

Barton Village looks at flood mitigation

by Kenzie Strange

BARTON VILLAGE — Flooding is on people’s minds here, with some people cleaning up damage from last year, some seeing their property lines getting eaten away by the rising Barton River, and aware the state is entering flood season again.

“I’ve lost 15 feet and four trees,” one community member said.

“I’ve lost 10 feet or 12 feet,” another said, adding, “It’s hard to see your life’s work go down the river,” and noting frustration when people say, “the river does what the river does.”

About 20 people came to the Barton Memorial Building Monday to talk about the Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER) project. The meeting was a first for Barton Village, with more to come.

Bruce Melendy, emergency management coordinator for Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) was there to explain and answer questions. He was accompanied by NVDA Executive Director David Snedeker, himself a resident of the village.

The state has \$90-million to spend in flood-related resilience efforts, but the money comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and can only be used in certain ways. For example, FEMA will pay for a home buyout or raising a building that is close to the river, but will not buy dirt or rocks to fill places the river has encroached upon, a solution people with

receding yards want FEMA to cover.

The meeting was for citizens of Barton Village. Barton Town and Orleans Village have already had their own meetings. Because the flooding affects the three municipalities that make up Barton, the consensus of the trustees and citizens is that they want to work together. They said three heads are better than one and want the landscaping aspect of flood resiliency to be a group effort.

Two or three people have approached the village for the buyout option, but although Gina Lyon, the chair of the trustees, sent them the paperwork, she has received nothing back yet.

Mr. Melendy said he’s “three for three” in the buyout process so far, but admitted it does take a while. Stilts seem to be an open option for anyone living on Glover Road, but Mr. Melendy said businesses are not available for the FEMA money — their main option is low-interest loans. Someone asked if the church in the village is eligible. Mr. Melendy said he’ll check on that, and wrote down comments and questions throughout the night for further investigation. FEMA money is mostly meant for private homes or publicly owned buildings.

People living in Barton Village need to file through the town, or municipality, to obtain flood relief money, and cannot apply on their own. Landscape architecture might be a necessary option to save the receding property lines, but it doesn’t qualify under current FEMA guidelines.

“You can’t move a historic village away from a

river when it’s been there 100 years or more,” Mr. Snedeker said.

He and Mr. Melendy want to come up with solutions that work for all, which means combining municipality efforts and having larger and more widely publicized meetings.

People in the audience snapped their fingers in approval when a tri-municipality effort was mentioned and voiced a “yes” to joining forces.

About half of the crowd put away their chairs and left once the RIVER discussion was over.

From there, the trustee board heard about the development of the old Barton Motors site, a coin drop happening during the village’s upcoming summer yard sale, and a number of smaller and housekeeping agenda items.

The atmosphere at the trustee meeting was one of ease, as chair Ms. Lyon joked with attendees and presenters, seemingly knowing all of them.

James Coe of Coe and Coe Architecture came to pitch some development ideas for the old Barton Motors site, which has been vacant for about a decade. Mr. Coe said his firm is considering three different development plans, and wants a mixture of retail storefronts, office space, and housing to be part of the plan.

One of the biggest obstacles in developing the space is making sure there’s enough parking available.

Those with ideas about what they want to see on the site, can send Mr. Coe messages by visiting

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BASSI will have coin drop at village yard sale

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his website, coeandcoearchitecture.com.

Richard Royer spoke on behalf of Barton Area Senior Services, Inc. (BASSI) to ask for a coin drop happening during Barton's village-wide yard sale coming up at the end of the month. His group wants the coin drop to be outside of the C & C grocery store, as that location has the most motor traffic, but Ms. Lyon and the board have concerns about safety.

The proceeds of the donations go to supporting senior services in Barton, and Mr. Royer said donations are down and the cost of food is going up. He said the group could really use the money.

The board agreed to have the coin drop slightly outside of the village center, near the offices of J.P. Sicard, Inc., and said if BASSI doesn't raise as much money as it hopes during the coin drop, there will be other chances for additional coin drops, perhaps during the Fourth of July, or during a weeklong celebration Barton is having in August.

In smaller items, there was a discussion about a new shed for salt and sand in the winter. The price tag is \$310,000 for the whole project, and Barton has only gotten \$90,000 in grant money so far. Senator Peter Welch didn't include the village's application in his list for

congressional funding, but the trustees are still waiting to hear back from Senator Bernie Sanders.

By the time smaller agenda items came up for the trustee board, only four people were left.

They were the only ones to hear Vera LaPorte, business manager of Barton Village, say it's been "audit hell" trying to get FEMA money to smaller grantees. The village currently has about \$124,000 to disperse, but FEMA won't release the money until contractors say yes.

Seamless Summer food service program

The Orleans Central Supervisory Union is participating in the Seamless Summer Food Program. Meals will be provided to all children without charge and are the same for all children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. Meals will be provided to all children one to 18 years of age at a first come, first serve basis at the sites and times as follows:

Irasburg, Barton, and Brownington schools: June 18 to July 18, Monday through Thursday. Breakfast will be available from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. and lunch will be available 11:30 a.m. to noon

each day.

Lake Region: June 18 to June 27 and July 8 to 25, Monday through Thursday. Breakfast will be available from 8 to 8:30 a.m. and lunch will be available from noon to 12:30 p.m. each day.

Orleans Federated Church will be handing out meals June 18 – July 25, Monday through Thursday, only from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. each day.


There will be no meals available on Thursday, July 4. All meals must be consumed on site with the exception of the Orleans Federated Church.

Children will receive one day of meals at a time from one site per day.

Although it is not required, it would be greatly appreciated if families could call ahead so that meals can be ready. Please leave a message at (802) 525-3636, extension 118, by 10 a.m. on Friday for Monday's meals. Leave your name, how many meals you will need, and what location you would like them at.

For more information, please contact Monica Fisher, food service coordinator at (802) 525-1204, extension 138. — from Orleans Central Supervisory Union

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