

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Newsletter

## Better(not bigger)Vermont



## ***What We've Been Up To***

Great news! The proposed bills to expand the use of tax increment financing to towns throughout Vermont (H.129 & S.33) did not make it out of the General Assembly! These bills would have Vermont towns subsidizing new development. Ya-hoo!

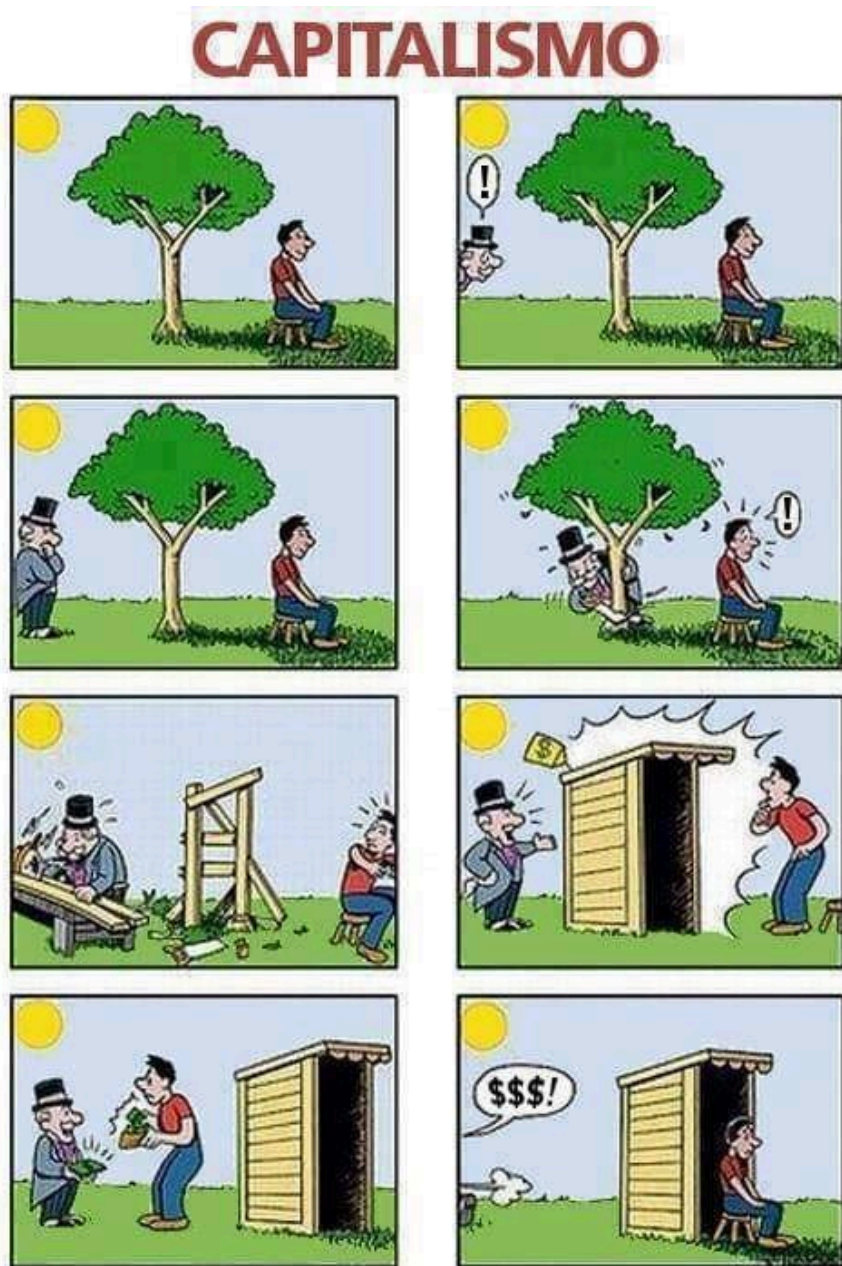
In addition to educating legislators, it's important for us all to engage in local discussions concerning growth, and to call out pro-growth bias in the media when we see it. We reproduce examples of each below and encourage you to plagiarize any part of these letters in your discussions with others.

Please share this Newsletter with others and encourage them to subscribe via our website (<https://www.betternotbiggervt.org/contact>) or simply by emailing us. Thank you!

The first example is a response by Bob Fireovid, BnbVT's Executive Director, to this question posed on Facebook by a neighbor in South Hero... "What are everyone's thoughts on further developing South Hero? Do you think South Hero needs more developments/houses? Businesses? Farms? or should it stop developing all together? "

Everyone I know who grew up in South Hero loved growing up here and playing outdoors. That joy won't be available to our grandchildren if we continue to "develop" this paradise we have now. As someone who watched development destroy the quality-of-life in other places where I lived, I can attest to this fact first hand.

This cartoon from another country summarizes my point, just replace the word "CAPITALISMO" with "DEVELOPMENT" (I'm in no way against capitalism).



Do we want our grandchildren to be the man in the first frame, or the last frame?

Remember Joni Mitchell's song "Big Yellow Taxi"...

"Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got till it's gone  
They paved paradise, put up a parking lot."

Other animals, like coyotes, consciously control their numbers to live within their means. Are humans this smart, or are we as blind as yeast?

Our second example is a letter by Wolfger Schneider, BnbVT's President, to Paul Solmon, who hosts *Making Sen\$e* on the *PBS News Hour*...

Wednesday's "Exploring the economic argument for a return to open US borders," was just another example of an argument for 'More' (i.e., it's all about the GDP). Just listening to Brian Kaplan, author of the book *Open Borders*, say any student of Econ101 can understand the advantage of open borders shows the simplistic thinking of traditional economists. Let us remember that traditional Econ101 does not acknowledge limits and believes in infinite substitutability, totally discounting the Earth's limits to supply the renewable and non-renewable resources on which our current economy depends. In an age of depleting fossil fuels and mineral rich deposits of non-renewable resources upon which our modern civilization is based, we should be asking, "How many people can our US territory support sustainably"? Some estimates say that we are no longer sustainable since the early 1970s. Will more immigrants make us more sustainable? Should we not regulate our US population via immigration to maintain a population we can feed and house sustainably?

Maybe Paul Solman should interview an ecological economist such as Jon David Erickson, Joshua Farley, or Robert Costanza as a counterpoint to Kaplan to present a more holistic and realistic view of our future.

## ***How You Can Help***

Better(not bigger)Vermont works to improve the lives and natural surroundings of present and future Vermonters. Please support our efforts by making a donation and/or forwarding this newsletter to others.

*Thank You!*

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