

# Community Engagement Academy

## Guest Speaker Biographies

### Session 1

#### Envision Berwick

Envision Berwick is a group of Berwick, Maine community members who join together with local people to celebrate Berwick as a rural, riverside town that appreciates the importance of a connected, actively engaged community and proudly cultivates its unique strengths and small town character. The group works to promote small business and creative outlets where local talent, entrepreneurship, and agriculture flourish; foster a healthy relationship with land and river through conservation, environmentally-minded development, substantial and functional green space, & responsible recreation; and create a safe, friendly downtown where youth, families and community come together.

**James Bellissimo** is the current Chair of Envision Berwick, he was a member of the Downtown Vision Committee and is also the current Chair of Livable Berwick, an age-friendly subcommittee of Envision Berwick.

**Ruth Bleau** is an artist at the Vibe Art Gallery, and a member of the Livable Berwick and Recreation Master Plan subcommittees.

**Pat Boisvert**, a former teacher in town, has been part of the Downtown Vision Committee and Envision Berwick. She is now on the Preserving Heritage Committee and the Livable Berwick Committee.

**Paul Boisvert** has lived in Berwick since 1972 and has been on the Town's Planning Board since 1977. He is a software engineer at G.E. Somersworth, NH, and is a member of the Downtown Vision Committee and Envision Berwick.

**Scott Richardson** is a 17-year resident of Berwick and a recent member of Envision Berwick, who focuses on riverfront and recreation planning.

**Frank Underwood**, founder of Underwood Engineers is "retired," and since his "retirement," Frank's work as a volunteer has helped to ignite the Vision process. Frank was recognized as Berwick's citizen of the year in 2016. He is the Vice-Chair of Envision Berwick, and was the Co-Chair of the Downtown Vision Committee.

**Rick Vandenberg** is a Senior Project Manager at Weston & Sampson Engineers, Rick assisted the Town of Berwick to receive the two grants from the US EPA's Brownfield Program. Rick is also the Chair of the Recreation Master Plan subcommittee.

**Tom Wright** is Chair of the Berwick Board of Selectmen and a life-long resident of Berwick. He has also served two terms in the State Legislature.

### Session 2

#### Paul Shea— Executive Director of Great American Downtown in Nashua

Paul Shea hails from Nashua, NH, where he serves as the Executive Director of Great American Downtown, a non-profit organization with a mission centered around economic and cultural vibrancy in Downtown Nashua. Shea also serves as a director for the Peacock Players, as a member of the Steering Committee of iUGO - Nashua's young professionals networking group, as an advisory committee member for City Arts Nashua, on the City of Nashua's Summer Fun Committee, and is a founder of the Gate City Community Gardens program. Shea has a Bachelor's in Science from Rivier University, and is a Master Gardener with UNH Cooperative Extension. Shea lives in Downtown Nashua's French Hill neighborhood with his wife Julie, their dog and three cats, and looks forward to becoming a father in April 2017.

#### Christopher Parker— Assistant City Manager for the City of Dover, New Hampshire, as well as Director of Planning and Strategic Initiatives

Chris has twenty years of experience doing progressive development within the planning community, including strategic planning, project management and organization image enhancement. He was named Planner of the Year by the New Hampshire Planners Association in 2011, in large part due to the efforts that he spearheaded to get the community engaged in planning decisions, from the redevelopment of the Cocheco River waterfront to the Main Street. Those efforts included design charrettes, study circles, and intensive brainstorming sessions.

### Session 3

#### Steve J. Miller— Coastal Training Program Coordinator Great Bay National Estuarine Research

Steve is the Coastal Training Program Coordinator at the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in New Hampshire. He provides science-based training and resources to municipal decision makers. His work focuses on helping coastal New Hampshire municipal staff and volunteers maintain the balance between economic development and environmental health. Steve earned a MS in Ecosystem Ecology and Wildlife, and a BS in Zoology. Steve is the Chair of the Portsmouth Conservation Commission, and is the Co-Chair of the New Hampshire Coastal Adaptation Workgroup.

#### Beth Gustafson Wheeler- Director of Population Health Foundation for Healthy Communities

Beth Gustafson Wheeler, MS, Director of Population Health, works with NH cities and towns and state wide partners to establish environments, policies and systems that support healthy eating and active living. With more than 25 years of experience in health promotion and public health, Beth has worked in a variety of areas including community organization, quality improvement, worksite health, and education.

#### Tanya Swain- Project Director, Maine Food Strategy

Tanya provides overall project management for the Maine Food Strategy and support for the initiative's Steering Committee and Leadership Team. She is the former executive director of the Western Mountains Alliance, a community development organization that led several initiatives to support the development of farm and agriculture-related businesses in rural Maine. WMA became part of Maine Rural Partners in 2014. Tanya's background includes nonprofit management, program development, fundraising and public relations.

#### PS21— Portsmouth Smart Growth for the 21st Century

PS21 presents ideas and encourages discussion and policy development around planning issues in Portsmouth. Our goal is to support the creation of a vibrant, sustainable, livable, and walkable community compatible with the principles of smart growth, the historic nature of Portsmouth, and the context of the 21st century. Since 2014, PS21 has hosted more than a dozen events and projects about 'walkability,' affordable housing, parking, climate change, tactical urbanism and the place-making approach to community development.

#### Doug Roberts— Board Chair for PS21

Doug Roberts is a former writer and photographer who owned and operated the website PortsmouthNH.com from 1996 until last year.