activity range. It runs until 5PM but does not cover pre-school/Kindergarteners. The cost is nominal and has a sliding scale.
- **Intergenerational education:** This could include mixed age groups with older children or adults reading to younger children; children helping with a senior lunch meal; the Vermont Reads program, etc.
- **Other aspirations/ideas:** Lecture series (VT Humanities Council), Media Literacy for all ages, First Wednesdays (VT Libraries speakers series), environmental education, summer camp development, bringing people together across various “divides” be they political, economic, or other barriers that keep people siloed.
- **Life-long Learning:** Wellness, ethics, and morals, and how to enhance the wellbeing of the community through life-long learning: personal learning, civic learning, environmental learning, etc.
- **Affordability and quality of public education:** Declining enrollments and the tax burden this imposes requires rethinking the PS funding and educational models in rural places.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI):** This can be done better with multi-cultural educational opportunities. Town-sponsored events need to be more aware of how many themed events are
- **A Learning Committee for Vershire:** Suggest the creation of a Learning Committee to the selectboard, to include representatives from Vershare, the Library, Vermont Historical Society, and other organizations, and for the purpose of creating concrete blueprints or plans for citizens to utilize if they want to actualize some of their educational program ideas.

Adjourn: The forum ended at 8:30pm.