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# AMHERST COMMUNITY PROFILE REPORT

**For Reference**

**Not to be taken from this room**

**Amherst, New Hampshire  
January 9 & 10, 1998**



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Amherst, N.H. 03031

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## OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PROFILES

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

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

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

## CREATING A COMMUNITY PROFILE IN AMHERST

During the early summer of 1997, Karen Elmer, Clerk of the Amherst Planning Board, read a news note describing the recent Community Profile in Brookline. She called the people involved, met with them, and in turn, contacted Penny Turner at the Hillsborough County office of UNH Cooperative Extension.

Amherst's desire to update its 10 year old Master Plan with maximum citizen input was explained to Ms. Turner. Subsequently, Amherst Planning Board Chairman, Charles Tiedeman, arranged an informational meeting on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1997, with a group of selected citizens. Approximately 20 people attended this meeting. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of a Community Profile Steering Committee, who set the date of January 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998 for the event.

For more information on the Amherst Community Profile, contact Karen Elmer, Amherst Town Hall, (603)673-6041, or Ron Berlack, (603)673-8550.

UNH Cooperation Extension  
Amherst Community Profile  
Souhegan High School  
January 9 & 10, 1998

**Agenda**

Friday Evening

**5:30 Sign-In, Pot-Luck Supper**

**6:30 Welcome**

- Overview of Community Profile Process
- Who is here?

**6:45 Mosaic and Vision**

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

**7:30 Amherst: Yesterday and Today**

- Presentation of statistical and historical data

**7:40 Presentation of Community Profile components**

- 1) Effective Community Leadership: *A Broader Definition*
- 2) Informed Citizen Participation: *More Than Voter Turn-Out*
- 3) Intergroup Relations: *Celebrating Diversity Within the Community*
- 4) Keeping Our Cultural Heritage Strong: *Arts, Festivals and Celebrations*
- 5) Education and Social Services: *Meeting our Citizens' Needs*
- 6) Physical Infrastructure and Services: *The Basics that Serve Our Needs*
- 7) Natural Resource Base: *Water, Energy and Materials*
- 8) How the community Looks and Feels: *Village, Farm and Forest*
- 9) Economic Vitality: *Stability through Diversity*
- 10) Local Business, Local Wealth: *Re-Circulating Money Within the Community*

**8:00 Small group discussions of components (Small group facilitators)**

Random assignments to small groups, one component per group

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

**9:30 Formal adjournment**

Saturday

**8:45 Coffee and check-in**

**9:00 Small group reports**

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

**9:50 Selection of key issues**

- Discussion to refine list of 50+ key issues down to about 10, based on consensus.

**10:20 Break**

**10:30 Individual selection of key issues**

- Participants select small group/issue to work on.

**10:45 Small groups meet for key issue discussions**

- 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 Lunch**

**1:00 Report back from small groups**

**2:00 Voting**

- Which projects do you think we should move forward on?
- Which is the most important project for our Amherst right now?

**2:15 Individual selection of project development groups**

**Break**

**2:30 Project development - small groups (small group facilitators)**

- Goals and objectives    •Potential obstacles, solutions    •Action steps
- Resources needed    •Principal leadership    •Timeline    •Coordinator, first step

**4:00 Where do we go from here? - full group**

- Action format - task forces or full body.
- How to communicate with each other and the community.
- Future meetings
- Who should be included?

**4:30 Adjourn**

# Amherst Community Profile

## Friday Evening

The Amherst Community Profile was conducted at Souhegan High School over two days: Friday evening, January 9th and all day Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998. About 80 participants attended both Friday and Saturday. The list of attendees was slightly different each day.

The event began Friday with a potluck supper. Delia Clark, a consultant working for UNH Cooperative Extension, gave us 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, who had children in the schools, where we work, and what were our primary sources of local information. 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 Amherst like today?

Wet	Christmas tree lighting
Quiet	Pretty
Bad traffic patterns	Active
Towerless!	Bad roads
Poor communications	Good government
Volunteerism	Big houses
Historic	Losing farms
Safe	Sparsely settled
Ethnically narrow	Overcrowded Middle School
Getting crowded	Not enough for young people to do
Changing	Not enough for anyone
Good Schools	Well maintained roads and bridges
High taxes	Socially isolated
Friendly	Living beyond its means
Bedroom Town	Highway business strip
Well educated	Good values
Wealthy	Walmart
Low participation	Too many black flies
Still somewhat rural	Progressive High School
Great library	Confused self-image
Beautiful village	Losing diversity
Great 4 <sup>th</sup> of July	Never had diversity

Excellent High School  
Overcrowded High School  
Overcrowded elementary schools  
Plows knocking down rock walls  
Still wildlife  
Good athletic program kids  
Good town band.  
Still a good town to raise children in  
Technically progressive  
Antique shops  
Large base of potential involved citizens  
Bradgon Farms  
Joe English  
Salzburg Square  
Politically conservative  
Golf  
Souhegan River  
need bike paths  
Summer program for kids  
Committed to preserve open areas  
Great yard sales  
Excellent teachers  
Littered  
Graffiti  
New kindergarten  
Airliner noise  
Baboosic Lake  
Airport flight patterns  
Pedestrian unfriendly  
More liberal than it wants to admit  
Conservative outlook  
Characterless Post Office  
Needs skating rink  
Needs a pool  
Dump  
Can't recycle mixed paper  
Congregational Church  
Village  
Caufields football field  
Unmonitored land fills  
Just the right distance from Boston  
Low Heaton skating pond  
Congregational Church on green  
Silent majority

Soccer club  
Fisher, mink and martin  
Too close geographically to Nashua  
Getting closer to Boston  
The reason why Nashua ranked #1  
Cable monopoly  
The Williamsburg of southern NH  
Great fire trucks  
Great town employees  
Not one good pub  
Village comradery  
Car a necessity  
No bikepath  
Too many radar traps  
Good hiking trails  
Not enough pink flamingos  
Responsive police force  
Ballot voting  
Too many golf courses  
Too many golfers  
Great Christmas lights  
Terrible cable company  
Insufficient income tax discounts for seniors  
Town meeting  
Too fast development  
Infrastructure building out of control  
Lack of industry  
Regional planning needed  
Volunteer rescue squad  
Not one good restaurant  
Betty Arnold  
Memorial Day  
Potential loss of center of town  
Too many tickets  
Aquifer  
More diverse than want to admit  
Bike lanes rather than bike paths  
Too many cul-de-sacs  
Innovative zoning  
Great golf course  
Senior citizen concerns  
Halloween on the Green  
4<sup>th</sup> of July on the Green

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

Fewer bugs	Town recreation buildings
Great place for kids	Look like "the way we were"
Town meeting back	Less litter
Get cows back	No wires in village
Pedestrian paths	Public forum
Uncrowded schools	No increase in taxes
Environmental awareness	Better community communication
Strong senior community	More citizen participation
Strong recycling	Sewer system
More conservation land	Fiscally conservative government
No more houses	Strong protection for historic district/village
More of same	No towers
Different traffic patterns	Bring back pink flamingos
Unstriping of roads	Rebuilding Kayser's dam
Souhegan High School as it is now	Allow dump picking and recycling
Slower growth	Keep rural/small-town lifestyle
Diversity	Paid planners
Maintain demographics	Effective and proactive Board of Selectmen
Historical upkeep	

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Next, Richard Martini presented a historical perspective of Amherst dating back as far as the 1700's, including slides. The text of this presentation is included in the report's Appendix.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE TEN COMPONENTS

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

### **Civic Infrastructure**

1. Effective Community Leadership: A Broader Definition
2. Informed Citizen Participation: More Than Voter Turn-Out
3. Intergroup Relations: Celebrating Diversity Within the Community

### **Community Infrastructure**

4. Our Cultural Heritage: Arts, Festivals and Celebrations
5. Education and Social Services: Meeting our Citizens' Needs
6. Physical Infrastructure and Services: The Basics that Serve Our Needs



## **Environment**

7. Natural Resource Base: Water, Energy and Materials
8. How the Community Looks and Feels: Village, Farm and Forest

## **Economy**

9. Economic Vitality: Stability through Diversity
10. Local Business, Local Wealth: Re-Circulating Money Within the Community

Next, 10 small groups of approximately seven people each were randomly formed, one group for each of the components. The small groups adjourned to assigned classrooms where facilitators lead the groups in their discussions and recorders made notes on ~~more~~ large easels. Each group considered the definition of their component and was asked the questions below in order to begin the discussion. Participants were asked to list the strengths of Amherst as they saw them, and then to list its weaknesses. 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 in the town. These were brought back to the whole group and highlighted in five-minute summations presented by a member of each small group.

## **1. Effective Community Leadership: A Broader Definition**

(Facilitator, Anne Krantz: Recorder, John Nute: Participants, Rosemarie Garreff, Jay Dinkel Marilyn Peterman, Carolyn Quinn, Candy Shirey, Betsie Bridge, Steve Coughlan, Rick Katzanberg.)

### Statement of Purpose

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

### Questions to think about

- Is there active leadership in all three sectors in the community: public, private and non-profit?
- Do leaders seek out the interests and ideas of local citizens?
- Do they represent diverse community interests (age and gender groups, length of time they have resided in the community, etc.)?
- Do leaders demonstrate knowledge, accountability, professionalism, and innovation?
- Is leadership results oriented?
- Do leaders demonstrate long range (20+ years ) thinking? Do they understand the impacts of their actions on the long term health and vitality of the community?
- Are leaders willing to consider and utilize alternative methods for delivering services, and to undertake regional solutions where appropriate?
- Do all three sectors actively recruit, train, and empower new leaders?
- Do leaders have a common forum to discuss issues with other leaders in the region?
- How do region wide policy conflicts get resolved?



#### Group Response: Community Leadership Strengths:

- Quantity of leaders.
- Quantity of potential leaders.
- Leaders try to do best they can for the town.
- Quality of leadership.
- Quality of professional leadership inspires volunteers.
- Leadership for youth organizations is wonderful!
- Parents share mentoring and leadership of youth.
- School catalyst for youth activities.
- Volunteerism is satisfying, fosters friendship, community feeling.
- Unique sense of service and sharing and volunteering.
- Helen Burns and Halloween.
- Lou Heaton and Pond.
- Minimal paid staff, work must be done by volunteers.
- Lots of opportunities.

#### Group Response: Community Leadership Concerns:

- May need change to more professional leadership as town grows (tower issue, cable company?).
- Are not developing interest of new recruits for town leadership.
- Leaders get negative responses.
- Community out of the loop. Communication not good, poor interest.
- Community doesn't retain leaders trained as youth leave area.
- Some youth (activities) do not get adult/community support.
- Residents don't have time to get involved.
- How to recruit volunteers?
- Misinformation - news focuses on negative.
- Public meetings' minutes not published, advertised.

#### Community Leadership: Vision for the Future:

- Communication - Web page (library has Web page ), better newspaper coverage.
- How do you lend your expertise to issues? Need lots of sub-committees; gives experience; creates "mid-level" of management for volunteers.
- "New" retired could be recruited, reminded they are needed, valuable - youth, parents, newbies.
- "Term limits" for leaders (how to structure?).
- Volunteerism a more positive experience (see 1<sup>st</sup> bullet)
- Structured leadership training for everyone develops quality.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Broaden base of volunteerism, recognizing it promotes:
  - satisfaction
  - fosters friendship
  - community feeling
  - positive personal experience
  - creates experience to develop leaders (quality and quantity).
- Develop proactive strategy to recruit and train potential leaders.

- Communication needed to catalyze citizen involvement:  
Web page  
newspaper coverage  
agenda and meeting notices and postings.
- Arrange variety of subcommittee opportunities to create "mid level" management skills.
- Recruit from the broadest possible range of population.

## 2. Informed Citizen Participation: More Than Voter Turn-Out

(Facilitator, Jan Bunker: Recorder, Gail Kennedy: Participants, Dennis Wilson, Allan Carlsmith, Alec Buchanan, Alan Shirey, Joe Visinski, Toni Kinkel, Cynthia Dokmo.)

### Statement of Purpose

If a community is to be strong, citizens must participate through voting in local elections, serving on governmental boards, attending public hearings and being active in civic organizations. Declining ability of government to meet community needs means that philanthropy and volunteerism become even more important. All citizens need to develop knowledge and skills to contribute to community life. All sectors within a community -- private, public, and nonprofit -- must each take responsibility for the community's civic education and generate and share information with the public. Sharing in problem solving and planning for the future as a community increases pride in the community and can result in an ethic of giving and sharing as a way of life.

### Questions to think about

- Do citizens know how the system works?
- Is it easy for newcomers to learn how to get involved in the community?
- How do people find out what is going on in the community?
- What is the level of volunteerism and philanthropy in the community? Which are the best areas and which are the weaker areas?
- Are citizens actively involved in major projects?
- Do citizens volunteer to serve on local boards and committees?
- Is participation pro-active or reactive?
- Do civic organizations and local businesses actively contribute to community functions?
- Do citizens have the information they need to make good decisions?
- Is there both adequate and balanced media coverage of local events and issues?
- How well do local committees and boards communicate with each other and the public and with other boards and committees throughout the region?
- Are local citizens actively involved in civic and business organizations and clubs that involve interaction with residents of neighboring communities?
- Do civic education efforts involve the entire community?
- Do schools, churches, youth and civic groups provide citizen education and promote community service?

### Group Response: Strengths in Citizen Participation:

- When people move here they realize they want to get involved.
- People tend to get involved.

- Great place to raise a family and to live.
- "Neighborhoods."
- Scale of town is small enough to be comprehended.
- Town meeting - your community.
- I can participate in government.
- Your voice means something and that is still here. Should be maintained.
- People respected - their opinions.
- If you run for office you hand out leaflets at the dump.
- Sufficient media resources so people can find out what is going on.
- Milford two newspapers do a good job.
- Other venues to find out what is going (library, schools, dump, churches).
- Discussion during sports events (kids) between people.
- Getting involved with schools - find out what's really going on.
- Strong tradition of volunteer boards despite outcry of decrease in volunteerism.
- Achievement of those volunteer boards, e.g. this school construction.
- Well educated, fairly professional community provides resources for volunteerism.
- Boards very visible to newcomers.
- Still a lot of volunteers in this town.
- If you are willing to put in your time.
- Conservation, rescue squad.
- Good to meet people on boards - positive and negative.
- We recommend people who have volunteered to volunteer again.
- Invite alternates to meetings to have a continuous flow to replace outgoing.
- A lot of volunteers.
- Police and others check on residents regularly - people need to know about these things.

Group Response: Concerns about Citizen Participation:

- Involved as "parents" forget role as "citizen."
- Rescue squad - hard to find volunteers (lack of direction and management).
- Only 1500-1800 voting - these are the people involved in volunteering (small segment of population).
- Always have to twist people's arms.
- Tasks are demanding (e.g. rescue squad).
- Small group running functions and committees - seen as clique but the opposite is true.
- People feel they haven't lived in town long enough.
- Divisive debate over official ballot has reduced volunteerism.
- Need better way to educate general public on what they're voting on.
- Concern that we need to focus on the positive and respect each other at meetings.
- A lot of "single issue" people come to meetings.
- People don't consider all the issues - just their's.
- Single issue focus discourages volunteerism.
- Meeting size shrinking, eventually stop seeing old faces.
- Town growing, Town Meeting participation decreasing.
- Single issue focus.
- Participation is reactive, not proactive.
- People feel their voice doesn't mean anything.
- Social structure changing effects volunteerism.
- Large portion of town "3 - 8 years" - transient nature.

- Outmigration from Digital, etc. belly-up.
- People move out due to retiring early, etc.
- Conflicting demands on time, people go where they have the biggest impact, very efficient therefore town government lost out.
- Identified problem with rescue squad (like a job).
- Social pressure to volunteer in schools or places where your friends think you should be.
- Community could be behind supporting volunteer services (fire, rescue squad).
- If positions had to be paid we couldn't afford it ("un" incorporate, become like Germany).

#### Citizen Participation: Vision for the Future:

- Find ways to increase volunteer pool.
- Move zoning and real estate focus from affluent people employed elsewhere to affluent people in town.
- Reverse bedroom community nature of town.
- Increase sense of community.
- Encourage more "at home" businesses.
- Zoning laws can discourage in town businesses (historic district).
- Redirect the town to become more "self-contained."
- Public relations - better inform people what the town offers.
- Forms to volunteer when you register your car (e.g.)
- Better information on opportunities for volunteerism.
- Transfer school volunteering into the community.
- List volunteer opportunities.
- Volunteer coordinator.
- Route 101A negatively impacts this "self-containment." It's geographically divisive.
- Master plan, zoning need to be changed.
- Williamsburg preserves atmosphere of colonial era - this is so in Amherst.
- Amherst has become a pretty residential neighborhood but it's "dead."
- Looking out for senior citizens should be community focus.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Ways to maintain and foster the volunteer pool.
- Volunteering builds a sense of community.
- Zoning and real estate focus needs to be examined to see how this discourages community.
- Broaden sense of civic responsibility.
- Intra board/committee/community communication coordination.

### 3. Intergroup Relations: Celebrating Diversity Within the Community

(Facilitator, Tom Head; Recorder, Alice Mullen; Participants, Beth Davis, Doug Kirkwood, Dana Crowell, Colleen O'Connell, Gerrie Porter, Andy Clifford, Burt Knight.)

#### Statement of Purpose

A community is made up of different people with different interests, experiences and backgrounds. These characteristics may divide a community into natural groups but there must be cooperation among them if the community is to work well. Increasing social complexity presents challenges to reaching consensus or resolving conflicts but also provide opportunities for cultural enrichment. As disagreements arise, neutral forums and processes are needed where all opinions can be heard and consensus encouraged. In addition, programs are needed to increase communication and understanding of different perspectives among groups and within the community as a whole.

#### Questions to think about

- How much communication is there among diverse interest groups in the community such as natives/newcomers, summer/year round residents, young parents/retirees, as well as business community, commuters, etc.?
- Are such groups involved in identifying community goals and in resolving community issues?
- Do all groups have skills to become involved in the community?
- Do formal and informal forums exist for sharing ideas and resolving public issues?
- Are collective decisions which represent broad input reached and implemented?
- Do groups cooperate in resolving broad disputes?
- Do small, specific conflicts escalate into larger issues?
- Does the community deal with critical issues before they become crises? How is this done?
- How would you define the self image of the community? Is it a positive one?
- How is social and cultural diversity celebrated in the community?

#### Group Response: General Discussion:

- Non diverse - homogeneous - white, same socio-economic group.
- Senior citizens/family groups/young families with children; natives/newcomers.
- People who operate infrastructure don't live in town.
- Residents/industry/businesses.
- Residents close to village/other areas away from village (do these people feel part of Amherst?).
- Lacks socio-economic diversity (weakness); upper-middle class - Amherst likes it this way - does it want to be diverse? Include in future planning? Low cost housing, elderly housing.
- Good reputation for schools; no industry.
- Town is selective (socio-economic wise) on who can come into the town.
- Is diversity politically correct things to do?
- Nothing happening in Amherst to promote economic diversity.
- The higher the economic status, the more isolated it becomes - becomes a gated community.
- Diversity - Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY).
- Diversity promotes interaction.
- Keep seniors in town.

Group Response: Strengths in Intergroup Relations:

- Religiously.
- Background - ethnic, educational, professional, geographic.
- Home occupations.
- Politically.
- Mechanism for achieving diversity is in zoning ordinances.
- All industry on Route 101A.

Group Response: Concerns about Intergroup Relations:

- Ignorance about types of industries in town.
- Same socio-economic group.
- People who operate infrastructure don't live in town.
- Attitude toward diversity - NIMBY.
- Cultural shallowness.
- Cultural shyness to diversity - isolation.

Intergroup Relations: Vision for the Future:

- Expand industrial base - keep on Route 101A - town in general doesn't want it.
- Improve infrastructure to accommodate industry.
- Keep empty nesters - tax breaks, elderly housing, activities (senior center), part of diversity, improve low cost.
- Sub communities - neighborhoods.

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Not as diverse (socio-economic) as we think we are and becoming less so - do we want to be?
- Lost our sense of community and civility - isolated.
- Improve commercial/industry diversity and infrastructure to support it.
- Keep age diversity - support "empty nesters" and young families.
- Create a sense of community in Amherst.

#### 4. Keeping Our Cultural Heritage Strong: Arts, Festivals and Celebrations

(Facilitator, Adam Hutchinson: Recorder, Julia Steed Mawson: Participants, Ruth Krumhansl, Jeff Davis, Vicki Fiacco, Robin Julian, Nancy Head.)

Statement of Purpose

The cultural life of a community can be a strong source of pride for citizens. Arts, theater, local festivals and celebrations all reflect and build a community's positive sense of itself and strengthen the fabric of all social interactions within the community.

Questions to think about

- What ways does the community celebrate itself?
- What are the special cultural centers, events and festivals within the community?

- Are these events well known within the community? Outside the community?
- Does the community preserve and enhance what is special and unique about its cultural heritage?
- Are children encouraged to participate in cultural events?
- Are citizens part of larger regional cultural events?

Group Response: Strengths in Cultural Areas:

- Fourth of July celebration.
- Memorial Day.
- Halloween.
- Christmas tree lights.
- Children's celebration.
- Antique Fair.
- Garden sales.
- Book sale.
- Band concerts.
- Terrific library.
- Historic Society.
- Souhegan Choral Society.
- Soccer club.
- Children's athletic club.
- Lots of school celebrations.
- PTA play.
- Souhegan High plays.
- Library programs.
- Boy Scouts annual dinner awards.
- Garden club strong.
- Newcomers' club activities.
- Lions (Past Lionesses)
- AAUW (American Association of University Women)
- Junior Women's Club.
- Rotary Club.
- Antique study clubs.
- Book clubs.
- 4-H.
- Jeff's active Halloween village.
- Haunted house in village.
- Lots of spirit on Halloween.
- Hayrides
- Fire truck rides.
- Concert.
- Peacock players, American Stage Festival | things outside of town that town folk can do.
- Mont Vernon Congregational Church
- Good NH Symphony in Manchester.
- Super theatrical groups - lot of range of experiences.
- Odyssey of the Mind - phenomenal volunteer time given.
- Clubs and activities at Middle and High Schools - school extra curricula.
- Hartshorn summer program - environmental.



- Baboosic Lake activities for summer.
- Town recreation department.
- 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade environmental camp in Maine/Pinkham Notch.
- Ski programs.
- Camp invention.
- Library story hours.
- Jasper Valley swim and tennis club.
- Hampshire Hills.
- Amherst Country Club.
- Student art show at library.
- Art show - green on 4<sup>th</sup> of July.
- Currier Gallery.
- "Reflections" - PTA.

Group Response: Concerns about Cultural Areas:

- Need ways to more spontaneously gather.
- Town center as hub, but subdivisions spread out.
- Few informal children's games and activities.
- General issue of safety concerns cuts down on 8 -12 year olds going on their own.
- Don't have feeling that others are watching out for them.
- Over-organize our kids.
- Television....decreases participation in public events.
- Don't have social pubs.
- Don't have the spontaneity.
- Encourage people to do black parties.
- Not having opportunities to get to know people informally.
- Both people work.
- Tired at night.
- Physical arrangement affects who people interact.
- Sometimes not a lot of people attend. Parents don't always support arts vs. sports.
- Important for well rounded students.
- Vast majority support sports vs. arts.
- Adults need to make sacrifice to encourage kids - broaden future of town.
- Loss of some things - ski hill, liability problems, Ben's hill, music appreciation classes for a week or 2 in summer, annual Memorial Day tennis tournament.
- Pollution problems at Baboosic degrade experience for public.
- May not be enough publication of available events.

Cultural Areas: Vision for the Future:

- Keep organized events.
- Expand events like July 4<sup>th</sup> event.
- Get more neighborhoods involved - encourage.
- Fireworks.
- Place to go to see people like place at library/village coffeehouse/pub.
- Need grocery store.
- Have a cheap Hampshire Hills - by town - not junky (not want to be too much like suburbia).
- Create different types of gathering centers.



- Create recreation/community center as part of school.
- Good to connect older folks to school, e.g. lap swimming, by having a diversity of things around - pool, speakers, concerts.
- Have town committee to get this started.
- Have neighborhood network contact person
- Have potlucks.
- Establish Old Amherst Days.
- Need things for all people of all economic backgrounds.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Foster support and communication about current and future town events to support cultural events in place (Old Amherst Day).
- Need meeting/recreation/spontaneous meeting places.
- Foster neighborhood sense of community - know your neighbors.
- Need/encourage arts through town and school - AAA, "Amherst Association for Arts."
- Need to combine school and non-school people through public use of school.

## 5. Education and Social Services: Meeting our Citizens' Needs

(Facilitator, George Bower: Recorder, Penny Turner: Participants, Peter Krumhansl, Tom Hunsader, Mike Fiacco, Jane Jones, Peter Bergin, Richard Martini, Tadd Torborg.)

#### Statement of Purpose

All citizens have a need for food, clothing, shelter, and for the education of their children. Although some needs are met by local, state, and federal programs, caring communities still keep a neighborly eye on fellow citizens. Things like pre-school programs, youth services, low-income housing, after-school extracurricular youth programs, and preventive health and substance abuse programs help to strengthen the social foundations of a community.

#### Questions to think about

- Are education and social services provided equitably?
- What services does the community provide to its neediest citizens?
- Does the community, through its schools or other programs, offer counseling on parenting or family relationships?
- What local or regional programs or services are offered? What are needed? For daycare/substance abuse/recreational/youth counseling?
- Are these services adequate? Are they well utilized? Under-utilized?
- Are school programs adequate for the community's needs?
- Is school planning forward thinking and open to regional solutions?
- Does local government address qualitative concerns about service?
- Does government consider and utilize alternative methods of service delivery?

#### Group Response: Strengths in Education and Social Services

- Excellent schools.
- Reasonable schools.
- Population well educated.
- parents value education.
- Strong sense of family value.
- Financial commitment to education.
- extra curricular support.
- Expectation among some students they will be well educated.
- Most kids who want to go to college; have the expectation they will.
- High SAT's and kids get accepted to college.
- Nothing comparable in surrounding areas.
- Many choices of schools in close proximity of Amherst.
- Atmosphere of school and quality of education = important.
- Basic philosophy of the High School.
- Churches responsive to members (senior citizens).
- FISH.
- Share program ( a regional program).
- Seniors can get involved in the community as well as younger people.
- Family groups, church groups - community involvement.
- AA exists.
- Helpful police force addresses issues to keep community out of trouble; friendly force with kids.
- Reasonable recreation department for elementary age.
- Liberal agenda.
- Special education.
- Student respect of each other and the property.

#### Group Response: Concerns about Education and Social Services

- No government services for senior citizens
- Overcrowding.
- Liberal agenda.
- Impact of schools on taxes, local and state.
- Lack of coordination from elementary to high school by administration.
- Curriculum doesn't flow, Amherst vs. National.
- Not accelerated; not progressive compared to others parts of country.
- Too much emphasis on special education.
- Gifted aren't tracked.
- Heterogeneous classes.
- Lack of diversity in this school, particularly ethnicity.
- Don't have as much diversity as under the MASH program.

#### Education and Social Services: Vision for the Future:

- Should have more for the gifted and talented.
- Smaller classes.
- Each child having his/her education plan.
- Greater challenges in some areas.
- Should not have program for gifted and classes.

- Categorize classroom size.
- Able to sustain high quality of education dollar-wise.
- May have to look at a 2<sup>nd</sup> high school.
- Focus on value of townspeople.
- Maintain centralized situation.
- School Board make sure all citizens know what's going on .
- Improve technology and train teachers.
- Utilize expertise of citizens of the town regarding technology.
- Continue to invest in technology.
- Needs to be a senior center or common center for all.
- Multipurpose recreation facility (provide transportation).
- Senior housing (reasonable cost, affordable).

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Overcrowded schools - population growth, large class size.
- Lack of a Community Center.
- Continue to give citizens quality education at affordable cost.
- Behavior education - need a group to educate, help, and counsel regarding drugs and alcohol, litter, awareness, community appreciation, and civic behavior.
- Affordable senior housing to enable citizens to continue to live in town.

## 6. Community Infrastructure: The Basics that Serve Our Needs

(Facilitator, Pixie Lown: Recorder, Sarah Smith: Participants, Dick Sherwood, William Morrissey, Ron Berlack, Jeff Andrews, Janne Luct, Susan Fry, Josh Delisle.)

#### Statement of Purpose

Public buildings, schools, sidewalks, sewers, roads, and the public water support -- are basic to the existence of a community. They absorb most tax dollars and sharply influence the community's quality of life.

#### Questions to think about

- What schools and other public facilities exist in the community?
- What facilities or services are needed?
- Are public water sources protected?
- How does the community handle disposal of its wastes?
- Does the town have a plan for financing the maintenance, expansion and replacement of its public facilities? Is it open to regional solutions for future infrastructural needs?
- Is there adequate housing available for elderly or disabled individuals? For people of lower income?
- Are public buildings such as schools and town hall adequate for our needs? Are they accessible to people with disabilities? Are they energy efficient?
- Do officials address qualitative concerns about facilities and systems and utilize alternative methods of service delivery?

- Are officials professional and entrepreneurial in meeting public facility needs?
- Are appropriate physical connections being made, such as public transportation between housing and job (or shopping) sites?

Group Response: Strengths in Infrastructure

- Public buildings are presently adequate: town hall, library, Dept. of Public Works, police, fire and rescue squad facilities, recreation facilities.
- Quality and number of public roads are adequate (3 class, etc. main feeder).
- Like having dirt roads.
- Lots of people walk around the center of town.
- Bridges are adequate.
- Has some good large meeting places.
- Impressed with dump/transfer station - neat, lots of recycling, seems adequate space-wise.
- Zero sewerage.
- Great playing fields!

Group Response: Concerns about Infrastructure

- Town hall not handicap accessible.
- Upgrade of roads often increases traffic speed.
- Don't like dirt roads, e.g. Green Road, County Road.
- Accessibility and traffic - hard to get from one place to another to get to or through; are roads changed to meet needs?
- Safety issue on roads that have no shoulder.
- Pedestrian traffic is in jeopardy.
- Will people put up with less roads to maintain character but not as good access?
- Transition of residential to access.
- Scenic roads can change but it takes agreement.
- Walking to town is difficult for those outside center.
- Walking is difficult around many areas of town because of traffic. Danger in intersection.
- Lack of parking in center of town, particularly at church.
- Housing for seniors is inadequate.
- School is having space problems.
- Not a space large enough for all to meet.
- Not enough recycling, problems with land fill, some seepage.
- Zero sewerage.
- Need planning for emergencies for problems like December 1996 storm, infrastructure failure.
- No public transportation.
- Some public buildings (older ones) are not so energy efficient.
- Not enough playing fields.
- Should not stripe roads (to slow traffic).
- No sprinkler in Middle School; also an asbestos issue.
- Is a very limited water system (also relates to sprinklers in schools).
- Geese and other pollutants affect lake.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Roads, including standards and guidelines, how to build preserving rural character with concern for accessibility and safety.
- Sustainability of housing and services for all ages to assure multi-age diversity.
- Need for addition or expansion of facilities, e.g. recreational playing fields, library, schools (long term).
- Improve communication about infrastructure, facilities, availability and emergency services.
- Need improved infrastructure to encourage and stimulate business.

### 7. Natural Resource Base: Water, Energy and Materials

(Facilitator, Bob Lown: Recorder, Phil Auger: Participants, Bill Belvin, Bik Hutchison, Clo Knibbe, Mary Mahar, Charles Glover, Robin Julian, Bob Schaumann.)

#### Statement of Purpose

Natural resources are materials from nature that maintain and enhance a community. This includes food, fuel, and materials used in everyday life. A sustainable community attempts to balance the rate at which renewable resources are consumed with the rate at which they are renewed. Dependence upon nonrenewable resources is minimized as much as is feasible. A sustainable community also attempts to reduce the amount of waste and emissions produced by increasing energy efficiency, and tries to minimize the effect of wastes that are created.

#### Questions to think about

- What percent of the energy used by the community is renewable versus nonrenewable?
- What opportunities exist for local sources of renewable energy?
- What problems are associated with existing patterns of energy use?
- Do energy conservation programs exist within the community?
- To what extent does the local community rely on local sources of food, fuel, and materials?
- How does the community handle disposal of its wastes?
- What percent of waste generated is recyclable and recycled?
- What opportunities exist for reducing that amount of waste generated to begin with?

#### Group Response: Strengths in the Natural Resource Base

- We have basic zoning and in conformance with geographic characteristics - good inventory exists.
- Long (well understood) standing study of aquifer.
- Souhegan River, Lincoln Pond and others, Baboosic Lake.
- Tremendous amount of natural resource areas - conservation lands.
- Hiking trails/cross country ski trails - good access, hunting allowed - multi use.
- Active Conservation Commission.
- Still lots of forest land.
- A number of permanent protected privately owned lands.
- Rural zoning - large blocks still available for sales.

- Still lots of current use land.
- Clean air.
- Good fishing, apparent wildlife.

#### Group Response: Concerns about the Natural Resource Base

- Assets not well understood by many - not appreciated.
- Not inventoried completely?
- Losing farm to forest.
- Air quality as it relates to transportation.
- Distant energy sources (related to above).
- Water quality - old landfill, uncapped, unmonitored, N.B.A.F.S.
- Road maintenance chemicals.
- Non diversified/limited tax base limits public investment in sewer and other resource protection.
- Communication needs to be stronger to ensure no mixed messages (i.e. hunting allowed where marked, no hunting).
- Town doesn't own enough open space.
- There's a lot going on but little communication.
- Baboosic is a disaster waiting to happen - gulls and septic.
- Attitudes towards recycling.
- Pathetic recycling.
- Litter.

#### The Natural Resource Base: Vision for the Future:

- No more paving of roads.
- Town sewerage system and a means of dealing with problem.
- 100% recycling.
- Rational form of public transportation.
- Road building to reduce runaway suburbia.
- Decrease subdivision road width.
- Limited growth plan to curb residential growth.
- Bike paths and ready, reasonable access.
- No more traffic lights/limited signage.
- Underground wires village and town.
- Natural gas.
- Aquifer protection and all other natural waters.
- Cap and test at landfill.
- More aggressive acquisition of open space.
- Provide tax incentives for senior citizens to avoid land fragmentation.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Protect water.
- Acquire public land for multi-use, minimize development.
- Sustainable air quality through alternative transportation, energy and technology.
- Better communication and involvement about natural resource issues.

- Better waste management to include:  
100% recycling  
solid waste management.

## 8. Working Landscape: Village, Farm and Forest

(Facilitator, Mike Merra: Recorder, Paul Belhumeur: Participants: David Lucktz, Bonnie Burns, Wilene Knight, Susan Stefanec, Beth Kimberly, Liz Overholt, Addie Hutchinson, Denise Roberts, Bill Overholt.)

### Statement of Purpose

The natural assets of a community consist of places of natural beauty that contribute significantly to the quality of the residents. Streams, rivers, walking trails, working farms, clean air, pastures and open land help determine a community's personality. They contribute to the everyday pleasures of a community life. A sustainable community practices effective management of natural assets so as not to undermine their existence or ability to function over time.

### Questions to think about

- What are your town's special water and land sites?
- Is there a broad community interest and participation in maintaining these?
- How healthy are the natural systems within the community?
- What stresses are the local economy and population putting on those natural systems?
- Are there ways to increase the resilience of the local natural systems to allow them to respond to adverse or changing conditions?
- Are current systems, such as waste management, handled in a way that preserves the integrity of natural systems in the community without damaging the integrity of natural systems elsewhere?
- Are the existing businesses environmentally sound?
- Are the public water sources protected?

### Group Response: Strengths in Working Landscapes

- Excellent Conservation Commission.
- Baboosic Lake.
- Joe English.
- Bog/wetlands.
- Souhegan River
- Balance between housing/farm forest/business.
- Rural atmosphere.
- Farms.
- Stone walls.
- Zoning Board of Adjustments/Planning Board/Historic Village District/Conservation Commission.
- Town Center.
- Beaver Brook.
- Souhegan High School.
- Recreational fields.
- Historic/scenic roads.



- Waste management system/recycling.

Group Response: Concerns about Working Landscapes

- Loss of rural character.
- Over-building (suburbanization).
- Loss of open and forest areas.
- Traffic density.
- Traffic speed.
- Roads unsafe to pedestrians.
- Lack of bicycle paths.
- Fast growth.
- Insufficient communication.
- Lack of comprehensive community center/meeting place.
- Outside state and federal influences - salt, wireless communication towns, bridges.
- Pollution at Baboosic Lake - algae, ducks, salt.
- Insufficient land designated for recreational fields, facilities.
- Lack of maintenance and management of recreational fields and facilities.

Working Landscapes: Vision for the Future:

- Controlled growth for preservation of rural character.
- More recreational areas.
- Clean rivers, streams, lakes.
- More "funded" land trust.
- Preservation of farms, stone walls, scenic routes.
- Picturesque landscape without "towers."
- Public communication place(s).
- Centers for congregation.
- Walking paths, bike paths (off road).
- Active participation of community members.

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Controlling growth.
- Preservation of rural character to maintain balance between housing/farms/forests/business.
- Maintain strength of Zoning Board of Adjustments/Planning Board/Historic Village District/Conservation Commission with sufficient people and regulations.
- Add to passive recreation/community centers.
- Maintain natural resources.



## 9. Economic Vitality: Stability through Diversity

(Facilitator: Christy Belvin: Recorder: Ellen Snyder: Participants: Jean Pituck, Jan Woodbury, Nike Speltz, Don Holden, Mary Katherine Lockwood, Steve Desmarais.)

### Statement of Purpose

The need to maintain flourishing workplaces is of great importance to communities. A sustainable community includes a variety of businesses, industries, and institutions which are environmentally sound, financially viable, provide reasonable wages and benefits to workers, and provides those workers with opportunities to develop their skills through training, education, and other forms of assistance to prepare for the community's future needs. Government, businesses and public service organizations are all important in attracting new investment and in developing new businesses that suit the character of the community.

### Questions to think about

- What types of businesses, industries, and institutions make up the economic base of the community? of the region?
- How diverse is the economic base? Is one sector or one employer dominant or is there a wide variety of sectors and employers?
- Are the existing businesses environmentally sound?
- Are there locally available education opportunities to provide residents with skills that match the needs of local businesses?
- What business services are lacking in the community?
- What types of jobs are available to residents in terms of security, wage levels, skill levels, and benefits?
- Do wages allow the majority of the population to enjoy a reasonable life style?

### Group Response: Strengths in Economic Vitality

- Well-educated population.
- Technologically advanced - computers in schools, businesses, homes.
- Access to larger communities - Nashua, Boston....
- Good transportation (roads, airport).
- Closeness to airport (Manchester).
- Room to grow, for light industry (1/4 of industrial land being used).
- Business-friendly government - state and local.
- Industrial park zoned commercial/industrial - this zoning allows more flexibility.
- Ability to have high number of home occupations and/or to work out of homes.
- High tech layoffs have led to entrepreneurship/new small businesses.
- Business trend to support work at home.
- Locally available continuing education- Daniel Webster, UNH, high school, library.
- Library has great print and computer resources, especially valuable for small/home businesses.
- Strong Chamber of Commerce - good support of existing businesses.
- Strong civic groups (e.g. Rotary).
- Access to investment capital - local banks.
- Culturally enriched - businesses want to be in vibrant communities.
- Several high tech companies in Amherst.
- Environmentally careful zoning in some cases (large aquifer).
- State of the art fire department.

- Municipal water in industrial park.

Group Response: Concerns about Economic Vitality:

- Lack of municipal sewer in industrial park.
- Industrial park has a single owner.
- Industrial park sits atop the aquifer.
- Dependence on leach fields has potential to impact the aquifer.
- Water quality is vulnerable to too much unplanned growth.
- Zoning setbacks are to buildings. Parking lots not included so there is potential for greater water contamination.
- Cable - only source; poor service.
- Lack of high speed telecommunication.
- Lack of diversity in economic structure. Dependent on high tech outside community; mostly retail available.
- Lack of good paying jobs with benefits for families.
- Businesses hiring on contract, temporary with no benefits.
- Manufacturing jobs declining, being replaced with multinational retail businesses.
- Locally owned businesses declining - money going outside community.
- High tech jobs vulnerable to boom and bust of industry and layoffs possible.
- Route 101A - bad traffic flow; too many traffic lights, poor access.
- Have to drive long distances to take care of routine/weekly chores.
- Not enough stores in downtown Amherst.

Economic Vitality: Vision for the Future:

- Clustering of retail/business services to reduce driving.
- Municipal sewer system in industrial park.
- Residential, commercial, and industrial all together.
- Pursue alternative zoning to create "community."
- Places to hang out in your neighborhood (e.g. coffee shop in residential area).
- Opportunities to walk or ride bike to services.
- More mix of uses in our neighborhoods.
- "New" Route 101A to Nashua/Turnpike (more quickly consider bypass or change existing Route 101A).
- Train service from Amherst to Boston.
- Larger business base - consider tax incentives to attract business.
- Avoid bidding wars with other communities.
- Address infrastructure:
  - high speed telecommunication without towers
  - transportation
- Rescue squad likely needs more resources beyond volunteers as community grows.
- Find ways to educate kids coming out of high school not going to college.
- More job/post-secondary preparation.

Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Need a municipal sewer in industrial park to ensure environmental protection, reduce liability, and encourage more industry.
- Need high speed telecommunications.

- Foster and encourage entrepreneurship and provide support system for small businesses.
- Develop a good mix and balance of residences, businesses and industry.
- Enhance transportation infrastructure (e.g Boston access; train; bikeways; Route 101A issues).

## 10. Local Business, Local Wealth: Re-Circulating Money Within the Community

(Facilitator, Sue Currier: Recorder, Nancy Adams: Participants. Christy Day, Judy Gilliland, Martin Michaelis, Tom Muccino, William D'Alessandro, Pat Baksay.)

### Statement of Purpose

Local control of businesses is important to the economic health of a community. The more often money circulates within the community before leaving, the more the community benefits. Locally controlled businesses allow employees to have a voice in the decisions that affect them.

### Questions to think about:

- What percent of the community's businesses, industries and organizations are locally owned?
- What percent of the community's businesses, industries and organizations have linkages to the local environment, social structure or economy?
- To what extent do local businesses purchase products from each other?
- What additional business services are needed that could be locally provided and locally owned?
- Is there an adequate supply of locally owned, locally controlled credit available for local businesses?
- Do employees have a voice in the decisions of their employer?
- Is there a reasonable distribution of wealth across the population or is there a wide gap between the haves and the have-nots. How has this distribution changed over time?

### Group Response: Strengths in Local Business:

- Viable small companies.
- Near an airport - but not too near (Boston, Nashua, Manchester).
- Near beltway.
- Personal wealth.
- Higher value niche stores.
- Potential for new businesses.
- We don't have a lot of "corporate" companies (McDonald's).
- Town provided more affordable houses and more even distribution of income levels.

### Group Response: Concerns about Local Business:

- Zoning too restrictive in historic district for new small business entry.
- Population growth pockets in outlying areas away from potential town business areas - Route 101/101A/122 corridor.
- Center of town needs a cafe or gathering place. Now only residential.

- Once in car heading down road doesn't matter if you shop in Amherst.
- Don't know when you're in Amherst.

#### Local Business: Vision for the Future:

- Promote local existing businesses.
- Keep local "historic heritage."
- Need a philosophy to promote and attract new businesses.
- Publicize local businesses.
- Keep thriving businesses thriving.
- Incentives to draw new, small businesses (services with low environmental impact).
- Good matrix (database) which has answers to questions regarding business statistics needed in this component.
- How we will fit into and affect regional planning.
- Keep open space, historic district and environment while still promoting/keeping small businesses.
- Don't want or need to be self-sufficient.
- Increased integration with other communities to maintain infrastructure and services.
- Want businesses here which have affordable goods.
- Greater link between public and private sector.

#### Key Issues for Now and the Future:

- Greater link between public wants and needs, and the ability of business community to respond. How can Amherst government facilitate the process - cafe in town, pub, signage, pink flamingos at dump?
- Need a good matrix/database which answers questions regarding business statistics.
- Need to keep open space, historic district, and environment while still promoting/keeping small businesses.
- We are not self-sufficient, but as a bedroom community, we don't have to be.

## Saturday Morning

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

The 10 easels from the small groups of the night before were arrayed across the front of the room, each bearing a list of the five key issues for that topic area. Our working day began with short presentations from a member of each of the groups, explaining their group's list. Delia then presented us with her version of a condensed list of 9 overarching issues which she felt had come up repeatedly in various ways in the small group lists. The entire group worked together to evaluate and refine this list. After some discussion, 7 key issues emerged as important to study for the future of Amherst. There were two issues identified by Delia but, through group consensus, were not selected as key issues. The first, "Sense of Community" was seen as an overarching theme, and which should be considered in every key issue group discussion. The second, "Balanced Use" was seen as appropriate for discussion in the key issues, "Diversity", "Public Spaces", "Natural Resource Protection", and "Business Infrastructure." The list of key issues is presented below along with some of the related ideas that were mentioned.

### Key Issues

1. Diversity - maintaining age diversity, young families, seniors; balanced use; affordable housing; affordable taxes; sustaining services for all ages.
2. Participation - volunteering; civic responsibility; recruit and train leaders; recruit volunteers from broad range; training in civic behavior; range of volunteer opportunities; broaden base.
3. Communication - coordination between boards and committees; about events; about emergency services; about natural resource issues; local government: public needs.
4. Public Spaces - balanced use; meeting places; recreation; spontaneous gathering places; need for community center building; use of school buildings, playing fields; pub/cafe; zoning to promote.
5. Educational Opportunities - quality education; affordable cost; overcrowded schools; increase arts opportunity; civic education: drugs, litter, participation.
6. Natural Resource Protection - balanced use; clean water, clean air; improved recycling and waste management; open space.
7. Business Infrastructure - improved infrastructure to promote appropriate business, transportation; high speed telecommunications; balanced use; support for small businesses; database.

## PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION

After a short mid-morning break, participants each chose which of the seven 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 loud for half an hour or so about "problems" and "goals." Then we suggested solutions, from practical to fanciful to idealistic. The next step was to evaluate the reality of each possible solution/project using the following impact/feasibility grid.

### **IMPACT:**

**How much will it matter?**

High

Moderate

Low


Low

Moderate

High

**FEASIBILITY: How possible is it  
in our community?**

We copied this grid onto a piece of large easel paper and each of our proposed solutions onto sticky notes. For each solution, the group decided together what the feasibility and impact of the solution would be. Then we placed the sticky note in the appropriate box.

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



## Diversity

(Facilitator, Tom Head: Recorder, Deborah Maes: Participants, Dick Sherwood, Rick Lalley, Charlottee Locke, Mary Mahar, Marilyn Peterman, Beth Davis.)

### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Diversity: definition - age, cultural/religious, ethnic/racial, financial, residential//commercial, housing.
- How you build in diversity.
- How to celebrate diversity.

### Possible Solutions

- Change zoning regulations so contractors and developers are encouraged to build less expensive houses through higher density, i.e. two acre lots to 1/2 - 3/4 acre.
- Finding ways to keep elderly in town through tax abatement for elderly.
- Correct flaw in low income zoning laws regarding income and eligibility.
- Town solicit developers for planned community for low income.
- Subdivide off parts of public/conservation land for low income housing.
- Federal funds for land purchase for low income housing.
- Investigate federal and state funds to support diversity for low income housing.
- Develop programs to encourage small businesses in Bonn Terrain.
- Selective advertising to encourage small businesses to come to Amherst.
- Investigate financial incentives to encourage small business.
- Establish Amherst Economic Development Council.
- More creative programs for everyone - arts, education.
- Establish Arts and Cultural Council.
- Look at schools' "Diversity Day" as a model.
- Formal intern program targeting international teachers in public schools.
- Encourage people with diversity to live and work in Amherst.
- Build through corporations; town in real estate business; town becomes developer.
- More diverse programs in library for all ages.

### Project Evaluations

#### High Impact/High Feasibility

Look at school's "Diversity Day" as a model.

- Create Arts/Cultural Council.
- School intern program targeting international teachers.
- More town library programs regarding diversity.
- Create Economic Development Council.
- Programs to attract small business.
- Advertising to attract small business.

#### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- Finding ways to keep elderly in town, i.e. tax abatements for elderly.
- Solicit developers for low income development.
- Federal and state funds availability?
- Encourage people with more diversity to work and live here.
- Zoning to "incentivize" higher density.
- Change income requirements in zoning laws regarding affordable housing.

#### Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- Town becomes quasi-developer to dictate/implement policies.

## **Participation**

(Facilitator, Pixie Lown: Recorder, Sarah Smith: Participants, Andy Clifford, Joe Visinski, Steve Coughlan, Martin Michaelis, Peter Bergen, Colleen O'Connell, Marilyn Peterman, Addie Hutchinson, Denise Roberts, Bob Schaumann.)

#### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Why aren't people involved?
- How do we get more people involved?

#### Possible Solutions

- Advertise volunteer opportunities.
- Have a clearinghouse for volunteer activities.
- Create a packet for newcomers.
- Modify current approach in schools regarding 40 hour requirement for High School kids.
- Publicity about volunteering advantages, etc. (handouts at dump, Post Office and other places).
- Put information in with tax mailing regarding participation (how to volunteer).
- Need organization to actively make phone calls to reach out with volunteer opportunities.
- Emphasize ease to get involved.
- Develop subcommittees to ease responsibilities and tasks.
- Identify areas (geographic) where volunteers are not involved, i.e. diversity , neighborhood coffee idea.
- Lighten up (criticism) on volunteers (civility).
- Recognition of volunteer efforts.
- Subcommittee on volunteers, e.g. Souhegan Woods have coffee-like welcome wagon, Saddle Woods - 17 showed up because of personal call.
- Need a coordinator of volunteer efforts.
- Target those (particularly men) who used to volunteer for such things as coaches ("warm prospects").
- Evening day care for parents to free up parents.
- Have those involved "mentor" others (friends, neighbors) to get involved.
- "Newcomers" may be a vehicle (may need clarification of what they do).
- Dinners in neighborhoods - way to get people involved.
- "Volunteer Day" to educate and "feed each other and recruit.
- Get input from all organizations - how do they recruit?
- How to get new people?

#### Project Evaluations

##### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Advertise volunteer opportunities.
- Subcommittees.
- Committee on committees.
- Create information packet for newcomers.



- Emphasize ease in volunteering.

#### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Identify areas "needing" volunteers.
- "Evening care" giving parents time to volunteer.
- Coordinate recruitment "need" information.
- Neighborhood coordinator.
- Volunteer clearinghouse.

#### Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Target men for continued work.
- Encourage neighborhood dinner group.
- Recognition of present volunteers.
- Lighten up on volunteers - be civil!

#### Low Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Send information with town mailings.
- Volunteer Days.

#### Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- Meet your neighbors - let them know what's available.

## **Communication**

(Facilitator, George Bower: Recorder, Penny Turner: Participants, David Hallenbeck, Beth Kimberly, Gerrie Porter, Susan Fry, Candy Shirey, Tadd Torborg, Tom Muccino, Rick Katzenberg.)

#### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Lack of timely communication on issues concerning the town and from the audience
  - information dissemination
  - people who should be at meetings don't bother to find out; talent being missed
  - notification limited to what RSA's require - insufficient
  - not enough channels and those that do exist not consistent, easily accessible, well documented, enough vehicles, objective.
- No single known accountable source for meeting information.
- Service provision information not known.
- Trails - exist but not known.
- Meeting results, zoning information, recreation information, government information.
- Understanding of town government process and participation ability and responsibilities.
- Sense of community lacking because of lack of communication.
- People and information don't have access to vehicles.
- Different people have different means of learning.
- Lack of centralized meeting place(s).
- Nobody pays attention.
- Lack of interest to motivate residents to pay attention.
- Lack of vehicles to communicate.
- Accuracy of information - a lot by word of mouth and therefore suspect.

- Need for responsible editorials.
- Allow for opinions and comment.

#### Possible Solutions

- Community television channel.
- Neighborhood kiosk(s).
- Web page.
- Full time town hall communication official.
- Cooperation of local papers.
- Web site (interactive).
- Electronic newspaper.
- Weekly newsletter.
- Centralized meeting place.
- Multiple forms of information.
- Banners/information over the roads.
- Radio station.
- One person identified for common liaison.
- One person on each board or committee responsible for communication.
- Comprehensive communication plan for town.
- Annual or periodic open house (town hall) for the public.
- On-line archives of all minutes, notes, agendas, newsletters.
- On-line list of official participants.
- Opportunities to "sign up" on-line and otherwise.
- Community forums on specific issues - in person, on-line, on phone.
- Means by which communication not going to be abused.
- Town recreation information brochure.
- Coordinating welcome wagon.
- Putting information in phone book.
- Mechanism for recognition and commendation.
- Mechanism to insure/assure quality of communication.
- Noise filter.
- Quality control.
- Town directory.
- Key neighborhood communication people (one person) neighborhood town crier).
- Neighborhood coffees.
- Town to make communication a much higher priority.
- Town boards to appoint communication committee.
- Amherst Town Commons in current/virtual sense - technologies, chat room.
- Make communication part of town budget - need \$ resources.
- List emergency communication and priority.
- Urgent communication and coordination.

#### Project Evaluations

##### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Town to make communication a priority.
- Full time town hall communication official.
- Coordinate welcome wagon and newcomers.
- Reasonable mechanism to ensure quality of information.

- Communication liaison for each board, council.
- Establish Communication Committee.
- Lay neighborhood communication people (town criers).
- Mechanism for recommendation and recognition.
- On-line opportunity to sign up and otherwise.
- On-line archive of all minutes, agendas, newsletters.
- Interactive Web page.
- Web page.
- On-line list of all official participants and email addresses.
- Virtual Amherst Town Commons chat room.

#### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Cooperation of local papers.
- Weekly town newsletter.
- Information banners over roads.
- Neighborhood kiosks.
- Town phone books listing recreation directory.
- Town recreation brochure.
- Resources (\$) needed to disseminate information.

#### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- List emergency communication and priority, urgent communication and coordination.
- Community television channel - cable.

#### Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- Radio station.

#### Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- Verbal communication.
- Neighborhood coffees.
- Periodic open house for population - general information night.
- Centralized meeting place.
- Community forums on specific issues.

#### No Ranking

- Multiple forms of printed information.
- Comprehensive communications plan for town.
- Means to prevent abuse to not benefit a particular cause.
- Noise filter - quality control.

## Public Spaces

(Facilitator, Christy Belvin: Recorder, Ellen Snyder: Participants, Judy Gilliland, Jeff Andrews, Nike Speltz, Nancy Head, Mike Merri, Christy Day, Bill Belvin, Marie Hallenbeck, Betsy Bridge, Sue Currier.)

### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Meeting spaces - informal and formal
  - lack of informal - cafe?, pub? other
  - lack of access to formal.
  - formal: library, Souhegan theater, Clarke School - multipurpose rooms, Congregational Church.
  - informal: Bagel shop, dump, Post Office, Country Club, The Homestead, Amherst Village Market, "on the street", recreational fields.
- Open lands - conservation lands, require management; Village Green/Commons. Can include private land - Heaton's Pond, Baboosic Lake, Souhegan River, ponds, Ponemah Bog, Bragdon Hill.
- Recreation lands including playing fields.
- Balanced use.
- Weekday uses & weekend uses - different uses and demands.
- Morning, daytime, after school, evening - uses, demands, needs.

### Possible Solutions

- Publicly owned coffee house in town center run by volunteers.
- Privately owned coffee house in town center.
- Better use of private and public spaces with high public use for public activities.
- Inventory of all different kinds of spaces and availability of uses (buildings and lands).
- Develop list of space needs - look at diversity of needs/time differences.
- Publicize availability of spaces.
- Improve small shopping center/Meeting Place as all season meeting place.
- Improve access to Meeting Place (e.g. traffic light).
- Amherst Village Market, "on the street", recreational fields.
- Open lands - conservation lands, require management; Village Green/Commons. Can include private land - Heaton's Pond, Baboosic Lake, Souhegan River, ponds, Ponemah Bog, Bragdon Hill.
- Recreation lands including playing fields.
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- Publicly owned coffee house in town center run by volunteers.
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- Develop list of space needs - look at diversity of needs/time differences.
- Publicize availability of spaces.
- Improve small shopping center/Meeting Place as all season meeting place.
- Improve access to Meeting Place (e.g. traffic light).
- Become southern N.H. maple sugaring center - Maple Sugar Festival (include Bragdon

Hill).

- A community center.
- Movie house with coffee.
- Arts and Jazz festivals.
- Ice cream truck on village green.
- Hot dog stand on village green.
- Make more use of village green and streets around green.
- Streets becoming hard to walk on.
- Sidewalk from library to town hall.
- Promote civility toward walkers, bikers....
- Communicate where and when fields are available for informal use. Set up a bulletin board for facility/field use.
- A skateboard center.
- Place for mountain bikers.
- Bike paths.
- Community chalkboard on village green.
- Picnic/hiking area near Bragdon Hill.
- Sledding hill - another one.
- Performance spaces? - need places to rehearse.
- Computer labs at schools - adults access - evenings....
- Coordinated use of libraries (e.g. Souhegan High School library inaccessible to public). Think of them as knowledge centers.
- "Teen Center" - meet needs of teen meeting places.
- Improve parking at Bragdon Hill.
- Turn Brick School into community center.
- Brochure on public use of fields.
- Baboosic Lake access - clean up beach to keep it attractive.
- Recreate access on existing right-of-way through private lands that have been offered to town (e.g. golf course right-of-way access to Souhegan River).
- Public float down Souhegan River.
- Public meeting room in Amherst Town Library with easy, regular access for informal gathering/chat - a "chat room."
- Create a "Barnes and Noble" type public library with coffee, reading area.
- Seasonal tent on village green for hot dog stands, etc.

#### Project Goals

- Recognize time-driven usage patterns, i.e., weekday vs. weekend, time of day, age group differences, seasonal differences.
- Find ways of cross-over of public spaces use by different age groups.
- Involve families, kids who don't attend Amherst public schools.
- Help people channel their available time toward activities/places that meet their needs/interests.
- Encourage more interaction at public spaces.
- Create more events like 4th of July to bring people together.
- How to use Bragdon Hill in summer.
- Create uses for public places during "off-seasons" - indoor and outdoor places.
- Inventory private spaces available for "off-season" uses.
- "New" meeting house available at Joe English for small groups.

## Project Evaluations

### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Community Center.
- "Teen Center" to meet needs of teenagers.
- Publically owned coffee house in center of town.
- Convert Brick School into Community Center.
- Movie house with coffee.
- Develop list of space needs, look at diversity.
- Inventory of space.
- Publicize availability of spaces.
- Better use of private public spaces with high public use, etc.
- Arts and Jazz festivals.
- Public/community chalkboard.
- Picnic/hiking area near Bragdon, etc.
- Baboosic Lake access - clean up beach.
- Ice cream truck on village green.
- Become southern N.H. maple sugaring center - festival, etc.

### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Public meeting in Amherst Town library.
- Library "chat" room.
- Streets becoming hard to walk all over town.
- Privately owned coffee house in center of town.
- Sidewalk from library to town hall.
- Improve Meeting Place (all season).
- Improve access to Meeting Place (e.g. traffic light).

### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- Bike paths.
- Create a "Barnes and Noble" type public library.
- Seasonal tent on village green.
- Improve parking at Bragdon Farm.

### Moderate Impact/High Feasibility

- Communication regarding field/facility use.
- Communicate when and where fields available for informal use.

### Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Regrade access to Souhegan River.
- Public float down Souhegan River.
- Adult use of computer lab evenings.
- Promote civility toward walkers from motorists.

### Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- Coordinated use of libraries (i.e. Souhegan/Town).
- Performance spaces, rehearsal spaces.

#### Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- Hot dog stand on village green.
- Sledding hill (another one).
- Place for mountain bikers.
- Skateboard center.

### **Educational Opportunities**

(Facilitator, Bob Lown: Recorder, Julie Simpson: Participants, Peter Krumhansl, Bim Krumhansl, Jane Jones, Jeanne Ludt, Carol Holden, Charles Glover, Ross Glover).

#### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- How to continue quality education without limiting growth.
- How do you think long-term? - long-term projections for buildings, etc. - fluctuations in school population, economic cycles.
- Involve community businesses; do schools meet business' needs - outcome based - do graduates meet needs of community?
- What can you do to help business community finance education?
- Do we want Amherst to be desirable for businesses to locate.
- Do graduates stay in Amherst?
- How transient is community? The more transient, the less long-term thinking.
- Need to overcome short-term thinking of transient residents.
- Provision of all types of educational opportunities for all ages - lectures, etc.
- Concerns - make up of community.

#### Possible Solutions

- Start music and arts programs earlier in schools.
- Community solution to latch-key children, youth and elder problem - "Home Alone" problem.
- Find better ways to project school populations.
- Keep schools small, but equal (in resources) and connected.
- Choice of schools by students.
- Magnet school (focus on special subject area).
- Get people without children into schools during day to witness overcrowding first-hand - "back to school" day.
- More communication about schools and issues.
- Citizen-teacher.
- Dean Kamen - mentoring program.
- Update community resource file.
- Improve lifelong learning facilities and opportunities.
- Make education more accessible to community members - school open longer hours.
- Find out needs of residents for educational opportunities.
- Increase communication about educational opportunities.
- Find out needs of businesses (kills, etc.).
- Available physical plant resources, i.e. extra classrooms for civic organizations to use.
- Buy building and land (old Post Office) for community education purposes.
- Take more time to find solutions to overcrowding.
- Develop long-term strategy for solving overcrowding.



## Project Evaluations

### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Citizen-teacher.
- Mentor program (Kamen).
- More citizen involvement.
- Space available in day for all.
- Citizen "back to school" day.
- Develop long term solution to overcrowding.
- Keep schools small and personal.
- Need more time to address overcrowding.
- Survey needs of businesses.
- More communication about schools and issues.
- Improve communication about educational opportunities.
- Survey needs of residents for educational opportunities.

### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- "Home Alone" problem.
- Schools more accessible to all.
- Earlier arts and music program.
- Update community resource file.
- Expand opportunities for lifelong learning.

### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- More accurate projection of school population.
- Buy building and land (old Post Office).
- Magnet school, i.e. arts.
- Student choice of schools.

## **Natural Resource Protection**

(Facilitator, Anne Krantz: Recorder, Nancy Adams: Participants, William D'Alessandro, Alec Buchanan, Clo Knibbe, Ruth Krumhansl, Robin Julian, Richard Martini, Jean Pituck, Jan Woodbury, Burt Knight, Wilene Knight.)

### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Open space.
- Recycling.
- Aquifer protection.
- Surface water protection.
- Traffic.
- Recreational use.
- Household hazardous waste, composting.
- Education of issue.

### Possible Solutions

- Buy land.
- Build trails.
- Bike lane.

- Buy connected land.
- Raise money.
- Conservation easements.
- Undeveloped land.
- Non-polluted land.
- Prime house lot land.
- Scenic land.
- Forest land.
- Waterfront land.
- Taxes impact.
- Land trust.
- Developer impact fees.
- Education.
- Zoning protection.
- Legislation.
- Collection fees.
- Septic system regulations.
- Septic system inspection.
- Runoff monitoring.
- Emission testing.
- Public transportation.
- Walking paths.
- Protected wooded hilltops.
- Motor vehicles on Baboosic Lake.
- Downstream from Milford "sewage".
- Careful industrial development.
- Litter cleanup.
- Hazardous waste local collection pickup.
- Dump picking shed.
- Route 101A.
- Cul-de-sacs cause traffic on main roads.
- Non-point source pollution - animals.
- Preserving barns.
- Designate scenic roads.
- Stone walls.
- Support local agriculture.
- Rural historical landscapes.
- Clear cutting.
- Site review process to preserve nature in cul-de-sac centers.
- Maintaining natural buffer zones in residential areas.
- Parking lot zoning next to wetlands.
- Kaiser Dam rebuild.
- Maintain wildlife habitat.
- Maintain wildlife corridors.
- Love coyotes.
- Love foxes.
- Xeroscaping.
- Use of native planting.

- Not developing slopes.
- Reseed wildflower highways.

### Project Evaluations

#### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Buy land.
- Forest land.
- Not developing slopes.
- Build trails.
- Conservation easements.
- Land trust.
- Designate scenic roads.
- Preserve rural historical landscape.
- Stone walls.
- Site review to preserve nature in cul-de-sacs.
- Legislation.
- Septic system regulations.
- Education.
- Litter cleanup.
- Collection fees - money raising.
- Careful industrial development.
- Dump picking shed.
- Zoning protection.
- Septic systems inspections.

#### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Downstream from Milford sewage.
- Emission testing.
- Runoff monitoring.
- Buy connected land.
- Bike lanes.
- Preserving barns.
- Wooded hilltops protected.
- Clear cutting trees.
- Maintain wildlife corridors.
- Maintain wildlife habitat.

#### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- Non-polluted land.
- Undeveloped land.
- Motor vehicles on Baboosic Lake.
- Walking/biking paths.
- Support local agriculture/farms.
- Public transportation.
- Tax impact.
- Raise money.
- Hazardous waste - local collection.
- Waterfront land

- Prime house lot land.
- Scenic land.

#### Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Developer impact fees.
- Use of native planting.
- Cul-de-sacs cause traffic on main roads.
- Xeroscaping.
- Maintaining natural buffer zones in residential areas.

#### Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- Non-point source pollution - animal waste.

#### Low Impact/Low Feasibility

- Love foxes.
- Love coyotes.
- Kaiser Dam rebuild.
- Route 101A.

## **Business Infrastructure**

(Facilitator, Jan Bunker: Recorder, Gail Kennedy: Participants, Dana Crowel, Susan Stefanec, Ron Berlack, Robin Warren, Steve Demarais, Jeff Davis, Jay Kinkle, Dennis Wilson, Bill Hutchinson.)

#### Clarification of the problem/issue to be addressed

- Promotion of businesses in town and to discuss the required infrastructure (sewer, aquifer management/environment, waste management) to support, promote and balance such business.
- Explore the tax impact.
- Incubation of small businesses.

#### Possible Solutions

- Tax incentives.
- Roads.
- Expedite regulations for government approval.
- Group or board that will address issues (Business Development Group).
- Eateries.
- Promotion.
- Sewer.
- Business incubation.
- Review signage.
- Explore tax impact.
- Telecommunications as it relates to the PCS and wireless (cable and telephone as current).
- Zoning the look and feel of business.
- By-pass.
- Public services.
- Services to support small business.
- Public perception - educate public.

- Short-term cost benefit analysis.
- Long-term cost benefit analysis.
- Promote business that fit community style (agriculture, small business, etc.).
- Small business information/support center.
- Promoting business cooperation with community projects (e.g. new playground).
- Offer promotional benefits for business to cooperate on community projects.
- Intercommunication between businesses.
- Business cooperative/internships.
- Develop a database of local businesses.
- Amherst Web page.
- Link with Nashua Regional Planning Commission.
- Link with Milford.
- Inter-town cooperation.
- Transportation

### Project Evaluations

#### High Impact/High Feasibility

- Business Development Group.
- Explore tax impact.
- Develop database of local businesses.
- Work with Nashua Regional Planning Commission.
- Promote business in our community style.
- Business cooperative/internships.
- Educate public on value of business.
- Amherst Web page.
- Offer public relations benefits for civic support.
- Long-term cost/benefit analysis.
- Short-term cost/benefit analysis.
- Telecommunication - cable/telephone as current.
- Transportation - roads.

#### High Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Sign ordinance review.
- Development authority.
- Roads.
- Inter-town cooperation.
- Small business information/support center.
- Provide local talent.
- Business incubation (\$\$, facilities, not taxes).

#### High Impact/Low Feasibility

- Telecommunications - PCS/wireless.
- Tax incentives.
- Transportation/bypass.

#### Moderate Impact/Moderate Feasibility

- Intercommunication between businesses.
- Link with Milford.

- Zoning - look and feel.
- Promotion of cooperation in community projects.
- Public services.
- Promotion.
- Expedite government approvals.
- Have eateries.

Moderate Impact/Low Feasibility

- Sewer.

## Saturday Afternoon PROJECT SELECTION

We returned to the large group after lunch break. A member of each small group presented the projects that the group had come up with. Delia Clark led a short discussion about whether some projects overlapped and could be combined with other closely related ones. In the list of projects below, the ones which were combined or dropped from consideration are enclosed in brackets. [.....]

Every participant received five adhesive dots to use to "vote" on projects they thought were important for Amherst to work on right away. Each voter could place as many dots as they wished by any project, distributing their five votes as they pleased, but with no more than three dot on any one project. The projects receiving the most votes would then be discussed in small groups. The list of project ideas follows. The number of votes each received is also noted.

### 1. Diversity

1. Establish Arts and Cultural Council (AAA), i.e. schools programs, library programs, exchange programs, jazz festivals. 44 votes.
2. [Establish Economic Development Council to look at zoning, housing, business incentives, incubate businesses that then stay in town.] (vote 7.1)
3. Explore ideas on how to make use of current zoning laws to encourage higher density, affordable housing, more local diversity. Work with developers, land planners, architects to get ideas on how to accomplish these changes. 2 votes.

### 2. Participation

1. Organize a committee on committees to find out what opportunities are available - serve as a clearing house publicizing opportunities available, communicate, market, recognition of volunteers testimonials from volunteers who have good experience, publicity. 20 votes.
2. [ Neighborhood coordinators - current volunteers organize "coffees" to explain opportunities and model how to do it! Also to serve as a source of information. ] (vote 2.1).
3. Evening care for kids so parents can get involved - also models volunteering to youth. 0 votes.

### 3. Communication

1. Establish Communication Committee to develop and implement town communication plan. 55 votes.
2. [Appropriate and coordinate resources to carry out plan.] (vote 3.1)



3. Develop and improve forms of mass communication, utilizing electric, printed, verbal and broadcast media, including an interactive Web page.] (vote 3.1)

#### **4. Public Spaces**

1. Inventory availability of public and private spaces and communicate findings to community members. 8 votes.
2. Create a community center at the Brick School for all ages, diversity of uses and times. 45 votes.
3. [Expand Community Festivals including Maple Sugaring Festival, Jazz, Arts, float on the Souhegan.] (vote 1.1)

#### **5. Educational Opportunities**

1. Increase citizen involvement in education - citizen-teacher, mentor program, "Citizen Back to School" day, utilizing school facilities by whole community. 8 votes.
2. [Improve communication - increase communication about schools, and school issues to community, survey business needs and residents' needs, about education opportunities in community to residents.] (Vote 3.1)
3. Develop long-term solution to school overcrowding - size of schools, small and personal. 4 votes.

#### **6. Natural Resource Protection**

1. Buy land (prime, rural, wildlife, trails, water protection, civic/community bank) with public dollars - multi million dollar, 20 year time frame. 71 votes.
2. Reduce solid waste - increase recycling, bag and tag, "still good" shed. 12 votes.
3. Regional transportation plan. Revisit infrastructure zoning to preserve natural resources - stone walls, scenic roads, water quality. 17 votes.

#### **7. Business Infrastructure**

1. Business Development Group - sustaining current business, incubation of small business, explore large business potential through exploring tax impacts, developing database, promoting business in keeping with our community style, business cooperative internships, educating public on value of business, Amherst Web page, Offering public relation benefits for civic support, short- and long-term cost benefit analyses. 52 votes.
2. Maintenance and develop of improved infrastructure, transportation, telecommunications, and other enhancements. 1 vote.

## ACTION STEPS

After the voting, the group decided to focus in on the top five projects. These were:

1. Land Acquisition - Natural Resources
2. Communication Committee
3. Business Development Group
4. Community Center - Brick School House
5. Arts, Sugar, and Cultural Council

Participants once again self-selected themselves into small groups according to the project that interested them most. Each group was asked to define the following:

- Critical Steps to Implementation
- Resources Needed
- Principal Leadership (group or individual)
- Potential Obstacles with Possible Strategies to Overcome Them
- Timeline for Implementation
- Action Step Coordinator

Some of the groups used these steps as a way to focus their discussions and notes, while others did not. Hence, the reports that follow are in a number of different formats:

### **Land Acquisition - Natural Resources**

(Facilitator, George Bower: Recorder, Penny Turner: Participants: Sue Currier, Robin Warren, Steve Demarais, Jan Woodbury, Wilene Knight, Burt Knight, Martin Michaelis, Clo Knibbe, Colleen O'Connell, Robin Julian.)

#### Critical Steps to Implementation:

- Thoroughly inform selves of other New Hampshire communities which have successfully purchased property for the town.
- Inventory of all land in town and its availability.
- Possibility of buying land not a focus.
- Prime land.
- Intention not to develop land ever.
- Look at parcels to keep rural nature of town.
- This needs to be a focus of land trust or conservation commission and not one of three.
- Who is going to own these properties.
- Need to determine purpose of this land (these land parcels).
- Look at possible legal entity which can purchase property.
- How to structure this project to make sure it happens:
  - this group could be an adjunct to the land trust
  - several committees to look at (i) parcels, (ii) legal (iii) structure.

#### Objectives:

- To purchase properties to take off the market to prevent development.
- To preserve open space.
- To maintain rural nature.

- Purchase of development rights.
- To buy land no other body/part of town has capacity to buy.

#### Resources Needed

- Where will the funds come from?
  - private contributions
  - private capital
  - ask town to raise the money
  - use easement approach
- Ask selectmen to seek advice of town counsel regarding laws of New Hampshire.
- Can obtain RSA's pertinent to this issue.

### **Communication Committee**

(Facilitator, Anne Krantz: Recorder, Nancy Adams: Participants, David Hallenbeck, Marie Hallenbeck, Rick Katzenberg, Susan Fry, Tom Muccino. Candy Shirey, Tom Head, Tadd Torborg, Dick Shepwood, Bob Schaumann.)

#### Goal

- To establish a clearinghouse for timely, unbiased information.
- Maximize availability of official and community information bi-directionally to the largest number of people via combination of controllable and non-controllable vehicles.
- Want to have an informal media source as well.

#### Resources Needed

- Meeting Room.
- Contact phone numbers.
- School board members - Rick Katzenberg

#### First Steps

- Tadd - make Committee Web page and list server, and confirm meeting space.
- Dave - check on Hollis' electronic communications.
- Bob/Susan - ideas from other towns' Web sites.

### **Business Development Group**

(Facilitator, Jan Bunker: Recorder, Gail Kennedy: Participants, Dana Crowell, Charles Glover, Alec Buchanan, Andy Clifford, Cynthia Dokmo, Ron Berlack, Steve Coughlan, Jay Dinkel, Peter Bergin, Joe Visinski, Bill Hutchinson, Rosemarie Garreff, Allan Carlsmith.)

#### Critical Steps to Implementation

- Identify location of businesses.
- Bring business into the community.
- Look at competition.
- Develop categories of business, e.g. home, small business with product, retail small business.
- Are we losing business? Why?
- Look at what is here, why they are here - survey.
- Survey should include - what brought you here, (developer plans for Bonterrain), how long

have you been here, identify industrial parks and zones, expansion plans, plans to move?, is Amherst friendly to your business, what town service have been helpful to you?

- Ask businesses why they have expanded.
- Interview with a survey (Dept. of Resources and Economics - Business Visitation Program and Chamber of Commerce can help us with this).
- Understand if we're friendly to business.
- Explore existing database (type, activity, etc.). Center for Economic Development, state, N.H. Manufacturers, American Business International (lists all NH companies), Fire Department has list, "LISTS", Secretary of State.
- Include entrepreneurial businesses.

#### Resources Needed

- To mail and develop survey - use town bulk permit.

#### First Meeting

- Develop the survey.
- Draw on resources to go out and talk with businesses (valid statistical base) on each kind of business.
- Work with "the Citizen" to run a series of articles directed toward home businesses (explore telephone company).
- Explore planning/zoning issues.
- Signage.
- Anticipate problems before interviewing businesses.
- Develop a list of alternatives.
- Understanding the cost/impact good/bad of increasing business base in town.
- Look at contribution of businesses to tax base.
- Influence zoning to include "historically accurate" businesses in town.
- Non financial reasons to develop business in town - fosters community. Keep resources in town, recruit jobs, increase volunteer base.
- Zoning change in the Village District. Redevelop Master Plan to include residential commercial area and leave Village as residential.
- Possibility of large homes becoming bed and breakfasts.
- How do we bring services/amenities back to the Village to restore sense of community (tastefully)?
- Look at "whole" town, not just "village".
- Attempted businesses turned down (source of negative feeling about new business climate?)
- Look at generations forward to plan development. Maybe new area? with new roads?
- No real planning around Route 101A development (many properties belonged to the state - low cost).

#### Timeline for Implementation

- 1999 adoption of zoning change - deadline 12/98.
- Explore database - 4 to 6 weeks, by 3/98 (Andy, Jay, Bill, Dana).
- Create and mail survey by 4/98 (High School Senior class Rick Katzenberg) (Ron, Peter, Jan, Joe).
- Invite Planning Board member, historic district, Chamber person, sewer studies committee, commercial realtor. Bring names and ideas to next meeting.
- Get updates from groups.

- Develop mission and charter (assess time frame).
- Look at tax impact by next meeting (Dana).

#### Next Meeting

- Friday, February 6, 1998, 7:30 a.m. at Jan Bunker's house, 2 Cross Street.

### **Community Center - Brick School House**

(Facilitator, Pixie Lown: Recorder, Sarah Smith: Participants, Christy Day, Nike Speltz, Judy Gilliland, Denise Roberts, Bim Krumhansl, Betsie Bridge, Nancy Head, Jeanne Ludt, Mary Mahar.)

#### Next Steps:

- Need to find out about meetings that affect February 2nd bond issue decision as to what kindergarten will do.
- Betsie will convene group to explore feasibility (Nancy, Jeanne, Bim, Betsie, Nancy, Judy, Nike, Denise)
- Need to build case as others will want to use. Think school district owns.
- What about combining with Arts Committee (Bim), Communication Committee (Mary) and recreation department (Denise).
- Place to get information on town activities.
- Need to investigate other spaces like medical building.
- Christy and Jeanne will look into good parking.
- Medical building is better space.
- Nike will look at models from other towns.
- Maybe bagel shop will cater.
- Other space (in village):
  - space next to video store
  - Quinn house
  - the meeting place as teen center (although you need a car to get here) - maybe can connect with a bike path, a light and crosswalk, late bus stop there (Mary will check out).
- Betsie will check out using part of Brick School as it is now. Maybe a small back room.
- Maybe kids could use basement at Brick School house.
- Library could up a display.

### **Arts, Sugar and Cultural Council**

(Facilitator, Christy Belvin: Recorder, Ellen Snyder: Participants, Beth Davis, Jeff Davis, Ruth Krumhansl, Beth Kimberly, Charlotte Locke.)

#### Goals and Objectives

- Need to get beyond forming the committee.
- Need to narrow goal and make something happen.
- Few people involved.
- Coordination and clearinghouse of what goes on in town.
- Identify where there might be gaps in events schedule.
- Tree lighting, 4th of July, Memorial Day - current events, expand on these.
- This effort more than just umbrella for events.

- Broaden/diversify cultural events awareness in town.
- A committee may need to focus on specific areas. Number of areas depends on how many people become involved.
- a Committee to establish an Arts and Festivals Council.
- Link to school arts program.
- Gather together folks involved in current arts events/programs. Recognize and support these programs.
- Create something new? or coordinate existing programs?
- A major goal in establishing Council is to add more diversity (art, culture) to community. To teach diversity. To broaden what's happening in town.

#### Existing Initiatives

- Athena DeGangi - school arts program, writes art columns for local program.
- "Reflections" program - PTA arts program.
- PTA enrichment coordinators.
- Amherst library monthly art exhibit and special art programs, performances, children's programs (librarian, Friends of Library).
- Adam Hutchinson, Kerry Silda - high school students interested in arts.
- Teaching internships - bringing teachers from other cultures/backgrounds into schools.
- Town band director.
- Souhegan Valley Chorus director.
- Church music directors.
- Nashua & NH symphonies.
- Manchester Youth Symphony orchestra - Amherst kids involved.
- Tree lighting, 4th of July, Memorial Day events.
- Parades - 4th (arts show), Memorial Day.
- Summer band concerts on the green.
- Children's festival on the green.
- Publicize these events/programs.
- Civic organizations such as Lions, Rotary, Juniors, gardeners, "newcomers", AAUW.

#### Purpose

- Gather together current "arts" folks and ask what they need. Share what this group has brain stormed and see where initiative leads - should a Council be formed? share needs, need to coordinate and help promote events? support for expanding events?
- Help communicate scheduled events.
- Arts and Culture and Festivals Council gathering - to explore formation of a Council on arts, culture and festivals to support, maintain, and expand existing events and festivals and to promote cultural and artistic diversity.

#### Next Steps

- Beth and Jeff Davis - hosting initial gathering.
- Beth will call Athena, Carolyn Quinn, K. Silva, Dana (lighting).
- Christy will call J. Slocomb, G. Butler, Ann B.
- Beth K. will call PTA, principal.
- Ruth will call Adam.
- Invite others interested but not currently involved in arts.

### Meeting

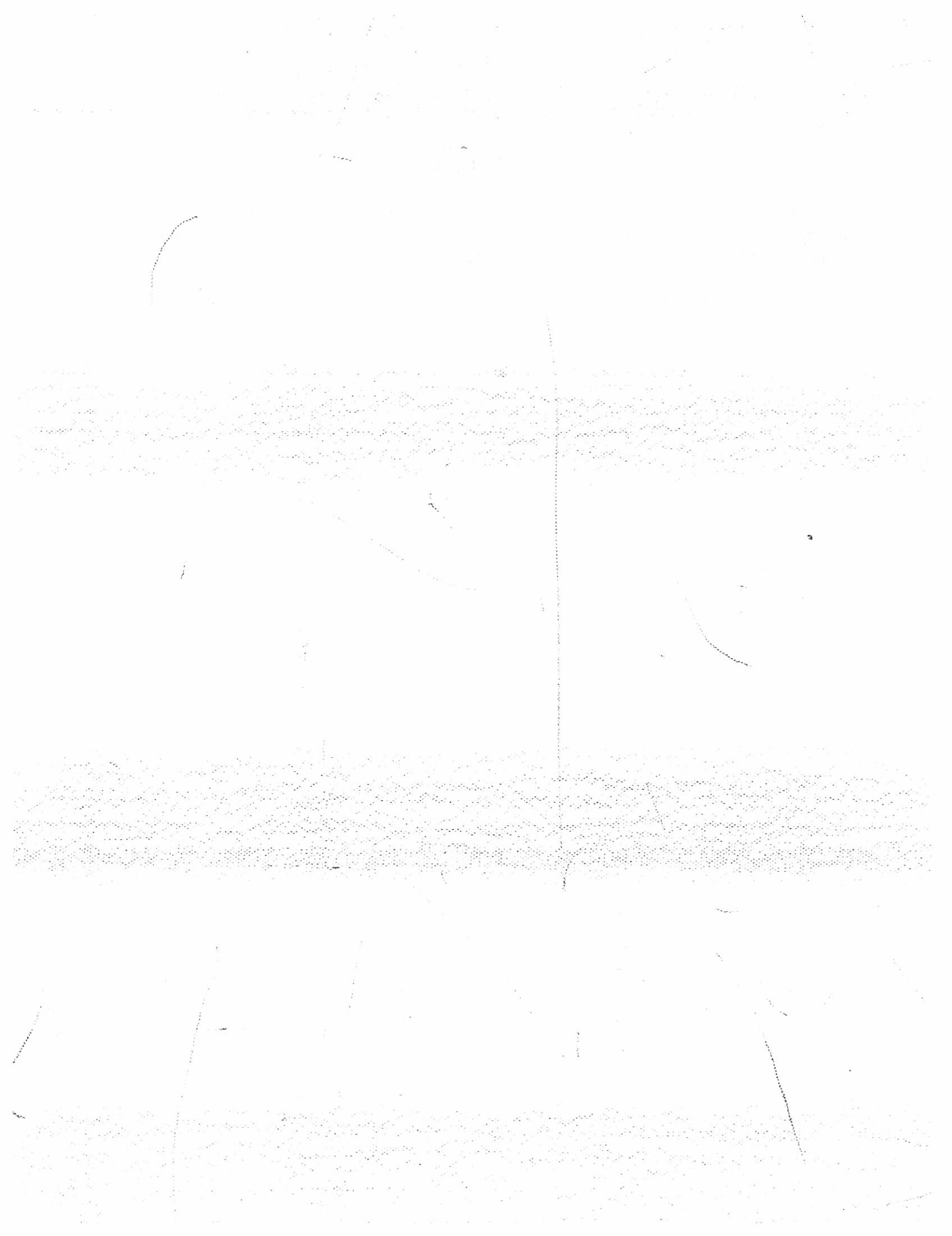
- Friday, January 23rd, 7:30 p.m., 115 Boston Post Road, 673-4880.

## CONCLUSION

Each small group reported back their plans to the entire group. The full group discussed next steps to keep up the momentum from the Profile, with each group appointing someone to maintain contact with the Amherst Profile Steering Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.





## APPENDIX A

### Amherst Community Profile Participants

Jeff Andrews	Ross Glover	Richard Martini
Pat Baksay	David Hallenbeck	Mike Merra
Bill Belvin	Marie Hallenbeck	Martin Michaelis
Peter Bergin	Nancy Head	William Morrissey
Ron Berlack	Tom Head	Tom Muccino
Betsie Bridge	Carol Holden	Colleen O'Connell
Alec Buchanan	Donald Holden	Elizabeth Overholt
Bonnie Burns	Edwin Huff	Bill Overholt
Mike Burns	Tom Hunsader	Marilyn Peterman
Allan Carlsmith	Adam Hutchison	Jean Pituck
Andy Clifford	Addie Hutchison	Gerrie Porter
Steve Coughlan	Bill Hutchison	Carolyn Quinn
Dana Crowell	Jane Jones	Denise Roberts
Sue Currier	Robin Julian	Helen Rowe
William D'Alessandro	Rick Katzenberg	Bob Schaumann
Beth Davis	Beth Kimberly	Andrew Singelakis
Jeff Davis	Clo Knibbe	Richard Sherwood
Christy Day	Burt Knight	Candy Shirey
Josh Delisle	Wilene Knight	Alan Shirey
Jay Dinkel	Bim Krumhansl	Nike Speltz
Toni Dinkel	Peter Krumhansl	Barbara Spitz
Steve Desmarais	Ruth Krumhansl	Susan Stefanec
Cynthia Dokmo	Rick Lalley	Tadd Torborg
Mary Donovan	Charlotte Locke	Joe Visinski
Mike Fiacco	David Locke	Robin Warren
Vicki Fiacco	James Lockwood	Cynthia Wilson
Susan Fry	Mary Katherine Lockwood	Dennis Wilson
Rosemarie Garreffi	Bob Lown	Jan Woodbury
Judy Gilliland	Jeanne Ludt	
Charles Glover	Mary Mahar	

### Amherst Community Profile Facilitators

Christy Belvin	Tom Head	Pixie Lown
George Bower	Adam Hutchison	Mike Merra
Jan Bunker	Anne Krantz	
Sue Currier	Bob Lown	

### Amherst Community Profile Steering Committee

Barb Andrews	Sharon Flanders	Dan Reidy
Ron Berlack	Adam Hutchison	Helen Rowe
Bonnie Burns	Robin Julian	Kerry Silva
Andy Clifford	Peter Krumhansl	Tadd Torborg
Sue Currier	Mike Merra	Cindy Wilson
Cynthia Dokmo	Marilyn Peterman	

### UNH Cooperative Extension Staff

Nancy Adams	George Hamilton	Sarah Smith
Phil Auger	Deborah Maes	Julia Steed Mawson
Paul Belhumeur	Alice Mullen	Ellen Snyder
Judith Bush	Jon Nute	Penny Turner
Jolee Chase	Dan Reidy	
Tim Fleury	Julie Simpson	

## Appendix B

### Historical Presentation by Richard Martini

This evening I would like to give a brief presentation on the history of the Town of Amherst. This will cover its settlement, the peak years as a shire town, and the hundred years of stagnation before the explosive growth of the last 40 years.

The original Narraganset #3 land grant, later Souhegan West, was made in 1733; in 1735 the first settlers arrived. In 1760 the town was incorporated and named for General Lord Jeffrey Amherst, commander in 1758 at the siege of Louisbourg. In 1759 he led an army in the successful campaign against Quebec, which resulted in the end of the French presence in Canada.

In 1769 Amherst became the shire town or county seat of Hillsborough County. The town was at a junction of major roads and the Amherst post office took delivery of most of the county's mail. These factors made Amherst more important than Concord and on a par with Exeter and Portsmouth.

By about 1850, when the railroads had passed by it, Amherst had lost its pre-eminence in the state. There was no water power, so Manchester and Nashua developed as industrial sites and eventually took over the courts. The final session of the Superior Court was held in 1879 and essentially marked the end of the town's existence as a county seat.

The town population peaked in 1790 at 2,400; it did not reach that again until the 1960s. By 1810, the population was down to about 1,500; part of that decrease came from cutting off Milford in 1794 and Mont Vernon in 1803. In 1920 the population had dropped to 868; at the end of World War II, it had returned to the count of 1880, a total of 1,225. The population started to take off in the 1960s, going from 2,051 in 1960 to 4,893 in 1970. It doubled again in the 1970s, reaching 10,441 in 1980. Currently the population is about 11,500.

In the past, Amherst was a lively commercial center: factories, stores, taverns, and inns were located in the village. Several foundries made cast iron stoves; brickmaking, sawmills, a tannery, weaving, and the manufacture of machine cards and buggy whips were among the local industries. Most residences were used for commercial, industrial or professional purposes. The owners lived on the second floor or in the back of the first floor, with the best sections of the house being used for the owner's livelihood.

The major source of income was agriculture with corn, rye, potatoes, chickens, apples and dairy products being the main items. Cattle, pigs, sheep, and even turkeys were driven down roads to market. Even into the early 1940s, dairy cattle were moved by road through Mont Vernon and Frankestown in a three-day trip to the more lush summer pastures in Hillsborough. Today, the town has only a few small farms and the town center is down to two garages, a grocery, and a video store.

The depression hit hard; there were few jobs available. In 1932, the combined town and county aid tax was \$2,300, which helped 95 Amherst residents. A ten-room house on Boston Post Road sold for \$1,600. The WPA and the work generated by the 1938 hurricane got people through this period.

In the late 1950s, the town looked tired. Many houses had little or no plumbing and used a minimum of electricity. Outhouses were still used by many residents.

We are here tonight to plan the town's growth in the next century. In the 1940s, as the town was changing from farming into a residential community, there was increasing discussion of the need to establish some sort of zoning to direct growth toward the best types of land use. This was not the first example of planning in Amherst. In 1760, the town's center was shifted from Upper Flanders to the broad flat area known as the Plain. The center purposely laid out around a large common grazing ground.

Not until 1945 was the first zoning ordinance passed. There were now two districts: village and roadside. The village district encompassed all land within a mile radius of the Town Hall; it would be entirely residential except for existing businesses. There were many regulations but there were no requirements on types of structures, no building codes, no road specifications. Over the years these oversights were corrected.

In 1958 the first planning ordinances were accepted. While industry was not specifically banned, neither was it encouraged. The apparent consensus of early planning boards was that Amherst should do all in its power to encourage residential development, the more the better, and single-family homes to the exclusion of all others. Industry, after all, would demand better roads, water supplies, and possibly sewage systems. For new residents, however, the town would only need to provide schools, and it had them already. Time would show how faulty this philosophy was.

In 1953, for the first time in the history of Amherst, the share of tax dollars going to the School District caught up and outdistanced that portion going to the town and county. Of the \$120,000 appropriated, over \$66,000 was earmarked for the schools. Today that school percentage is about 85%.

As Amherst moved into the 1960s, drastic changes occurred. The population doubled and doubled again. Houses sprang up on what had been farmland or fields, woodland, and hillsides. People flocked to this open, hilly town with its charismatic village center and well-kept Federalist houses arranged around a common. This was the "typical" New England town that is widely imagined but rarely seen, a town that might never have had the economic boost of industrialization, but by the same token was not blighted by decaying mill buildings. Stores and all industries are confined to the outskirts of the village and the majority of town residences are in the professions and commute to their work.

In 1970, the Amherst Village Historic District was created. It applies certain restrictions on architectural changes and land use in the village. Its authority comes from State statutes, with control by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. In 1982, 167 buildings and pieces of property within the District were accepted into the National Register of Historic Places. Both of these actions insure that the historical character of the village is not changed.

Even before 1960, three subtle changes in attitude were taking place, not only in Amherst, but across the country. One was the change in attitude towards land. What had traditionally been accepted as farmland or woodland or swamp or hillside became redefined in terms of house lots. The main factor was how many house lots could be carved out of an area. Land prices rose accordingly: in 1961 the town fathers were delighted to sell for \$350 an 80-acre lot that had been

logged over and let go for unpaid taxes. Eight years later, a subsequent owner sold it to the Conservation Commission for about \$30,000. This became the original Joe English Reservation.

The attitude toward housing also changed. Previously, houses were built to fill a specific need. One built for his own use or to provide a home for a married child. Most Amherst housing in the last four decades has been constructed for vastly different reasons - not to fulfill a demand but to create one. Speculators buy and subdivide land, build houses and roads, and look for people to buy them.

There has also been a change in the attitude toward planning. Previously it smacked of socialism and dictatorship, unreasonably restricting the owner's right to do what he wanted with his property. Today, however, in all communities planning is viewed as essential in order to preserve the very character that made people come to live there in the first place. There remains in all of it an uncomfortable balance between private rights and public interest, and it is not easy to know where to draw the line.

Amherst has greatly changed over the last 40 years. The village has lost its traditional function; it is no longer the focal point of the town. While the charm of the village is a major factor in bringing people to settle here, over the years its viability as a center of town life has eroded. Town and school meetings are no longer held there; the police department and post office have moved away. The three churches, Clark and Wilkins Schools, and the library bring in their own segments of the population. The Town Hall is still the center of local government, however, most people visit it only to pay their taxes or to register their automobiles.

Our task in these meetings is to reconcile the conflicting demands of the town's residents so as to prepare Amherst for the demands and changes coming in the twenty-first century.

#### References:

- 1). *Amherst New Hampshire 1881/1982: A Sleeping town Awakens*  
Historical Society of Amherst, 1983
- 2). *Colonial Amherst Village*  
Robert H. Rowe, 1995
- 3). Various issues of the *Newsletter*  
Historical Society of Amherst