

BRISTOL CORE

P.O. Box 413, Bristol, VT 05443 • (802) 453-7378 • info@bristolcore.org • bristolcore.org

Bristol's local downtown organization, Bristol CORE, is an essential part of our active and engaged community. Our mission and passion are to bring people together to keep our town vibrant, celebrate its history, and plan for its future.

2020 created a very different kind of environment for Bristol CORE. In January, after many years in development, we successfully opened the *Bristol COWORKING* space, centrally located on Main Street above the Bristol Cliffs Cafe. Partnering with the building's owners (the recently retired Conner & Buck partners), the coworking space offers two membership levels in a beautiful open office space to accommodate the needs of local freelancers, startups, and remote workers.

The Board focused on the organization's usual fundraising initiatives in February and began preparations for the *Main Street Lighting and Sidewalk Improvements Project*. With something of this size and scope and with an undetermined completion date, we decided to put the *Main Street Flower Basket* project on hold and debated the viability of our *Pocock Rocks* music festival in June, given the construction schedule.

As the global COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Vermont in March, our in-person meetings moved to Zoom's online conferencing platform. The Board's discussions turned to our local downtown businesses and the help needed during quarantine restrictions and over the next few months' uncertainties. Fundraising was put on hold until a more appropriate time, and the decision was made to cancel the *Pocock Rocks* festival.

As we reached mid-year, the organization focused on recovery events and promotions for local businesses and worked with a Bristol-based web developer to create online shopping websites for two Main Street businesses. We also began holding socially-distanced *Business Roundtable* discussions on the town green that allowed local business owners to connect face-to-face after months of difficulty due to the pandemic. These discussions highlighted the creativity, adaptability, and determination of our local businesses while exchanging ideas and resources during this challenging time.

By September, the *Main Street Lighting and Sidewalk Improvements Project* was almost complete, having had a longer than expected construction period. Bristol CORE worked as a liaison with the Town of Bristol for this project, which saw significant updates to the main street lamp posts, sidewalks, curbs, improved ADA access, and a new pedestrian crossing at the east end of the downtown block with bump-outs, improved signage, and manual crossing signals.

To promote the 're-opening' of Bristol's downtown area and celebrate the new infrastructure updates, we organized two large Main Street sidewalk sales in September and October, which garnered great success.

In the same month, Bristol CORE was awarded \$10,000 from the *Restart Vermont Regional Marketing And Stimulus Grant Program*. This collaboration with the Middlebury Chamber of Commerce, and the

towns of Middlebury and Vergennes, allowed us to create a mid-November *10-Day, 35K Giveaway* promotion using all local currency to bolster the local economy in all three towns. At the time of this letter's writing, more than 50% of the local currency has already circulated back to our community.

With COVID-19 numbers growing by the end of the year, the organization again had the difficult task of canceling our December-based events: *Chocolate Walk, Eat, Drink and Be Merry*, and the *Lumen Celebration of Fire & Light*. With these unable to occur, we focused on the yearly *Winter Decorating of Main Street* in collaboration with the Bristol Recreation Department, with holiday lights and decorations on lamp posts, the bandstand, Howden Hall, and Holley Hall.

The Bristol CORE board continued to evolve in 2020 with the addition of Main Street business owners Maura Donnelly of *Simon Says* and Alicia Standridge of *Your Home*.

In December, Bristol CORE's Executive Director, Ian Albinson, announced that he would be stepping down from the position to focus on other community-related endeavors. The Board of Directors will soon be launching a search for his replacement. The Board is very grateful for Ian's five years of service as Executive Director of this organization, championing several initiatives, sustaining annual events, and developing new partnerships.

Fundraising, sponsorships, and volunteered person-power enables Bristol CORE to implement the projects and events that keep Bristol buzzing. A town appropriation provides a third of our funding, and we are truly grateful for the support of the Town Administrator, the Selectboard, and taxpayers in our fantastic community.

We welcome your ideas, involvement, enthusiasm, and financial support! To learn more about our signature events, current projects, get involved or make a tax-deductible contribution, please visit our website, www.bristolcore.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Bristol CORE Board of Directors

Board Members:

Maura Donnelly, Kelly Hamshaw, Aidan Lenihan, Meridith McFarland, Alicia Standridge, Taylor Welch

Ex-officio:

Ian Albinson, Executive Director | Valerie Capels, Town Administrator