

Complete application. All requirements met.

- Cover letter dated 02/14/2020
- Authorization from selectboard on 09/04/2019
- Town planning process confirmed on 06/27/2019 by NVDA
- NVDA notified on 02/07/2020
- Color photographs included
- Town does not have zoning or historic districts
- Boundary map included. Boundary was developed by the town in coordination with DHCD staff.

Staff Recommendation

Approve application and award designation

Irasburg Village



Irasburg Village

Revitalization Efforts

- Updated Town Plan in 2019 to focus on village revitalization
- Operate a vibrant afterschool enrichment program at the Leach Public Library
- Restored the steeple in the United Church
- Relocated a historic schoolhouse to the village center and it currently serves as the town clerk's office
- Rehabbed the town hall and it is used regularly for events, weddings, and community gatherings
- Installed a “Welcome to Irasburg” sign and notice board that announces upcoming town events
- Initiated the “University of Irasburg” sponsored by the Leach Public Library, as a pop-up university that offered 15 classes in 2019, with 95 students participating
- Host the annual October harvest festival, thanksgiving dinner, and youth sports teams play baseball on the common

Irasburg Village

Photographs

Figure 1: Looking east on Route 58 from the corner of Park Avenue and Route 58. Fire Department (#1 on map) is visible on the left.



Figure 2: Looking west on Route 58. Masonic Temple (#8 on map) and excavation business (#6 on map) are on right.



Figure 3: Looking southwest from Irasburg Common. Steeple of Irasburg United Church (#25 on map) in distance.



Irasburg Village

Photographs

Figure 4: The new notice board on the Common was used to promote the Village Center Designation visit with Richard Amore.



Figure 5: View of the Irasburg Common looking east. Post office and Ray's Market (#34 on map) in distance.



Figure 6: University of Irasburg banner on the historic gazebo on the Common.



Figure 7: Fire Station (#1 on map)



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Figure 8: Town Clerk's Office (#2 on map)



Figure 10: Leach Memorial Library (#37)



Figure 9: Foam insulation business (#5 on map)



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Figure 13: The Meadows, 10-unit affordable housing development (#13 on map)



Figure 12: Bed and Breakfast (#12 on map)



Figure 14: Locksmith business (#20 on map)



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Figure 15: Barn used for community events (#22 on map)



Figure 16: Irasburg United Church (#25 on map)



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Figure 19: Ray's Market, Post Office, and Apartments Overhead (#34 on map)



Figure 18: Home-based business (#32 on map)

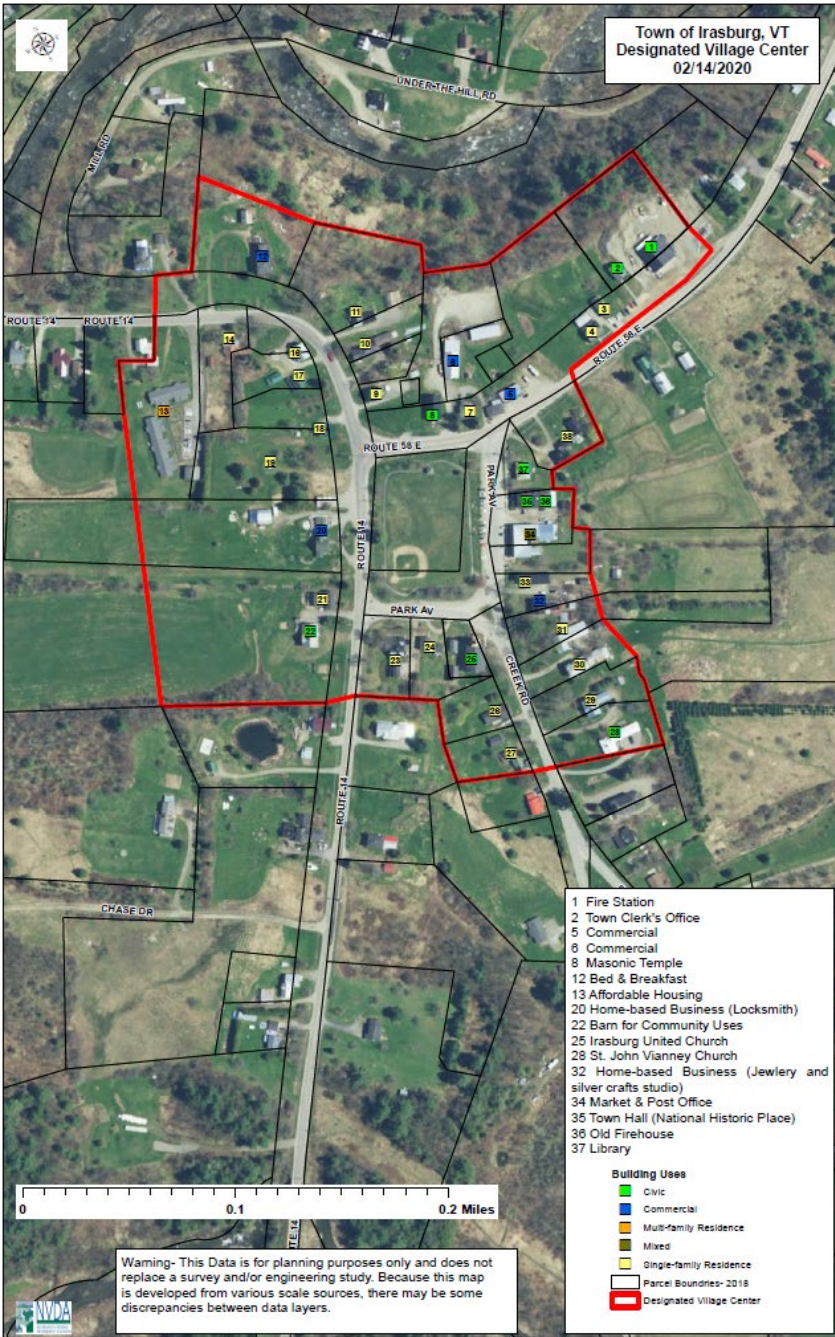


Figure 20: Historic Town Hall (#35 On map) and historic structure behind it (#36 on map) It was the old Irasburg firehouse, and later served as a print shop. Now it is a catch-all storage area..

Irasburg Village

Photographs



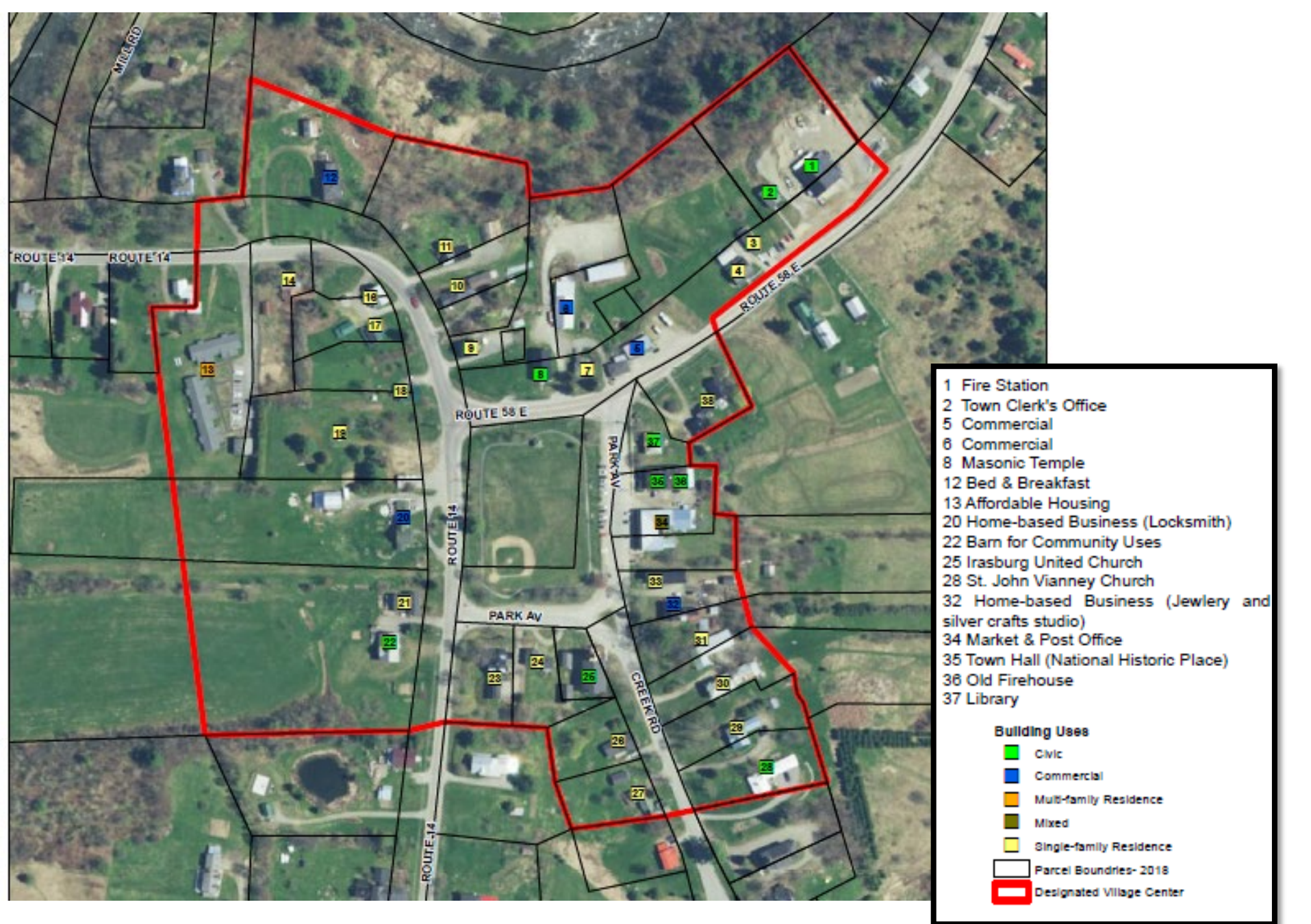


Irasburg Village

Proposed Boundary Map

The proposed boundary runs along Route 14, Park Avenue and Route 58 East and includes the common, town hall, library, fire station, two churches, market and post office, masonic temple, small businesses, multifamily and single-family residences.

The town worked with staff to define the boundary that meets statutory definition and submitted a map that meets the program's requirements.



Irasburg Village

Discussion/Questions and Motion



Staff Recommendation
Approve application and award designation

February 14, 2020

Richard Amore
Vermont Village Center Designation Program
Division for Community Planning and Revitalization
Department of Housing and Community Development
One National Life Drive, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620

Dear Richard,

The Town of Irasburg is pleased to submit its application for Village Center Designation. Enclosed you will find the following information:

- Letter notifying Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) of our intent to apply for village center designation;
- Minutes from the September 4, 2019 select board meeting, approving the decision to apply for village center designation;
- Letter from NVDA confirming the Town's planning process;
- A description of the community and proposed village center area. This element is accompanied by photographs, as well as a description of recent improvements to the village, challenges, and opportunities. The latter are documented in the town plan, and relevant language from the plan (adopted May 13, 2019) is included.
- Map of proposed area
- Relevant pages from the Irasburg Town Plan

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. My email is judithjackson@gmail.com , and my phone number is 802-754-9968. Thank you very much for your consideration of our application.

Sincerely,



Judith Jackson
Clerk, Irasburg Planning Commission

Cc: Danielle Ingalls, Irasburg Town Clerk

Irasburg, VT 05845
February 7, 2020

Northeastern Vermont Development Association
P.O. Box 630
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
Attn: Alison Low

We are writing on behalf of the Irasburg Selectboard and the Irasburg Planning Commission to inform you of the Town of Irasburg's intent to apply to the Vermont Village Center Designation Program for Village Center Designation.

Thank you for NVDA's consistent support for Irasburg's planning initiatives. We look forward to working with you on Village Center Designation.

Best regards,

Danielle Ingalls
Town Clerk, Irasburg

Judith Jackson
Clerk, Irasburg Planning Commission

Selectboard Meeting Minutes September 4th, 2019

Present: Dave Lahar, Mike Booth, Mark Collette, Chad Tollmann, Danielle Ingalls, Peter Limon, Judy Jackson, Dustin Sanville, Bill Harm, Patty Rakowsky.

The meeting was called to order at 4:45pm, by chair of the Board, Dave Lahar.

Dave made a motion to find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, seconded by Mike.

Dave made a motion to enter into executive session in accordance with 1 V.S.A §313(1)(B) for labor relations agreements with employees, seconded by Mike. Executive session entered at 4:48pm with Chad Tollmann attending.

Executive session exited at 5:17pm. There was no action taken.

In additions and deletions to the agenda, Chad asked to add a discussion on road work updates and coal purchasing. Dave asked to have a discussion on providing attorney fees in regards to the Hansen/Delabruere vs. Town of Irasburg case. Dave asked to add the discussion on propane pricing.

The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the August 21st, 2019 meeting.

In public comment, there was none.

Chad informed the Board that he has shopped around for coal and has only found it available from E.M Brown's for \$288/ton. Mark will call Farmyard store for pricing. Dave made a motion to authorize Chad to buy the coal from E.M Brown's unless Mark can find a lower price, Mike seconded. Chad informed the Board that they have completed the work on Lake Region Road, including placing blue board insulation on the problem culvert that heaves every year. Chad said that they have also flushed the culverts along Lake Region Road. Chad will look into lining up someone to paint the center lines after paving. Chad hopes to haul winter sand starting the 16th of September. They will be changing a culvert on Ingalls Lane on the 10th as well. Dave will contact the Clark's salesman about the ongoing issues with the 2019 Town Truck before winter comes. Chad stated that he has looked at the building between the Town Hall and Ray's Market and it is still full of stuff. Dave will talk with Leo about moving the stuff out so it can be used for storage of the ice rink boards and the picnic tables.

Bill Harm was present to discuss roaming domestic animals. Bill stated that he felt the ordinance was too vague in regards to domestic animals. He has had a lot of complaints about roaming chickens and pigs and feels he can't take action due to the grey area. He has also

investigated a recent dog bite in Town. Danielle informed Bill that she has sent out three notices of delinquent dog licenses. It was discussed to send tickets as the issues arise instead of waiting until the end of the year to send tickets for offenses that may have happened 6 months prior to issuing the ticket. The Board will review the ordinance and add wording throughout in regards to domestic animals to hopefully help clear up the grey area.

Peter Limon was present to discuss working within the Town right of way to fix a large water leak in the system (10,000 gallons a day). The leak is guessed to be in the river. There are four options to fix the leak. Due to the ledge in the area the least costly option is to drill a well for the one landowner that is serviced by the problematic line. The second less costly option is to trench along Under the Hill Road to extend another existing updated line to service the one landowner. The Selectboard as well as Peter and Dustin are all in agreement that drilling the well and having an attorney draw up legal paperwork that protects the water coop from any further responsibility after drilling the well would be the best solution.

Judy was present to discuss seeking village center designation. Dave made a motion to proceed with the application for Village Center Designation, Mark seconded, approved.

Judy also voiced her concern for the health of the maple trees on the common. She noticed that they did not leaf out and are turning color early. Judy suggested calling the county forester to come look at the trees. The Board agreed to have the county forester look at the trees and give his opinion and suggestions. Judy will call and ask him to look at the trees.

In additions, the pricing of propane was discussed. The Board asked Danielle to reach out to Blanchard Oil to draw up a proposal/contract to review at the next meeting honoring their quoted price of \$1.49/gallon. Dave asked Danielle if she could find the total attorney fees spent on the Hansen/Delabruere vs. Town of Irasburg case for the past couple years and provide that number to Mr. Hansen and Ms. Delabruere.

The Board reviewed and approved the order #18 bills and payroll.

Dave and Mark went on a tour of the J Hutchins asphalt plant last Wednesday and learned that the new plant has been ordered and it is supposed to be much more efficient in reducing the smell.

In correspondence, the Board looked at the draft RFP for reappraisal. The Board asked Danielle to send it electronically for their review.

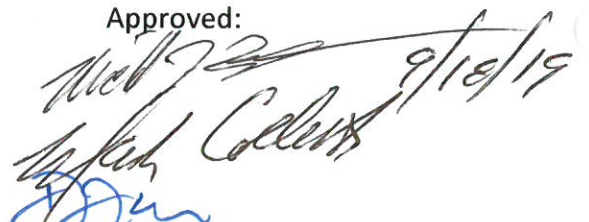
In other business, the Board scheduled a date to review the budget for after the VLCT meeting on September 16th at 3:00pm.

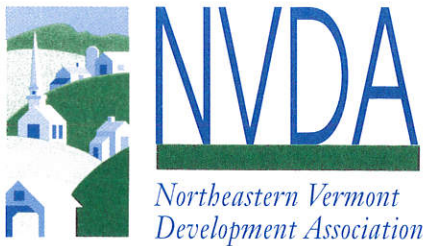
Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm.

Submitted:



Approved:





February 13, 2020

Danielle Ingalls, Irasburg Town Clerk
Judith Jackson, Clerk, Irasburg Planning Commission
Town of Irasburg
161 Route 58E
Irasburg, VT 05845

Dear Danielle and Judy,

We have received your letter notifying us of your intent to apply for Village Center Designation.

This letter is to inform you that Irasburg's planning process was confirmed in a NVDA public hearing held on June 27, 2019. Vermont statute requires us to review and confirm the planning efforts of the municipalities in the Northeast Kingdom at least twice every eight years. This process allows our communities to apply for state Municipal Planning Grants and access other benefits, including Village Center designation. **This letter of confirmation must be included in your town's application for Village Center designation.**

To be confirmed, the regional planning commission has to consult with the municipality to determine if it meets these requirements, as determined by 24 V.S.A. §4350:

- It is engaged in a continuous planning process that, within a reasonable time, will result in a plan that is consistent with statewide planning goals;
- It is engaged in a process to implement its municipal plan; and
- It is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes.

Part of the consultation process involves determining whether the municipality has adopted a plan that can be regionally approved. Your plan, adopted on May 13, 2019, was approved by the full board of NVDA on June 27, 2019, which was NVDA's quarterly board meeting. In a separately warned hearing for that same evening, the full board then voted to confirm the planning efforts of Irasburg.

We are very pleased that your community is pursuing Village Center Designation. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the designation process.

Sincerely,

Alison Low AICP, CFM
Senior Planner

cc. David Snedeker

PO Box 630 36 Eastern Avenue, Suite 1 St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819-0630 802 748-5181 Fax: 802 748-1223

Irasburg Village

Community and Context

A distinctive topography places the heart of the town of Irasburg and its historic village Common in a bowl, rimmed by the surrounding ridgelines. The village center includes commercial and civic enterprises, dense single-family housing, and the town Common. Route 14 borders the Common to the west and Route 58 to the north, the Creek Road to the east and Park Avenue to the south.

As the historic and business focus, the village center is the core of activity in Irasburg. It provides for a mix of commercial, residential and public uses while maintaining the historic heritage of the village. The village center is the site of the Town Hall (built in 1912), the Irasburg Common (laid out in 1816), the Leach Public Library (1926), the U.S. Post Office, and the Town Clerk's Office. A busy general store and a locksmith are located here, as well as artisans, two churches, a low-income housing development (completed in 2010), and home-based occupations. A foam-insulation business moved to the Common in 2016.

Many single- and multi-family residences occupy this area, and considerable foot traffic traverses it throughout the day. It is a busy transportation corridor and a lively center for neighbor-to-neighbor interaction.

A major goal of Irasburg's 2019 Town Plan calls for a lively and prosperous historic village center that attracts and serves not only Irasburg residents but neighbors and visitors. Toward that end, several current and planned measures show evidence of vitality and interest in the village center:

- A vibrant after-school enrichment program, operated through the Leach Public Library, brings Irasburg schoolchildren to the library, the Town Hall, and other historic buildings after school every weekday.
- The United Church has restored its steeple to its historic white color.

- A historic country schoolhouse was moved to the village center and repurposed as the Town Clerk's Office.
- A refurbished and redecorated Town Hall attracts a growing number of weddings and other social events, and efforts have begun to market the space more widely.
- An annual October harvest festival brings visitors and citizens to the Common. This year's festival hosted the first annual Edible Irasburg Auction, a library fundraiser.
- The fourth annual free Thanksgiving dinner brought more than 300 local people to the Town Hall in 2019.
- Sports teams of all ages play baseball on the Common every spring, and Christmas lights sparkle on the spruce tree each December.
- A new notice board on the Common, built to match the "Welcome to Irasburg" sign, announces civic events to the many Irasburg citizens who lack internet connections.
- The University of Irasburg, sponsored by the Leach Library, held its inaugural term in 2019. A pop-up university held during the month of April with the motto "Neighbors teaching neighbors," the U of I holds classes in venues around the Common, including a privately owned timber-frame barn built in 2014 that is often used for public events. In 2019, the U of I offered 15 classes attended by 95 students.
- Volunteers plant annuals around the gazebo and tend young trees around the Common's perimeter.
- VTrans 2018 counts on Route 58 passing through the village are 2200 AADT. The volume of traffic that passes through Irasburg each day represents a potential customer base for retail and service business development.

Challenges and Opportunities

- The Leach Library is not ADA compliant and needs significant renovations to make it accessible to all. In 2019, Irasburg applied for a Municipal Planning Grant to start the process, but the application was unsuccessful. The Planning Commission plans to learn from the initial effort and try again this year.
- The deteriorating condition of the historic bandstand on the Common has recently been confirmed by a condition assessment funded by the Robert

Sincerbeaux Fund of the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Selectboard and Planning Commission members and the Town Clerk met recently with a representative of the Preservation Trust to consider how to engage the community in planning next steps for the bandstand.

- The Selectboard and the Planning Commission have expressed strong interest in developing a Park & Ride in the village center. Currently, nearly 70 percent of Irasburg commuters drive alone to work.
- A Common Tree Committee has begun working with the Orleans Country Forester to monitor and improve the health of the maples and other trees on the Common.
- Renovation of a historic printing office located behind Ray's Market, long used as a catch-all storage area, could provide much-needed space for enrichment classes and other civic functions.
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access—crosswalks, for example—would promote increased use of the Common for recreation. Several years ago, the Town received a VTrans grant to develop cost estimates for a sidewalk from the library to school (approximately .25 mile). Requirements for the sidewalk, which would have been on a state highway, made the project cost-prohibitive for the town -- even with a 90% match. The need for a safe route from the village to the school remains.

Land use considerations

Although the town has no zoning provision, Irasburg largely maintains its historic development pattern of concentrated development in the village center with residential dwellings located along the principle routes radiating from the center.

In 2019, the Northern Vermont Development Association, the Regional Planning Commission, approved Irasburg's Town Plan 2019 to receive substantial deference in Section 248 proceedings.

Irasburg citizens place a high value on the visual character and quality of Irasburg's landscape. Well-respected and widely used systematic procedures and methods exist to objectively assess potential impacts of development on a scenic and visual resource. Thus, Irasburg's Town Plan requires that all development projects that trigger Act 250 review and permitting, any Section

248 process related to a Certificate of Public Good, and all construction projects occurring in the designated Mountains, Hills and Ridgelines area that change the visual character and quality of Irasburg be evaluated by a Visual Impact Assessment, carried out according to best professional practice.

Consistency with Town Plan

Irasburg strongly supports Village Center Designation in order to support the goal, expressed in the Town Plan, to encourage mixed-use development and revitalization in the historic village center while preserving the surrounding landscape. Irasburg's first-ever Town Plan, adopted in April, 2019, integrates Village Center Designation into town planning throughout the document, as shown in the following excerpts from the Plan.

Chapter 2. Land Use, pages 11-12: "Irasburg should request Village Center Designation for the village center from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

"The Department of Housing and Community Development oversees the Village Center Designation program to encourage and recognize local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. Irasburg support applying to this program for its village center area to become a Designated Village Center. This designation will achieve the goals of the plan by encouraging mixed-use development and revitalization in the historic village center while preserving the surrounding landscape. This area is characterized by commercial, civic, religious and residential uses. It maintains the historic look and feel of an earlier century.

"The Designation will give business owners and municipal bodies access to financial opportunities to re-invest into their properties to maintain the historic character and to implement needed safety and accessibility improvements. The Designation will also encourage a healthier, safer and more walkable village center for people of all ages by increasing investments in these locations and reducing the combined cost of housing and transportation. The Designation will enhance the value of this popular and unique place for both residents and visitors. Seventy percent of survey respondents encouraged the development

of tourism and hospitality industries. Irasburg will make good use of the funding, training and resources available to communities with this Designation.”

Goal, page 20: “A lively and prosperous village center attracts and serves not only Irasburg residents but neighbors and visitors.”

Action, page 20: “Encourage a vibrant village center: Pursue Irasburg’s designation as a Designated Village Center.”

Chapter 3. Transportation, page 26, Action: “Pursue Village Center Designation and Vermont Agency of Transportation grants as a means to facilitate improved pedestrian and bicycle access including a walking/bike path from the village center to the Irasburg Village School; develop a designated Park & Ride facility; and investigate a vehicle charging station.”

Chapter 4. Utilities and Facilities, page 33, Goal: “Irasburg’s public infrastructure, utilities and services continue to meet the needs of the town citizens, in accord with the Irasburg planning principles of respect for the environment, sound economics and regard for community values. Irasburg protects, maintains and preserves the Common and historic buildings for future generations.”

Action: “Pursue Village Center Designation.”

Chapter 5. Natural and Historic Resources, page 44: “Irasburg plans to apply for Vermont Village Center Designation, a designation that would provide eligibility for tax credits for preserving and improving historic structures in the village center. Tax credits can be used for façade improvements or structural improvements to bring historic buildings up to modern safety standards, giving them new and expanded use and life.”

Chapter 6. Education, page 51, Action: “Apply for Village Center Designation. Such a designation will permit Irasburg to pursue a multi-use path from the village center to the Irasburg Village School.”

Chapter 8. Energy, page 77, Action: “Pursue Village Center Designation to encourage development and redevelopment in the historic village center; to access grant funding and training opportunities; to encourage improved

pedestrian and bicycle access within the village center; to develop a dedicated Park & Ride facility; and to investigate the feasibility of installing an EV charging station.”

Chapter 9. Housing, page 83, Action: “Apply for Village Center Designation to obtain tax credits and other programs to preserve Irasburg’s existing village housing.

Chapter 10. Economic Development, page 87: “Irasburg intends to apply for Village Center Designation. Such a designation would help to support energy efficiency and conservation initiatives..... Re-use of existing structures is a way to encourage re-development of Irasburg’s historic buildings. Village Center Designation would play a key role.”

Action, page 88: “Apply for Village Center Designation.”

Actions, page 90: “This Town Plan rests on the principles of respect for the environment, sound economics and regard for community values. The following summary comprises a set of actions to achieve the Plan’s goals, as outlined in each chapter, based on those principles.

Infrastructure: “Pursue Irasburg’s designation as a Designated Village Center. Such a designation will make the town of Irasburg eligible for tax credits and other financial support from the state of Vermont and from granting agencies such as the Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Preservation Trust the Vermont Arts Council and others.”

“Village Center Designation will support the Town of Irasburg in pursuing the following actions described and encouraged in this Plan:

- Repair, upgrade and maintain town facilities while preserving their architectural, structural and historical integrity.
- Maintain the Irasburg Common in good condition
- Encourage wider use of the Common, the Town Hall and other village infrastructure by citizens and tourists alike for social and civic functions as a center of community life.

- Preserve Irasburg’s existing housing stock located in the village and development and redevelopment in the historic village center.
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation options, including development of a multi-use path from the village center to the Irasburg Village School.
 - Develop a dedicated Park & Ride facility
 - Investigate the feasibility of installing an EV charging station”
- Irasburg’s entire Town Plan may be found at <https://www.leachpubliclibrary.org/town-plan-2019.html>

Irasburg Village Views

Figure 1: Looking east on Route 58 from the corner of Park Avenue and Route 58. Fire Department (#1 on map) is visible on the left.



Figure 2: Looking west on Route 58. Masonic Temple (#8 on map) and excavation business (#6) on map are on right.



Figure 3: Looking southwest from Irasburg Common. Steeple of Irasburg United Church (#25 on map) in distance.



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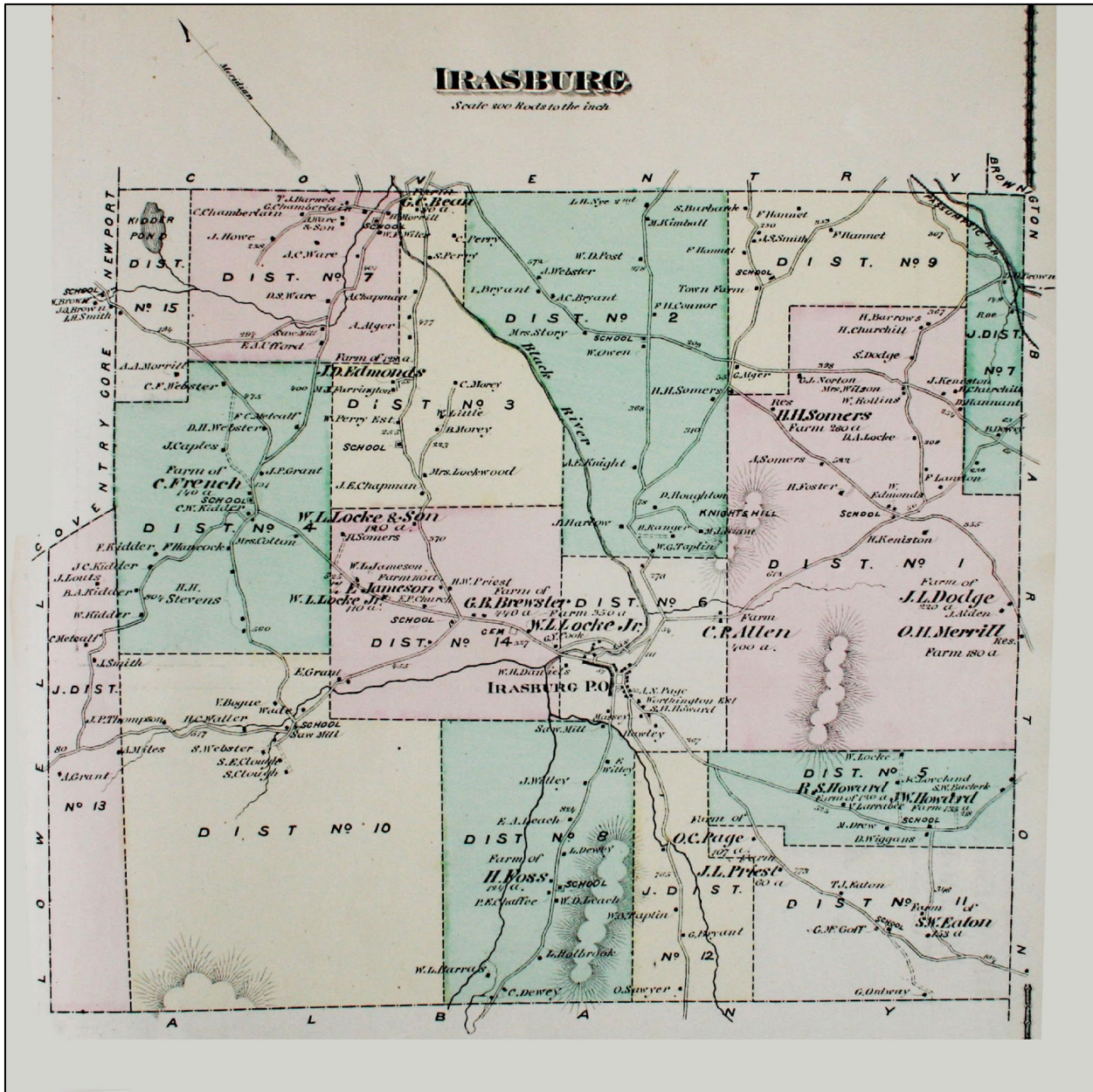
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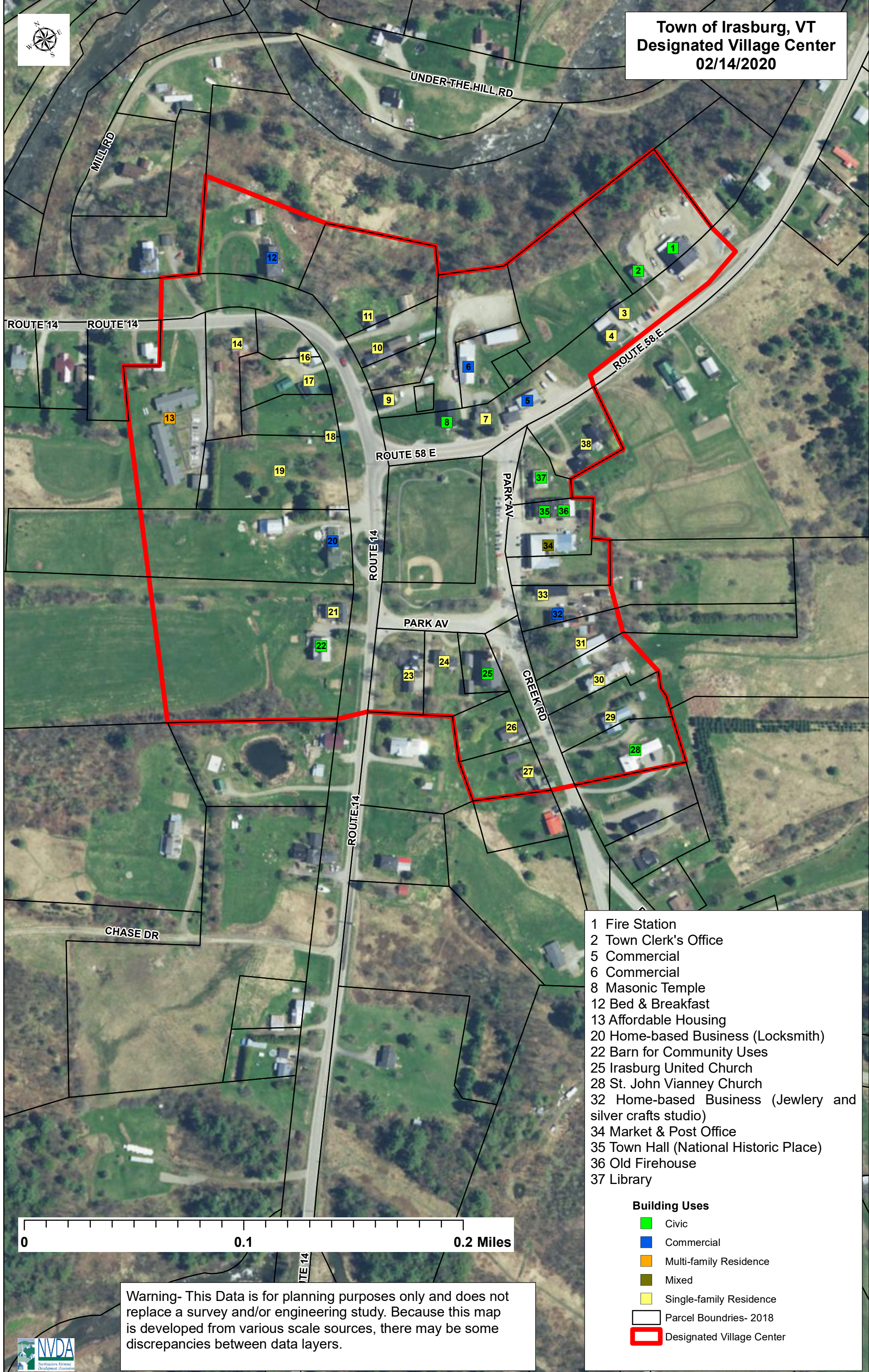
Figure 20: Historic Town Hall (#35 On map) and historic structure behind it (#36 on map) It was the old Irasburg firehouse, and later served as a print shop. Now it is a catch-all storage area..



Figure 21: Map showing residential development in Irasburg in 1878. Note the presence of 11 district schools. Except for school consolidation, twenty-first-century development in Irasburg follows essentially the same pattern of residential dwellings located along the principal routes radiating from the concentrated Village Center. *From Atlas of Lamoille and Orleans Counties VT, F.W. Beers & Co., New York 1878.*

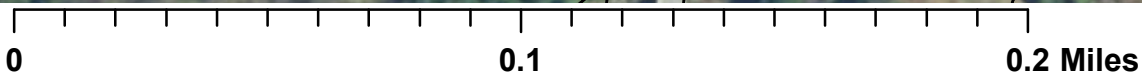


**Town of Irasburg, VT
Designated Village Center
02/14/2020**



- 1 Fire Station
- 2 Town Clerk's Office
- 5 Commercial
- 6 Commercial
- 8 Masonic Temple
- 12 Bed & Breakfast
- 13 Affordable Housing
- 20 Home-based Business (Locksmith)
- 22 Barn for Community Uses
- 25 Irasburg United Church
- 28 St. John Vianney Church
- 32 Home-based Business (Jewelry and silver crafts studio)
- 34 Market & Post Office
- 35 Town Hall (National Historic Place)
- 36 Old Firehouse
- 37 Library

- Building Uses**
- Civic
 - Commercial
 - Multi-family Residence
 - Mixed
 - Single-family Residence
 - Parcel Boundaries- 2018
 - Designated Village Center



Warning- This Data is for planning purposes only and does not replace a survey and/or engineering study. Because this map is developed from various scale sources, there may be some discrepancies between data layers.

