



October 18, 2017

RE: TIF District for Bennington, VT

To Whom it may concern:

I am a 2nd generation small business owner here in Bennington, this year celebrating our 40th year in business. I've served six years on the BBC/BDA board, including a term as it's president, and twelve years on the chamber of commerce board, including serving as it's current president of the board.

During our 40 years in business, we've seen many challenges facing small businesses in our region. Perhaps the biggest challenge is the struggle to keep our downtown area vital and strong. Like many downtowns in Vermont, our aging infrastructure is a significant deterrent to new development.

The creation of a TIF district in Bennington and it's ability to leverage needed infrastructure improvements is a necessary component for ensuring the success of the historic changes that we envision for our community.

Our chamber of commerce is a nexus for marketing and networking. We have a wide range of connections throughout the region and the state, and we are often the first point of contact for new folks coming to our state. We plan to use our organization as a platform to spread the word about the value of a TIF district as a tool for economic development.

We believe this will be useful both for the retention of existing workforce, and for attracting the next generation of businesses and new employees to our downtown TIF district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonah Spivak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line at the end.

Jonah Spivak
owner, Hawkins House Craftsmarket
president of the board of directors, Bennington Regional Chamber of Commerce