1. <u>Ed Sargood</u> – Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for the Bank of Bennington
    1. The Bank of Bennington joined in the Putnam block revitalization effort as a leadership equity investor, as a way to turn around the local economy to which we will all benefit, including the bank. We are a significant employer in the area and we have significant investments in our infrastructure as well as lending relationships. A more vibrant downtown will improve our economy and is likely to lead to significant additional investments locally by the bank's customers.
    2. The bank was started in downtown Bennington, and our headquarters now sits a block and a half from the four corners. We are intertwined with Bennington and as such our fortunes cannot be separated from the local economy A deteriorating and vacant main street impacts many of the bank's customers and the bank itself. It is for this reason that Bank of Bennington became active in discussing with other area institutional, business's and community leaders, ways in which the private sector may become more actively involved in bringing about economic growth in Bennington. We need to do everything we can to bring investment into Bennington so that that a positive ripple effect can begin to happen.
    3. We think that investment begets investment and that not one entity or the town can make all the investment needed. It takes a collaborative environment and the tools to overcome obstacles, to maximize the potential reinvestment.   A TIF District in Bennington would be one of those vital tools. The saying that a rising tide lifts all boats is certainly a true analogy here.   If we can create a critical mass of people who are downtown morning through night, it creates opportunities for everyone. For us that means more lending opportunities and additional deposit customers to continue that lending. The multiplier effect has the potential to rapidly improve the local economy. And since the Bank can't outperform its local market, a strong economy is important to us