

September 10, 2018

Hello Fred.

I thought I would offer an idea of something fairly simple that the Economic Health Task Force might want to do.

Several years ago there was hope of Middlebury College alums starting or moving businesses here. Not as much came of that as was hoped, but there is another group of people who are already here and could be approached. I am referring to faculty and staff spouses and partners. There are hundreds of such people; some work at the college or hope to do so; others work in town, commute or telecommute or are self-employed. Some may be wishing to use their skills but haven't found an outlet. What if you sent out a survey to all spouses/partners asking people what their field of interest is and if they would like to be put in touch with others with similar interests? Perhaps there are several people who have experience in a particular field, and if they could get together they might be able to start a business or non-profit. Or perhaps they are telecommuting but would like to work here if they had some assistance finding co-working space, etc. You could make it clear, if you wish, that this is not a job board; you are looking to jump-start some new activity. Sometimes spouses/partners feel like a burden or a fifth wheel because so many of them want to work at the college and there are not enough positions. I think treating spouses/partners as a resource would be better for them and for the town.

Best regards,
Chris Robbins