

City of Caribou, Maine

Municipal Building

25 High Street Caribou, ME 04736 Telephone (207) 493-3324 Fax (207) 498-3954 www.cariboumaine.org

AGENDA

Caribou Riverfront Renaissance 6:00 pm February 15, 2022

Caribou City Council Chambers

Note: COVID-19 Protocol will be in effect, masks must be worn when social distancing can not be enforced.

- I. Call Meeting to Order, Determine Quorum
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Approval of the minutes for the January 18, 2022, Caribou Riverfront Renaissance Committee Meeting
- III. Further discussion Maine DOT, Office of Freight and Passenger Services for conversation regarding potential Reuse Options for the Railroad ROW and projects at the Limestone Street Bridge and Railroad ROW culvert at Otter Brook.
- IV. Further discussion on outreach to neighboring communities. Consider setting March meeting date for our Central Aroostook Stakeholders in person/zoom and talking points.
 - a. Andrea F. Outreach to Riverfront Development District landowners.
- V. Zoning and Land Use Table
 - a. Planning Board Insights, Land Use Table and Zoning
 - b. Riverfront Development District Designation
- VI. New Business
 - a. Updated Project Outline
 - b. Master Plan
 - i. Christina to explore contacts
 - ii. "Heart and Soul" and Bucksport's River Walk Theory of Life
 - iii. Heart and soul Planning Grant
 - c. Age Friendly, CARY, Snowmobile and ATV Clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis (support from other community initiatives)
- VII. Ideas and Insights

Adjournment

City of Caribou, Maine



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Caribou Riverfront Renaissance Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday, January 18, 2022 @ 6:00 pm City Council Chambers

Members Present: Mark Draper, Andrea Flannery, Dan Bagley, Christina Kane-Gibson, Councilor Louella Willey, City Manager Penny Thompson, Gary Marquis, Ken Murchison,

Members Absent: Jay Kamm, Others Present: Jan Murchison

I. Call Meeting to Order, Determine Quorum

a. Chair Mark Draper called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and determined that a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of the minutes for the December 14, 2021, Caribou Riverfront Renaissance Committee Meeting. Minutes amended to reflect that Dan Bagley was present at the November 23rd, 2021, CRRC Meeting, it was noted that Christina's' name was misspelled and in item 1-a-6 the passage was corrected by adding "except by act of legislature" at the end of the statement. Motion was made by Dan Bagley and seconded by Andrea Flannery to approve minutes as amended, all in favor, motion to approve passed.

III. Further Discussion with MDOT Freight regarding potential reuse options for the railroad ROW

a. Tabled further discussion until future time when Jay Kamm can participate in the conversation.

IV. Outreach to Neighboring Communities

- a. The January 11, 2022, Outreach Letter to neighboring communities was shared with the Committee, at that time there were no additional contacts other than an initial inquiry from the Town of Fort Fairfield
- b. Discussion on outreach commenced, Dan B. had recently spoken to Carl Flora at LDA about the Renaissance Committee and LD 1133 which would allow for rail reuse while maintaining the ROW for future railroad applications and Gary M. described the Limestone Snowmobile Club efforts to create a trail on the existing Railroad ROW though he was not sure about permissions or funding. Gary did say that there would need to be much work to drive that trail though to Caribou due to the general condition of the rail bed with tree growth and washed-out areas that would require bridging. From the Presque Isle end, trains have not crossed the Aroostook River in over two years.
- c. Discussion turned to future planning maybe utilizing the Aroostook Waste Solutions Model of Ownership with Caribou, Fort Fairfield, Limestone and

Presque Isle to create a coalition in preparation for the MDOT Rail Use Commission required to gain interim use of the MDOT Trail ROW, perhaps in the form of a long-term lease (100 yr.) including the potential to recycle iron or ties. Basically, an RFP for a Central Aroostook Recreational Multi-Use Trail Project in the beginning, Phase 1, lending us a "Tourism" spin. NMDC may be able to help with the planning.

- d. Follow-up phone calls will be made to each neighboring community and LDA and arrangements should be made to meet in person in the March time frame and we should make a list of talking points to bring to our regional stakeholders meeting and ask each community wat their vision for rail reuse is.
- e. Timing of a presentation to the City Council was discussed. The CRRC could meet with the Council to inform of our progress priorities and goals but initially no budgetary consideration until we have a better idea of the scope of our Master Plan project. Gary can present what has already been completed with the 2004 Trails Study and from there we can springboard into our New Master Plan beginning with the prior document. Any plan should include the potential for public private partnerships with the object to be the ability to guide future development.

V. Zoning and Land Use Table

a. CRRC to work with Caribou Planning Board to develop a more comprehensive Land Use Table for our Riverfront Redevelopment District

VI. New Business

- a. Master Plan Master Plan
 - 1. Begin where 2004 Trails Study left off.
 - 2. Goals and Priorities
 - 3. Public Input
 - 4. Depending on the scope of work, engaging a consultant
 - 5. As we develop our reuse plan develop a budget for the next steps and for implementation.
- b. Branding
 - 1. To better define the Riverfront Renaissance and the riverfront development district; Why is it Unique and What makes it special?
 - 2. See attached
 - 3. We would like to make the riverfront a destination.
 - 1. Come Home to Caribou
 - 2. Come to the river
 - 3. Join us at the river

VII. Insights and Ideas

- a. Christina to explore contacts
- b. Andrea to contact Landowners in the Riverfront Development District
- c. Jay to Explore Irving's Lease Agreement with the State of Maine Department of Transportation
- d. Mark and Ken to outline (lay out the process) work done to date and future steps
- e. Penny T. described the MDOT Otter Brook Project. On the rial side, the removal of the culverts in the railbed at Otter Brook to improve the stream channel in a

series of steps to enhance access to brook trout to and from the Aroostook River and on the road side the Otter Brook Bridge on Limestone Street and the long range plan to decommission/demolish/repair the two concrete box culvert bridge.

VIII. Next Meeting

a. February 15, 2022, at 6:00 pm in the Caribou City Council Chambers

IX. Adjournment

a. Motion by Mark K. 7:33 pm, all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay Kamm Secretary, Riverfront Renaissance Committee

Branding Session

Gateways:

- Dow Siding Road
- Lower Washington Street
- Lower Lyndon Street
- Water Street
- Elm Street
- Limestone Street
- Entire Riverfront
- Railroad ROW (throughout)

Need for way faring signs (RR Switches for signs? Replicate signage from pedestrian walk around Collins Pond (Uniform Signage))

Water Features:

- Aroostook River ("Shining Water")
- Prestile Stream
- Caribou Stream
- Otter Brook (MDOT Rail Project)

Excellent recreational, and water related opportunities (Fishing, Boating, Paddling, Birdwatching).

Historic:

- Water Street (historic major artery)
- Trout Hatchery (Otter Brook)
- "Olmstead House" (An original Collins Family Home)
- Railroad Station
- Railroad Locomotive Garage (and turnstile)
- Native campsite near Dow Siding (Archaeological Study "Chan Site")

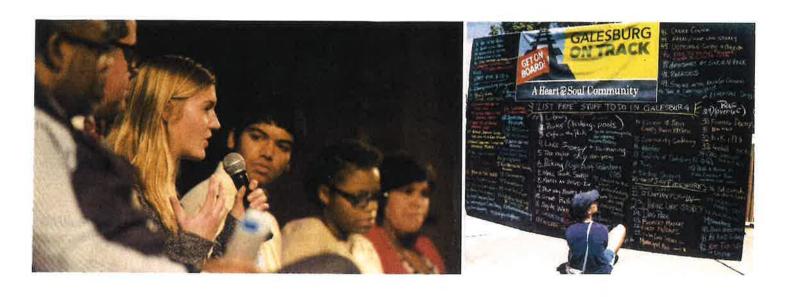
Focus on an historical and once vibrant area of our community.

Land Use:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Recreational
- Green Space
- Mixed Use

Existing and Prosed Land Use and Zoning potential





How To Create Stronger, Healthier and More Vibrant Small Cities and Towns



We Believe in Your Community

I grew up in Weston, Vermont, population 600, and served on the Planning Commission many years ago.

I observed most residents didn't get involved in town affairs until something controversial came along. We on the Planning Commission updated the Town Plan, a nearly year-long

process where we invited public participation which was scant.

Hardly a year had passed when a developer proposed an "educational center" five miles north of town on the upper side of a mountain. In actuality, it turned out to be an amusement park with numerous rides and the added attraction of an African animal park and was called Wildlife Wonderland.

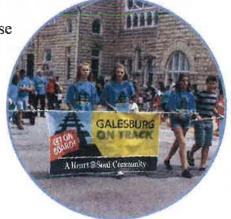
The town became divided over it. Friendships were strained, enemies created, legal challenges exchanged, and an air of unpleasantness hung over the town.

An appeal resulted in exchanging the wildlife animals with farm animals. The theme park opened in the spring and went bankrupt in October. The scars on the mountain healed faster than the scars among the residents.

This troubled me for years and over time Community Heart & Soul emerged as a better way for small cities and towns to make decisions about their future.

Community Heart & Soul is premised on the notion that all small cities and towns have a distinct Heart & Soul. It's those elements that residents love about their town, the pride they feel, the places they love and show visitors, the gathering places, and a way of doing business that rises above political ideologies and views residents as friends and neighbors who will work together.

And it's led by all residents in partnership with their elected and appointed officials.



Small cities and towns have faced numerous challenges since WWII chasing the silverbullet approach to economic development. You know, get a factory to move to town and the problems are solved. Didn't work out so well.

With Heart & Soul, towns get their confidence back and when that happens people do amazing things and economic

development emerges more from within. You will see some examples in the pages that follow.

After an initial two years of learning, your town's Heart & Soul becomes an ongoing practice for years to come. It does not sit on a shelf. There are a growing number of Heart & Soul towns and lines of exchange of ideas among them are being established.

As most Heart & Soul towns say, this was the greatest investment we ever made and it's paying off with new energy, an amazing increase in the number of volunteers, more individuals running for office, and pride in rebuilding our own economy.

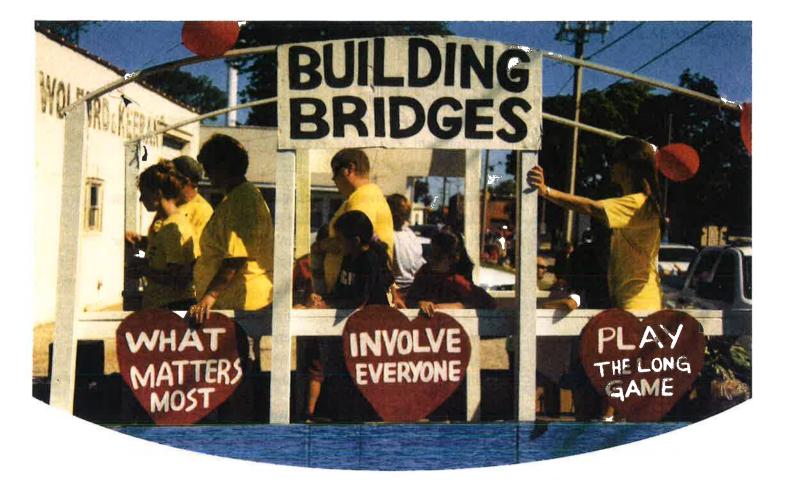
Lyman Orton

HALLOWELL 15.

Founder, Community Heart & Soul Proprietor, The Vermont Country Store

With Heart & Soul, towns get their confidence back and when that happens people do amazing things and economic development emerges."





Every Town Has a Heart and Soul That Reflects What Residents Love About Their Community and Why They Choose to Live There

Community Heart & Soul is a resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it. Organized into four phases, the step-by-step process is led by a Certified Coach who guides a community through the Heart & Soul process.

Community Heart & Soul is the foundation upon which a town produces long-lasting benefits that live on, long term...in the heartbeat of your community. Community Heart & Soul is a practice, adopted by each town that continues long into the future. A town's Heart & Soul connects the human elements of residents with the governance elements of elected and appointed officials.



Three powerful principles guide the Heart & Soul model: Involve Everyone

Hearing from all residents, especially those whose voices are hidden or missing, is a priority throughout the Community Heart & Soul process.

Focus on What Matters Most

When residents share what they love about where they live and identify their hopes for the future, common themes emerge. These are the things that matter most to residents and become the foundation for sound decision-making.





Play the Long Game

Community Heart & Soul is just the beginning of an evolutionary way towns view themselves, how they govern, and how they make decisions about the future. Communities are equipped for the long run with the skills and tools to continue doing business guided by what matters most—their community's Heart & Soul.

Community Heart & Soul reaches deep into communities to ensure all voices are represented in determining a town's future.

Instead of bringing residents to the table, Community Heart & Soul brings the table to residents at community events, neighborhood block parties, schools, businesses, and virtual gatherings.



Heart & Soul Communities Experience a Range of Social and Economic Benefits

Here are just a few of the many ways communities are revitalized by Community Heart & Soul.

Pride and confidence grow in the town

From the start, The Heart & Soul Team in McComb, Ohio, (pop. 1,600) was on the move, reaching out to as many residents as possible, marching in the town's celebrated Cookie Festival parade, connecting with locals at the fire department chicken BBQ, and meeting fans at high school sports games, among other events.

One resident observed a positive impact right away: "You know what I love about Heart & Soul? People feel they can be proud of McComb. I've already seen so much good. And it's just the



McComb Region Heart & Soul, Ohio

start." Asking people what they love about McComb got people thinking about their town's assets and possibilities. This rekindled a sense of pride.

Learn more: www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/mccomb-ohio



Gardiner Heart & Soul, Maine

Volunteerism increases

In Gardiner, Maine, (pop. 5,700) city council meetings were characterized by a few angry residents showing up to yell and complain. Community Heart & Soul got residents reconnected to their local government. Interest in serving on committees grew. More people attended council meetings. The tenor of meetings changed as discourse became more civil. The mayor reported a hundredfold increase in active volunteers.

Learn more:

www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/gardiner-maine

Town officials gain a deeper understanding of what matters to residents

In Cortez, Colorado, (pop. 9,000) city planners wanted to get more residents involved, especially those missing voices rarely heard. City officials began to think beyond city hall as the only place for public meetings. Using the Community Network Analysis, volunteers and planners went to people in their neighborhoods and sponsored block parties and potluck dinners.



Cortez Heart & Soul, Colorado

As plans for the future took shape, they went back to residents to check their work. Community engagement helped planners do their jobs. It also strengthened bonds among neighbors based on a shared love of place and the desire to make it better.

Learn more: www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/cortez-colorado



Biddeford Heart & Soul, Maine

Investment in the town increases

Biddeford, Maine, (pop. 21,000) was known as "Trash Town" because of the industrial garbage incinerator right downtown. But the facility provided 80 jobs and was the largest taxpayer in a town without a lot of options. Engagement activities during Biddeford's Community Heart & Soul project made it clear that residents wanted the incinerator gone.

That gave officials the backing they needed to buy the facility and close it. The move triggered major reinvestment with more than 90 new businesses and \$90 million invested in the first seven years

after Heart & Soul, including a \$50 million boutique hotel and \$15 million in affordable housing.

Learn more: www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/biddeford-maine

Residents honor the importance of history and culture

The Greater Carlisle Heart & Soul Team in Pennsylvania (pop. 19,000) heard from a resident about a long abandoned African-American church built by her grandfather circa 1870. The story rallied the community to protect and preserve the church along with the nearby cemetery, where her grandfather's gravesite is located along with several Civil War veterans. Now, the site is on the National Register of Historic Places and a door has been opened to dialogue about the African-American history in the community.

Learn more:

www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/greater-carlisle-pennsylvania



Greater Carlisle Heart & Soul, Pennsylvania



See more examples of how towns benefit from Community Heart & Soul: www.communityheartandsoul.org/community-heart-soul-towns

How Community Heart & Soul Works



Developed and field-tested in partnership with over 100 small cities and towns across the United States, Community Heart & Soul is a proven process for engaging residents in shaping the future of their community. For most communities, completing the four phases of

Community Heart & Soul takes about two years. But completion of the Heart & Soul process is really just the beginning. That's because Community Heart & Soul is an ongoing practice that provides municipal officials with a clear understanding of what matters most to their constituents—all the residents—and forges a partnership that builds on the first thing everyone has in common: they all live here.

Four Phases of Community Heart & Soul

Phase 1: Imagine

Approx. 2-3 months: In Phase 1, you will gather partners and a diverse team of volunteers. Together, you will use your collective hopes for the future to set goals and build awareness, interest and commitment across the community. This is also an important time to identify who lives, works, and plays in the community and to develop a communications plan to reach them all.



Community Network Analysis

The Community Network Analysis is a guiding tool throughout Community Heart & Soul. The Community Network Analysis is about understanding who lives, works, and plays in your community and how best to reach them. It begins by analyzing



community demographics and tapping local knowledge to brainstorm ways to engage different groups and networks. This is used throughout the process to ensure the work involves everyone.

Golden Heart & Soul, Colorado

Phase 2: Connect

Approx. 6-8 months: Activities in Phase 2 focus on reaching a broad, diverse mix of people to identify what matters most to your community. Gathering and sharing personal stories about local experiences is a key engagement strategy in this phase, bringing people together to find common ground. This phase ends in articulating that common ground in Heart & Soul Statements, which guide activities and drive results in Phases 3 and 4.



Heart & Soul Statements

Here is a sampling of Heart & Soul Statements drawn from towns across the country.

We treasure a vibrant downtown with **small businesses**, **festivals**, **parades**, **waterfront**, **and art-related opportunities** that provide economic development and places for people to gather; promoting a rich, welcoming sense of community."

We appreciate a local community that celebrates and accepts all of the differences among individuals that keep our town vibrant and culturally beautiful."

Our city government is **responsive**, approachable, good at listening, welcomes participation and involvement, is fair to all parts of the city and is accountable."



See more Heart & Soul Statements: www.communityheartandsoul.org/phase-two



Phase 3: Plan

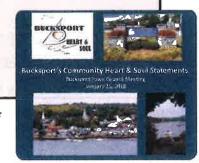
Approx. 4-6 months: In Phase 3, your community's Heart & Soul Statements provide a framework for gathering and prioritizing ideas for action. Again, include as many people as possible as you discuss and make decisions for your community's future. You will also begin to plan for the long-term practice of Community Heart & Soul.

Action Plans

As Bucksport Heart & Soul in Maine completed Phase 3, team leaders wanted to get the ball rolling on ideas prioritized by the community that ranged from **creating a downtown beautification program, to holding block parties, to developing a farm-to-school program**. The team began by signing on organizations, soliciting support from the library, the chamber of commerce, the local land trust, the garden club, and so on.

Next, they held the Bucksport Heart & Soul Summit and Volunteer Fair. Sixteen organizations that adopted Heart & Soul action items set up displays about their action ideas and signed up volunteers on the spot. Among the outcomes: a storybook trail on the waterfront walking path, new benches going

up on Main Street, and an increase in the number of volunteers, from 30 to 400, who participated in the town's annual spring cleanup day.



Bucksport Heart & Soul, Maine



Hear from the Bucksport Town Manager: www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJQ8Ue_oqUg



Phase 4: Act

Ongoing, starting after
Phase 3: In Phase 4, you will
begin the ongoing practice of
Heart & Soul, focusing on the
transition to sustained longterm implementation. Your
town makes policy decisions,
and people and organizations
work together to implement
town's Action Plan and uphold
your Heart & Soul Statements.

Ongoing Practice of Community Heart & Soul

The Madison County, Iowa Heart & Soul team developed an inspirational video highlighting the work of Community Heart & Soul. The video serves as an inspirational springboard and is supporting decision-makers in using Heart & Soul data to take action. Heart & Soul Statements have been integrated into the Covered Bridges Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. The Madison County Heart & Soul website has tools for action planning with specific examples of actions that are utilizing Heart & Soul Statements.



Resources Needed To Join Community Heart & Soul

Over many years we have invested heavily in developing Community Heart & Soul, tested and deployed it in over 100 communities, learned from what worked and what didn't, tracked the long-term successes and positive impacts, trained coaches and staff of our partners, developed networks among Heart & Soul towns, and now we are ready to expand across the country with your help.

If we were a private consulting business we would be out selling our content and services for lots of money. But we're not. We are a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that I have funded from my family's business, The Vermont Country Store. We give away our intellectual property. We pay a staff to develop that. We have created a highly valuable practice for small cities and towns to operate and function through resident

Resources Provided by Community Heart & Soul



This is the best investment we ever made in our community."

engagement. The feedback we get from practicing towns is "this is the best investment we ever made in our community."

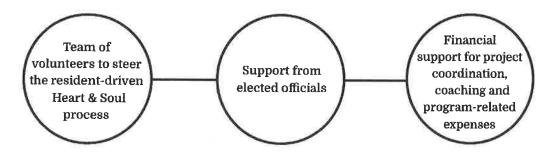


It's not totally free. Your town will need to invest. You will need to put skin in the game. That is a powerful incentive to continue the long-term practice of Community Heart & Soul in your town and with that the rewards will emerge.

I invite you to join the expanding network of Heart & Soul towns and all it has to offer your town.

Lyman Orton

Resources Provided by Towns



Get Started Now!

Community Heart & Soul is about rolling up your sleeves, getting active, and doing things. With that in mind, here are 4 things you can do to get going right away.





Apply for a \$10,000 Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant! For a limited time, we are offering Seed Grants to help communities with startup funding for Community Heart & Soul. Complete details are available at: www.communityheartandsoul.org/seed-grants

Watch inspiring videos and read town profiles: www.communityheartandsoul.org





Download our "Community Heart & Soul Overview": https://bit.ly/chs-overview



Email us at info@communityheartandsoul.org or call us at 802.495.0864. We'll be happy to help you with next steps. There's no better time to start than NOW. Let us know how we can help!

www.communityheartandsoul.org 120 Graham Way, Suite 126 Shelburne, VT 05482

Contact



We Invite You to Apply

The Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program provides \$10,000 in funding for resident-driven groups in small cities and towns to start the Community Heart & Soul model. Grant funding requires a \$10,000 cash match from the participating municipality or a partnering organization.



Why Apply?



\$10,000 grants to start Community Heart & Soul



Designed for small cities and towns (population 2,500-30,000)



Grantees are invited to join network events with Heart & Soul towns across the country

SEE FULL GRANT GUIDELINES

How To Apply

View the online recording of An Introduction to Community Heart & Soul

View the webinar recording of:
Overview of the Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program

3 Submit an online application

Finalists will be asked to complete a brief exercise from <u>Getting Started</u> with Community Heart & Soul and participate in a virtual interview with Community Heart & Soul staff.

Questions? Email us

APPLY NOW

Helpful Resources

We recommend the following resources to help you prepare your Seed Grant application:

HOW-TO MODELS

BUCKSPORT MAINE FINDS ITS HEART & SOUL





Bucksport, Maine, from across the Penobscot River. (Photos Deborah Fallows)

f you're in Maine, heading Downeast from Portland on coastal Route 1, you'll cross the stunning Penobscot Narrows Bridge, and then the smaller East Channel Bridge. At the end of that second bridge, you'll face a decision. Turn right, as most people do, toward Mount Desert Island and the Acadia National Park. Or turn left, as most people don't, for a look at Bucksport, population 5000. If you turn right, you're missing something. One plucky Bucksport resident told us on our recent visit there that they considered posting a sign at the end of the bridge, Don't Turn Left, to see what might happen.

Why turn left? Because we think that Bucksport, which has faced about as big an economic downfall as one can face, has lessons for us all on how to renew a town.

During our 100,000 miles of travels around the country since 2013, my husband, Jim, and I have seen many towns face transitions like Bucksport's. A major economic failure is followed by the call for a soul-searching look into the abandoned mine, or at the quieted factory floor. We have heard and seen towns shrink into their own shadows, or (rarely) luck into an economic-backed renaissance coming out of nowhere. We have heard people say: "We're waiting for someone to come and save us," and, with a very different emphasis, "We know no one is coming to save us." Most often, we have heard people ask the practical questions: how do we recover, how do we move ahead, what are we supposed to do?

Bucksport, for its answer, turned to a program we had first heard about nearly six years ago, the <u>Orton Family Foundation's Community Heart & Soul program</u>. We had been trying to see first-hand a town that had engaged in Heart & Soul (H&S), and finally, after the long covid lockdown, we made it to Bucksport.

We wanted to learn about Community Heart & Soul's ® (H&S) step-by-step, citizen-led process. Its aspiration is strongly democratic — to reach community consensus on shared values. Its goal is strongly practical — to put in motion an action plan to support those values. A trained H&S coach shepherds a town through the process. Jane Lafleur, Bucksport's coach, told us that the coach's role was to counsel and respond, but emphasized that it was *not* to lead.

Bucksport, we had heard, had become somewhat of a poster child among the more than 100 H&S towns nationwide. Plus, for us, another lure was that the town is nestled into one of America's natural treasures, the coastline of Maine.

ike the rest of America, my husband, Jim, and I were house-weary and agitated from Covid lockdowns and eager to get away. Our small Cirrus propeller plane, the workhorse for our more than 100,000 mile journey over the past eight years, was out of its annual inspection and ready to fly. I have to say at this point: while we have always appreciated that the privilege of flying this little plane makes the journey as rewarding as the destination, this time we felt immeasurably more grateful and excited.

The flight from our hometown of D.C. to mid-coast Maine is about 3 hours over sites familiar to us: the suburbs and farms of the mid-Atlantic, the slice of the mighty Susquehanna River, the smattering of quarries and often nearby prisons, the low-altitude view over West Point's parade grounds above the Hudson River, the diagonal cut through Connecticut and Massachusetts, and the pièce de résistance, the stunning shoreline of the Maine coast. On the blue-sky day that we flew, Maine was showing off, with thousands of small boats, strings of beaches, cluster after cluster of small islands, little towns with church spires, and its rugged, rocky inlets and bays.



Along the coast, from 2500 feet up.

Community Heart & Soul is one of several town renewal models that we have learned about (more on others soon). It started with the vision of founder Lyman Orton, who describes himself as the proprietor of his longtime family-owned Vermont Country Store, which has long charmed New England and through catalogs, America, with what they describe as its "practical and hard-to-find" products. Orton's premise with his foundation is that residents of a town know its "heart and soul" best and can turn that knowledge into the power to change, gain confidence, and even muster economic development.

Here's how the H&S 4-step model works:

- 1. Engage the community players, lay the groundwork, and communicate. For the first few months, townspeople come together as partners and volunteers to build their networks, figure out how to proceed, and open communication channels.
- 2. Collect residents' stories about what matters to them in their hometown and about specific ideas for action. Storytelling is a hallmark of the process. Through hundreds of stories, the values of the town emerge, and the people of the town identify and articulate a set of qualities (called statements in H&S vocabulary) that they want to define their town. A framed list of the statements hangs in the lobby of Bucksport's town hall, a reminder for the citizens of Bucksport and a point of reference for elected leaders and officials to guide their decisions.

Nancy Minott, an early coordinator for the H&S project and now a trustee for the Buck Memorial Library, recalled for us the reach of citizen engagement from an early town meeting in Bucksport:

"I remember, this man stood there, and he just looked at everybody. And he said, 'I have never, never had the courage to talk. You know, I was never invited to share a story. And this is the first time, so I might be a little nervous.'"

"To me," says Minott, "that was just exactly what you learned: people that hadn't had a voice were finding a voice."

3. Make a Plan. This is the slow-cooking meat and potatoes portion of the process, to prioritize action items that will serve the town values, and to solicit people and partner organizations to execute. For example, in Bucksport, one statement is Recreation. Citizens suggested relevant action items, such as expand the Trails System, and install exercise stations, and nature walks, and benches and bike racks. Form a walking club, an outing club, provide picnic

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Bucksport, we had heard, had become somewhat of a poster child among the more than 100 H&S towns nationwide. Plus, for us, another lure was that the town is nestled into one of America's natural treasures, the coastline of Maine.

ike the rest of America, my husband, Jim, and I were house-weary and agitated from Covid lockdowns and eager to get away. Our small Cirrus propeller plane, the workhorse for our more than 100,000 mile journey over the past eight years, was out of its annual inspection and ready to fly. I have to say at this point: while we have always appreciated that the privilege of flying this little plane makes the journey as rewarding as the destination, this time we felt immeasurably more grateful and excited.

The flight from our hometown of D.C. to mid-coast Maine is about 3 hours over sites familiar to us: the suburbs and farms of the mid-Atlantic, the slice of the mighty Susquehanna River, the smattering of quarries and often nearby prisons, the low-altitude view over West Point's parade grounds above the Hudson River, the diagonal cut through Connecticut and Massachusetts, and the pièce de résistance, the stunning shoreline of the Maine coast. On the blue-sky day that we flew, Maine was showing off, with thousands of small boats, strings of beaches, cluster after cluster of small islands, little towns with church spires, and its rugged, rocky inlets and bays.

areas. Build a (multi-generational) playground and a bocce court, a skateboard park, a bowling alley. Expand the marina.

4. Act. Start in on the task list with responsible, accountable volunteers and community organization partnerships, bearing in mind that the this is the beginning of a long-game.

Along the way, Bucksport assembled 100 volunteers, leaders, partnerships, from students to radio announcers and civic organizations like the YMCA. They worked for 10,000 hours. They collected 250 stories, listened for 400 hours. They identified 9 strong statements of their values, and identified 82 tasks, a huge number compared with the usual 10 or 15 action items other H&S towns have undertaken.

Bucksport volunteers recounted the hard work behind the numbers of people hours and projects. Hard work, hard work, hard work, we heard time and again. A resident from nearby Gardiner, Maine, which was near completion of the H&S work, came to talk with Bucksport when they were just beginning.

Chris Johnson, a founder of Bucksport's H&S project, described a moment of that meeting to us, "Somebody asked if the process was hard. He goes, "Oh God, it's the hardest thing you'll ever do." And he was right. Only, he underplayed it, because it's so much work. And yet, there's a permanence to it, I think. And for the town of Bucksport, we could have done better, but the seeds have been planted. And the seeds have been sown."

A crucial part of the H&S philosophy is that towns don't just wrap up their renewal process after two years and store their statements somewhere on a dusty shelf. Rather, ideally, towns continue to practice what they have put into place

Community
Heart & Soul

Community
Heart & Soul

Contribute Rest - We counted not community that comes souther through majorbare holying neighbors, volunteering, and supporting that of souther special parts of the southern seems of the souther

(courtesy of Bucksport Town Office)

through listening, working and acting cooperatively. H&S may not be for every town. But it is one answer to the question we hear so often from residents who want to improve their towns: what are we supposed to do? The Heart & Soul process offers specific actions, step-by-step.

n one obvious way, Bucksport is a special case. Could it have accomplished its efforts without its 8 million dollar war chest and its foundation of infrastructure already begun? It's impossible to know. "If they hadn't put away as much money, it would have been harder," Sue Lessard told us. But like many others, she says that it was a help but not the determining factor. "To be perfectly honest, I don't know that the people's attitudes would have been different, but it would have been a steeper climb."

Shortly after the official Heart & Soul process was complete and addressing the specific tasks had begun, Covid hit, interrupting everything. When we visited with Nancy Minott, we asked her "Now what"? Minott told us that the residents had picked up the string again to execute their Heart & Soul action plan. "This spring, when things started to get a little bit quieter, we started to say, 'Yeah, we need to get back to our Action Plan and look over our action ideas from the citizens.' I think it's really important that these ideas do materialize, because that's respectful. I mean, why bother to put your ideas out there, if you're not going to do that."

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This is the site of the Our Towns Civic Foundation, dedicated to connecting innovators, reformers, civic-patriots, and dreamers across America. The reports here are based on travels and interviews over the past decade by Deborah and James Fallows. The ongoing accounts will emphasize local voices on how communities are adjusting to the economic, environmental, and technological opportunities and challenges of the era.

Towns





The River Walk Theory of Life

By Deborah Fallows



This article first appeared on the Our Towns Civic Foundation website.

"Every town has a river walk, even if it doesn't have a river."

his has become a family mantra in our household, since we began noticing so many busy and bucolic public walks and trails during our town travels. We found them following rivers or lakes, but sometimes tracking railbeds or winding through fields or parks or marshes.

In the U.S., the River Walk in San Antonio was the early favorite that probably inspired the trend. The idea of today's <u>San Antonio River Walk</u> emerged from the response to a costly flood nearly 100 years ago. Plans for a dam, objections from a conservation group, and a

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<u>Bucksport Maine Finds Its Heart</u> <u>& Soul</u>

AUGUST 23, 2021

vision for something altogether different – a river walk – carried on for almost two decades. WPA funding in 1939 propelled the project ahead, and it opened to the World's Fair visitors in 1968.

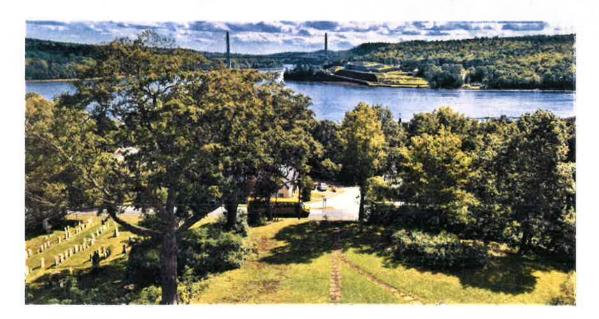
River walks can drive tremendous economic returns, as is the case in San Antonio. Or they can focus more on healthy opportunities to keep residents moving, or act as impromptu gathering places where old meet young, tourists meet natives, and residents who usually travel in different social and economic circles find each other eye to eye. River walks often celebrate the natural assets of an area, and offer anyone and everyone a chance to enjoy them.

Here are a few of my favorites: Seattle's <u>wetlands boardwalks</u>. Greenville, South Carolina's 22-mile <u>Swamp Rabbit Trail</u> along the Reedy River; the <u>Capital Crescent Trail</u> running between the C&O canal and the Potomac River in our hometown of Washington, D.C.; the 29-mile hike and bike trail circling <u>Sioux Falls</u>; Redlands, California's <u>Orange Blossom Trail</u>, upgrading both the urban and undeveloped spaces; Duluth, Minnesota's <u>Lakewalk</u> along the shores of Lake Superior; Danville, Virginia's tree canopied <u>Riverwalk Trail</u> along the Dan River. My list grows and grows.

hen I caught up with our friends from Bucksport, Maine recently, one of my ambitions was to find out more about its river walk, the waterfront development called the Walkway, which we had first seen during a visit last summer to learn about the town's ambitious citizen-led town development process called Community Heart & Soul (CH&S). (CH&S is a partner and supporter of Our Towns reports.)

Now, in the depths of winter and still wary of Covid, we settled on the next-best electronic and telephone exchanges to reconnect. I talked by phone with Nancy Minott, who was the original coordinator for the H&S efforts and is now a trustee of the Buck Memorial Library.

Talking through the items on Bucksport's action plan for Community Heart & Soul, we were both amazed at how far the town had moved along and even beyond the list of improvements that they drew up a few years ago. Here are some: upgraded playground and public pool; transportation assistance to medical appointments for seniors; a creative matching-multiplier program to support local merchants; cooking classes; community gardens; new rental apartment development; history center and museum development; computer classes for seniors; street, sidewalk, and trail improvements; downtown beautification projects; wireless internet inside and outside the library. The list is still building.



 \mathbf{B}

ucksport's waterfront is a major natural asset, set along the shore where the Eastern Channel meets the mighty Penobscot River, with a view of the elegant Penobscot Narrows Bridge, flanked upstream by historic Fort Knox, which seems to grow right out of the steep hillside.

The Walkway runs the length of a good mile, just a stone's throw downhill from Main Street. More than 20 years in the making, the Walkway already serves multiple purposes as a social gathering place, an economic stimulator, a healthy-living opportunity, an environmental improvement zone, a town beautifier, a record of history, a perspective on the town's place on earth, a celebration of local identity, art, and creativity. *But...* and it's a big but... at the far end of the Walkway looms the reminder of one of Bucksport's biggest shocks and remaining challenges – the depression-era paper mill, described by the *Ellsworth American* in the winter of 1929-30 as "one of the greatest industrial projects undertaken in the New England states in recent years." The mill, opened in 1930 and long the economic core of the town, closed in 2014, taking away some 600 jobs and the flow-over economy. The theme of my previous piece was how the mill's closure had become a catalyst for Bucksport's current reinvention. The future of the mill property is another big upcoming event for the town.

First, the Walkway highlights.



Veterans Park on the Walkway (Deborah Fallows)

If you're driving north along Coastal Route 1 and heading Down East, (directions around here are always a geographic tromp l'oeil for those of us "from away") you'll cross the Penobscot Narrows Bridge, and then the smaller East Channel Bridge. At its end and just below is Veterans Park, a kind of pedestrian gateway built in 2009, with a memorial and engraved stones.

Bucksport reminds residents and informs visitors of its more than 200-year history with a series of engraved plaques and granite benches honoring remarkable citizens or statements or events. Young Maine sculptor <u>Matthew Foster</u> created his granite work, *Before the Wind*, for the children and future generations of Bucksport. He writes in his <u>artist's statement</u>, of

its message for the children: "First, that they never dismiss their heritage, but instead return to it often; second, that the wind is always to their backs, propelling them forward, like a ship running before the wind."



Before the Wind, by Matthew Foster and Whale, by Don Justin Meserve. (Courtesy Town of Bucksport.)

A second small yet powerful sculpture stands in its lee. This is *Whale*, by <u>Don Justin</u> <u>Meserve</u>, a celebrated Maine sculptor, who died a little more than a decade ago.

The Covid era is already marked by a granite bench from the Class of 2020 at Bucksport High School, engraved with the disarming and poignant words "Inspiration during Isolation." I talked by phone with Jen Skala, who was the class of 2020's adviser at the high school for their four years, about the back story of the bench.



Granite bench donated by the Class of 2020. (Deborah Fallows.)

During the simpler days of 2019, the class of 2020 had been busy raising funds in anticipation of their class trip to Boston, including their chosen highlights of a water park visit and a Red Sox game. They had raised enough money to cover all the costs for the 70-some class members. Then Covid hit, and the school doors slammed shut in March of 2020. Part of the collateral damage: trip cancelled. The class huddled and (magnanimously) decided to use part of the funds to give back to the community of Bucksport, which had generously supported them in their fundraising efforts and at school events. The class noticed the model of the Class of 1950, and their granite bench along the Walkway. Now, 70 years later, there would be another, marking a heavy moment in the town's history and lasting for the ages. The class did more, creating two \$500 scholarships for classes that would follow them, for students to pursue any kind of continuing education, be it community college, trade schools, or four-year college.

For recreation and commerce, Bucksport built out the Town Marina's access to boats, added a diesel fuel pump, began to rebuild its floating docks, and replaced its fishing pier. Plans for a year-round dock structure with handicapped accessibility are in the works.



American Cruise Lines' American Constitution docks in Bucksport. (Courtesy of Judith Gillis)

The American Cruise <u>Lines</u> has included Bucksport as a port of call for its passenger ships. And Bucksport is approaching the <u>Pan Am Railways System</u> (soon to be part of CSX) about securing the unused properties at the end of their Bucksport Branch for new business and commercial expansion. On a personal scale, as of 2021, vendors were granted permits, scaling up festivals and gatherings, like Arts Festival, Ghoulsport, the Penobscot Maritime Heritage Event, and Bucksport Pride.



Picnic Point along the Walkway, paper mill in the background. (Courtesy Hans Krichels)

Set in an observation lookout of the Walkway, Picnic Point, is a five-panel story panorama of Bucksport's history. The offset's 10-foot diameter compass rose is laid in the bricks, and in its center, reinforcing Bucksport's plucky, self-aware, colloquial identifier as "Center of the Known Universe" is a tall pole with directional arrows: Cairo – 5200 miles away, Moscow – 4300, and Albany, Australia – 11,675. There are fountains and picnic benches, plenty of summer flowers, and a gazebo all along the path.



Along the Story Walk in Bucksport. (Courtesy of Hans Krichels)

M

y favorite section of the Walkway for people-engagement is the Story Walk and the accompanying exercise prompts. In 2018, the Buck Memorial Library volunteers installed the first of its rotating series to celebrate favorite children's books with illustrated pages mounted on sign posts. Beneath the book pages, more signs encourage children to Take Baby

Steps, Skip, Gallop like a Horse, and Walk like a Duck.

Approaching the western end of the Walkway, I was hoping to find my way to a closer view of the old paper mill. It is hard to imagine the former bustling life and work inside and around the mill. I corresponded with Sue Lessard, Bucksport's indefatigable town manager, to guide me into the future of what might happen with the old mill. It turns out: plenty.

The mill and its properties, having gone through a series of changes and acquisitions since its closure in 2014, are now divvied into ownership by three different companies. Whole Oceans, a land-based producer of farm-raised salmon, retains a permit until the end of 2023 for a "recirculating aquaculture system" to grow an annual 5000 metric tons of salmon. Announcements forthcoming. The Maine Maritime Academy, up the road in Castine, has a Mariner Training Institute up and running. They are planning expansions. Ironclad Energy, a company that deals in power generating properties, bought the plant's backup power generating facility.

At the end of our book, *Our Towns*, Jim wrote about the "10 1/2 signs of civic success" that we saw and learned about from the successful towns we visited. I think it is probably time to update that list, to add River Walk and make it 11 1/2 signs.

James and Deborah Fallows, authors of Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey into the Heart of America, spent five years crisscrossing the country in their single-engine plane, visiting dozens of small cities and towns. Wherever they touched down, they would interview local residents, town officials, business owners, librarians, and others to learn how communities were reinventing themselves in the face of changing economic and social conditions.



Deborah (author) and James Fallows in Bucksport, Maine

Our Towns became a national best seller and was recently made into a feature-length HBO documentary film. The Fallowses also launched Our Towns Civic Foundation, a nonprofit organization that serves as a platform for sharing stories of small-town innovation and resiliency. Through the foundation, they connect and support individuals across America who are working to improve local communities.

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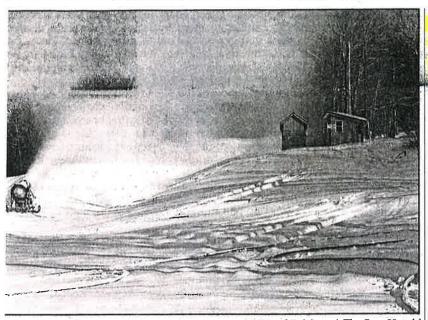
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Heart & Soul Community

The Caribou cheering squad competes in the Class C North championships Saturday at Stearns High School. See story on page 5.



David DiMinno | The Star-Herald

ins producing snow for Big Rock Mountain.

ecent snowfall a boost or County's ski slopes,

vid DiMinno

aff Writer

ok County's ski have been aflate season starts f snow for severut last weekend's gave them just needed.

ear, Big Rock and Quoggy enter have been y many sub-zero vell as a lack of wfall to help keep pen — especially for Quoggy Jo beas no snow-maknent.

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industry is esticontribute \$1 bilfaine's economy according to Ski ssociation Execector Dirk Gouulso plays an imart in Aroostook winter economy, purists to northern d pulling in visiother parts of The The most recent as well as subseuse them.

"As someone who grew up with alpine skiing, I can say it's incredibly important [to the economy]," said Quoggy Jo Ski Center Board Chair Chris Killcollins. "There's not the largest variety of things to do in Aroostook once the weather gets cold. Once the winter sports end for schools, be it elementary, middle, high schools and even colleges, that only leaves so many options for activities."

Big Rock Mountain is still in the early stages of its winter season, but has already seen a large uptick in season pass holders and daily lift ticket purchases. Before the storm, the mountain was operating with only 70 percent of its 26 trails open.

The snowmaking at Big Rock is limited to specific locations throughout the mountain, mainly following the lift lines. The mountain has done 150 hours of snowmaking so far, and will continue throughout the season. Snow-making requires cold temperatures and dry air for the best quality surface.

"Ideally for production we look for below 20 degrees and super dry," said Big Rock Assistant General Manager Aaron Damon. "The quality produced in those conditions is just far superior."

Higher up on the mountain toward the northeast, more of the trails were closed because the ski area operator is unable to make Turn to Page 3, Slopes



Caribou updates campground rules

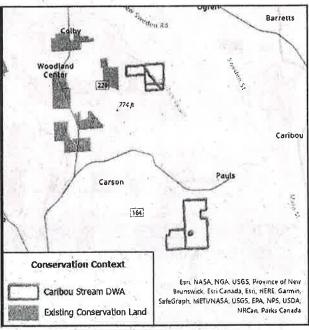
By Melissa Lizotte

Staff Writer
CARIBOU — With an updated campground ordinance and a new committee in place, the city of Caribou is continuing its push to revitalize the riverfront district.

Since approving a proposal for a new campground, to be located east of Limestone Street near the Aroostook River, city officials have taken steps to ensure that the region becomes more accessible to future business growth.

In December, the city council approved final changes to Caribou's campground standards in its Land Use Ordinances. The most notable changes, originally approved in June 2021, allow a minimum of 3 acres of land in the R2, or Residential Mixed Housing Zone, and no less than 7 acres in the Rural Mixed Housing Zone, also known as R3, to be developed for campgrounds.

Turn to Page 2, Rules



Courtesy of Land for Maine's Future

This graphic shows the site of the parcels that make up the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's Caribou Stream deer wintering area located in Washburn and Woodland.

County deer get help to survive the winter

By Pete Warner BDN Staff

The County is a rough place for deer.

The region's agricultural crops are the lifeblood of its economy but are detrimental to the survival of whitetailed deer. The number of

As a result, deer in The County struggle to find adequate cover to survive long, cold, snowy winters.

Now the state is ramping up its efforts to rebuild the deer population through the development of wintering areas, thanks to a recent in-

Freshmen: Anderson, Gwendolyn E; Cote, Madelyn E; Deprey, Madelynn H; Godin, Amelia T; Sleeper, Isabella G; Wilcox, Althea A; Wing, Elizabeth M.

Hanley, Grace M.; Hartley, Damian C.; Jones, Jaedon E.; Labreck, Danika L.; Landes, Matthew B.; Lapointe,

igan E.; Hancock, Jacob L.; Charis A.; Fournier, Jayden C.; Gallagher, Emily D.; Garner, Jason S.; Guerrette, Brennan C.; Hersey, Calvin D.; Holmes, Jeremiah A.; Devin J.; Margeson, Evan King, Alexis M.; LaBreck,

Andrew D.; Russell, Ian J.; Sargent, Kaymen J.; Sleeper, Edison J.L.; St Peter, Josey C.; St Pierre, Dawson P.; Violette, Jacob J.; Walker, Nevaeh L.

days in jail.

Jessica Putnam, 39, pleton: operating unde: influence (drugs or cor dismissed; driving to en ger, \$575 fine, 30 day lie suspension, \$125 restitut

Tyama L. Turner, 45, pleton: operating under influence (drugs or cor dismissed.

Joey Carroll Jandreau Caribou: domestic vio assault, dismissed.

Franklin D. Price, Stockholm: unlawful pc sion of scheduled drugs, fine, 30 days in jail.

Veronica R. Lopez, Caribou: unlawful po sion of methamphetar two years in prison; attac false plates, dismissed.

Chad Bragg, 46, V burn: disorderly conduc fensive words, gestures, fine.

Brian A. Hitchcock, Caribou: unlawful posse: of scheduled drugs, \$400

Cathy M. Hooey, 37, ibou: unlawful possessic scheduled drugs, \$400 30 days in jail.

Veronica R. Lopez, Caribou: violating conc of release, 90 days in criminal forfeiture of pro ty, dismissed.

Ashlev L. Michaud, Washburn: refusing to uniform summons comp dismissed.

Alexander Shorey, Madawaska: criminal pass, \$300 fine.

Alexander Shorey, Madawaska: operating v

Rules

Continued from page 1

Typically, R2 is more densely populated with residential homes while R3 has traditionally allowed for the development of farms, campgrounds and similar businesses. The ordinance changes allow campgrounds to be developed in both districts, Code Enforcement Officer Ken Murchison said.

After councilors approved Troy Haney's proposal for a campground in the R2 district last year, they revisited the campground standards and updated the language to be aligned with modern development goals.

For instance, the previous standards required a visual buffer between properties and the riverfront. That requirement has since been eliminated.

"It didn't make sense to

have something in place that blocked the view of the river from a campground," Murchison said.

Thus far, Haney has built the main driveway headed into the campground. Once spring arrives, he will complete electrical and plumbing work and create separate spots for a total of nine campers. He is aiming for a June 2022 opening.

Haney said the city has been proactive in amending the campground standards since learning of his business ideas. Given the renewed interest in the riverfront, he hopes to help start positive business trends.

"We're hoping that other people will see what they can do with property in the area," Haney said. "I think people sometimes forget how this land can be reworked into something nice."

Several other businesses,

including a climate-controlled storage facility, are also in development on and near Limestone Street. Murchison said.

The riverfront district is an unofficial, five-mile stretch of Caribou that runs from the Dow Siding Road, up Route 1 and onto Limestone Street along the Aroostook River. In the past decade, the area has mainly been underutilized as an industrial, zone and is home to railroad tracks that no longer run regularly.

Members of the newly formed Caribou Riverfront Renaissance Committee hope to spark a "rebirth" of the riverfront area. The committee is developing a master plan that will outline how to rebrand and market the area as a potential business and recreational hub. The plan will allow the city to qualify for future economic development grant funding.

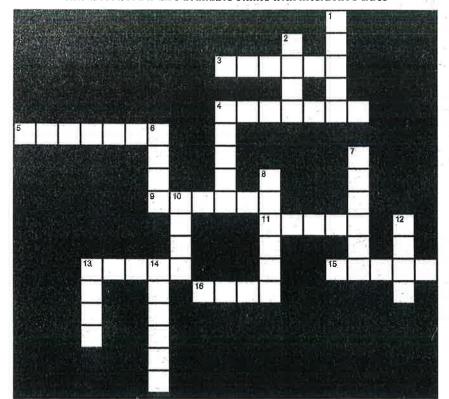
The committee hopes to create a walking trail that would connect the riverfront district with the boat landing on Lower Lyndon Street and with Water Street, making the area accessible to Caribou's downtown. Other goals include attracting more businesses and exploring how to turn the riverfront into its own zoning district.

Murchison said that members of the public who want to join the committee or become involved with riverfront projects can attend committee meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. The next committee meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at the Caribou Municipal Building, 25 High St.

"We're very optimistic. This started as a grassroots group of people who believed that the riverfront is our best kept secret," Murchison said. "Municipalities don't have venture capital, but we have other ways to make the area more attractive to businesses."

Crossword Fun

This crossword is also available online with interactive clues







Henry's previous owners could no longer keep him. He has since been neutered and up to date on vaccines. He is a very vocal boy who likes to talk. Henry cannot go with young children as he can be moody sometimes.



Annie is 10 manth old. She is spave up to date on vaccines. Annie has I with other dogs, cals, and children (yrs. Annie needs someone who can her with housebreaking and bas obedience. She is still puppy and is energetic so she needs a very active

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