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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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Royal Diner owners 'moving on'

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Bo Foard and David Manning have closed the diner's
doors and are selling the property

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TEXT BODY:

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After two years running it, Royal Diner co-owner Bo
Foard and partner David Manning have closed its doors and are
quietly talking to folks who've expressed interest in buying the
building it's in.

"It's been a pleasure, but we're moving on," said Foard
by phone on Jan. 19, noting there was not a particular issue or

11 problem; the time had just come for him to wrap it up at the
12 Marlboro Road property.

13 "I just kind of reached the end of what I thought I could
14 do there," he said. "The energy the place needed to make it move
15 forward. I tried really hard to staff it, and that's really hard in this
16 environment."

17 He called Manning and said, "You know, I think I'm
18 done."

19 "It was a quick decision," Foard said. "I think it's time to
20 create businesses for someone else, but we've had a lot of fun.
21 And I reached a point where it wasn't fun anymore, and we're
22 moving on."

23 While he doesn't participate in social media, Foard did
24 get a friend to post for him and he's aware of the various and
25 vocal opinions about his tenure and the closure.

26 "There's a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking about
27 what should be done there," said Foard. "I love the restaurant
28 business, but I don't have the bandwidth to do what I was doing
29 at the Diner long term."

30 Foard still co-owns The Porch restaurant on Putney Road
31 in Brattleboro with Gretchen Hardy, the hands-on manager there.

32 He is also owner and founder of Foard Panel, Inc., which
33 designs, manufactures, and installs structural insulating panels.

34 Foard said the Royal Diner has "some seasonality to it"
35 but that it's been packed, especially in summer. And he's enjoyed
36 the ride.

37 "I had awesome customers and friends, and we've had a
38 lot of fun. I made the decision so fast I can't believe I did it, but I
39 was really confident my time there was ended," he said.

40 "I think we've set the stage for the next person," Foard
41 said. "We've done a ton of work there, and the physical plant is
42 always going to need work. It's a 1937 Worcester dining car.
43 What makes it funky and cool also makes it challenging."

44 Foard said he and Manning have had "a ton of inquiries
45 and shown it more than a few times" and are hopeful one of

46 those folks will take it on. If not, the partners intend to list the
47 property with a real estate agent.
48 "Somebody's going to have to have the financial
49 wherewithal to take this on," he said. "I'm more than willing to
50 help out new owners. We've put a lot of sweat equity into the
51 place and we're pretty proud of it and I was really happy with my
52 staff and the food we produced."

53 But "it just got to the end for me and I have so many
54 things going on," he said. "This didn't go the way I wanted it to."

55 "I think I was looking for the next Gretchen, and it didn't
56 happen," he said with a laugh.

57 Foard wants folks to know what's happening with the
58 diner's old neon sign.

59 "A lot of people ask, 'Where is the neon sign?', which we
60 got working for the first time in, like, 10 years," he said. "This
61 spring someone came in and said, 'Your sign's on fire.'

62 Thanks to Dennis Tier, of Deni and Bev Tier Signs in
63 Dummerston, "that sign's going to be totally restored, like brand
64 new."

65 "I look forward to the new owners having this
66 masterpiece," Foard said.

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