



## Welcome to the VCDA 2024 Spring Conference

How Municipalities Can Drive Local Economic Development

Tuesday, June 25th, 2024 | 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | The Hardwick Town House

Celebrate the power of municipalities in shaping vibrant communities and driving economic development. This event will highlight the pivotal role municipalities play in fostering vibrancy and resilience across Vermont. Join us in Hardwick to:

- Hear firsthand accounts of impactful municipally-led projects driving positive change in towns across the state.
- Share practical tools and strategies to empower municipalities in their development efforts.
- Learn effective techniques for rallying support and engagement from municipal leaders.
- Showcase stories of collaboration and unity, where communities and municipalities join forces to achieve shared goals.

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Not a VCDA member? Learn how to join at <https://www.vtcda.org/become-a-member.html>

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Take our feedback survey at

<https://forms.gle/ajYqkr88jWpb1Dgg6>



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# AGENDA

- |              |                                             |                                                                                                  |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9:00</b>  | <b>Welcome</b>                              | <b>David Gross, <i>Hardwick Town House</i> and<br/>David Upson, <i>Hardwick Town Manager</i></b> |
| <b>9:10</b>  | <b>Keynote</b>                              | <b>Dominic Cloud, St Albans City Manager</b>                                                     |
| <b>9:30</b>  | <b>Panel</b>                                | <b>Downtown Organizations/Village Trusts Partnering<br/>with Municipalities</b>                  |
| <b>10:30</b> | <b>Break</b>                                |                                                                                                  |
| <b>10:40</b> | <b>Special Announcement</b>                 |                                                                                                  |
| <b>10:45</b> | <b>Panel</b>                                | <b>The Hardwick Yellow Barn Project:<br/>Public-Private Collaboration</b>                        |
| <b>11:40</b> | <b>Presentation of Bernice Murray Award</b> |                                                                                                  |
| <b>11:50</b> | <b>Lunch</b> provided by Caja Madera        |                                                                                                  |
| <b>12:50</b> | <b>Tours of Hardwick</b>                    |                                                                                                  |
| <b>2:15</b>  | <b>Special Announcement</b>                 |                                                                                                  |
| <b>2:20</b>  | <b>Panel</b>                                | <b>Building Municipal Capacity for Development</b>                                               |
| <b>3:20</b>  | <b>Group Discussion</b>                     |                                                                                                  |
| <b>3:50</b>  | <b>Closing</b>                              |                                                                                                  |
| <b>4:00</b>  | <b>Adjourn</b>                              |                                                                                                  |

## Meet Our 2024 Bernice Murray Award Recipient



### **Karen Horn**

Karen Horn directed VLCT advocacy efforts from 1987 through the 2023 legislative session. She sought the governance, environmental, economic and management authority to allow local officials effectively discharge their responsibilities. This often entailed teaching “Local Government 101”, not only to legislators, but also all manner of mildly confused legislative, non-profit and executive branch staff at both state and federal levels. In 2024 Karen started the KB Horn LLC to offer project management assistance to municipalities.

Karen earned her BA from McGill University and MA from UVM. Back in the dark ages, she worked at the VT Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and Massachusetts Executive Office of Communities and Development. She served seven years on Moretown and Washington West school boards, and started the Moretown Energy Committee, serving as both Coordinator and Committee Chair. Thus far, she has served thirteen years on the Moretown Planning Commission, currently as Vice Chair. Karen lives with her husband and exuberant dog on the side of a Moretown mountain.

## Keynote Presentation



Dominic Cloud

St Albans City Manager

[d.cloud@stalbansvt.com](mailto:d.cloud@stalbansvt.com)

Over the last fifteen years Dominic Cloud has directed the comprehensive redevelopment of St. Albans from his position as City Manager. Under his tenure, the City has demonstrated the transformational power of forming public / private partnerships to advance economic development projects. Mr. Cloud previously served as Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Municipal Assistance Center and as a lobbyist in the Statehouse. He received an MPA from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and a B.A. in Government from St. John's University. He lives in Essex, Vermont with his family.

## Panel

# Downtown Organizations/Village Trust Partnering with Municipalities

**Moderator | Gary Holloway | Downtown Program Manager, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) | [gary.holloway@vermont.gov](mailto:gary.holloway@vermont.gov)**

Gary has worked in a variety of downtown community development capacities for over 20 years. Gary is currently the Downtown Program Manager for the State of Vermont Downtown Program, a Main Street America Coordinating Program. Gary works in the field extensively, assisting Vermont communities on revitalization and preservation initiatives. Prior to his work in Vermont, Gary managed two downtown revitalization projects, one in the City of Vineland, NJ converting an old, blighted department store into the Landis Marketplace, a year-round indoor marketplace and the Bellingham Public Market in Bellingham, WA converting an old grocery store into a marketplace of local businesses.

**Gretchen Havreluk | Business and Municipal Consultant, Ingram & May | [ghavreluk@gmail.com](mailto:ghavreluk@gmail.com)**

Gretchen is a business and municipal consultant with Ingram & May; specifically implementing small and large projects for her clients which includes writing and managing over \$3 Million in grants. The Town of Wilmington has contracted Gretchen part time since 2011 working on economic and community development projects from large scale sidewalk projects to creating business incentive programs. One of the first things she did in the role was to create Wilmington Works, the Downtown Designation and successfully received funding for the parttime Wilmington Works Coordinator position.

**Gillian Sewake | Director, Discover St. Johnsbury | [director@discoverstjohnsbury.com](mailto:director@discoverstjohnsbury.com)**

Gillian Sewake became the Director of Discover St. Johnsbury in December 2020, and is proud to support St. Johnsbury's revitalization, in concert with the Town of St. Johnsbury and community partners. Discover St. Johnsbury's mission is to stimulate and promote the vitality of St. Johnsbury's cultural, commercial, and community resources through regional marketing, producing community events, support for local businesses, and other economic development activities. Sewake is a Vermont Business Magazine Class of 2021 Rising Star, a graduate of the 2021 NEK Leadership Institute cohort, and a 2020 member of the Vermont Changemakers Table. She is on the board of Kingdom County Productions and Vice Chair of the NEK Young Professionals Network. She and her husband Geoffrey currently reside in Peacham Village with their two children and own Whirligig Brewing in downtown St. Johnsbury.

**Rick Ufford-Chase | Director, Newport Downtown Development | [ricketuffordchasecdd@gmail.com](mailto:ricketuffordchasecdd@gmail.com)**

Rick Ufford-Chase is the Director of Newport Downtown Development and a member of Newport City Council. Newport Downtown Development is the independent, non-profit that partners with the City of Newport to drive economic revitalization. The organization has more than 75 active volunteers and is deeply involved in efforts to brand Newport as a hub for the four-season, outdoor recreation economy, to make Newport both a local and a tourist destination with events like the popular "Winter Saturdays" dances, and to build a vibrant downtown economy that grows out of a thoughtful long-term development strategy.

**Kristin Urie | Director of the John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library in East Craftsbury and a founding Board member of the Albany Community Trust | [inthegarden802@gmail.com](mailto:inthegarden802@gmail.com)**

Kristin Urie is a founding board member of the Albany Community Trust, a non-profit formed in 2018 to support the vibrancy of Albany, Vermont. The group worked to bring back the general store in Albany village, and the Genny Albany opened June 3, 2021. She is a librarian at the Albany Community School and the John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library in East Craftsbury, and serves on the board of the Craftsbury Community Care Center. She lives with her husband and four teenagers on Bonnieview Farm in South Albany, where they raise sheep and lease land and infrastructure to 4 other local businesses.

**Chad Whitehead | St. Johnsbury Town Manager | [cwhitehead@stjvt.com](mailto:cwhitehead@stjvt.com)**

## **Panel**

# The Hardwick Yellow Barn Project: Public-Private Collaboration

**Moderator | Misty Sinsigalli | Area Director, USDA Rural Development | [misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov](mailto:misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov)**

As an Area Director, Misty works across all Rural Development program areas for the New Hampshire and Vermont jurisdiction. She lives the mission of increasing economic prosperity and improving the quality of life for the communities of the two State region through utilizing a broad array of USDA Rural Development's 60+ loan and grant programs. Prior to entering the Area Director role Misty worked as the Lead Specialist for Community Programs in Vermont and New Hampshire. Misty is a graduate of Champlain College and the University of Connecticut, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice and her master's degree in Public Administration. She has worked for the Federal Government for over 17 years. She was with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for 8 years before coming to Rural Development. She is thankful she gets to work in a job she loves in a jurisdiction she has always called home. She lives in Fairlee, VT and has two children. She loves being outdoors with her children - no matter the season. Nature is the best playground for both adults and children.

**Jon Ramsay | Executive Director, Center for an Agricultural Economy |**

**[jon@hardwickagriculture.org](mailto:jon@hardwickagriculture.org)**

Jon grew up on his family's dairy farm located in Greensboro. Jon continues to manage the farm, now raising Black Angus cattle for both breeding stock and beef. Before joining the CAE, Jon was the Director of the Farmland Access Program at the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), where he focused on farm affordability for new and beginning farmers statewide and farmland conservation from 1999-2019. Jon, his wife Selina and their son Jin live on the family farm, where they enjoy gardening, walking trips to Long Pond and enjoying Caspian Lake during the summer.

**Alison Low, AICP CFM | Senior Planner, Northeastern Vermont Development Association |**

**[alow@nvda.net](mailto:alow@nvda.net)**

Alison Low, AICP CFM is a Senior Planner at Northeastern Vermont Development Association, the regional planning commission and economic development corporation serving 50 communities of the Northeast Kingdom. In addition to assisting communities with planning and land use, she has written and



administered numerous grants to construct key food system infrastructure, including the Vermont Food Venture Center in Hardwick, and the Cellars at Jasper Hill in Greensboro, and most recently, the Hardwick Yellow Barn Accelerator. She resides in Danville, where she serves on the selectboard.

**Kristie Farnham | Director of Business Support, Vermont Department of Economic Development | [kristie.farnham@vermont.gov](mailto:kristie.farnham@vermont.gov)**

Kristie manages programs that incentivize economic and community development across Vermont, specifically the Brownfields Revitalization Fund and the Northern Border Regional Commission. Kristie's career in state government began in 1999. She joined the Agency of Commerce and Community Development – Department of Economic Development team in 2016.

**Erica Burke | General Manager, Cabot Creamery Cooperative | [eburke@cabotcheese.com](mailto:eburke@cabotcheese.com)**

Erica Burke is the General Manager of Retail Stores for Cabot Creamery and a critical leader in the development of the Yellow Barn retail experience. During her professional career, she has served in numerous roles that provide her with varied insights into public/private collaboration efforts in the State of Vermont. Her recent professional accomplishments include being a member of the Cabot Economic Development Committee, a former Board Member for the Vermont Specialty Food Association, and a presenter for Vermont Attractions.

**Eric Remick | Chair of the Hardwick Selectboard, Software Engineer and Sugarmaker | [eric.remick@hardwickvt.gov](mailto:eric.remick@hardwickvt.gov)**

Eric Remick is a software and computing consultant from the private sector. Eric currently serves as the Chair of the Hardwick Selectboard and is a key member of the Hardwick Yellow Barn core project team. He has participated in weekly progress meetings since the core team's formation in 2018 and has served as an anchor tenant liaison by attending regular design meetings with the project team's architect and engineers, as well as design consultants for anchor tenants. Familiar with local, state and federal funding sources, he also regularly interfaces with project grant funders and lenders. He is also active on the Hardwick Trails Committee, and the committee for Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, which runs directly adjacent to the Yellow Barn. He lives in Hardwick, where he has been a sugar maker since 2004.

# **Tours of Hardwick**

Attendees have three tour options, all of which will occur simultaneously

## **Tour 1: Showcasing Municipal and Nonprofit Partnership**

Explore partnerships between municipalities and nonprofits and how they work together

Town House, Depot and optional Library walk

Led by Tracy Martin, Community Development Coordinator, Town of Hardwick

## **Tour 2: Community and Economic Development - Revolving Loan Funds and other Strategies/Opportunities**

Visiting businesses in downtown Hardwick

Led by David Upson, Hardwick Town Manager and Shari Cornish, Hardwick Selectboard member and business owner

## **Tour 3: Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure - A Work in Progress**

Localmotion, Pedestrian bridge, Loop from the LVRT down to the Pedestrian Bridge,

Mill Street walkability challenges (walk audits), LVRT Depot and Wayfinding

Led by David Gross, Chair, Hardwick Planning Commission

## **Panel**

# Building Municipal Capacity for Development

**Moderator | Jenna Koloski | Director of Community Engagement and Policy, Vermont Council on Rural Development | [jenna@vtrural.org](mailto:jenna@vtrural.org)**

Jenna Koloski has been the Director of Community Engagement and Policy at the Vermont Council on Rural Development since 2015. In that role, she coordinates statewide policy discussions on issues that impact rural communities and facilitates community-level prioritization for the future of Vermont towns. Prior to the work at VCRD, she worked in several Vermont organizations focused on outdoor recreation, community development, and food security. Jenna studied Conservation and Biodiversity at McGill University and holds a master's degree in Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School. Jenna serves as the President of the Vermont Community Development Association. She lives with her family in Huntington, Vermont.

**Tracy Nichae Martin | Community Development Coordinator, Town of Hardwick | [cdc@hardwickvt.gov](mailto:cdc@hardwickvt.gov)**

Tracy grew up in the Bronx. She first came to Vermont to attend Marlboro College. She went on to earn an MA in archaeological studies from Yale and an MS in historic preservation from UVM. For more than 30 years, Tracy worked in museum administration, in both the nonprofit and public sectors. She and her husband have lived in East Hardwick for 19 years, so when Tracy retired from her work with Vermont's State Historic Sites, she was thrilled to find a position that allows her to contribute her energies to the vitality of the town she has come to love and call home.

**Ted Brady | Executive Director, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) | [tbrady@vlct.org](mailto:tbrady@vlct.org)**

Ted Brady is the Executive Director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT). Brady served as Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development in the Scott Administration for three years, was appointed by President Obama as the Vermont and New Hampshire State Director for USDA Rural Development, and spent more than a decade working as a community and economic development liaison in U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy's office, both in Washington, D.C. and in Vermont. He lives in Williston with his wife Erin and their two children.

**Chip Sawyer | Director of Planning & Development, City of St Albans | [c.sawyer@stalbansvt.com](mailto:c.sawyer@stalbansvt.com)**

Chip Sawyer is the Director of Planning & Development for the City of St. Albans. There he oversees the City's land use planning and permitting, community development, stormwater planning, property valuation, and special projects. Chip has previously worked as a Program Manager at the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont and as a Senior Planner at Lamoille County Planning Commission. He holds Master's degrees in Public Administration and Natural Resource Planning from the University of Vermont. Chip grew up in the City of St. Albans and lives there with his family today.

**Tom Davis | Economic Development Director, Town of Northfield | [tdavis@northfield.vt.us](mailto:tdavis@northfield.vt.us)**

Tom Davis has been the Economic Development Director Northfield, Vermont since June of 2022. Previously he was a housing developer and the owner of radio stations and online newspapers in multiple locations. He returned to his hometown in 2020 during the pandemic to become town's first full-time economic development director. Mr. Davis has recruited developers and property owners to work together to build housing, support local businesses with funding opportunities, and engage Northfield in future-focused, smart growth. In the process, Mr. Davis has obtained over \$500,000 through grants and tax credits, and has attracted new investments of over \$5 million to build housing and improve Northfield's downtown.

# FEEDBACK SURVEY: VCDA SPRING CONFERENCE 2024

Please circle your response to the questions below

1. How valuable to you was the **Keynote from Dominic Cloud**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

2. How valuable to you was the **Downtown Organizations/Village Trusts panel**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

3. How valuable to you was the **Hardwick Yellow Barn Project panel**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

4. Which Tour of Hardwick did you take?

None of them      Tour 1      Tour 2      Tour 3

5. How valuable to you was the **Tour of Hardwick you took**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

6. How valuable to you was the **Building Municipal Capacity panel**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

7. How valuable to you was the **group discussion portion of the event**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

8. How valuable to you was the **overall conference**?

Did Not Attend      Not At All Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

9. Was the **food** satisfactory?    Yes    No

10. Was the **venue** satisfactory?    Yes    No

11. Would you attend another VCDA conference?    Yes    No

What topics would you like to see covered at future conferences?

Please share with us any additional feedback you may have on the back of this form.  
Name (Optional):