Purpose:

The purpose of the **Design Standards** is to promote information gathering, idea generation, discussion and consensus decision making that generates the best design possible. Good design allows rather than restricts, encourages rather than suppresses, It Seeks to foster the goodness and wisdom latent in the natural systems that surround us and ourselves in relationship to that system.

Overview:

An important feature of our design, originally developed by Christopher Alexandra's ideas put forth in a Pattern Language, is that good design seeks to weave and connect patterns. In our case that means a lot of attention to the relationship of elements and how those relationships enhance design for humans and the environment. For example there is a relationship between a brook and the trail system surrounding it, weave of the features of private parcels and surrounding Common Land with the intent to enhance both, creating a sense of connectivity and landscape coherence. This means nearby space for gathering areas, community gardens, commercial gardening and farming, a shops and/or a studio.

How the Design Standards Work?

The Standards work by being suggestive and encouraging versus mandatory and forced. However, they do have the authority that rests in forging **Consensus Agreements. Consensus Agreements** is created in a review process that is dynamic, living, improvisational and learning oriented. The Process is a mindful and deliberative generating an understanding of a project that in turn fosters commitment and investment and therefore support for the project and its relationship to the community.

Consensus Agreement is done in a two-step process:

1. The first is a step in which all design plans and the Applicant presents drawings to the **Design Review Committee** comprised of three volunteer members that will review the plans for completeness, clarity and alignment with Community Standards. This review will generate information and make recommendations to the Applicant. Both the Applicant and the Committee is obligated to create consensus on this feedback and information before moving forward to the second phase of the project.

2. The second phase, called **Community Review,** opens the process up to the entire Commons membership where the Applicant and the **DRC** will have the opportunity to present their project to the Community, incorporating the suggestions of the **DRC** while obtaining additional Community feedback, concerns and suggestions or **Consensus Support.**

3. The Community Review phase can be **opened to the surrounding community** of neighbors, and adjoining members of the Smith family. The decision to do that will depend a lot on the interest generated in the surrounding community who would have the option of requesting party status to the review.

Consider, for example a member presenting to the community plans for a house site, its landscaping and other ideas and plans about its immediate area including detail on how this area would impact on neighbors and the adjacent Common land. Using the "**Standards"** as a guide questions would be asked and the applicant receives a lot of feedback, ideas and other relevant information pertaining to the project designed to help all parties become more educated about the project and it potential and, possibly, constraining factors and issues. In this process other

become more invested in the project and therefore more committed to the outcomes for the applicant and the community as a whole.

One project I need to do this with is the **Cold Creek Railroad** and my ideas about its development and expansion. I look forward to that process for all the reasons cited above including the asking of hard questions and the articulation of various challenges that the project faces as a vehicle that makes an impact.

The concept of a Common's **Design Review Committee (DRC)** is incorporated in the draft of us **by Laws** reading as follows. Below, is how it is currently drafted?)

*DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE: The Common hereby establishes a Design Review Committee as a permanent committee of the Community, which shall administer and perform the architectural and landscape review and control functions of the Common set forth in the **Design Standards** as to all construction and improvements made by the Common or Member Households. The Design Review Committee will consist of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) members and shall be elected by the Community.*

Design Standards.

There are design standards in four major areas:

1. **Economy, sustainability and affordability.**
2. **Land Use and Architecture,**
3. **Energy and Resources,**
4. **Community.**

Economy, Sustainability and Affordability:

Overview:

Bill Mckibben, well known for his writing and social activism on Global Warming, also promotes, as part of the solution, "sustainable economies in close knit communities." McKibben suggests that the focus should be on **"deep economy",** which includes, rather than constant growth, a major consideration of human satisfaction and quality of life resulting from economic activity. Therefore, at the Commons, we seek to create an economy that performs better at traditional economic measures, like for example, returns on investments and access to income generating work while, in addition, meeting the environmental and human relationship standards of the "deep economy" that Mckibben promotes.

Creating a sustainable economy is the balance between meeting the human needs for capital, income, and goods and services while enhancing the natural environment with quality of life concerns at the forefront. For example, we can take significant steps to reduce our carbon footprint, but in doing so, it should advance other economic factors, like building equity value, versus weaken them. We can meet important environmental and human satisfaction goals ("deep economy") including aesthetics while at the same time create an economy that, in the short term, generates meaningful work and produce for its members and, in the long term, effective returns for investments.

The Socially Responsible Business network that Steve and Tanna Hood have been involved in and found in Vermont (and now throughout the country)– holds as a core principle that in order for a socially, environmentally responsible business to make sense, to be viable, it must be economically successful and sustainable—we agree. This requirement ensures that not only can we define our current opportunities, resources and investment needs, but the community also has a financially sound foundation and an equitable method to make those decisions without over extending any member family financially and, when possible, generating financial opportunity, for that members and their family.

This is a "whole system design" approach rooted in the idea that we can design and implement a system, from an economic perspective, in which all elements enhance others. For example, we can create an environment where the

skills, resources, life experiences, knowledge and business interest of one member enhances the others and vice-a-versa.

Below are Standards that enhance this model:

1. **Develop a Community "business plan"** that seeks to achieve three interconnected goals: Developing a "business plan" means a deliberate focus on definition of goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities and timelines, all with a solid foundation in economic sustainability, by the community. The plan rests on three legs: productivity to meet costs, attracting people who want to engage in business activity and educational and skill development opportunity for all members.

   Conversely, it does not mean that all members must engage in business activity, but, does mean that all members work to support and enhance the business activity of those who are engaged because that activity helps the business and the community as a whole.

2. **To Design the Common to be financially productive** to the point that it meets, or at least helps meet, all of its operating expenses including fixed costs like maintenance, taxes and insurance and the cost of new developments. This is done by harvesting, in a sustainable manner, the farm's natural resources like timber and garden and farm produce including produce utilized in our own local food supply system. It is also accomplished by developing small artisan oriented and professional service business owned by Community members that contribute goods and services to the Community (and other communities) while helping to shoulder Common costs—the intent is to create jobs within the community and tax base that contributes to revenue. For example, a garden produce business, a maple sugar business, would lease land for their operations, income from leases would go into Common coffers. An artisan shop would generate employment and, if on leased land, revenue for the community. One member may make a product or provide a service while others may sell or market that service or product.

3. **To attract to the community families that seek to utilize the farm's resources for income producing purposes**. For example, we have plenty of space for small professional offices and the development of other business oriented resources like meeting spaces. The farm has outstanding spaces for small shops, gardening and farming. In our business and marketing plans we can develop better strategies to reach out to this population and the possibly create incentives that would attract them. This is where affordability comes in—we need to create a living option that is affordable while not requiring excessive service cost while promising good future investment.

4. **Insure access and incentives for training and educational opportunities** that would empower all members and children, develop new skills and knowledges in areas that interest them and would be in the Communities' interest. In some cases, we can share our knowledges and skills, in other cases we can draw in outside resources to help us, invite in experts, sponsor events and workshops.

5. **Encourage the design of single-family houses in clusters** that allow more economical use of shared infrastructure and land for production purposes. Encourage the use of Common land that interweaves with private land to maximize the efficiency that comes with diversity and utilizing public and private spaces in a manner that enhances both spaces from an economic perspective. For example, a workshop on Common land between two private spaces and utilized by more than one family.

6. **Utilize clustering of buildings** to provide for small open areas that contribute to diversity, recreation, social and gardening activity while balanced with more private and house site areas. Utilize the natural features of

the landscape, like contour lines, tree lines stone walls, transitional areas and outcroppings as a means of creating boundaries between private and public areas inherent to good cluster design and overall efficiency of production.

7. **Encourage Design that can easily adapted and retrofitted**, so as to be easily expanded and altered for the changing needs of the community. Part of the success of the farm's existing landscape and structures has been its ability to adapt—for example the Studio started life as a woodshop and Breidablick, as a blacksmith shop. Yet both were retrofitted into income generating rental structures that became the economic engines of the farm's future.

   This applies to land as well, for example consider the changes in the Meadow and the Plantation over the years. From an economic perspective the idea is to work with the natural changes that are occurring, for example the "Plantation" is maturing while not reproducing, this means revenue from timber harvesting in the short term while initiating the next generation of productive growth in the Common areas of the "Plantation. "

8. **Encourage the use of durable, high quality and American (preferably locally made) tools for systems** like workshop, and gardening tools. The Common can begin to build a collection of Common tools and machines that would see more efficient utilization throughout the project. Members could also hire themselves and their tools out for Common projects- for example, snow plowing or lawn and garden work. When possible standardize materials and methods for optimal purchasing and labor savings while sustaining quality. Avoid the purchase of lavish and exotic material and tools that in some cases come from great distances, focusing instead on simplicity, local, quality and durability.

9. **Develop a Community Contribution program** in which all members volunteer to take on tasks in an organized program that contribute to the Community. Examples are: bookkeeping, marketing, landscaping, building maintenance, gardening and others. The idea is to get the job done, help the community while engaging and empowering members with work, often with others, that they enjoy and learn from doing.

10. **Encourage the use of the Farm's resources to reduce Construction costs.** The Farm has large quantities of sand, stone and timber that can be utilized for cost savings purposes in construction, landscaping and gardening. A system needs to be developed that provides for the allocation and payment of these resources by individual member needs, for example timber harvest for building purposes.

11. **Hire local.** As much as possible hire local labor and firms. In our experience local labor and firms are highly skilled, knowledgeable, motivated and less expensive then regional and out of state labor. Local workers develop a sense ownership in their projects at the farm, as a means of expressing local pride. Finally, the principle of economic reciprocity works here, the idea is to grow and enhance the local economy of Huntington (and Vermont) so it can help us grow and enhance our economy as currently practiced in our lodging business.

12. **Encourage maintenance procedures designed for ease of upkeep with the least impact on the environment and the community.** For example, minimize the use of paint and other materials that require frequent upkeep or replacement. Utilize window sashes that are aluminum clad and painted in order to reduce maintenance and improve efficiency. Build with durable and weather resistant materials like stone and timber frame.

13. **Encourage architectural choices yet, standardization that are cost effective because of labor and material savings**. The community should consider, as an effort to reduce costs because duplicating architecture with modification defrays building cost. Therefore, we encourage the exploration of a standard house design that could be utilized for multiple areas across the community by many members. This design could allow enough flexibility to be customized for individual owner needs and the unique features of the

landscape while having broad application across the community. The idea is to use the principle of standardization as means to enhance creativity versus weaken it.

14. **Reduce costs for owners in their personal spaces by providing access to tools, land and buildings in public spaces.** For example, the Community may construct a Common Building for storage, a barn for animals or a Common House for offices, a library, meetings and meals saving costs on individual structures, food and material.

15. **Equate equity growth and returns on long term investments with beauty.** Today the farm is worth about 46 times more then we purchased it for in 1968. We attribute this increase to many factors like increases in local real estate values in the area and the emergence of Huntington as a vibrant community near Burlington that combines a strong local economy with a regional one. One major factor contributing to equity growth, we believe, is our emphasis on beauty, as we have repeatedly learned in our lodging business, draws people to the farm at an occupancy rate that far exceeds state averages.

Land Use and Architecture:

Overview:

Development activity should fit and strive to protect the natural and diverse features of the landscape including open spaces, rock outcroppings, trails, streams, wetlands, open spaces, productive farm land and historic settlement patterns

1. **"Design with Nature:"** The farm has a very visually interesting and varied landscape containing such features as dramatic views, small, almost self-contained pocket, semi secluded environments, large rock outcroppings, streams, wetlands, varied slopes from steep to nearly flat, stone walls and woodland diversity that ranges from Maple and Beech groves to large stands of mature Norway Spruce that was planted in the 1930s. Wildlife, soils, plant species are very varied and rich throughout.

   This varied landscape, although rugged, is nearly ideal for small self-contained residential lots as even close buildings will seemingly protecting privacy while offering plenty of opportunity for creative landscaping with trails, small gardens and grass areas that blend with the dramatic features on the natural environment mentioned above.

   Design then works the way that nature does, it does this by finding and weaving patterns between natural elements like a brook, a hillside, the plants and animals that live there, humans and our goals and our purposes are always part of this beautiful matrix.

   Use **"biological resources"** and **"make the least change for the greatest effect."** are credos that guide us; this is the nature that we seek to design with.

2. **"Design with History for Permanence"** Permanence—putting down roots-creating patterns and staying are amongst the key elements of a sustainable and adaptive culture. This can only happen in settled societies that grow over time where home and community are central.

   Influenced by traditional Vermont architecture and the art work of Carl Larson, a 19th century Swedish painter, our buildings, although different from one another, are, all at once, graceful, pretty, rustic and country like melding together and forming a cohesive yet varied pattern. Over the years we have focused on design features that emphasize a consistency between buildings while each building has an individual identity, for example there is an interesting architectural contrast and symmetry between Breidablick and the Farm House. We have also emphasized sturdy, durable and well-insulated buildings that are compatible with our rugged landscape, Vermont's long winters and high-energy standards.

Timber frame construction has been used in Breidablick, Campanula, the Farm House and the Railroad Shop. Requiring this form of construction as a design standard, would be overreaching, but we will ask new builders to consider timber framing as an option because of its proven durability, excellent insulation qualities and its outstanding aesthetic quality inside and out.

That the built environment at the farm also adheres to the scale of a rural and village style landscape, the three cottages range from 600 square feet to 1,600 square feet (including porches). These buildings are too small to work as permeant residential structure without additions, which is why we have developed expansion plans for Breidablick considering a scale that works. The Farm House, which has more space than we need, is 2,500 square feet; it is a good model size wise, for future construction. We hope that existing lodging structures, especially Campanula that could come under Common ownership, can act as overflow for visiting guest and family.

3. **From a space consideration perspective, it is important to keep in mind that the farm has back-up lodging capacity** that can afford visiting families and friends a space of their own while being a more cost effective and environmentally friendly alternative to additional new construction. It is also possible that Campanula could come under Common ownership as a revenue generating structure for the community and, also, an inviting and cost effective environment for family and friends to stay.

   In summary, it is important to keep one eye on the existing design and construction patterns that have been established and proven over time while likewise sustaining our tradition of creating buildings with design features that meld into the Farm's unique landscape. Continuity, respect for tradition, historic preservation is import but so is fresh faces, fresh ideas and designs—good design, as the Europeans teach us, "A creative and innovative future always stands on the shoulders of a rich past."

4. **Retain sufficient existing trees** in the development zone to respect the forest heritage of the site and for shading buildings and screen and shelter outdoor living spaces.

5. **Using the principles of Guilds** (mutually enhanced plantings) and other Permaculture principles like sheet mulching and swale development. to introduce new plantings of trees and understory development that includes open space, wetlands, ponds, gardens and lawn areas.

6. **Encourage diversity in house locations and architectural** styles generating the interest that comes with diversity while counter balancing, to sustain a level of consistency of land use and architectural styles throughout the project. Further diversity is achieved by varying distances and boundaries achieved by utilizing custom parcel sizes and the establishment of six zones in the project that weave their way throughout the entire project according to land use patterns. (see zone map)

7. **Encourage the interweave of common and gathering areas**, length and interconnection of trails, pathways, lawns, gardens, agricultural and commercial land, open spaces and the railroad for community connection and recreation.

8. **Encourage planning for natural and human activity in the edge areas.** For example, open space and woodlands, the edges of wetlands, streams and ponds and the areas between woodlands and meadows and roads. Roads, trails and the railroad also create interesting edge areas that provide a lot of opportunity for managing and planting with nature.

9. **Encourage the establishment of fragile areas that are left undisturbed.** For example, steep slopes, rock out-cropping, wetlands, steam channels and areas for wildlife habitats and rare plants. (Most these are protected by State regulations, but we can have a good look too)

10. **Encourage roadways, driveway, trail and parking construction that is as small as practically possible while meeting Town standards**. When possible cluster parking to avoid the sprawling of automobiles and design roadways and trails to meander comfortably through the trees, land shapes and rock outcroppings, retaining country lane character that incorporate natural features. Encourage the use of natural materials such as stone and timber for culverts, bridges and retaining walls avoiding manufactured culverts and concrete as much as possible.

11. **Provide parking areas for two vehicles on each house lot** while creating a central parking area that is, as much as possible, out of the community's main view sheds. Strive to make access to automobiles safe and convenient, while not overwhelming.

12. **Encourage the creation of small areas that resemble pocket parks** with benches, tables and small shelters where people can gather to picnic, socialize or be alone. Utilize trails and the railroad as a means to gain access and enhance these areas. Study and implement strategies in keeping with Permaculture Principles that would attract wildlife to these areas like berry bushes and flowers that attract birds and butterflies.

13. **Create small ponds and wetlands for many uses**: wildlife and species diversity, fire protection, recreation, and aesthetic enhancement.

14. **Insure that all Town and State regulatory requirements are met and in alignment with ours**. In the case of a conflict Town and State requirements supersede ours.

Energy and Resources:

Overview:

Development activity should strive to meet high energy standards meeting environmental, global warming, aesthetic and quality of life style goals.

A. **Encourage the use of local and on site resources**. For example- timber, stone and sand are readily available for construction. Utilize fire wood, gardens and other agriculture for food supply and possible business ventures and organic material (e.g. leaves, grass clippings and chips) for compost and soil development.

B. **Encourage renewable energy** for heating, hot water, lighting, and electrical loads. Use as much as possible, renewable materials for construction, maintenance, and repair, and maximize the use of materials with recycled content, recyclable design, and local origin. Explore and develop Solar

and wind applications. Stack bathrooms to facilitate the use of composting toilets and channel gray water to a central filtration area to reduce septic loads.

C. **Encourage that all new construction with South Facing roofs** so that solar panels can be located on them and other land features such as retaining walls, the location of heat retaining ponds, south facing open spaces for garden and farm land be designed to maximize solar gain that will enhance the communities' options with plantings and animal habitats that require more protected and warmer temperatures Utilize swales, trees and bushes in wind breaks, contouring as a means to slow down water and plant in guilds trees, scrubs, flowers and vegetables..

Community

Overview:

Community is enhanced by a model in which there is a strong interrelationship and interdependence between private and public sectors, reinforcing the opportunity for Community team work and function. It follows principles of Whole System in which each parcel is located in respect to how it enhances the whole and vice-a versa.

1. **Encourage the establishment and maintenance of buffers** (e.g. walls, green spaces, wet lands, and gardens) to ensure community privacy and to reduce impact on neighboring properties. Encourage private backyard and private spaces screened by dense plantings, fences, and building geometry's. Develop transitional spaces, such as individual walkways gardens and porches that lead to and open into the Common spaces. The idea is to create a lively integration of private, transitional and public spaces creating, from a social perspective an interesting, compelling, diverse and dynamic design.

2. **Encourage the development of "gathering areas"** such as a sandbox, picnic areas with fire pits, huts with open spaces for game and recreation. Provide multiple play and recreation areas, for example frog ponds, sandboxes and trails for skiing and hiking with an emphasis on using low cost natural areas and projects versus expansive manufactured projects like, for example, a swimming pool. Consider, at some point, a Common House for meetings, eating and as a location for a Library, education facilities and a store. Utilize the Railroad as an effective gathering teaching and play area while transporting people from one part of the farm to another that encourages participation and gatherings.

3. **Encourage, as part of our good neighbor's policy**, to provide resources like trails, gardens, and the railroad that are utilized, within limits, as community resources. Plan for enhanced community interaction while honoring the private realm.

4. **Plan for accessibility.** Pay careful attention to universal design practices that will extend accessibility to those who are physically handicapped and increase flexibility for those whose physical circumstances may change over time.

5. **Plan for changing community needs**. As time passes, additional facilities may be needed. For example, at some time in the future a Common House that also serves as a small community store. This facility could be a gateway into the community and as the social center at the heart of the community. Another common structure could be a non-winterized storage barn for storing community tools and equipment and perhaps excess personal belongings. A community work space or shop could

also be located in this building