



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cooperative Extension



CHESTER COMMUNITY PROFILE REPORT

Chester, New Hampshire
May 3 & 4, 2002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Creating a Community Profile in Chester.....	3
Agenda.....	5
Friday Evening.....	7
The Mosaic.....	7
The Vision.....	8
The Ten Components.....	10
1. Effective Community Leadership.....	11
2. Informed Citizen Participation.....	13
3. Sense of Community.....	15
4. Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth.....	17
5. Lifelong Education and Learning.....	20
6. Community Services, Facilities, Utilities & Transportation.....	22
7. Recreation and Cultural Heritage.....	25
8. Working Landscape and the Natural Environment.....	26
9. Economic Vitality.....	29
10. Growth and Development.....	31
Saturday Morning: Key Issues.....	33
Communications	
Improved Lifelong Learning Opportunities	
Preserving Rural Community Character	
Leadership and Volunteerism	
Economic Opportunity	
Conclusion.....	46
Appendices	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following people, businesses and organizations provided support for Community Profile. Thanks to all of them.

Burger King – Derry
Café Theresa
Chester Conservation Commission
Chester Planning Board
Chester School District
Cracker Barrel Restaurant – Derry
Dr. Mel Balk
Freed’s Bakery – Manchester
Friehofer’s Bakery
G&P Pizza
McDonald’s - Derry
Pumpkin Pine
Shaw’s – Derry
Victory Market – Derry
Your Variety

Cactus Jack’s
Chester Board of Selectmen
Chester Library Staff
Chester Public Library Trustees
Tom Coughlin
Curves for Women
Dunkin Donuts – Derry
Fremont Pizza
Friends of the Library
Head and Body Shop
Meineke – Derry
Sam’s Club – Manchester
Spollett’s General Store
Wal-Mart – Derry

The Community Profile model was developed with the assistance of:

University of Vermont Cooperative Extension: *Bill McMaster and Bob Townshend*

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension: *Jerry Howe*

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs: *Peg Elmer*

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission: *Vicki Smith*

Tufts University, Center for Environmental Management, Consortium for Regional
Sustainability: *Elizabeth Kline*

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: *Tom Deans and Deborah Cowen*

Vermont Community Foundation: *Eddie Gale*

Sustainable Seattle: *Alan Atkisson*

University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies: *Fred Schmidt*

Community Innovations: *Jeff Bercuvitz*

The Upper Valley: 2001 & Beyond Steering Committee Members: *Don Bourdon, Delia Clark, Ann Crow, Geoff Dates, Harrison Drinkwater, Charlotte Faulkner, Phil Friedman, Barbara Jones, John Kuhns, Bin Lewis, Norm Marshall, Lilla McLane-Bradley, Deecie McNelly, Walter Paine, Betty Porter, Bob Rosenblum, Barry Schuster, Mike Smith, and Vicki Smith* and with generous donation of time and expertise from: *Jackie Clement, Ed Delhagen, Susan Edsall, Maureen Hart, and Anne Peyton*

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PROFILES

The Community Profile is a process by which communities take stock of where they are today and develop an action plan for how they want to operate in the future. Whether the issue is a quality school system, an air pollution problem, lack of adequate affordable housing or solid waste disposal, the need for effective problem-solving skills is the same. A community must have strong leaders, from all sectors, who are able to work together with informed involved citizens to reach agreement on issues. The Community Profile assists communities to develop their problem-solving ability. It is a self-evaluation tool that draws heavily on the collective wisdom of the participants and is not a test or a comparison between communities. It provides a method for citizens to affirm community strengths, identify concerns and problems, and then to help a community structure collaborative approaches to meet these challenges creatively, set directions for the future, and manage change.

The original Civic Profile emerged from the Governor's Commission on New Hampshire in the 21st Century as a process and a mechanism that communities could use to strengthen their civic infrastructure. The National Civic League, along with several university studies, identified those qualities that make a community work - that help communities plan for the future and survive such dramatic change as extreme population growth, plant shut-downs or military base closings.

In 1995, the League of Women Voters in the Upper Valley, working with UNH Cooperative Extension and UVM Cooperative Extension, identified ten key qualities that help a community to work well now and sustain its social, economic, and environmental health for the future. This is the model that was adapted by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and are the "tools" of the community's self-assessment.

Creating A Community Profile in Chester

History

Having heard about the Community Profile Process from other towns, the Chester Conservation Commission and the Chester Planning Board decided in the Spring of 2001 that Chester would benefit from this process. All of the Boards in town were suffering from the "recycled volunteer" syndrome, and that fresh ideas and new volunteers would be welcome.

The Conservation Commission saw this as an extension to its creation of a Natural Resource Inventory work. The Planning Board saw this as a way to get input from residents to update its Master Plan. Both Boards presented the concept to the Board of Selectmen who then supported the idea so that all residents would be able to have input in determining Chester's future needs.

Chester has always a strong history of community involvement. In addition to the “official” town boards, the following committees/groups are active in town: Recreation Commission, Historical Society, Friends of the Library, Rockingham Herb Society, Solid Waste/Recycling Committee, Senior Citizens group, Lions’ Club, VFW. Additionally, a group of citizens met in 1996-1997 to brainstorm Chester’s facilities’ space needs. This project resulted from a desperate need to expand the town offices and police and fire stations.

From this small beginning, a group called “Chester Concerned Citizens” has remained to advise other residents and Chester’s Boards on a variety of issues facing the town. Chester built a new school and fire station in 1999, and relocated the town offices to the old school in 2000 as a result of the space needs project. There is also a strong spirit of generosity in Chester. Over \$400,000 was donated to renovate the old school for town offices and to build an addition to the library.

A “Cost of Community Services” profile was completed in 1996. This helped residents understand that residential development has a negative impact on the tax rate. Because of this, there is strong support for conservation activities by the residents. Chester has protected over 550 acres of land in the last 5 years, beginning with a generous gift of over 400 acres by one long time resident. Additionally, the town just recently passed a \$3 million bond to continue these efforts. This year’s efforts include using these funds to purchase conservation easements and hopefully, to purchase 105 acres for a conservation/recreation area for its residents.

All of these things set the stage for the Community Profile process to happen.

**UNH Cooperative Extension
Chester Community Profile
May 3 & 4, 2002
Agenda**

Friday Evening

5:30 Sign-In & Pot-Luck Supper

6:30 Welcome - Charlie French, Extension Specialist, Community and Economic Development

Mosaic and Vision

- What is Chester like now?
- What do we want Chester to be like in the future?

Historical Overview -

- Where has Chester been?

7:45 Presentation of Community Profile components

- 1) Effective Community Leadership
- 2) Informed Citizen Participation
- 3) Sense of Community
- 4) Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth
- 5) Lifelong Education and Learning
- 6) Community Services, Facilities, Utilities & Transportation
- 7) Recreation and Cultural Heritage
- 8) Working Landscape and the Natural Environment
- 9) Economic Vitality
- 10) Growth and Development

8:00 Break/Move into small groups

8:15 Small group discussions of components

Random assignments to small groups, one component per group

- Strengths of Chester in the component area
- Challenges of Chester in the component area
- What would you like to see in the future?
- What are the 5 key issues that need to be addressed?

9:30 Formal adjournment

Saturday

8:00 Coffee and check-in

8:30 Small group reports

- Each of the ten small groups report to the large group, three minutes each.

9:15 Selection of key issues-participants select small group/issues

9:45 Break

10:00 Small groups meet for key issue discussion:

- Define the problem or opportunity
- Project goals - identify what you want to accomplish
- Identify potential projects/solutions
- Evaluate potential projects using impact-feasibility grid
- Select 3 projects to bring to the full group

11:45 Full Group: report back from small groups

12:15 Lunch and voting

- Which projects do you think we should move forward on?
- Which is the project in each theme that is most important for Chester right now?

12:45 Project Development: small groups

- Who's missing and needs to be part of the group's work
- Convener determination to invite/ensure involvement of those working on project

1:30 Adjourn

Community Profile

Friday Evening

The Community Profile was conducted at Chester Academy over two days: Friday evening, May 3, 2002 and all day Saturday, May 4, 2002. About 65 participants attended on Friday with approximately 45 people attending on Saturday. The list of attendees was slightly different each day.

The event began on Friday with a potluck supper. Charlie French, Extension Specialist, Community and Economic Development, gave us an overview of the profile process and an introduction to the goals for the two days. Its goal is strengthening community involvement; its key idea is sustainability - balancing economic and environmental factors while thinking about the impacts of our actions for the next seven generations.

We spent a few minutes meeting each other, learning how long we had lived in town, where we live in town and where we work. We were then asked to offer descriptions of what our town was like right now and what we would like it to be like in the future. Adjectives and phrases were called out and recorded on large easels labeled "NOW" and "FUTURE" at the front of the room. Here are the results:

THE MOSAIC - What is Chester like today?

- high taxes
- great library staff
- dedicated fire and emergency services
- not enough recycling
- dedicated volunteer fire department
- great chicken barbecue
- great town fair
- Scouts working to restore historical items
- great place to work from home
- no place for seniors to live once they have to move from homes
- our children cannot afford to live here
- expensive real estate
- limited housing options
- a lot of dirt roads
- strong, independent town boards that work well together
- wildlife habitat
- generous citizens
- friendly
- small
- rapidly growing

- quality of life
- historical
- still lots of places to walk
- remote
- accessible
- no public transportation
- no medical facilities
- no industry
- fine college
- rural
- serene
- expensive
- predominately white
- picturesque
- in transition
- nice safe place to raise kids
- no method of communication for everyone
- no recreation
- has a strong system
- great recreation program
- virtually invisible industry
- strong volunteer base
- strong interest in preserving land
- no commercial tax base whatsoever
- excessive amount of commercial tax base
- builders paradise
- lots of tiny businesses
- no water resource protection
- great fireworks
- no interests for the teenage crowd
- overcrowded schools
- great library
- friendly people that work in the stores, Post Office, library, etc.
- excellent college in town
- very dedicated trash recycling
- too much pollution
- not too many mixed cultures

THE VISION - What do we want Chester to be like in the future?

- good use of Springhill Farm
- town-generated income other than the tax base
- better utilization of physical plant
- place to ride horses

- control of building ordinances
- community park for all ages
- clean drinking water
- elderly housing
- communication between boards
- reasonable property taxes
- more protected land
- some form of public transportation for people unable to drive
- less destruction of land
- more citizen involvement
- town newspaper
- if a tree comes down, replace it
- commercial tax base
- state funded kindergarten
- plenty of community events
- skateboard park
- accessibility to Harantis Lake for canoes
- joint community projects between college and community
- sidewalks in key areas particularly around schools
- tennis courts
- town beach
- biking and walking paths
- more farms and fields
- maintain and utilize the buildings we have now
- year round schools for better utilization of physical plant
- more invisible industry
- town-wide web page
- safe, uncongested roadways
- traffic light at 121 & 102
- more dirt roads
- middle school
- town land acquired for municipal purposes
- adequate number of playing fields for sports activities
- like a metropolis
- library, school, and college networked
- rural
- more housing options - instead of 3-bedroom colonial
- affordable housing so young people can stay in town
- golf course
- town beach and swimming area
- retired can stay here in future years

COMMUNITY PROFILE TEN COMPONENTS

After we developed a mosaic and vision for Chester and digested some of the history, Charlie French introduced us to the idea of discussing Chester within the framework of 10 qualities which can be used to profile a community. These topics, drawn from the work of the National Civic League and adapted by UNH Cooperative Extension are important components of any successful community. These components make a community work well now and sustain the cultural, economic and environmental health and vitality for the long-term future.

Civic Infrastructure

Effective Community Leadership
Informed Citizen Participation
Sense of Community

Community Infrastructure

Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth
Lifelong Education and Learning
Community Services, Facilities, Utilities & Transportation
Recreation and Cultural Heritage

Environment

Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

Economy

Economic Vitality
Growth and Development

Next, 10 small groups of approximately 5 people each were randomly formed, one group for each of the components. The small groups adjourned to various rooms where community trained facilitators lead the groups in their discussions and recorders made notes on more large tablets. Each group considered the definition of their component and examined the statements to be considered for their component to begin the discussion. Participants were asked to list the strengths of Chester as they saw them, and then to list its concerns. Next the groups gave some thought to the problems and issues they thought were important to the town's future. Finally, each group was asked to identify five key issues that need to be addressed by the town. These were brought back to the whole group and highlighted in three-minute summations presented by a member of each small group on Saturday morning.

1. Effective Community Leadership

Facilitator: Ray Cyr Recorder: Claudia Boozer-Blasco, Scott Talbot Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Howard Bouwry, Tracey Kallander, Scott Talbot, Scott Rice

Statement of Purpose:

The public, private and non-profit sectors must all develop leaders who can cooperate with each other in enhancing the long-term future of the community. Leadership should be responsive, honest, efficient, enlightened, fair and accountable. Leaders should be representative of their community and should have both a grasp of the community's problems and the ability to envision an economically secure, environmentally sound and socially viable future. Leaders should be attuned to the potential to exploit opportunities and to solve problems of the community by cooperating with other neighboring communities.

Statements a community should consider:

- Our leadership actively recruits, trains and empowers new leaders.
- Leadership represents diverse community interest (age and gender groups, length of time they have resided in the community, culture, etc)
- Community leadership demonstrates knowledge, accountability, professionalism, innovation and is results-oriented.
- Leaders involve local citizens in identifying community goals and resolving community issues.
- Leaders demonstrate long-range (20+ years) thinking. They understand the impacts of their actions on the long term health and vitality of the community.
- Citizens know how the system works and it is easy for newcomers to learn how to get involved in the community.
- People find out easily what is going on in the community.
- Schools, churches, youth and civic groups provide citizen education and promote community service.
- Citizens are actively recruited and involved in major projects.
- Participation and leadership is proactive instead of reactive, facing community issues before they become crises.
- Local committees and boards communicate well with each other, the public and with boards and committees throughout the region.

Group Response - Strengths:

- commitment to maintain sense of community
- in the past, roundtable discussions - continue this
- like watching the committee meetings on television (i.e. School Board, Selectmen, etc.)
- greater communication between town and school
- same people coming forward - indicates their involvement
- six Eagle Scouts from Chester

- Scouts have visible role in community - formal and informal leadership for Scouts, i.e. parental support to help with Eagle Scout projects
- young people doing positive for the community
- certain individuals demonstrate talent in leadership area
- people work in many business areas, thus there is a potential pool for good leaders
- a lot of meetings happen and they are open and accessible
- democratic form of government
- people can participate and become leaders easily
- new people are bringing new, positive ideas and perspectives
- good to see number of town hall employees are also residents - very local
- people have strong feelings and interest in where Chester is going, where we are, etc.
- 70 people or so wanting to attend Profile
- development of future planning committee is very positive

Group Response - Challenges:

- same individuals in leadership
- we could have more people at meetings
- need to get people to participate more
- people are intimidated by the responsibilities of leadership positions, time commitment for leaders
- lack of communication of leaders is too public
- lack of newspaper, lack of day-to-day events coverage
- TV channel not as effective as it could be
- sometimes leaders don't listen to public because of certain personalities or their own personal agenda
- some people take positions of leadership for own personal agenda
- people sometimes find themselves in leadership positions and didn't expect it. Be careful what you wish for
- lack of qualified candidates for leadership positions
- some elected officials don't take full responsibility for what they have to do (fulfill obligations)
- nothing townspeople can do to correct situation
- can't force commitment
- hope future actions reflect thinking of group process
- people on committees need to find ways to get along/respect
- learn to disagree respectfully

Vision for the Future:

- future hopefully with 5 member boards, committees will be able to run effectively and fairly, efficiently and less personal dynamics
- town free publication to talk about issues during meetings
- Derry News to commit to more Chester news, events, issues
- encouragement for people to run for and have leadership roles as well as participate-- need better communication for this to happen

- sharing burden for town leadership
- town positions going from volunteers to paid--to better support our leaders
- provide people with opportunity to get involved with limited commitment and task projects
- more focused committees with more specific goals
- need organized committee leaders, facilitators to have better progress
- important for people to support group and groups to support other groups
- have additional coordination for committees
- look at outside towns for ideas to run committees or projects

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. encourage communication between committees, boards and town residents
2. greater participation in leadership issues
3. encourage additional opportunities to share ideas and provide more positive feedback to leadership
4. practice greater respect in resolving differences and managing conflict
5. need commitment to long-range planning leadership

2. Informed Citizen Participation

Facilitator: Ann Cyr

Recorder: Judy Balk

Spokesperson: Phyllis Papa

Participants: Sue Rieter, Maureen Lein, Barbara Rice, Al Wagner

Statement of Purpose:

In a healthy community, citizens actively participate through voting in the local elections, serving on local boards, attending public hearings, and being involved in civic organizations and community activities. All citizens need to develop knowledge and skills to contribute to community life. All sectors within a community—private, public and nonprofit—must each take responsibility for the community’s civic education and generate and share information with the public. Sharing in problem solving and planning for the future as a community increases pride in the community and can result in an ethic of giving and sharing as a way of life.

Statements a community should consider:

- Citizens know how the system works and it is easy for newcomers to learn how to get involved in the community.
- People find out easily what is going on in the community.
- Schools, churches, youth and civic groups provide citizen education and promote community service.
- Citizens are actively recruited and involved in major projects.
- Participation and leadership is proactive instead of reactive, facing community issues before they become crises.
- Local committees and boards communicate well with each other, the public and with boards and committees throughout the region.

Group Response - Strengths:

- great Channel 21 volunteers
- good articles in Derry News
- good school newsletter
- community info in library
- strong volunteer network
- Lions Club, Mom's, etc. good
- good email network
- strong network of Recreation Department--good support
- televising board meetings
- Post Office bulletin board/town hall
- notice board
- local businesses contribute
- church is welcoming
- PTA candidates night
- lots of opportunities for volunteering
- active grapevine
- local coffee shop/pizza place/dump/granite state

Group Response - Challenges:

- no information for newcomers
- we don't have information on town issues
- if you don't have children in school, you're left out
- no town newspaper
- no coverage of town items in area media
- no info on property regulations, procedures – "do's and don'ts"
- reduction of volunteers – for example PTA
- need PR person to inform people of needs and realize personal benefits
- animosity builds when you don't know what's accepted
- lack of people - same old recycled volunteers
- newcomers don't feel welcome
- if you don't have cable, you're uninformed
- no good sense of neighborhood
- people want privacy
- active grapevine

Vision for the Future:

- community newspaper
- website - listserve
- information packet for newcomers
- support our public library
- fact sheets for all residents
- Chester phone book by Friends of the Library

- “meet your government” day
- town fair expanded
- “how to” - instructions (volunteerism, run a town fair, run for office)
- Friends of Library craft fair
- Granite State telephone
- college participate more
- town participate with college more
- local products, events recognized
- directory - local products, services
- develop new means for volunteers

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. poor information sharing
2. need multimedia approach to distributing information
3. central clearing house for information
4. getting more people connected, interested, involved
5. more social opportunities

3. Sense of Community

Facilitator: Mary Beth Ditoro Recorder: Sarah Dagostino Spokesperson: Margaret Tully
 Participants: Andrew Hadik, Dick Godfrey, Margaret Tully, Frank Papa, Michael Shea

Statement of Purpose:

A sense of community is an intangible yet vital component of a healthy community. It encompasses elements such as image, spirit, character and pride, along with processes such as communication, inter-group relations and networking. A community is made up of different people with different interests, experiences and backgrounds. Increased communication and understanding of different perspectives among groups and within the community as a whole is an important factor in establishing a sense of community.

Statements a community should consider:

- There is adequate communication among diverse groups in the community such as natives/newcomers, summer/year round residents, young parents/retirees, as well as business community, commuters, etc.
- Community members often put aside their differences to work for the common good of the community.
- Formal and informal forums exist for sharing ideas and resolving public issues.
- Our community celebrates itself in many different ways, including _____.

Group Response - Strengths:

- great volunteer fire department
- great town fair

- good school environment
- small enough that people can feel involved -independent enough for others not to do it
- many and diverse opportunities to get involved
- good college & library
- the people, they come together for support
- wonderful recreation program
- very friendly and helpful
- careful with the money
- chance to effectively campaign for things
- outsiders bringing in influences and diversity (don't want to change it, more the mind set)
- no major eye sores, a lot of open space
- beautiful
- developments are well done
- people with diverse backgrounds and knowledge base
- Channel 21, local cable
- a lot of freedom (for buildings, raisings)
- a lot to offer in range of open space
- very convenient in relation to outside accessibilities
- town meeting
- good word of mouth

Group Response - Challenges:

- rapid growth
 - being an affordable community
 - town members (Selectmen/Board members)--a small group and villified/travel
 - not enough people volunteering for boards
 - how one understands the town processes, how it runs
 - getting people to participate
 - needs effective leadership/leadership process
 - difficult to get response from town
 - lack of professionalism in town processes/offices
 - we're a volunteer system, so it takes more time
 - outgrowing our volunteer form of government
 - lots of personal attacks
 - promoting the strengths in the sense of community
 - more people need to care
 - lack of town participation, people not "getting out there"
-
- water and resources (MBTEs, water table)
 - garbage
 - lack of communication w/o vehicle to do so
 - lack of more town functions (like town fair)

- geographical difficulties
- college needs to work with library etc, to pull community together
- no social planning within the town
- weakness in people keeping themselves informed

Vision for the Future:

- social club
- things stay the same
- develop silver sands into controlled recreational facility (not an amusement park)
- town beach/pool
- community web page (make agenda available on line)
- town applications to download (instead of going into town for it)
- town newspaper
- create more opportunities in communication

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. professional respect for town officials and volunteers (more courtesy, less rudeness)
2. more inter community communications (ex. Website, newsletter, paper, town bulletin board)
3. establish effective leadership to set a professional tone and professional ground rules
4. link college –library-school to pull community together – cooperative effort with integral town institutions
5. develop adult/family recreational facilities using existing buildings, protected acreage, possible Silver Sands

4. Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth

Facilitator: Maryann Walsh Recorder: Cathleen Patterson Spokesperson: not noted
 Participants: Deb Munson, Gladys Nicoll, John DiGenova, Rep. Albert Home, Wendy Brock

Statement of Purpose:

Support services such as adequate child day care, comprehensive after-school, youth, teen and senior programs, preventative health and substance abuse programs, parenting and family support programs, and effective human service networks help strengthen the social fabric of a community. Aided by effective communication, compassionate leadership, active citizen participation, and inter-group cooperation, a comprehensive package of supportive services will enable a community to nurture healthy community member.

Statements a community should consider:

- There are _____ local and/or regional programs available addressing the social issues of our youth, teens, seniors, parents and families.

- The health and social services are accessible, adequate and provided in an equitable manner.
- The three sectors (public, private and nonprofit) work together to provide a comprehensive package of programs.
- The majority of programs are of _____ quality.
- Community services are “cradle to grave”, addressing the entire age spectrum of the community.
- Local government provides an array of services for the community’s neediest members.
- There is adequate information about the available services and many community members utilize them.
- Many of the services allow families to participate together

Group Response - Strengths:

- library - services all generations
- library - community spirit
- White Pines College
 - tutoring
 - mentoring
 - 2 yr. College pumped to 4 yr. College
- precedent change/help community
- seniors program
- Lion’s Club
- trust fund
- town welcoming to new people
- Scout program (historical projects)
- food bank
- Eagle Scouts
 - donations
 - in-kind support
- Historical Society
- handicap accessibility
- dentist
- DARE
- ballfield/parks
 - walking trails
- mill projects
- Wilkum Townsend trust fund
- land donations to town (very generous)
- citizen participation/belief in value of community
- great volunteer fire department
 - vital and key element
- day care centers
- strong athletic program

- recreation-wise
 - variety of ages
- neighbors
 - good
 - generous
 - take care of one another
- Mom's club
 - playground
 - volunteer program
- close proximity for teenagers to get jobs
- town fair/fireworks
- great Halloween
- great community traditions

Group Response - Challenges:

- affordable housing
- public transportation would create more opportunities
- need a drugstore/pharmacy
- public kindergarten
- health care/affordable/universal insurance
- develop opportunities for expanding tax base
- more money being invested in multipurpose rooms/areas (better use of)
- establish own school district
- TV station
- restore (use) old buildings for community use i.e. plays, community events
- establishment of community theatre
- make the theatre handicapped accessible
- always be aware of handicapped accessible needs
- playground
- campgrounds (Silver Sands)

Vision for the Future:

- take care of library
- four service organizations need to be strengthened
 - Lion's Club
 - Historical Society
 - Senior's Club
 - Friends of the Library
- akc/volunteerism
- encourage "clean businesses" to come in (i.e. pharmacies)
- recreation
 - natural beauty preserved
 - influences quality of families

- affordable housing for age spectrum

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. take care of library
2. service organizations need to be strengthened (seniors, historical, friends of library) volunteerism
3. encourage “clean businesses” ie. MD’s, pharmacies
4. recreation (natural beauty preserved/influence quality of life)
5. affordable housing for entire age spectrum

5. Lifelong Education and Learning

Facilitator: Camilla Lockwood

Recorder: Nada Haddad

Spokesperson: Colin Costine

Participants: Constance Hamel, Coralee Bend, Jacob DeVries, Nancy Grimes

Statement of Purpose:

Programs of higher education and lifelong learning provide businesses with a pool of trained employees. Other formal and informal learning opportunities allow community members to discover hidden talents and develop an array of interests and skills. Lifelong learning allows citizens to manage their lives more effectively in a changing economy and to participate in increasingly complex municipal operations with greater knowledge and skill.

Statements a community should consider:

- Educational opportunities are easily accessible and provided equitably.
- Lifelong educational opportunities, including formal and informal academic, vocational, artistic, and spiritual meet the community=s needs.
- The level and quality of adult literacy programming in the community is _____.
- The public school facilities adequately meet community members’ needs.
- There is a(n) _____ level of quality preschool and daycare opportunities in the community.
- There is communication and cooperation between the municipal government and the local public school board.
- The community supports and values high quality K-12 public school education.
- There is a support network for community members who home-school their children.

Group Response - Strengths:

- Rockingham Herb Society
- White Pines College
- good school (1-8)
- money in place to be of adequate size (expansion)
- library (school library, town, college)
- Historical Society

- archives on file
- access to Pinkerton Academy
- access to UNH
- Senior Citizen Society
- Amoskeag Fishway
- Audubon in Massobesic Lake (Auburn)
- Derry Adult Education
- training for fire and rescue
- colleges in Manchester
- quilt shop in town
- Rockingham County Conservation District
- Exeter River local advisory
- Lamprey River
- 4-H horse program
- Girl Scout program
- Boy Scout (Eagle Scout)
- Catholic Church (CCD)
- bible study Congregational/Baptist Church
- young mothers program (fellowship)
- play group in town
- elder hostel program

Group Response - Challenges:

- adult education
- elder hostel
- transportation to education center/college
- kindergarten is private only
- lack of networking better schools, libraries, etc. (through Internet, etc) to share resources
- web page of town
- terminal Internet access (besides the one available at library)
- better and more diversified phone/Internet providers
- lack of French TV channel
- school budget reduced to eliminate aides for regular classroom and was voted back in
- lack of cultural diversity
- community center
- newsletter

Vision for the Future:

- Agriculture Education Center at Spring Hill Farm
- community center
- technology network wireless
- expand the school (kindergarten, middle school, etc)
- have more adult education centers and access (transportation)
- sharing infrastructure from school, police

- fixing multipurpose room community center
- off season use (summer) of White Pine College & Chester Academy
- expand the Derry transportation (Community Action Plan) to use the Derry and other education opportunities
- explore organizing car pool to education center
- newsletter/town web site home page
- increase diversity/cultural
- expand computer center
- have access to audio visual town equipment to make presentations
- extra town staff for produce newsletter to keep people better informed
- health education (school/adult/senior, etc)
- more workshops to be brought into town
- educational trips
- fun trips

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. community center
2. adult education (including health)
3. newsletter/web site home page
4. agriculture/land use/natural resource/open space center at Spring Hill Farm
5. use of existing buildings during off season for education and learning

6. Community Services, Facilities, Utilities & Transportation

Facilitator: Linda Heuer

Recorder: Jason Heuer

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Beth Riley, Joanne Millsaps, Ami Bach, Eileen Tully

Statement of Purpose:

A community provides many essential facilities and services to its members - public facilities such as municipal buildings, schools, sidewalks, roads, libraries, a recycling center and cemeteries as well as services and utilities such as police, fire, ambulance, highway maintenance, water and sewer. These key functions consume the majority of tax dollars and sharply influence the community's quality of life.

Roads get most of us where we need and want to go, and most people drive their own cars for convenience. However, more vehicles sharing the roads results in increased highway maintenance, air pollution and traffic congestion. Alternatives to automobile travel include pedestrians and bicycle travel and bus and rail transportation.

Statements a community should consider:

- Public facilities and services such as _____ are needed in our community.
- The community's road system is adequate and well-maintained. The use of traffic controls (signs, lights, speed limits, police, etc) is well planned and coordinated.

- Our public water source is protected.
- Our community does a great job of reducing, recycling, and disposing of its wastes.
- The town has a plan for financing the maintenance, expansion and replacement of its public facilities.
- The community is open to regional solutions for future infrastructural needs.
- Public buildings such as schools and town offices are adequate for our needs.
- Public buildings are accessible to people with disabilities and are energy efficient.
- The community is easy to travel around by foot and bicycle.
- Officials address qualitative concerns about facilities and systems and utilize alternative methods of service delivery.
- Appropriate physical connections exist, such as public transportation between housing and job sites.
- The levels and quality of emergency services - fire, police and ambulance are _.
- The community encourages carpooling, and helps make it work for people by providing information and accessible parking areas.
- Tradeoffs, such as maintenance, pollution and congestion are considered when widening main roads or building new roads.

Group Response - Strengths:

- reducing recycling and disposal
- good fire department
- good police department
- good school system
- good library
- ample parking
- good at plowing roads
- adequate cemetery and municipal buildings
- town looks pretty
- service from VNA, care givers, and UNH
- multipurpose room
- Santa on fire truck
- Halloween
- town fair
- good independent phone company/internet service
- emergency service
- helpful people
- Historical Society
- protect wells
- early interventions
- Judy Balk
- service link
- police/fire - willing, responsive, capable, quick care about community
- school - new building, new addition, Pinkerton Academy, White Pines College
- library - new addition, activities, nice selection of books, access to state library

Group Response - Challenges:

- no preschool programs at library
- little information on early intervention
- limited transportation for elderly
- bad Post Office - inadequate delivery
- arguments and squabbling at town meetings, sometimes on small issues
- unable to maintain roads
- slipping behind in resurfacing roads
- not easy to get around on foot and bike
- no traffic light at Route 102/121
- no retirement housing
- too many houses for school to handle
- no public transportation
- no community newsletter
- police not responding to citizen request on off-road vehicles on public road
- police office not open and friendly, not well marked, hard to get in
- no town ambulance

Vision for the Future:

- public transportation
- senior housing/retirement community
- sidewalks in center of town and new developments
- middle school
- public kindergarten
- annual resurfacing plan for roads
- library preschool/toddler programs
- community newsletter
- affordable housing
- readjust elderly tax abatement
- resource center

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. rapid rate of growth is taxing school and municipal services despite skilled and dedicated staff and volunteers
2. need for a central resource to disseminate community information
3. need to offer public kindergarten, middle school and a late bus from Pinkerton
4. need access to basic public transportation, regular road improvements and sidewalks
5. affordable housing for all age groups

7. Recreation and Cultural Heritage

Facilitator: Mel Balk

Recorder: Eric Slade

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Tim Peloquin, Joyce Kennedy, Gerry Riley, Chuck Myette

Statement of Purpose:

Recreational and cultural activities nurture the body and soul of a community - individual and team sports, outdoor activities, arts, crafts, music, dance, theater, holidays, festivals and celebrations. Recreational opportunities allow community members to experience and appreciate the community's diversity of natural and human resources. Cultural activities reflect and build a community's positive sense of itself and strengthen the fabric of social interactions within the community.

Statements a community should consider:

- Our community celebrates itself in many different ways, including _____.
- There is a wide array of recreational opportunities available to community members.
- There are special cultural centers, events and festivals within the community.
- There is a high level of awareness about and accessibility to available recreational opportunities.
- Our cultural events bring together and celebrate the community's diverse population.
- Many of the recreational opportunities allow community members to experience the community's natural resources.
- The community preserves and enhances what is special and unique about its cultural heritage.
- Children, youth and seniors are encouraged to participate in cultural events.
- Citizens are part of larger regional cultural events.

Group Response - Strengths:

- recreational program (baseball, soccer)
- Spring Hill Farm
- strong conservation program
- military celebration
- town puts aside conservation \$
- Chester Street Halloween walk
- craft fair
- celebrates Memorial Day, Flag Day, etc.
- strong history
- many library programs

Group Response - Challenges:

- limited recreational space
- no town beach
- few programs for ages 12+

- limited adult recreational programs
- limited communication around rec activities
- no cultural or arts programs
- inability to preserve historical property (Stephen's Hall)
- farmers don't have enough land
- no outdoor winter sports
- no school football teams

Vision for the Future:

- improve recreational program
- folk festival with music and food
- town fair hosting local music talent
- annual town event
- Spring Hill Farm (horseback riding, fishing, kids conservation corps, trail system)
- communication format
- community calendar
- watersports
- recreational impact fees for developers (zoning)
- theater and cultural arts center
- developed parks system
- no traffic light
- preservation of historical property
- keep historical look
- future commercial development
- transportation for those who can't participate without it
- generational

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. Spring Hill Farm
2. communication format
3. recreational impact fees for developers
4. theater and cultural arts center
5. plan for future cemetery needs

8. Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

Facilitator: Pat Monfet

Recorder: Mike Ditoro

Spokesperson: Andrew Jeans

Participants: Greg Lowell, Margaret Voss, Lowell Kennedy

Statement of Purpose:

Natural resources and historical assets of a community contribute significantly to the quality of life for residents and play an integral part in defining community character. Streams, rivers, walking trails, working farms, forest, clean air, historic buildings and bridges, wildlife and open land help to determine a community's personality and contribute to the everyday pleasures of

community life. A sustainable community recognizes the importance of these assets and takes appropriate measures to assure their continuance.

Statements a community should consider:

- The community has recently inventoried its natural base.
- There is broad community interest and participation in protecting key natural resource and historical assets.
- Steps have been taken to provide long-term land protection to assure functioning natural resource systems.
- The local economy and population are putting stress on those natural resource systems.
- There are ways to increase the resilience of the local natural resource systems to allow them to respond to diverse or changing conditions, such as _____.
- Current systems, such as waste management, are handled in a way that preserves the integrity of natural systems in the community without damaging the integrity of natural systems elsewhere.
- Existing businesses are environmentally sound.
- Public water sources are protected.
- Some of these natural resource features are unique or in some way important regionally or statewide.
- Natural resource and open space contribute to the economic vitality of the community.
- Critical resources are being negatively impacted by competing land uses.
- Steps have been taken to establish regulatory controls and promote voluntary actions to assure the continued availability of natural resources.
- The community has addressed regional natural resource features and issues with surrounding communities.

Group Response - Strengths:

- zeal for conservation (every initiative brought before town)
- reaction to growth/taxes
- growth hasn't gone too far that we can't save our land (we haven't gone too far)
- towns people have spent money up front to prevent further growth and tax increases
- opportunity for town to purchase Silver Sand
- amount of historical properties, buildings, farms
- willingness of landowners to donate or sell easements to town for conservation

Ms. Church

George Herrick

- we still have quite a few dirt roads
- many trails and class 6 roads for hiking, biking walking
- wildlife habitat
- water resources, lakes, streams, ponds, rivers
- natural resources inventory is underway
- support of town boards
- Chester recycles 1/3 of its waste stream

- very high ratio of in home businesses
 - not an eyesore
 - environmentally friendly/low impact

Group Response - Challenges

- growth control to prevent Chester from being overcrowded
- people do not understand: impact of development's growth control
- planning needs to better consider the environmental impact:
 - water resources
 - soil contamination
 - public access to trails and lands
- not enough state support of environmental regulations
- not enough manpower/management of town conservation land (Spring Hill Farm)
- balancing development with conservation
- get developers included and buy-in to support town with parks, green areas
- people willing to donate land may not be able to because of economic reasons--need support from town for alternatives for selling off land
- need to provide and develop animal habitats which area being lost
- erosion of class 6 roads and trails due to atvs, dirt bikes
- enforcement of use of atvs and dirt bikes to preserve class 6 roads
- maintain public access trails and land
- modify/amend zoning and planning ordinances to maintain existing access to adjacent land and trails
- include mandatory conservation land in new developments
- educate newcomers to rural life (no sewers/no public water)
- difference of expectations between older and newer residents

Vision for the Future:

- less change the better--stay historical (do not want to look like Salem or Derry)
- protect our watershed areas
- use water resources study to plan and control growth
- use perk tests for planning and growth control
- large continuous undeveloped land parcels
- wildlife refugees
- design of good looking country road, tree lined, pleasing to the eye
- good maintenance and preservation of public historical buildings
- preserve rural character of town
- preserve agricultural lands
- make provisions to be self sufficient
- more incentives for land conservation \$
- alternatives for building tax base (not just commercial)
- town to be in business for:
 - agricultural crops

maple sugar industry

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. maintain rural character
2. growth management
3. balance development with conservation
4. protection of key natural resources
5. educate and support all stakeholders

9. Economic Vitality

Facilitator: Jack Walsh

Recorder: Emily Heuer

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Melissa Rossetti, Alexandra Hadik, Janet Snyder, Dann N. Batting, Kenny Quinto

Statement of Purpose:

The private, public and non-profit sectors are all important in attracting new investment and in developing new businesses that suit the character of the community and meet its needs. A community can more effectively manage its growth through the prudent use of local zoning ordinances and planning regulations that guide how land is divided, used, and developed. These tools allow the community to regulate the development of residential areas, commercial districts and the town center.

Statements a community should consider:

- A variety of businesses, industries and institutions make up the economic base of the community and the region, such as _____.
- There are locally available educational opportunities to provide residents with skills that match the needs of local businesses.
- Local government works well with the local businesses to enhance the economic vitality of the community.
- There are business services lacking in the community, such as _____.
- Community members patronize downtown businesses on a regular basis and value the local businesses. Wages allow the majority of the population to enjoy a reasonable lifestyle.

Group Response - Strengths:

- small cottage industries (work at home)
- location--Chester is conveniently located
- specific to interest level in town
- necessities
- service industries (architect, engineering, surveying, carpentry, desktop publishing)
- college
- zoning by-laws encourage home business

- longevity of local businesses
- there are some farming opportunities
- good real estate market
- rural community because no commercial industry
- environmental sensitivities
- gravel pit
- proximity to interstates
- Pinkerton High School
- school system

Group Response - Challenges:

- no pharmacy
- tough to bring jobs into town
- zoning by-laws - bedroom community
- without bigger businesses, limited employment opportunities
- can't buy locally grown produce, limited availability - needs to be promoted more, lack of accessibility
- fastest growing town in Rockingham County - limited types of real estate
- affordability restricted market limit types of people - cluster housing
- no elderly housing
- limited on diverse economics
- town biggest employer, no economic benefits
- escalating tax rate
- good restaurant - lack of
- Bed and Breakfast needed
- large retail stores needed
- no industries to bring money into town - jobs too
- no place for residents to spend money in town
- ice cream store - need one
- no bank
- not able to maintain services previously had
- environmental sensitivities
- gravel pit
- proximity to interstates

Vision for the Future:

- tax base broadened
- environmentally safe development
- increase industry not necessarily reduce taxes - serious tax problems in NH as well as Chester
- no major manufacturing, places for people to work locally bring money in
- want stable environment and taxes
- restaurants
- spend money at services in town

- more local service, no big corporations
- several more schools in town (middle school?) with businesses to balance
- want community where young and elderly can live
- diverse group of population
- affordability
- not Derry, but in between
- controlled growth, not necessarily stopping it
- bank
- better lines of communication across different boards - cross impact
- paid fire department, full-time
- full time town government employees, more town management - even consultant
- more recreation and conservation areas opened

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. population growth
2. increase in business/promoting agriculture business
3. maintaining diversity in population, business, housing, etc.
4. maintaining rural character and being environmentally sensitive
5. zoning laws

10. Growth and Development

Facilitator: William Nevious

Recorder: Sandra Bouldry

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Susan Price Batting, Marilyn Joan Rossetti, Jane Grimm, Cornelia Prevost

Statement of Purpose:

A healthy community includes access to a variety of environmentally sound and successful businesses, industries, and institutions that provide reasonable wages and benefits to workers, engage in family-friendly policies, provide workers with opportunities to develop marketable skills and contribute to the overall well-being of the community. Another important factor in the development of a healthy community is the diversity of housing. This encompasses availability, affordability and location, all of which affect the lives of community members, especially the elderly, disabled and low-income families.

Statements a community should consider:

- The community's zoning and planning regulations are updated regularly and reflect a broad spectrum of residents' vision of the community in 5, 10 and 20 years.
- There is adequate affordable and rental housing for the elderly and disabled, young families and/or single-parent families.
- Land use regulations and land protection efforts are preserving an adequate amount of open space in the community and areas of natural beauty and historic importance are well protected.

Group Response - Strengths:

- \$3M - resources set aside for conservation
- zoning ordinances
- dedicated and knowledgeable people
- undeveloped areas
- passion for growth limitation
- small, rural community spirit
- defined town center
- balance of residents (young & older) who work well together
- interest in town history and preservation of historical buildings
- desire to keep nature for recreational purposes
- preservation of grass roots town government

Group Response - Challenges:

- no affordable housing for elderly or disabled
- no affordable housing for anyone
- limited rental housing
- our zoning regulations encourage sprawl
- victim of our own niceness
- very little town land for recreational use by town members
- commercial zoning very small
- no businesses that draw people to town to spend money
- to balance of commercial vs. bedroom community
- retention of rural atmosphere
- ability to manage growth
- not enough communication between planning board, zoning board and community
- consistent review of zoning ordinances
- strategic planning for commercial development
- Master Plan not well publicized and/or implemented
- how to trigger growth ordinance in a timely fashion
- better cohesion board to board and boards to community
- incentives for builders to build smaller homes
- incentives for builders to build homes for empty-nesters
- preserve adequate amount of open space
- young activities development
- maintain healthy water and septic systems
- municipal highway department facility

Vision for the Future:

- managed growth
- housing variety
- a master plan which is implemented and updated regularly
- preserve historical flavor and town center
- adequate highway department facility

- outdoor facilities - open space for recreation
- help to maintain rural character by preserving open space
- municipal services that grow/keep up with town growth
- balance of commercial and bedroom community
- development and implementation of communication plan between boards and community
- quality education that follows town growth

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. diversified housing
2. communication tools
3. growth management
4. maintain rural character
5. land conservation, for example: open space and recreation, water resources, farmland

Saturday Morning

Everyone reassembled bright and early Saturday morning at Chester Academy, where we were greeted by hot coffee and tea and delicious baked goods. There were a few folks there who had not been present Friday evening and they soon felt the enthusiasm of the rest of the group. Similarly, a few members of the Friday night small groups were missing. However, most of the people were stalwarts who had signed on for both days.

The 10 easels from the small groups of the night before were arrayed across the front of the rooms, each bearing a list of the five key issues for that topic area. Our working day began with short presentations from a member of each of the groups, explaining their group's list. The entire group worked together to evaluate and refine this list. After some discussion, 5 key issues emerged as important to study for the future of Chester. This list is presented below along with some of the related ideas that were mentioned.

Key Issues

1. Communications
2. Improved Lifelong Learning Opportunities
3. Preserving Rural Community Character
4. Leadership and Volunteerism
5. Economic Opportunity

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

After a short mid-morning break, participants each chose which of the 5 key issues they would like to discuss further and broke into small groups accordingly. Each topic attracted enough people to form a small working group.

The task of each group was to think about problems that existed in each area and then to brainstorm possible solutions/answers to the issue identified. We did that by thinking out aloud for half an hour or so about “problems” and “goals”. Then we suggested solutions, from practical to fanciful to idealistic. The next step was to evaluate the reality of each possible solution/project using the following impact/feasibility grid.

IMPACT:
How much will it matter?

High

Moderate

Low

High

Moderate

Low

FEASIBILITY: How possible is it in our community?

Using the grid above, we copied each of our proposed solutions onto sticky notes. For each solution, the group decided together what the feasibility and impact of the solution would be. Then we placed the sticky note in the appropriate box.

Based on the grid, each group chose three solutions and wrote them up as proposals on their easel to be presented to the large group. Some groups chose only proposals with high impact/feasibility ratings, while others chose projects from a variety of ratings. Small projects, which were highly feasible, but of low impact, were favored by those who wanted to start small and accomplish something quickly. Long term, difficult projects had advocates who were willing to commit to longer struggles with high rewards. Many of the groups proposed a combination of proposals. Verbatim notes from each of the groups are presented below.

Key Issue #1 Communication

Facilitator: Ray Cyr

Recorder: Scott Talbot

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Susan Price-Batting, Phyllis Papa, Dan Landau

Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed:

- intercommunication between town, committees, boards and residents
- find other forms of town-wide communication
- need packet for newcomers to inform them about town, and resources
- need to tap into local resources
- there is no communication method for town wide use
- more hours, more convenience for the town office
- central information resource needed

Possible Solutions:

- establish communication committee to develop communication method for town use
- newspaper
- website
- newsletter
- utilize TV station
- packet information for newcomers
- town manager
- extended town office hours
- use realtors to distribute information packets
- create central repository for all information and sources of information
- have a place for all surveys and site plans for Chester town-owned property
- look at alternative sources for communication
- look at alternative sources of communication for youth/with youth
- utilize White Pines
- utilize existing buildings
- have more social events to create more communication
- (website) able to have information about boards and their recent activities easily accessible
- need easily accessible up-to-date information on town activities and meetings
- utilize library for more communication
- identify
 - clubs
 - organizations
 - facilities
- develop inter town boards, and committee communications method
- use voice mail in office
- return calls at night

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- look at alternative sources of communications for youth/with youth
- create a central repository for all information and sources of information
- have a place for all surveys and site plans for town owned property
- develop inter-town boards and committee communication
- establish a communication committee to develop a method for town wide use
- (web site) able to have information about boards and their recent activities easily acceptable

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- newsletter

High Impact/Low Feasibility

- town manager

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

- town officers return calls at night, if requested
- use town office voice mail
- utilize library for more communication
- utilize White Pines College
- web site

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- use realtors to distribute information packet
- packet of information for newcomers
- extended hours for town office

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- newspaper

Low Impact/High Feasibility

- utilizing existing buildings
- utilize TV station

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- identify clubs, organizations, and facilities to communication
- have more social events to create more communication

Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- look at alternative sources for communication

Key Issue #2 Improved Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Facilitator: Ann Cyr

Recorder: Mike Ditoro

Spokesperson: Jane Grimm

Participants: Nancy Grimes, Ami Bach, Judy Balk, David Douglas

Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed:

- utilizing programs in our surrounding neighborhood (transportation access)
- establish a community center facility (utilize existing space in town)
- develop a resource center to address community questions (at library)
- tap into resources and development of White Pines College
- build a middle school and kindergarten (possible site for a community center) inter-generational center
- capitalize and utilize communication (yet to be determined) program
- parenting classes
- more improved senior programs
- establish a cultural center for Chester i.e. Douglas

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- establish community/resource/cultural centers utilizing town space and future middle school space, to help foster inter-generational and community questions
- tap into and develop resources of White Pines College and other programs in our surrounding communities
- capitalize and utilize communication program (yet to be determined)

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

none

High Impact/Low Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility
none

Low Impact/High Feasibility
none

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
none

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
none

Key Issue #3 Preserving Rural Community Character

Facilitator: Judy Balk

Recorder: Linda Heuer

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Gerry Riley, Beth Riley, Joanne Millsaps, Barbara Rice, Greg Lowell, Colin Costine, Dick Godfrey, Melissa Rosseth, Margaret Tully, Marilyn Rossetti, Andrew Jeans, Margaret Voss, Chuck Myette

Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed:

- what is rural character
- no stop lights
- working agricultural land
- small town activities
- hunting/fishing
- not convenient
- wildlife/habitat
- hay wagon
- adequate zoning
- new building blend
- natural environment
- control business
- open, unforested
- rural friendly regulations
- riding horses
- seeing cows, sheep, etc.
- forest dirt roads
- old homes - historic structures
- industrial vs. commercial
- rod & gun club
- water, ponds

Possible Solutions:

- continue funding of SLPC

- educate public on value of SLPC
- Silver Sands 105 acres 1.5 mil
- Spring Hill Farm - maintaining
- advertising/education of conservation issues
- increase volunteerism
- continue to use current use for penalty fee
- support local agriculture
- farmers market/farmers co-op
- zoning ordinances/support smart growth
- grant writers
- existing resources i.e. UNH
- historic restoration
- the “right” legal counsel
- stone walls

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- maintain Spring Hill Farm
- purchase of Silver Sands
- advertising of conservation issue
- continue to use current use for penalty fee for conservation
- support smart growth

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- the “right” legal counsel
- zoning ordinances
- continue funding of SPLC

High Impact/Low Feasibility

- educate public on value of SLPC
- pursuit of grants
- increase volunteerism
- education of conservation issues

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

- use of existing resources i.e. UNH

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- support local agriculture
- farmer’s market, farmer’s co-op

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- historic restoration

Low Impact/High Feasibility

none

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility

none

Low Impact/Low Feasibility

none

Key Issue #4 Leadership and Volunteerism

Facilitator: Camilla Lockwood

Recorder: Jack Walsh

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Pat Montet, Robert Grimm, Mary Beth Ditoro, Chuck Heuer

Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed:

- expand leadership opportunities
- change perception of opportunities for involvement (one time mailing)
- town user guide
- develop process for change
 - educate population on what process is
- the <illegible> available at town hall
- how do we get people out
 - mock child elections
- oversight committee
- effective professional leadership (paid) SAU/town administration
- welcome wagon information packet
 - realty officers
 - town government
 - local businesses
- centralized computer facility that supports town based web site
- volunteers/other resources
- expand leadership

Possible Solutions:

- town user guide development and implementation
- establish youth committees

- central computer facility that supports town-based web site (volunteer, other resources, services)
- establish effective SAU staffing
- establish revenue generating committee
- develop process for change
- establish paid town administration position
- establish advisory committee to governing bodies and create levels of authority within them
- how do we get people out (mock child elections?)

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- establish youth committees
- town user guide development and implementation
- central computer facility that supports town based website
volunteer
other resources
services
- establish effective SAU staffing

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- establish revenue generating committee
- develop process for change
- establish paid town administration position
- establish advisory committee to governing bodies and create levels of authority within them

High Impact/Low Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

none

Low Impact/High Feasibility

none

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
none

Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- how do we get people out?
mock child elections

Key Issue #5 Economic Opportunity

Facilitator: Maryann Walsh

Recorder: Jack Walsh

Spokesperson: not noted

Participants: Scott Rico, Sue Rieter, Andrew Hadik, Kenny Quinto, Al Wagner, Dann Batting, Maureen Lein

Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed:

- small commercial zone
- no pattern to commercial industry coming in
rezone portion of town as commercial zone
- need neighborhood businesses
how could we do this?
- come up with type of businesses wanted in community - define them
- trouble with certain businesses coming in community (zoning issues)
- no easy way for in and out traffic
- rules don't allow for commercial zone
- conflict between businesses and residential zones
- can't integrate businesses into residential areas
- doesn't allow commercial condo
- identify 1st, was area commercial or residential 1st (what can be 1st?)

Possible Solutions:

- take certain vicinity for housing and/or commercial use (rezoning)
- put for the efforts to avoid conflicts between residential and commercial zones
- try to keep houses away from areas of business so there is no effect on one another
- minimize impact on residential areas when commercial businesses come in
- create buffer zones
- need to look at zoning laws and make change
- develop what makes sense, do not develop what doesn't
- develop a professional office building
tempered growth
don't want to bring people in
do we want to bring people in
- bring in certain commercial businesses to bring down taxes
- stay out of court: re: density, Oak Hill subdivision
- accumulate low/moderate income people - proactive
- minimize impact on septic

- better the quality of land - houses very close together
- targeted effort to get senior housing w/o federal funding, also housing for people with mental health issues, etc.
- need daycare, medical, etc. in town to help people
- small homes - people can graduate into supported care
- master plan for continued care

Project Evaluation:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- establish what types of businesses for economic stimuli, develop only what makes sense
- support local agriculture

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- create buffer zones...re-zoning take certain vicinity for housing and/or commercial use
- better the quality of land - houses are very close together
- targeted effort to get some senior housing w/o federal funding
- housing for people with mental health issues
- small homes so people can graduate into supported care
- master plan for a continued care and child/adult daycare need medical facilities

High Impact/Low Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

none

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- stay out of court - regarding density
- need to look at zoning laws and make changes

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- develop a professional office building - tempered growth

Low Impact/High Feasibility

none

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- minimize impact on residential areas when commercial use comes in put forth the efforts to avoid conflicts between residential and commercial zones

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
none

PROJECT SELECTION

We returned to the large group after lunch break. A member of each small group presented the projects that the group had come up with. Charlie French led a short discussion about whether some projects overlapped and could be combined with other closely related ones.

Every participant received five adhesive dots to use to “vote” on the project in each theme they thought were important for Chester to work on right away. Each voter placed a dot as they wished on one project within each topic so that there would be a priority project for each group to work on first. The projects receiving the most votes were then discussed in small groups. The list of project ideas follows.

#1 Communication

1. Establish communications committee to develop communications method for town and residents **(30 votes)**
2. Create web site with up to date information **(3 votes)**
3. Create physical central repository for all information and sources of information **(6 votes)**

#2 Improve Lifelong Learning

1. Establish community/resource/cultural center utilizing existing town space and future middle schools space, to help foster inter-generational and community questions **(22 votes)**
2. Tap into and develop resources of White Pines College and other programs in our surrounding community **(16 votes)**
3. Capitalize and utilize communication program (yet to be defined) **(3 votes)**

#3 Preserving Rural Community Character

1. Zoning ordinances **(11 votes)**
2. Support Conservation issues including funding **(27 votes)**
3. Education **(2 votes)**

#4 Leadership and Volunteerism

1. Expand voluntary leadership roles **(7 votes)**
 establish additional empowered committees

- youth advisory committee
- oversight committees
- revenue generation committee
- process for change committee
- 2. Expand communication (**29 votes**)
 - town user guide
 - development and long term deployment
 - central computer facility
- 3. Paid professional administration (**1 vote**)

#5 Economic Opportunity

- 1. Economic Steering Committee (**16 votes**)
 - identifying what types of businesses and locations promoting above
- 2. Senior housing/assisted living without using federal funding (local control and funding) (**14 votes**)
- 3. Promote and support local agriculture (**12 votes**)
 - providing visibility for existing businesses (farmers market) and guide
 - encouraging new agricultural businesses

ACTION GROUPS

After the voting, the groups decided to focus in on the top project from each group. These are listed below with their convener information and members.

Establish Communications Committee: Ray Cyr, Ann Cyr, Dan Landau, Scott Talbot, Susan Price-Batting, Al Wagner, Mike Ditoro, Mary Beth Ditoro, Linda Heuer. **The convener: Ray Cyr 887-7680.**

Expand Communication: Chuck Heuer, Pat Monfet, Ami Bach, Bob Grimm, Mike Ditoro. **The convener: Chuck Heuer 887-3435.**

Support Conservation Issues: Andrew Hadik, Colin Costine, Margaret Voss, Joanne Millsaps, Maureen Lein, Greg Lowell, Chuck Myette, Beth Riley, Gerry Riley, Barbara Rice, Camilla Lockwood. **The convener: Beth Riley 887-3913.**

Establish community/resource/cultural center: Jane Grimm, Judy Balk, David Douglas, Ami Bach, Nancy Grimes. **The convener: Jane Grimm 887-8292.**

Economic Steering Committee: Kenny Quinto, Andrew Jeans, Scott Rice, Eileen Tully, Scott Johnson, Sue Rieter, Dann Batting. **The convener: Kenny Quinto 887-7298.**

CONCLUSION

Each small group reported back their plans to the entire group. All action groups agreed to recruit additional members to work with their committees. All the action groups will meet as a large group again on May 21, 2002 at 7 p.m. in the Chester Town Hall to begin to establish goals and objectives to accomplish the individual projects.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

APPENDIX

Community Profile Participants

Howard Bouwry	Eileen Tully
Tracey Kallander	Tim Peloquin
Scott Talbot	Joyce Kennedy
Scott Rice	Gerry Riley
Phyllis Papa	Chuck Myette
Sue Rieter	Greg Lowell
Maureen Lein	Margaret Voss
Barbara Rice	Andrew Jeans
Al Wagner	Lowell Kennedy
Margaret Tully	Melissa Rossetti
Andrew Hadik	Alexandra Hadik
Dick Godfrey	Janet Snyder
Frank Papa	Dann N. Batting
Michael Shea	Kenny Quinto
Deb Munson	Susan Price Batting
Gladys Nicoll	Marilyn Joan Rossetti
John DiGenova	Jane Grimm
Rep. Albert Home	Cornelia Prevost
Constance Hamel	Dan Landau
Coralee Bend	Nancy Grimes
Colin Costine	David Douglas
Jacob DeVries	Melissa Rosseth
Nancy Grimes	Margaret Voss
Beth Riley	Pat Montet
Joanne Millsaps	Mary Beth Ditoro
Ami Bach	Chuck Heuer

Community Profile Facilitators and Recorders

Judy Balk	Danny Landau
Ann Cyr	Cam Lockwood
Ray Cry	Pat Monfet
Sara D'Agostino	Dr. William Nevius
MaryBeth Ditoro	Beth Riley
Chuck Heuer	MaryAnn Walsh
Emily Heuer	Jack Walsh
Linda Heuer	

Community Profile Steering Committee

Maureen Lein
Judy Balk
Cathi Hughes
Mel Balk
Tim Peloquin
Ray Cyr
Beth Riley
Dick Godfrey
Marilyn Rossetti
Hilary Hall
Melissa Rossetti
Linda Heuer
Brad Wamsley

