

# Y2C Action Teams Moving Ahead

By Annamarie Pluhar

Some of the teams formed on the Y2C organizational weekend are charging ahead and some are taking an easier pace in getting underway.

The affordable housing team invited Connie Snow from the Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust to join them at their first meeting. This group is working on a number of initiatives to understand how we might be able to ensure affordable housing.

The communications group is investigating how to make a community calendar available

to everyone, both on the Internet and at particular locations around town.

The school and community group has not yet officially met, though considerable work is already being done. Quite a few people are interested in issues related to preschool and after-school care. Simultaneously, the legislature has drafted a law related to pre-schooling that specifically affirms the importance of the early years in a child's development, and outlines ways for towns to draw down funding from the state (ADM monies) for children ages three and four who are enrolled at least ten hours a week in preschools and daycare

facilities that meet eligibility requirements. Based on initial review, it looks like Dummerston will be able to draw down funds for approximately fifteen children in the coming year; this will increase our ADM count, thereby lowering our taxes.

Several community members and our local school board are involved in helping Dummerston gain access to these funds, and we need your help. Please call Molly Stoner at 257-4009 if you have a three- or four-year-old child whom you plan to enroll in a preschool or childcare facility this fall. Please call Rachel Glickman if you are or know of a childcare provider who meets the following criteria: has NAEYC accreditation or four stars through Vermont STARS (or three stars with an approved plan for the fourth); is a center that employs at least one licensed teacher; or is a home-care provider who receives regular, active supervision from a licensed teacher. The school board has invited Cindy Tarail of Windham County's Building Bright Futures Council to discuss this issue at a board meeting on August 7, 2007.

The school and community group is planning to meet and set a mission for the further work of the group, establish one or more task forces, and choose leaders for the projects. Current ideas include creating a vehicle for communication with families of young children, assessing skills and interests of community members who wish to volunteer in the school, and working to secure preschool and after-school care options for Dummerston families. Please join us to share your thinking and your talents!

The rural land preservation group is still forming and clarifying how they can help the planning commission in their work.

The social needs and community gatherings groups are planning to meet in July.

Information about the action teams is on the Y2C Web site: <http://www.dummerston.com/Y2C>.

## Southern Loop Power Plans Catch Town Residents by Surprise

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The second piece of this project which affects us locally involves a major expansion of the CVPS substation near the old West Dummerston dam site on the West River. The proposed installation would include the existing transformers and extend about 700' to the northwest. The buildings, equipment and fenced yard would cover 4.6 acres, and would be visible from the Camp Arden Road. CVPS already owns this land.

The third local piece of the Southern Loop project involves construction of a new 345-kilovolt tandem line linking the new substation with the upgraded north-south line. From the substation, the new line would cross the river to Camp Arden (Farwell property), bisect the Arden property, cross the Camp Arden Road, and proceed through the Wittlers' property (field and forest) to a junction with the north-south line. The plans indicate that this link will require clearing a 250-foot swath through almost three quarters of a mile of undisturbed forest. Roughly twenty additional acres of Dummerston land would be deforested by the clearing for this spur, which would require new easements.

Needless to say, this project will significantly change the character of the entire Hague

neighborhood, and has already affected property values. The project runs counter to the vision expressed in our Planning Commission's May 2007 booklet, "Planning for the Land We Love". The widening of the north-south line would take place mostly on "Conservation" land; the new substation would be on "Recreation" land; and about half of the new connecting link would be on "Conservation" land.

The public response to the Southern Loop project has been surprising. The Brattleboro Reformer ran four comprehensive and well-balanced articles on its front page, from June 28 through July 2. Our planning commission has devoted four meetings solely to this issue, and held a public hearing in West Dummerston on July 11. Our conservation commission has devoted several meetings to consideration of the many environmental impacts of the project. In addition, our selectboard spent much of its July 5th meeting hearing citizens' concerns about the Southern Loop. Both the selectboard and the planning commission, in consultation with the Windham Regional Commission, are now deliberating how they can best represent our town's interests during the Vermont Public Service Board's long approval/disapproval process.

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