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**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 New economic initiative looks toward growth in  
2 Brattleboro

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3 Town manager describes work on Next Generation  
4 Brattleboro and Selectboard's participation in its progress

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 Next Generation Brattleboro, a community-led initiative  
7 to strengthen the town's economic future by attracting more  
8 working age residents, is in an exploration phase.

9 At the Selectboard's March 26 meeting, Town Manager  
10 John Potter offered some background about the concept, which  
11 emerged from community gatherings in November and March

12 where the goal of “802 by 2032” — 802 new working-age  
13 residents by 2032 — was discussed.

14 “Over the past 12 months or so, a number of residents,  
15 business leaders, Selectboard members, and community partners  
16 have reached out to the Town Manager’s office with a shared  
17 interest in strengthening Brattleboro’s economic future,” Potter  
18 said.

19 In a memo to the board, he described Next Generation  
20 Brattleboro as an “exciting and emerging, community-led effort”  
21 and characterized the initiative as growing organically, led by “an  
22 informal group of participants [that] has stepped forward to help  
23 organize meetings and advance ideas.”

24 “I have worked to bring people together, asked who else  
25 should be involved, and helped create the space for a broader  
26 conversation about where we are headed as a community,” he  
27 wrote.

28 A meeting in November led to a follow-up gathering on  
29 March 4 at the Retreat Farm with more than 150 community  
30 members, civic leaders, nonprofit executives, and business  
31 owners.

32 Participants at that meeting discussed questions pointing  
33 toward a shared vision: “How can we create the conditions for  
34 the next generation to want to live here? What does it mean to  
35 welcome a new generation? [And] how can a town inspire  
36 opportunity and prosperity?”

37 The goal of 802 new residents will focus on “early career  
38 adults aged 25 to 35,” according to the presentation slides from  
39 the event appended to Potter’s memo.

40 Potter said that he and some board members have been  
41 discussing these issues as they relate to two Selectboard priorities  
42 from the previous year: increased revenues and financial  
43 responsibility and health.

44 “The idea was, what can we do around economic  
45 development to move forward on increasing our revenues and  
46 improving the financial health of the town?” Potter said.

47 The rationale behind the effort is to broaden the tax base  
48 and sustain services amid an aging population, shrinking  
49 workforce, and rising municipal costs.

50 Emphasis is on a shared “North Star” and leveraging  
51 local assets: downtown, arts and culture, civic engagement, and  
52 regional hub status.

53 The concept is in an informal, early stage and has no  
54 formal structure yet, while those working on the issue are  
55 exploring ways for longer-term investment to blend private,  
56 philanthropic, and public funds for projects that are consistent  
57 with the Town Plan.

58 Potter proposed spending about six hours weekly  
59 shepherding the concept since no money is available this year for  
60 an assistant town manager.

61 He noted there is no intention to replace existing groups  
62 such as the Brattleboro Regional Chamber of Commerce, or to  
63 replace or duplicate the organization’s work.

64 “It’s more asking the question: Is there a way that we can  
65 better align?” he said.

66 Potter asked the board for feedback and guidance and  
67 said that if there is support, public engagement will be  
68 broadened.

69 With general Selectboard consensus to maintain  
70 momentum and involve members, those members decided to  
71 take a deeper dive into the concept and revisit specifics at their  
72 upcoming retreat.

73 After hearing from the public, board members and Potter  
74 reinforced inclusivity and openness to diverse community  
75 participation.

76 Board members Nell Mayo and Peter Case will work  
77 more directly with Potter, who asked for contributions from all  
78 board members within open meeting law constraints.

79 Case said that his “No. 1 goal is that at some point in  
80 time, whether I sit on this board or not, we don’t necessarily have  
81 to talk about what we cut, but that we are just heading in a

82 direction that is solving all our problems because we're finally  
83 doing it right."

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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87 ####BEGIN VIDEO####

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

88 ####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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