UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cooperative Extension



Acworth
Community Profile
Report

Acworth, New Hampshire
October 21 & 22, 2005

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OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PROFILES

The Community Profile is a process by which communities stake 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 Civil 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 changes 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 Profile and are the "tools" of the community self-assessment.

Creating the Acworth Community Profile Acworth from the Co-Chairs of the Event

Marcie Maynard
I became interested in the UNH Community Profile process in the hopes of improving communication and understanding amongst Acworthians. I know how many of us feel a deep affection for our town, and we want the very best for Acworth and its citizens. I think we all feel that Acworth deserves the opportunity to improve and flourish, and it's been demonstrated that towns can through the Profile process.

Alice Fogel
The Profile seemed like a good, practiced, organized, nonpartisan system by which to bring all Acworthians together. It was an opportunity to get those who feel strongly about issues in town to come and communicate with their neighbors--both those they know agree with them and those they think don't, as well as ones we don't often hear from at all--to air concerns and dispel bad feelings in the effort to work together towards common goals.

Acworth Community Profile
Acworth Town Hall and Community Church
October 21 & 22, 2005
Agenda

Friday, October 21, 2005: 6:00-9:30 p.m.

6:00 Sign-In & Potluck Supper

7:00 Welcome – Michele Gagne, *UNH Cooperative Extension* and Marcie Maynard/Alice Fogel Steering Committee Chairs

- Overview of Community Profile Process
- Who is here?

Mosaic and Vision

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

Historical Overview – Helen Frink

- Where has Acworth been?

Master Plan Overview – Steve Davis

- Update on the Master Plan

7:45 Presentation of Community Profile components

- Citizen Participation & Community Leadership
- Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals & Youth and Lifelong Learning
- Community Services, Facilities, Utilities and Transportation
- Economic Vitality and Growth & Development
- Sense of Community and Recreation & Cultural Heritage
- Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

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 Acworth in the component area
- Challenges of Acworth 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, October 22, 2005: 8:30 a.m.

8:30 Coffee and check-in

9:00 Small group reports
- Each of the six small groups report to the large group, three minutes each.

9:45 Selection of key issues - participants select small group/issues

10:15 Break

10:30 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

12:15 Full Group: report back from small groups

12:45 Lunch and voting
- Which projects do you think we should move forward on?
- Which is the most important project for Acworth right now?

1:30 Individual selection of project development groups
Project development: small groups
- Who needs to be involved (agencies/individuals)
- Resources needed
- Other things needed to be done prior to follow-up meeting

2:00 Formal adjournment

****Follow-up Meeting to begin work on projects****

November 8, 2005 6:30-8:30 at the Acworth Town Hall

Community Profile
Friday Evening

The Acworth Community Profile was conducted at the Acworth Town Hall and Community Church over two days: Friday evening, October 21, 2005 and all day Saturday, October 22, 2005. About 85 participants attended on Friday, with about 40 attending on Saturday.

The event began Friday with a potluck dinner. Michele Gagne from UNH Cooperative Extension gave an overview of the profile process and an introduction to the goals for the two days. A Community Profile is something like a potluck supper - a feast of ideas. 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, where we work, and how many of us had children in the schools. 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 Acworth like today?

- Beautiful
- Wet
- Bucolic
- Somewhat small
- Unique
- Self reliant
- Diverse yet not diverse
- Traditional
- Rural
- Individualistic
- Caring
- Innovative and Alternative
- Bohemian
- Hilly
- Agricultural
- Sense of history
- Home
- Friendly
- Treasures
- Off the beaten path
- Great school

- Community church
- Peaceful
- Retirement
- Creative and Artistic
- Welcoming
- Forested
- Good place to raise kids
- Kind town
- Great school
- Family
- Resort/Vacation spot
  (Crescent Lake)
- Very diverse population
- Maintain rural quality

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

- How about high speed Internet
- Retaining air rotary phone
- Retaining our sense of community
- Clean
- Viable forestry and agriculture
- Clean watershed and plenty of it
- See us keep our store
- Keep our school here
- Simple
- People still attending town meetings
- Stubborn, ordinary
- Quiet
- Off the beaten path
- Even more diverse
- Self sufficient
- More young families
- Family farms
- The town to stay heterogeneous
- Affordable housing
- Less garbage
- More capable of empowering disadvantaged through community support
- More potlucks
- More dances
- Thriving economy
- Preserving what we have now and always: People, Community, and Environment

- Keep school system as it is
- Creative building trades
- More recycling
- Maintaining self sufficiency where people hire each other and create business together
- More environmentally sustainability
- More music
- Preserving natural character of river valley including agriculture

Acworth Historical Presentation presented by Helen H. Frink

Like other area towns, Acworth was granted in 1766 to original proprietors as lots and ranges; there were 12 ranges running E to W, each range divided into 18 lots numbered S to N. Each lot contained about 110 acres, is indexed in the old Acworth history (pub. 1867) so residents may be able to trace a home back to this old.

Kevin Gardner, The Granite Kiss, says building of these miles of stonewalls, mostly between 1790 and 1820, was huge, unparalleled feat of architecture. Many stonewalls were toppled by fallen trees or frost heaves. Others were cleared to make way for farming equipment; as soon as the scythe and hand held rake gave way to horse-drawn equipment around time of Civil War, walls became impediment, because horse and mowing machine turned in an arc that left the corner of each field unmowed. No better with tractor, so old walls were removed.

Acworth's population is now around 750. It's useful to recall that in 1810 Acworth had 1,526 residents, more than twice as many as we have now. That didn't necessarily mean more households, because about 1/3 of those residents were school-age children. Acworth's population declined steadily after 1810, first because soil proved too poor for continuous farming, and second because the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the development of railroads around 1850 took the profit out of farmers' cash crops, first flax, later butter and cheese, maple sugar. The Civil War caused more rapid decline because young men in Union Army saw better land and better opportunities in the south and west. The low point of Acworth's population came in 1960, when the census counted just 371 residents. In the hippie years, the back to the land movement of the late sixties and early seventies, people began moving back, so that in 1970 the population was around 460.

Today any people seem to want to live in Acworth to get away from it all, the stress of faster-paced city life, traffic, pollution, noise. But for most of the town's history, the emphasis instead was on coming together. Originally everyone's driveway was town-maintained, but a group of men who constituted a highway district. There were 32 highway districts in 1810, most covered a very small area. Men figured the cost of necessary construction and repair, assessed highway tax on each household, and then men could either work out their highway tax or pay it in cash. Widows, elderly might need to pay in cash. Most men worked with team of oxen or horses and a dump cart shoveling, raking, spreading gravel. This system changed gradually as old backwoods farms were given up or burned down, and these roads were "thrown up" by the town, meaning there was no longer any tax-supported maintenance. In East Acworth the Keyes Hollow Road, the old Symonds Road at end of Underwood Drive, and the Dodge Hollow Road have been

made into wonderful conservation trails. But we're still debating the fairest way to manage these old rights of way, which remain public although we may no longer want to pay for their upkeep.

Most of these old roads followed rivers and streams; that's why the October 9th floods did such terrible road damage; examples: Honey Brook alongside route 123A going out to Marlow; Thayer Brook runs alongside the Forest Road from South Acworth to Alstead. Because the streams carved a fairly flat, broad valley, they made road building easier. Second, the larger rivers, particularly the Connecticut, had always been the highways, first for Native Americans, then for early white settlers. Hotels or taverns sprang up near these rivers, served the highways that followed the rivers, and then the railroads that followed in the 1850s.

Communities formed along these rivers because of water power. While farming was the first way to make a living in Acworth, mills soon followed. The first settlements on high ground, Acworth Center, or in other towns Alstead Center or Marlow Hill, were soon followed by mill settlements in the river valleys, for example in South Acworth and East Acworth. This transition from hilltop farming to river valley mill towns is true of Alstead, Marlow, and countless other towns as well. You can see this settlement pattern not only in South Acworth, but also where the Grout Hill and Gates Mountain Roads meet across 123A. You see a cluster of small houses built too close together to be surrounded by fields. Their barns if they are still standing, weren't the huge barns that stored hay and dairy cattle, but smaller stables for one milk cow and a driving horse. That kind of community suggests an old mill settlement. These are clearly visible in Marlow and also along Alstead's Mechanic Street and River Street or in East Alstead's Mill Hollow before this last flood.

Each of these little communities needed certain other amenities besides the mills that provided a living. They needed a school, and usually a store and a church, or a place for community gatherings. In 1850, Acworth had 13 school districts to serve 474 children. Several of these schoolhouses are still standing: the Grout Hill School built in 1847 and the little East Acworth schoolhouse from the 1850s. Since children all had to walk to school, the schoolhouses needed to be within 2 miles of every family's house. The key factor here was darkness, and the distance children could walk on a snowy late winter afternoon. Schools included children as young as 4, and went through the 8th grade. Many residents ended their schooling there because it was too difficult to travel to a local high school. Obviously electricity and school bus transportation have changed education patterns, and have also made it possible for families with young children to live much further from schoolhouses. At the same time, that has eroded the cohesion of these very small little micro communities, as has the very necessary establishment of regional school districts. Not only in the Fall Mountain district, but also in the Monadnock district we see growing tensions and competitions among the various towns concerned that each should pay its fair share and no more. At the same time citizens who have no children in the high school are less committed to supporting it because it's a more distant extension of community. Tension and the search for a fair balance are the ongoing struggles here.

Besides the mill and the school, most of these little settlements included a meeting place for sociability. We can see the South Acworth Village Store with its old Union Hall upstairs, built in 1856. Later the Grange Hall, formerly the Methodist Church, filled this function. East Acworth

had a huge old hotel, livery stable and barn whose foundation is all that's left. The barn came down about 1990. Besides dances held in the ell of the old house, there were church services there.

Meeting in Acworth's Church on the Hill, we're all aware of the powerful force of religion in the early community. Until 1819 everyone in any NH town was expected to contribute to the minister's tax. The assumption was that everyone shared the same religious beliefs, and that the religious community and the town itself were one and the same. But the religious unity ended very early, actually about 200 years ago. Quakers petitioned for exemption from the minister's tax to attend meeting in Quaker City in Unity, where the meeting house was built in 1820. Then it could be handily reached along Black North Road, before the beaver made it impassable. Here on the Common, there were 3 churches between 1844 and 1854. The school was held in the red brick house opposite the SE corner of the Common, the Barnard house. The Baptist Church, which was moved down to South Acworth in 1867, stood where the Acworth School is now. And the Methodist Church, which is now the Grange Hall, stood about where the flagpole and memorial boulder are now, from the time it was built in 1844 until it was moved down to South Acworth in 1854.

These churches served a social function at least as important as their religious role. They provided music, singing, and intellectual stimulation, as well as a chance to sit down and rest. Men worked with other men, particularly in Acworth's numerous water-powered mills. There they also enjoyed the sociability of farmers bringing corn and wheat and rye to be ground, or hauling logs to be cut into lumber or turned into chair stock or barrels or shoe pegs. Women were stuck at home with young children until Sunday. No wonder they were eager to take a bath on Saturday night, put on their best clothes, forgo cooking any hot meals on Sunday, and spend the day sitting down in the company of other women. They extended their church community to organizations like the Female Charitable Society too. So while we commonly think of women of the 1800s and early 1900s as more religious than men, maybe we should also consider what the church as a social institution contributed.

There were two floods that played a role in reshaping the town. Regardless of human settlements and the way they shape the landscape, Nature comes back every few decades to remind us that we are not the absolute rulers of the universe. There was a huge flood in November 3 through 5th of 1927. The Cold River flowed over the road by Leon Newton's farm and Crane Brook flooded down Crane Brook Road. The state allocated over $5,000 to repair this highway district in the west part of town alone. Glenn Bascom harnessed 4 of his horses and he and his neighbors willed in the washouts with stones from old stonewalls, and then hauled in gravel to spread over the damaged areas. The bridges in South Acworth and in East Acworth washed out and had to be rebuilt as well. This year at least most of our bridges have survived intact.

Another flood, this time in the spring, struck Acworth between March 12-19th, 1936, when several feet of heavy snow melting over still frozen ground contributed to the flooding. Roads were so impassable that the school bus, the mail carrier, and the stage, by now a motorized vehicle, were unable to get through. Much of the Cold River Road in East Acworth and 123A into South Acworth remained under water for days. Men used dynamite to blast huge icebergs

out of the Cold River near the Newton farm and further down river in an attempt to break up the huge ice dams that flooded low-lying fields and roads. This rainstorm destroyed traces of the foundations and dams of many of the water-powered mills. There was still a cement-topped mill dam in South Acworth that washed out and had to be repaired. By then it belonged to the town, which needed to pay for its repair as well as around $4,000 in road damage. Some of the work was funded by the Works Progress Administration, the WPA. Probably most of you know this as one of President Roosevelt's make-work programs to counteract the massive unemployment caused by the Great Depression. Locally, the WPA was called the Working People of Acworth.

Oddly enough, some of the factors that helped put an end to the Great Depression were further disasters: the 1938 hurricane that began on September 21st, the Marlow fire of 1941, and finally the Second World War. If there is a message here, it may be that these natural disasters can provide a creative opportunity for change, and I hope that's where we can begin our Community Profile discussion tonight.

Master Plan Overview by Steve Davies

The Planning Board Master plan committee has been reorganized with all new maps and drafts of four sections to be worked over. The Master plan is the basis for local regulation and the document upon which town planning is based upon. The current Master Plan was written in 1979 with only minor revisions over the years. This revision is the beginning of an more or less continuous process to keep the Master Plan up to date. Please come and offer your opinions and help guide the future town planning.

COMMUNITY PROFILE SIX COMPONENTS

After we developed a mosaic and vision for, and digested some of the historical information, Nancy Adams introduced us to the idea of discussing within the framework of 6 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
Informed Citizen Participation and Community Leadership

Community Infrastructure
Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth and Lifelong Learning
Community Services, Facilities and Utilities and Transportation
Sense of Community and Cultural Heritage

Environment
Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

Economy
Economic Vitality and Growth and Development

Next 6 small groups of approximately 10 people each were randomly formed, one group for each of the components. The small groups adjourned to various rooms where facilitators lead the groups in their discussions and recorders made notes on more large tablets.

Each group considered the definition of their component and was asked questions below in order to begin the discussion. Participants were asked to list the strengths of Acworth 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 which 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. Informed Citizenship Participation and Community Leadership

Facilitator: Sarah Vogel Recorder: Stella Herpel Spokesperson: Suzanne Orlando
Participants: William Sandeau, Meredith Tenney, Jerry Pfohl, John Herpel, Carolyn Mitchell, Debbie Fielding, Elizabeth Cubberley, Sally Eaton, Betty Williams, Janet Albright, Sandra Wotowiec, Suzanne Orlando, Kathi Bradt

Statement of Purpose:

In a healthy community, citizens actively participate through voting in 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. Shared problem solving and planning for the future as a community increases local pride and commitment.

Healthy communities have, and develop, public leaders who work together to enhance the long-term future of the community. Community leadership must be responsive, honest, efficient, enlightened, fair and accountable. It should have the ability to bring the community together to participate in open, neutral dialogue on important issues.

Leaders should be representative of their community and be able to envision an economically secure, environmentally sound and socially viable future. Leadership should empower community members to assist in resolving community issues.

Statements a community should consider:

- *Our leadership actively recruits, trains, and empowers new leaders.*
- *Leadership represents diverse community interests (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 can 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.*
- *Civic organizations and local businesses actively contribute to community functions.*
- *Local committees and boards communicate well with each other, the public, and with boards and committees throughout the region.*

Group Response - Strengths:

- Friendly folk
- Voter turnout

- Town meeting turnout
- Many leaders
- Concerned population
- Creative populace used for community good
- Intra-community communication
- School encouraged co-operative community service
- Village store – service and communication and community
- Dump – Post office – Library – Church (Many options for gathering/talking)
- Leadership (diversity of age residents)
- Well educated populace/leadership
- Volunteer leadership forthcoming
- Kathi Bradt
- Opportunities for leadership
- Youth devoted to the town-many options for their involvement and learning leadership roles and using those roles
- Professional development of leaders
  -Research – organization
- Passionate leaders
- Women leaders numerous
- Small town size

<u>Group Response - Challenges</u>

- Diminish polarization fostered by lack of communication with understanding between groups
- General lack of communication
- Better diffusion of facts
- Many assumptions without facts
- Getting news, word, and facts out to Crescent Lake
- Lack of facts in Newsletter
- Go to original sources
- Resistance to change – for the better
- Ideas are personalized rather than free standing
- Encourage all to participate and voice their own concerns/ideas
- Lack of method/means to get all to participate
- Extend the invitation
- Reaching across political lines
- Portion of population concerned but not participating
- Forum for all voices
- Assumptions for predetermined outcomes
- Commonality lost in view of differences
- Find common ground to cross political boundaries
- Long meetings difficult for most
- Emotional drain of dissention
- Lack of female members on governing boards

- Time demand of elected offices
- Adequate posting of meetings/opportunities
- Verbal/personal invitations to participate
- Leadership that is forward-looking, not just reactive to the present issue
- Money/time
- Articulate/clarify vision for the future of the community
- Protect community from profiteers
- Provision for quality of affordable housing
- Means of support for leadership (vision-direction)
- Translate ideas (Master Plan) into functional legislation/action/law/practice (add teeth)
- Support community leaders (appreciation)

Vision for the Future:

- More women in leadership roles (mediator/negotiators) skills mandate % females
- More efficient structure of government (more time/cost efficient) →More participation
- Community bulletin (facts)
  - -Newsletter without bias
  - -Editorial balance/variety
  - -Governmental minutes without comment
- Minutes on website (in addition to hard copies)
- Engage/encourage youth leadership (18-28) e.g. at town meetings
- Mandate youth seat on board
- Unifying activities (Turkey Shoot as historical example)
- Activity that everyone needs and wants to become involved in – coming together for common goals/good

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. Put Master Plan into action
2. Community bulletin production (get out the facts)
3. Town Pub
4. Cohesive/consistent across government uniformity of definitions/language (improve professionalism/communication)
5. Base all on Master Plan
6. Communications
7. Gender representation
8. Government efficiency
9. Universal representation in master plan—input from everyone
10. Everyone's voice is gotten

Final 5 Key issues:

1. Consistency across government: procedures, definitions
2. Communications government: All voices (Census survey), All facts (Bulletin)
3. Master plan implementation
   - -visioning leaders, rules with teeth

4. Unifying town wide "Do" is needed
5. Age/gender inclusion

2. Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals and Youth; Lifelong Learning

Facilitator: Craig Oshkello Recorder: Chuck Hersey Spokesperson: Not noted
Participants: Shawn Bowman, Bill Mitchell, Gordon Gowen, Claudia Istel, Barbara Davis, Bob Skinney, Todd Lindenstruth, Mark Wellens, Debby Hinman, Jim Genovese

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 members.

Programs of higher education and lifelong learning provide local 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:

- *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.*
- *There is adequate information about the available services and many community members utilize them.*
- *Many of the services allow families to participate together.*
- *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 good 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:

- Small grammar school
- Excellent medical care
- Opportunities for informal education
  - -Woodwork carving
  - -Industrial talents to share
  - -Artisans
- 4-H youth groups (church)
- Recreation committees – Fishing, hockey
- Cooperative Extension
- Strong sense of community – sense of family – kids feel at home
- Acworth School
- Fall Mountain Regional High School District community--5 generations of students
- Healthy recreation: ski, kayak, fish, hiking
- Don't have to drive far for healthy recreation
- Elder community groups: Female Charitable, Women's Club, Friends of Library, Out to Lunch
- Library – board collection
- Farmers as teachers – openness to visits
- Cold Pond Community Farm
  - -CSA-land trust
- Community Church scholarship outreach
- Acworth Village Store
- Conservation Commission
- "Project week" at Acworth School
- Crescent Lake Association
- Crescent Lake
- Town forests (2-400+ acres) (30+ miles class VI roads)
- Few posted signs
- School location history
- Elders
- Moms and Dads
- Kids
- Cold River
- Play groups
- Home school – relationship to public school
- Pay phone

Group Response - Challenges:

- Larger library
- Lack of up-to-date, family- related children's literature
- Library needs more hours
- Continuity in librarian to continue to serve community

- Poor emergency response time - law enforcement – distance to response-need cooperation with citizens
- Local network of emergency response
- More training opportunities for local resources
- How to support fire squad/rescue
- Keeping Acworth Schools
- Up to date Internet access
- Better cell service
- Communication and power in emergency
- Percent kids stay in town
- Overburdening legislative processes building/planning
- Supporting our local school system (Fall Mountain District)
    - -Financial
    - -Teachers
- Standardized curriculum
- Disconnect between agriculture & education
- Limited resources to elderly
    - -Emergency check-in/coordinated response
- Affordable housing
- No local daily newspaper

<u>Vision for the Future:</u>

- Students to work with town officials to govern
- Preservation of agriculture farmland, forests, timber, class VI roads
- Full time library
- Keep youth in town – treat them right
    - -Good athletic fields-South Acworth Store, river, tennis, ball fields
- Elected recreation committee with funds
- Community involvement at dump – 100% recycling – pay as you throw
- Agriculture field school – ecology building
- Weekly newspaper
- Vibrant village store – festival music – breakfast
- "Project Week" expanded
- Plan for growth – Children, grandchild return to live
    - - That doesn't destroy strengths
- Children
- Allow for more population
- Responsible development
- Develop for supporting families
- Preservation of architecture

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. Support Acworth School
2. Preserve natural resources
3. Improve communications – public service, emergency response, town newspaper
4. Library support and expanse
5. Support Acworth Village Store & Post Office
6. Increase recreation opportunities

3. Community Services, Facilities, Utilities and Transportation

Facilitator: Evelyn Clowes Recorder: Sandy Brewer Spokesperson: Not noted
Participants: Peter Rhodes, Stephen Davis, Ray Nabatoff, Joann Brown, "Stab" Waldo Streeter, Sandy Brewer, Jack Rieck, Daniel Giuseppone.

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, and 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 pedestrian 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 sources are 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 car pooling, and helps make it work for people by providing information and accessible parking areas.*

- *Parking is adequate in the commercial areas.*
- *Tradeoffs, such as maintenance, pollution, and congestion are considered when widening main roads or building new roads.*

Group Response - Strengths:

- Library
- Village Store
- Condensed community services
  -Church-library-town hall-school
- Community Church
- Knowing people personally
- State maintained roads
- Two buildings of worship plus community aid building, general store
- Cold River and the Deep Hole
- Crescent Lake-140 cottages with public boat landing
- Power and phone
- Ground water – Wells Springs
- Pay phone in village
- Volunteer fire department and EMTs Fast Squad
- Organized town structure – town meetings – paper ballots
- Highway maintenance crew
- 2 Post-offices
- Grammar school
- Town Hall
- Bee Hives
- Town Forest
- Recreation field on Turkey Shoot
- Mill Pond in South Acworth
- Out to Lunch bunch
- Friday night pot lucks
- Snowmobile trails/hiking
- Beryl & Gates Mountains
- Clubs: Women's
  Ladies
  Female Charitable Society
  Friends of the Library
- Community Newsletter (monthly)
- Strengths and contributions of all citizens new and old
- Conservation projects

Group Response - Challenges:

- Thinking long term and funding long term projects
  -roads
  -buildings

-forestry

- Thinking long term about how we affect future generations
- High-speed Internet access
- Bringing modern communications technology to our rural areas
- 3 power companies that are not interconnected
- Manage flow of Bowers Brook
- Managing bureaucracies
- Expanding regulations as population grows
- Grange Building
- Keeping essential services/basic needs (food, fuel, health care) in the community
- Maintaining the rural and harmonious life style while the community grows
- Solid waste and recycling
- Police protection
- Managing Class VI roads
- Post flood roads
- Emergency management plan
- Tying infrastructure decisions to ultimate goals for future

Vision for the Future:

- High speed Internet access
- Having essential services and basic needs within the community, that meet the needs of the community
- Emergency management plan plus direct connection to Red Cross chapters incorporating all community trained personnel in town
- Incident command center – who's in charge?
- Communications in an emergency
- Informed decisions about how you upgrade roads and the consequences
- Schools – infrastructure – not local enough
- K-8 stay in community

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. Thinking long term about infrastructure development and long term projects and funding in relationship to growth and future generations.
2. Having essential services and basic needs within the community that meet the needs of the community.
3. Emergency management plan
4. Influence of utility providers while upgrading utilities and providing 21st century communications technology to our rural area.
5. Solid waste management and recycling

4. Economic Vitality & Growth and Development

Facilitator: Liana Hambrich Recorder: Alice Fogel Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Michele Turner, Maryellen Sheehan, Robin Luther, Mary Giuseppone, Peter Maynard, Dick Elsesser, Jonathan Clowes, Hugh J. Williams.

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.

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 factoring the development of a healthy community is the diversity of housing. This encompasses availability, affordability and location, all of which affects the lives of community members, especially the elderly, disabled and low-income families.

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.*
- *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:

- Lots of self employment – small business, home industry
- Abundant land in conservation easements, trusts
- Community-based business
- A nursery for individual pursuits
- Development thru "un-development"--thinking of growth as preservation
- Community value in open land
- Awareness of need for planning

- Isolation
- Support for local projects
- Interdependent because of isolation
- Agriculture
- Resource in forest – a treasure
- Culture of collaboration between businesses
- Beauty fosters these pursuits
- Bring young people to trades
- Population here not for economic reasons
- Low-key beauty (no grandeur)
- Diversified agriculture
- Creativity
- Specialties – Different areas of expertise
- General and unique talents
- Many educators – music, skills, etc.
- Community store
- Church
- Lots of retired people to influence children and V.V

Group Response – Challenges:

- Maintain the strengths as we grow – not lose the qualities of the town
- Get high-speed Internet but keep roads bumpy
- More children here
- More diversity
- Diverse views honored
- Avoid paralysis of conflict
- Thinking of growth in light of 1810 population
- Reliance on outside energy (cost)
- Local production of food – support
- Safety
- Land costs rising – prohibits farming and young settlers
- Lease option for long term easements for farming
- Community owned land for investment conservation, forestry, and agriculture
- Use of Class VI roads for growth and development
- Education and planning on Class VI roads
- How to prepare for management change
- Retention of agriculture land
- Mindset of consumerism and "growth"
- Teaching youth to be content with less
- Keeping our desires within our pocketbook
- Speeding – traffic – control of pace rather than go through for feeding of "small town"
- Changing mindset of local US super market produce
- Business listing for town "currency" to keep money in town

- Zoning needs to reflect values
- Cluster housing
- Minimal regulations
- Development means of communication - supported zoning regulations
- Getting everyone involved and civil problem solving

Vision for the Future:
- Local health clinic – not necessarily mainstream
- Young families in agriculture – with town support
- Young families in arts and crafts
- Legacies – the farms (Elsessers, e.g.)
- The state can be relied on to support farming
- Cooperation – town, state, individuals
- Education about value of this lifestyle
- Cluster housing and preserved spaces
- Town currency and business registry
- Affordable housing
- Zoning with preservation AND affordability in mind
- All people involved
- Bedroom community

Key Issues for Now and the Future:
1. Preserving natural land (including agricultural) as an economic value
2. Encouraging young families by means of affordable housing and land
3. Improving communication and dialog over growth and development issues
4. Building community & community culture as a base for economic vitality
5. Cultivating home-based livelihoods and supporting already existing ones
6. The Z word

5. Sense of Community

Facilitator: Peter Wotowiec Recorder: Ashlee Iber Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: John W. Luther, Shirley Fisesier, Carol Hotz, Sarah Haines, Ken Grant, Gretchen Abendschein, Jim Brown, Lillie LeBlanc, Bill Osborn.

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.

Recreational and cultural activities nurture the body and soul of a community - individual and team sports, outdoor activities, art, 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:

- *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 _____.*
- *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:

- Old home day, festivals, pot luck suppers, village store project
- Out to Lunch bunch (Wednesday)
- Town meeting
- Church
- Play – Acworth players/potluck players
- Barn dances
- Volleyball group
- Ice skating rink
- Recreation committee (sports)
- Halloween play
- "Tavern" night
- Network of informal gatherings
- Library
- School
- Hockey games
- First responders' squad
- Variety of people, talents and abilities in the community
- Jazz trio/opera singers
- Swimming holes/river
- Backwoods, hiking, snowmobiling, mountain biking→ outdoor opportunities

- Landscape
- Bike trails
- Newsletter

Group Response – Challenges:
- Isolated locations
- Activities for teenagers
- No police force
- Break-ins
- Set up with fire – responsibility
- Different economic spectrum, varying views
- Roads (conditions)
- Opinions represented in newsletter (editorial vs. other)
    - -People being slandered
    - -Dividing town
    - -Representative?
- Communication methods
    - -Accuracy
    - -Information availability
- Animosity lingers
- Loss of Turkey Shoot
- Store-both an asset and challenge
    - -Profitability
    - -Staffing
    - -Serving needs of community
- Keep financially viable church in small community
- Growth patterns changing
- Protecting against housing development
- Difficult for young people to stay here
    - -Paying jobs ($)
    - -Affordable housing
    - -Commuting outside town
- Accommodating families vs. cost of schools etc, property tax structure, other types

Vision for the Future:
- Organize contra dancing and square dancing, other dancing
- Maintain town meeting structure
- Improve connection between townspeople and town government
- Improvement of bringing divisive groups together in the community – work together
- Alternative newsletter to express different points of view – cross-section
- Encourage consensus building
- Designated cycling/walking trails
    - -Safety purposes-other people
- Multiple land use – both hunting and other recreation

- Intergenerational Acworth Outing Club – organized outings of variety
- Dance classes
- Consider private land for public uses
- Map of trails/places to go of general interest – open to public
  - -Publicize
  - -Trail development
  - -Communication
- Walking trails without hunting for safety
- See musical abilities performed regularly
  - -More diversity & participation
  - -Possibly join with other towns

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

1. Increase communication in town
   - -Newsletter/alternative newsletter
   - -Utilizing profiling format in the future as a town
2. Organize arts and community events
3. Organize outdoor activities – trail maps, outing organization/club
4. Increase access to outdoor activities
5. Support and encourage the Village Store

6. Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

Facilitator: Vicki Hebert Recorder: Marcie Maynard Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Mark Haubrich, Sam R. Stephens, Sharon Miller, Joanna Dennett, Dennis Eaton, Lichae LeBlanc, Charley Haines, Paul Hotz, Tom Esslinger

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 a 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 resource base.*
- *There is broad community interest and participation in protecting key natural resources 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 stresses on those natural resource systems.*
- *There are ways to increase the resilience of the local natural resources 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 some way important regionally or statewide.*
- *Natural resources 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.*

<u>Group Response - Strengths:</u>

- Hilly terrain limits the amount of building
- Good access to water, which can also be a problem (pollution)
- Abundance and abundant wildlife of all types
- We don't have a major road going through here, which keeps the place remote (not much traffic which would harm the environment)
- 123A is a significant road that can be a thoroughfare for trucking goods from town to town – for economy
- A significant amount of rather good agriculture soils, many of which are protected under easement
- A significant number of miles of Class VI roads – we can do hiking recreation, water flow – an asset for tourism
- A great combination of farmland, forestland, and many different types of people with different talents
- Rigid septic system regulations (state laws)
- Geographically a fairly large town
- Clean streams and rivers
- Cold River especially clean and we have Deb Hanna as Cold River advising head for testing (state program)

  -Cold River is designated river – neighboring towns cooperate and take initiative to test river and keep it clean
- No industries or big businesses along the river – good for water quality
- Huge vertical drop from where river begins and where it ends, used to be an asset – maybe it can be again in the future
- High elevation
- Sense of history in the lay of land and old houses
- Historical buildings and historical assets

Group Response – Challenges:

- Remote
- Roads, from a financial standpoint – maintaining and improving them
- Diversifying land use in addition to resources, by having businesses (not just homes) to diversify the tax base and possible employment
- Having kids in town and having a place for them to build and have a house
- Having kids appreciate the natural environment to appreciate natural assets we have now
- Watch out we don't get developers buying large pieces of land and cutting it up and developing (It will also mess up environment)
- Dump is a problem – a lot of stuff thrown out (for small town) that is toxic (burned plastic in Newport) we need stricter laws on what people can dump where and how
- Communications is a challenge for economic development and emergencies (including cellular communications and fast-speed Internet)
- Preventing future flooding
- Need markets for our farm products to preserve our farms
- Community transportation to access cities because we don't have a lot of industry here – so we need transportation to the industry in cities
- Illegal dumping
- Contract with NH/VT solid waste project terminating in 2007 – hopefully towns will become cooperative
- Timber cutting doesn't always respect environmental regulations (cutting trees near rivers – challenge to maintain river and stream quality)
- Knowing what the sense of the town is as far as zoning--drawing a balance in land development
- Real town planning re: development
- Growth and development is important – needs to be a controlled growth
- Regulations on the quality of what people build
- Affordable housing needs to be quality
- Reasonable quality houses to maintain tax base
- Development needs to still preserve open space and agricultural land
- Find type of agriculture that is viable (ie: Langdove horse farms)
- Preserve agriculture lands

Vision for the Future:

- There could be a lot more truck gardening and buildup on soil to keep town going locally
- Young people can't afford to buy land – who wants to farm – should be state aid for them
- Some way to get people to work without driving individual cars
- Somewhat self-sufficient community where we work with and employ each other
- Addition to the Town Hall
- Community should be self-sustaining community
- Village Store markets Acworth's unique products--people would know where they could get local products
- Expanded community newsletter – to market each others' products

- Road plans so we can access FEMA funds for road improvements
  - -FEMA – for preventative work – we need a database of what we put into it – they will match us
  - -Inventory of needs, money and time for road improvements
- Cell phone service
- Busing in Acworth to make money
- Carpenters can design affordable housing
- Communication amongst town people and controlled growth
- Town can acquire open and for market gardens (people could farm like Mary Ellen) - people can use as source of income
- Town less polarized – different groups lock horns on issues and need to communicate and reach understudy
- Bring back town beach or provide recreational waterfront

<u>Key Issues for Now and the Future</u>

1. Communication – internally and externally
2. Rivers – using and preserving
3. Roads and transportation
4. Business and economic development
5. Land use – preserving and expanding farms
   - Affordable quality housing
   - Managing growth

Saturday Morning

Everyone reassembled bright and early Saturday morning at the Acworth Community Church where we were greeted by hot coffee, 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 6 easels from the small groups of the night before were arrayed across the front of the room, each bearing a list of the 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 Acworth. This list is presented below.

Key Issues

1. Community Planning and Infrastructure

2. Natural Resources

3. Community and Educational Services

4. Community and Community Building

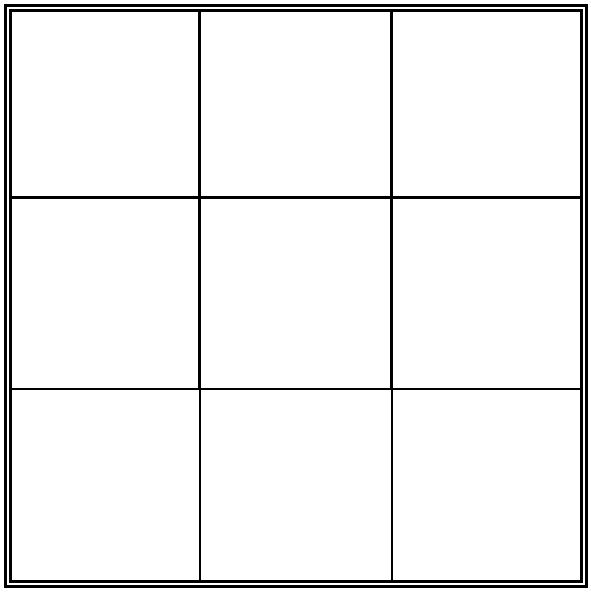
5. Recreational Opportunities

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

After a short mid-morning break, participants 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?



FEASIBILITY:
How possible is it?

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 reward. Many of the groups proposed a combination of proposals. Verbatim notes from each of the groups are presented below.

Key Issue #1 Community Planning and Infrastructure

Facilitator: Charlie French Recorder: Stella Herpel Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Carol Hotz, Paul Hotz, John Herpel, John Clowes, Will Turner, Gordon Gowen, Joanne Brown, Dick Elsesser, Ray Nabatoff, Marcie Maynard, Liana Hambrich.

The Issue:

- Money
  - -Local tax base/business
  - -Outside sources
  - -Town store promotion
  - -Fishing destinations
  - -Golf course
  - -Bed and Breakfast
  - -Grant writing
- Managing growth
  - -Getting consensus
  - -Maintaining character
- Land use – vision that accommodates diversity
- Reverence for status quo – weigh impact of actions/decisions
- Communications – special meeting to discuss issues with town fathers
- Communication-- (can't) blog?
- Maintain status quo – get message to Boston. etc
- Fear of escalating taxes (Vermont caps property tax at 25% of income)
- Implementing Master Plan in a way that meets everyone's needs and gives consistency
- Master Plan as vision/guideline
- Clarifying responsibilities/authorities (eg-emergency response-single leader)
- Tread thoughtfully in implementing Master Plan – move deliberately and realistically
- Long range vision – impact/funding (e.g. upgrading roads – speed – accidents)
- Who implements Master Plan (Planning Board)--how to be consistent?
- Where to see/ read Master Plan (communication)
- Impossible to avoid controversy
- Commonality of goals – diversity of strategy – how to harness these to the common goal
- NIMBY trumping Master Plan
- Interpreting Master Plan
- Get out information before hearings
- Kerry Smith needs money and equipment (Highway Department)
- Self sustaining economy
- How to get word out of local workers/ businesses/ resources (business directory)
- Vision of small/ harmonic community
- Clear expectations of infrastructure goals/ needs/ impacts (road plan)
- Acworth's location will keep it a small bedroom community (little changed in 100 years)
- Consistency in government
- Accountability of government – evenhandedness
- Affordability/ sustainability (feasibility)

- Provisions for economic neediness (tax money)
- How to accommodate future generations here without having to sell/divide the farm

Vision:
- Reverence for what makes Acworth special
  -Maintain that in face of inevitable growth
- Differential goal of residents – outside elements
- Reverence "Acworth" as we grow – keeping it special
- Balance community and individual needs
- Affordable sustainability
- Communication is a universal component dialogue – technologies – hearing and getting all voices information dissemination

Possible Solutions:
- Active emergency manager coordinator appointed
- Community newsletter/blog (digital access)
- Arts and crafts catalogue/store exposure
- Registry of agricultural resources – produce sources – Acworth products
- Culture makers of Acworth products (craft produce and products)
- Business/resource directory
- "Welcome to Acworth" letter to new residents with return slip for more information and vision statement/oath of residency
- Copy of Master Plan to all residents
- Big club over government to monitor consistency and conformity to Master Plan
- Community development committee in our own Chamber of Commerce
- Affordable housing for elderly/families
- More info meetings in Master Plan development
- Cell phone access – install receiver in steeple
- Cluster plan
- Zoning to block new developers and row housing
- Day care center and kindergarten with senior center
- Plan elderly housing (not need-blind, not need-related)
- Move Grange to expand its uses – recreational grounds
- High-speed Internet
- Village store to "Internet Café"
- Land bank
- Youth lots (land bank)

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility
- Active emergency manager coordinator appointed
- Community newsletter/blog (digital access)

- "Welcome to Acworth" letter to new residents with return slip for more information and vision statement/oath of residency
- Copy of master plan to all residents

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- More info meetings in master plan development
- Cell phone access – install receiver in steeple
- Cluster plan
- Zoning to block new developers and row housing

High Impact/Low Feasibility
- Affordable housing for elderly/families
- Day care center and kindergarten with senior center
- Plan elderly housing (not need-blind, not need-related)
- Move Grange to expand its uses – recreational grounds

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility
- Registry of agricultural resources – produce sources – Acworth products
- Culture makers of Acworth products (craft produce and products)
- Business/resource directory

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Community development committee in our own Chamber of Commerce
- High-speed Internet (also noted in Moderate Impact/ High Feasibility)
- Village Store to "Internet Café" (also noted in Moderate Impact/ High Feasibility)
- Land bank (also noted in Moderate Impact/ High Feasibility)
- Youth lots (land bank) (also noted in Moderate Impact/ High Feasibility)

Moderate Impact/ Low Feasibility
- Big club over government to monitor consistency and conformity to Master Plan

Low Impact/High Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Key Issue #2 Natural Resources

Facilitator: Sarah Vogel Recorder: Ashlee Iber Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Kris Fenderson, Peter Maynard, Ken Grant, Del Hinman, Peter Wotowiec, Mark Wellens, Carolyn Mitchell, W Mitchell, William Sandoe, Bill Osborn.

The Issue

- Examples
  - -Stonewell Arch/cellar holes/agriculture
  - -River
  - -Class VI roads, trails
  - -Mill sites, bridge, other stone structures
  - -Lake (source of Cold River)
  - -Forest – logging/clear cutting
  - -Open fields
- Balance between local control to regulate outside use and freedom
- Balanced based on ecological principles and the land itself
- Bedroom community/exurbia
- Education
- What's essential?
  - -Forest cover
  - -Clean water
  - -Town should ID and purchase--act if necessary to protect
- Existing cultural architecture
  - -Buildings and cemeteries
- Traditional open access to land for hunting etc… Snowmobiles = multiple use of land
- Maintain good wildlife habitats
- Promote responsible local ATV use and manage outside people

Possible Solutions:

- Education on stewardship
- New zoning laws
- Inventory of stone structures or – historical/prehistoric/cultural/significant places – maps/booklets/photographs
- Inventory of important natural areas and prime agricultural lands
- Protect Beryl Mountain – Gates Mountain
- Protect Mitchell Pond
- ID key areas in need of protection
- Potentially purchase valuable sites
- Private citizens' group concerned with natural resources in addition to Conservation Commission
- Fun/education events highlighting outdoor activities/ location
- Outing Club
- Open Space committee (non-government)-(volunteer)
- Easement/land sharing provisions for grazing, etc.

- Town policies should support forestry, agriculture, water, natural habitats, and river
- Local management of river
    -Fishing management/ limits
    -More community input on fishing
- Cold River advisory committee
    -More members? (+2)
    -Fishing perspective
- Plan for development on Class VI roads
    -Which ones to develop? Or not develop?
- Packets of info distributed-- best forestry management, building permits, etc = education
- Information available for voluntary land protection = resources, education, info
- Work with town attorney and state regulation reps to represent town options/ interests
- Zoning – forest conservation zone
    -Don't break up into smaller parcels
- More stringent zoning in specific districts (historical districts)
- Research laws that protect stone walls, stone structures, eg: boundary walls vs. internal
- Communicate/make accessible Natural Resources Inventory
- Education about zoning
- Greater citizen participation

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- Open Space Committee (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- Private citizens' group concerned with natural resources in addition to Conservation Commission (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- Cold River advisory committee
    -Needs more members
    -Fishing perspective (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- Local management of river
    -i.e. fishing management
    -More community input on fishing (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- Inventory of stone structures of historical/prehistoric/cultural significant places - make maps, booklets, photographs
- Identify areas in need of protection

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Fun education events highlighting outdoor activities/locations i.e. an outing club (also noted in High Impact/High Feasibility, Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility, Moderate Impact/High Feasibility)
- More stringent zoning in historic districts
- Education on stewardship
- Town policies should support forestry, agriculture, water, natural habitats, and river

- Plan for development and Class VI roads – which ones to develop? Which ones to not?
- Protect Mitchell Pond
- Protect Beryl Mountain and Gates Mountain

High Impact/Low Feasibility
- Zoning – forest conservation zone, i.e. don't break up into smaller parcels (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- Potentially purchase valuable sites/easements (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)
- New zoning laws (also noted in High Impact/Moderate Feasibility)

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility
- Communicate/make accessible natural resources inventory
- Research laws that protect stonewalls, stone structures (boundary walls protected)

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Information available for voluntary land protection – resources, education, info
- Packet of information distributed: best forest management, building permits, etc. – education
- Education on zoning

Moderate Impact/ Low Feasibility
- Work with town attorney and state regulators and state representatives, town options and interests

Low Impact/High Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Key Issue # 3 Community & Educational Services

Facilitator: Seth Wilner Recorder: Barbara Davis Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Barbara Davis, Suzanne Orlando, Sandra Wotowiec, Sally Eaton, Meredith Tenney.

Possible Solutions:
- Support disadvantaged people – support these people better
- ID youth at young age and have community support and provide resources when they are absent
- Improve the school we have
  -Reinstitute the ski program

-Have 5th grade here – preserve and maintain
-All elementary education provided here

- Elderly people and their needs
  -Grow old and be able to stay here in Acworth while participating
  -Elder housing – locally managed
- Cell phone towers for people
- Emergency services
- Emergency response
  -People affected by emergency
- Emergency network – people in community automatically check on people to help meet their needs
- Emergency response cards with local names and numbers to contact – goes to each community member – maybe include picture
- Emergency coordinator who went through town meeting and coordinated emergency networks
  -Person would need task force to ID needs and needy people
  -Person would ID what roads were open
- Kids have opportunities
- "Diner"/pub → community – local – meeting place
  -Unifying element – spontaneous – brings community together
- Basic services
  -Affordable housing
  -Support for elderly
  -Support for disadvantaged
- Affordable housing through town owned land or land trusts
- Habitat for Humanity house here in Acworth
- Enhancement and enrichment
  -Improving educational programs for all ages
  -Unifying community/foster sense of community
- Revamp overseer of poor – and change name to "community services coordinator"
  -Form task force of people to contribute funds or services to meet needs
  -Coordinator is not a single individual working alone – has support of community behind her/him
- Library lectures – Helen Frink monthly
- Community bulletin
- Create funding to support disadvantaged in town
- Outing club
- Book club/discussions
- Knitting club
- Waste management education and recycling
- Community gardens
- Local nutrition education – importance of eating local foods
- Refurbish/move Grange
- South Acworth playing fields

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- Revamp overseer of poor – and change name to "community services coordinator"
  -Form task force of people to contribute funds or services to meet needs
- Emergency network – people in community automatically check on people to help meet their needs
- Emergency coordinators thru town meeting and coordinated emergency networking need task force to identify needs and the needy
- Coordinator to ID what roads are open
- Emergency response cards local names and contact – goes to each community member
- Community Bulletin
- Education about alternate elderly care
- Augment "blessing fund" and communicate to community about its availability
- Community garden
  -Suzanne Orlando will address/research

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Cell phone tower – aesthetically done
- "Diner"/Pub
  -Barbara Davis & Dennis Eaton will investigate
- Waste management and recycling education and policies
  -Hold programs at library or church
- Habitat for Humanity house here in Acworth
- Affordable housing thru town owned land or land trusts
- South Acworth playing fields

High Impact/Low Feasibility

- Move Grange/refurbish
- Elderly housing locally managed

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

- Local nutrition info importance of eating local foods
  -Sullivan County Cooperative Extension will help on this
- Library lectures
  -Sally Eaton will contact Bressica & Friends of Library
  -Solicit ideas in community newsletter

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Reinstitute ski program

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility
- Preserve and maintain 5th grade in Acworth

Low Impact/High Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Key Issue #4 Communication & Community Building

Facilitator: Vicki Hebert Recorder: Evelyn Clowes Spokesperson: Dennis Eaton
Participants: Dennis Eaton, Jim Brown, Jerry Pfohl, Gretchen Abendschein, Hugh and Betty Williams, Alice Fogel

The Issue:
- Town has become polarized – often due to poor communication – especially newsletter
- Better communication would improve our knowledge of each other and out doing business with each other
- Communication and cooperation = dialogue
- Discover common goals rather than disparate means
- What are our common values?
- Folks think town officials fail to communicate with citizens and town officials feel they fail to communicate our needs and wants--polarization/lack of dialogue
- Failure to listen to one another

Potential Solutions:
- Town e-mail list to help inform about meetings and other town events
- Flyer/bulletin informing about meetings and town events
- Mailing list (snail mail) of folks who do not get e-mail
- Improve town mailing list accuracy
- Utilize sandwich boards for major events
- Have a separate bulletin board for official town communication
- Learn to be careful about assumptions
- Use town newsletter as forum for dialogue on issues
- Town mission statement and ground rules to open meetings of town function
  -Chair responsibility/opportunity
- Town business list, skills, attributes
- Open, informational meeting before a hearing on hot issues – need an unbiased mediator/facilitator/impartial moderator
- Train chairs in orderly procedures for meetings
- Go deeper into common values with one another – what can get us there
- Remind each other that we all care deeply about Acworth

- Create more opportunities for informal 'get-together'

Project Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility
- Town mission statement with ground rules to open meeting of town functions – impartial chair – responsibility/opportunity
- Town email list to notify of meetings and events
- Newsletter for facts and dialogue

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Acknowledge depth of common values – forum for that – define them (also noted in High Impact/Low Feasibility)
- Train chairs in rules of order
- Revamp town mailing list

High Impact/Low Feasibility
- Mail notices of meetings and events

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility
- Town business and skills list
- Separate bulletin boards designated for town events
- Sandwich boards uptown and down for meetings and events
- Posted bulletin flyer to notify of meetings and events – flyer to take home at store dump (also noted in Low Impact/High Feasibility)

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Create opportunities for informal social get-togethers

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/High Feasibility
- Informational pre-meeting before hearings – mediated by impartial moderator

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Key Issue #5 Recreational Opportunities

Facilitator: Michele Gagne Recorder: Sandy Brewer Spokesperson: not noted
Participants: Robert Skinney, Jim Genovese, Janet Albright, Mary Giuseppone, Daniel Giuseppone

Potential Solutions:

- Centralized sport fields
  - -Existing hard to find
  - -Inadequate
- Build new fields/sports complex
- Possible relocation of Grange buildings
- Trail maps and access
  - -Snowmobile trails
  - -Hiking trails/biking trails/nature trails
  - -Boat ramp
  - -Birding trails
  - -Class VI road committee
- Publication - monthly
  - -Listing activities
  - -For all age groups
  - -Sierra Club outings
  - -E-mail Acworth web sites
- Getting more people involved in the recreation committee with Mary Lord
  - -Including young
- Build/repair community bulletin board and maintain – to post recreational information
  - -Town hall
  - -Lake
  - -Post office
  - -Village store
- Recreation committee budget increase
  - -Dinner – homemade pies
  - -Raffles
- Community events
  - -Dances
  - -Outings
  - -Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
  - -Hiking/biking
  - -Breakfasts (pancakes)
  - -Yoga/meditation/exercise
  - -Guided tours of existing recreation trails
  - -ALL these activities – multi-generational

Program Evaluations:

High Impact/High Feasibility

- Expanded recreation committee with diverse membership (i.e. youth)

- Access and make user friendly existing trail maps
- Have fundraisers/raffles to raise money for recreation (i.e. dinner with homemade pies)
- Develop monthly calendar of events including recreation (but also other activities)

High Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Relocate Grange buildings to use as sports complex
- Increase annual recreation budget for committee to expand programs

High Impact/Low Feasibility
- Build new field/complex

Moderate Impact/High Feasibility
- Have more community events
  - -Dances
  - -Outings
  - -Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
  - -Hiking/biking
  - -Breakfasts (pancakes)
  - -Yoga/meditation/exercise
  - -Guided tours of existing recreation trails
  - -ALL these activities – multi-generational

Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility
- Build bulletin boards/repair current ones and maintain to post recreation information (i.e. at Lake, Village store, Post Office, Library)
- Put recreation information on current website
- Have guided tours of existing recreational opportunities/trails/snowshoe (i.e. tour after pancake breakfast)

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/High Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility
None noted

Low Impact/Low Feasibility
None noted

Saturday Afternoon
PROJECT SELECTION

A member of each small group presented the projects that the group had come up with, Michele Gagne with UNH Cooperative Extension led a short discussion about whether some projects overlapped and could be combined with other closely related ones.

Lunch was then served and every participant received five adhesive dots to use to "vote" on projects they thought were important for to work on right away. Each voter could place one dot for each easel/theme as their top priority for that group. The projects receiving the most votes would then be discussed in small groups. The list of project ideas follows.

#1 Conserve Acworth's Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources

1. Create a historic structures inventory, including stone structures, existing buildings, mill sites, etc. **(23 votes)**
2. Create a citizens' group to inventory and steward Acworth's natural resource assets, including education and communication **(14 votes)**
3. Improve citizen participation in the review and update of current zoning and Class VI roads **(7 votes)**

#2 Inform Community about Community Events/Meetings

1. Inform community about community events, meetings, gatherings – e-mail, flyers, post on town bulletin boards, newsletter, Acworth website, mailing list (revamp it first), use sandwich boards, use separate bulletin boards for town business, create town business directory. **(27 votes)**
2. New way to conduct public meetings – use ground rules, offer training to meeting chairs in "Rules of Order", suggest town group and boards create and use their mission statements as foundation for their work, begin discussion with an acknowledgement of our commonly held values as "Acworthians", hold informational meeting on "hot issues" before the hearing. **(8 votes)**
3. Create opportunities for informal social and cultural "get-togethers" **(6 votes)**

#3 Master Plan Involvement

1. Local resource directory
   -Welcoming info
   -Business, arts and crafts, agriculture, labor
   -Digital and hard copy
   -Plan for dissemination **(13 votes)**
2. Expand involvement in master plan
   -Solicit man power to draft and implement – Planning Board letter to all
   -Town development plan
   -Land bank – zoning – innovative land use – etc. **(25 votes)**
3. Community newsletter/blog

-Hard copy
-Digital town documents (Master Plan etc)
-Letters to the editor **(10 votes)**

#4 Recreational Opportunities

1. Expand current recreation committee and include youth/diverse membership **(12 votes)**
2. Publicize existing recreation opportunities (i.e. monthly town calendar of events)
   -Trails
   -Clubs **(9 votes)**
3. Create a centrally located sports area
   -Grange building
   -Soccer
   -Football
   -Softball/baseball
   -Picnic area **(21 votes)**

#5 Creating an Emergency Response Coordinator

1. Change name of the 'overseer of the poor' position to 'community service coordinator'. This coordinator would form a task force to facilitate community support services and address financial concerns, elder care and needs of disadvantaged youth. The coordinator would be the liaison with the 'blessing fund' at the church and other community resources. **(9 votes)**
2. Develop a community bulletin which could communicate facts to the community about: upcoming community events and sports, unedited minutes to town government meetings, openings on the town boards and committees, publish letters to the editor, classifieds. **(17 votes)**
3. Create an emergency response coordinator position thru town meeting who would form an Emergency Response Committee to design and Emergency Response Plan to include: creation of emergency cards with local contacts, investigate possibility of cell tower, and network to communicate vital information when needed (neighborhood watch) with clear defined authority. **(21 votes)**

ACTION GROUPS

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

Project # 1: Create a historic structures inventory, including stone structures, existing buildings, mill sites, etc:

Facilitator: Sarah Vogel Recorder: not noted
Participants: Kris Fenderson, Deb Hinman, Ken Grant, Roger Cote, Peter Maynard, Sandra Wotowiec, Bill Osborn, Bill Mitchell, Carolyn Mitchell

Who:

- Peter-mapping, field work;
- Bill-mapping, field work;
- Rover Cote-historic buildings (esp. church);
- Debby Hoffman-History of cellar holes;
- Buddy Smith, Historical Society;
- Mark Goodwin-developing map/GIS;
- Special Places map-conservation commission;
- Gordon, Mr. Mitchell, Brad Basam-geneologist;
- Helen Frink, Gerry Demuro, Ray Chin, Mary Chin.
- **Resources:** Special places map, GIS, Burn info onto CD's, use old maps, Warner's stone structure inventory sheets etc, Historical Society. **The convener: Deb Hinman-Historical Society dhinman@sover.net**

Project # 2: Inform community about community events, meetings, gatherings:

Facilitator: Vicki Hebert Recorder: Alice Fogel
Participants: William Sandeau, Gretchen Abendschein, Ray Nabatoff, Jerry Pfohl, Suzanna Orlando, Jim Brown, Joanna Dennett.

Who: Library, Town Governors and support staff, online webpage-webmaster, recreation committee representative, events coordinators, writers, printers, Master Plan writers, citizens of Acworth.

- Ray-Store Internet café training;
- Suzanne-Library connection;
- Alice-Tentative outline of print bulletin contents; recreation committee connection, mailing list,
- William-minutes of meetings in town and agenda;
- Gretchen, Jerry, Mike, Joanna-Directory of arts and businesses.

Resources: Master Plan, minutes of meetings, online blog, artists and businesses, trainers in Internet use, money/funding, Selectman's support for money, warrant, classifieds, all minutes available, resources directory, business directory, mailing list, arts.

Project # 3: Expand Involvement in Master Plan:

Facilitator: Evelyn Clowes Recorder: Stella Herpel
Participants: John Herpel, Paul Hotz, Carol Hotz, Liana Hambrich, Joanne Brown, Stephen Davis, Gordon Gowen, Marcie Maynard, Jon Clowes

Resources: Planning board or rep, Master Plan Committee, Selectman, interested citizens, 1979 master plan authors. Also need town list (updated), people need to draft letters (clear with planning board), update list (Alice), disseminate info, handwritten label local endorsements

Project # 4: Create a Centrally located Sports Area:

Facilitator: Bon Skinner Recorder: Sandy Brewer
Participants: Sam Edson, Jim Genovese, Janet Albright, Dennis Eaton, Mary Giuseppone, Dan Giuseppone.

Who: Recreation Committee, Mary Lord, Sam Edison and Mark Edison, Bob Skinner, Sandy Brewar, Jim Genovese, Janet Albright, Dan and Mary Giuseppone, Dennis Eaton.
Resources: communication on committee meetings, notify Mary Lord before November 8th-she needs to update group, names, telephone numbers, addresses of committee members, venue, plan before November 8th, current committees agenda to share with group.

Project # 5: Creating an Emergency Response Coordinator:

Facilitator: Seth Wilner Recorder: not noted
Participants: Barbara Davis, Sally Eaton, John Tuthill

Who: Fire Chief-Albert Knicely, Emergency management director-Ken Grant, Selectmen, church groups, school, general store, Cathy at Town Hall, NH emergency management Agency-Peter Patachnik, Road Agent-Kerry Smith, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning-grant funding, Senator Odell, Representative Jay Phinity, Health officer-Donna Dutten, Board of Selectmen Committee.
Resources: Available funds/grants-Upper Valley Regional Planning, what is available in Town, Existing emergency response plan – get through Ken Grant, need a town liaison with authorities, 911 map of Acworth-available at Town Hall to look at, identify organizations/agencies in town who could help with neighborhood network, need a hazard mitigation plan to access FEMA money. Cell phone tower calls – Perhaps start with Dan O'neil.

CONCLUSION

The groups all agreed to recruit others to the follow-up meeting facilitated by UNH Cooperative Extension on November 8, 2005 at the Acworth Town Hall

The meeting adjourned at 2PM.

APPENDIX

Community Profile Participants

Gretchen Abendschein
Janet Albright
Shawn Bowman
Kathi Bradt
Sandy Brewer
Jim Brown
Joanne Brown
Evelyn Clowes
Jonathan Clowes
Roger Cote
Elizabeth Cubberley
Barbara Davis
Stephen Davis
Joanna Dennett
Dennis Eaton
Sally Eaton
Sam Edson
Dick Elsesser
Shirley Elsesser
Tom Esslinger
Kris Fenderson
Alice Fogel
Debbie Fielding
Jim Genovese
Daniel Giuseppone
Mary Giuseppone
Gordon Gowen
Ken Grant
Charley Haines
Sarah Haines
Liana Haubrich
Mark Haubrich
John Herpel
Stella Herpel
Deb Hinman
Carol Hotz
Paul Hotz
Claudia Istel
Lillie LeBlanc
Michael LeBlanc
Todd Lindenstruth
John W. Luther
Robin Luther
Marcie Maynard
Peter Maynard
Sharon Miller
Bill Mitchell
Carolyn Mitchell
Ray Nabatoff
Suzanne Orlando
Bill Osborn
Craig Oshkello
Jerry Pfohl
Peter Rhoades
Jack Rieck
William Sandoe
Maryellen Sheehan
Bob Skinner
Sam R Stephens
"Stab" Waldo Streeter
Meridith Tenney
Michele Turner
John Tuthill
Sarah Vogel
Mark Wellens
Betty Williams
Hugh J. Williams
Sandra Wotowiec

Community Profile Facilitators and Recorders

Sandy Brewer
Evelyn Clowes
Barbara Davis
Alice Fogel
Charlie French
Michele Gagne
Liana Haubrich
Vicki Herbert
Stella Herpel
Ashlee Iber
Marcie Maynard
Craig Oshkello
Bob Skinner
Sarah Vogel
Seth Wilner
Peter Wotowiec