

Peacham Conversations & Call to Action:
*A transcription and brief narrative of the
the community forums held on
October 22nd and 23rd, 2017*

October 2017

Transcribed and Narration Provided By:
Geoffrey Sewake

A part of the Peacham Conversations & Call to Action programming and engagement effort lead by the Peacham Planning Commission with assistance through a 2017 Vermont Municipal Planning Grant and in partnership with the Vermont Council on Rural Development and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

Peacham Planning Commission
Town of Peacham
Peacham, Vermont 05862

Geoffrey Sewake, Chair
Nicholas Commerci
Rene Joly
Melissa Laurita Kohl
Marilyn Magnus

I. Day #1: Friday, October 22nd, 2017@ 6pm, Town Gym

GROUND RULES

- 1) Be Respectful & Polite
- 2) Listen to Others
- 3) One Speaker at a Time
- 4) All Ideas Are Valid
- 5) Share the Floor
- 6) Challenge Problems Not People

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions
 - a. Geoffrey Sewake, Planning Commission Chair
 - b. Jenna Koloski, Community & Policy Manager Vermont Council on Rural Development
 - c. Alison Low, Senior Planner, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
 - d. Ben Doyle, Director of Community & Economic Development, USDA Rural Development
2. Overview
 - a. Geoffrey Sewake, Brief introduction to the process and program
 - b. Jenna Koloski, Review of agenda, process and next steps
3. Brainstorming Conversations
 - a. Community & Economic Development – *Jenna Koloski, Facilitator & Gillian Sewake, Scribe*
 - i. What is working now in Peacham?
 - ii. What are the challenges?
 - iii. What are your community action ideas?
 1. What are the top 8 action ideas?
 - b. Recreation Resources & Activities – *Ben Doyle, Facilitator & Geoffrey Sewake, Scribe*
 - i. What is working now in Peacham?
 - ii. What are the challenges?
 - iii. What are your community action ideas?
 1. What are the top 8 action ideas?
 - c. Community Character & Identity - *Alison Low, Facilitator & Barry Lawson, Scribe*
 - i. What is working now in Peacham?
 - ii. What are the challenges?
 - iii. What are your community action ideas?
 1. What are the top 8 action ideas?
4. Report Out
 - a. Top eight ideas voted on by the participants of each conversation group
5. Closing
 - a. Geoffrey Sewake, Thank you
 - b. Jenna Koloski, Thank you and next steps

BRAINSTORMING CONVERSATIONS

Discussion Group: Community & Economic Development

Jenna Koloski, Facilitator & Gillian Sewake, Scribe

Assets

- Café
- People: Active + Dedicated
- Selectboard
- Events: PAMfest, Fall Foliage, Winter Carnival, 4th of July
- Access to interstates
- Physical beauty
- Peacham Historical Association
- Local philanthropy
- Peacham Community Housing
- Peacham Corner Guild
- Farmers Market
- Dynamic Population

Challenges

- Affordable Housing
- Vacant Country Store
- South Peacham Store (vacant) -> possibly becoming antique storage?
- Lack of store
- Lack of local jobs
- Resistance to change
- Long(ish) commute
- Broadband internet access
- Electrical paradigm to markets
- Aging population
- Lack of public transportation
- Coyotes
- Heavily committed volunteer pool
- Pedestrian access along Bailey-Hazen [accessible]

Action Ideas

- Develop Affordable Housing for All
- Develop a Senior Housing Plan and Identify Living Spaces
- Convert Peacham Store Building for Community
- Develop a Store in Peacham
- Revitalize Village Center
- Improve Connectivity
- Welcome Community/Packet for New Residents
- Develop 15-Year Energy Vision for the Town
- Build Economic Development Task Force
- Build a Community Fund for Peacham Initiatives + Projects
- Create a Time bank to Exchange Services between Community Members
- Support Working Farms (Policies and Market Development)

- Actively Promote Tourism and Visitors Services to Support the Local Economy Year round
- Develop Attract a Dinner Restaurant
- Install an EV Charging Station
- Redevelop the Town Hall Complex

Discussion Group: Recreation Resources & Activities

Ben Doyle, Facilitator & Geoffrey Sewake, Scribe

Assets

- PAMFEst
- Peacham Trails (Pathways)
- Fall Foliage
- 4th of July
- Snow Roller Barn Museum
- Farmers Market
- Winter Carnival
- Muck Auction
- Snowball Dance Event
- Church
- Star Parties
- Hunting
- Hiking (like Devil's Hill)
- Fishing
- Town Forest
- VAST Trails (has been multi-use, i.e. skiing)
- Martin's Pond + Others
- Loon Platform
- Running Club
- Basketball
- Game's Clubs
- Library
- Historical Society
- Biking
- Ballfields
- School Playground
- Contra Dances

Challenges

- Recreation is not economic driver
- They bring people in, but not main purpose
- Peacham Café benefits
- Recreation for residents, retention/attraction
- Farmers Market potential for economic development
- Town struggles to keep local businesses in business (CSAs. General Store, others)
- Want more activities – still not enough (Aging in place)
- Volunteer's (shrinking pool, need new ones, burnout)

- Volunteer challenges seems systemic of new world (balance jobs, kids, family)
- Locals don't get chance to enjoy if volunteering – too many things to do
- Not aware of events
- Need maintaining
- Not aware of volunteer needs
- Collaborators is an opportunity to connect with groups
- Church has good attendance

Action Ideas

- Community Rec Center
- Access to Activities
 - Time of Day
 - (+) more activities
- Tennis Court
 - Pavilion
 - Other Use
 - Town currently thinking about it
- Community Calendar
 - Weekly, etc
 - Needs to be centralized clearinghouse
 - Needs to be in multiple mediums
 - Digital and not digital -> Look to AWIP
- Volunteer Mentorship Program
 - Learn from leader
 - Low volunteer time required
- Opportunity to Grow Non-School Activities
- Opportunity to Connect with Non-School Activities, Groups, People
- Use a Public Board
 - Like the Town office board
- Re-form Town Action Committee
 - Move work away from selectboard
- Investigate Liability Coverage for Community Events
- Engage School, Formally, for Volunteers
 - Like students
 - There is a meeting taking place at school to engage with the community

Discussion Group: Community Character & Identity

Alison Low, Facilitator & Barry Lawson, Scribe

Assets

- Front Porch Forum (FPF)
- Very nice P.O. people
- Fabulous Library, Town Hall (office)
- Great Peacham Historical Association (PHA)
- Volunteering
- Science Building
- Active Farms
- Great School / School Choice

- Café
- Interesting Events, PAMfest, Carnival
- Senior Housing
- Architecture, heritage, buildings
- Landscape – Rolling fields, vistas
- Mixing agriculture & forest
- Friendly folks – safe place
- Intellectually stimulating & values
- Church – Meeting place
- Astronomy Foundation, Guild
- Old school houses
- Tractor parade
- Aging While In Place (AWIP)
- Parent Teacher Group (PTG)
- Collaborators

Challenges

- Volunteers – need more!
 - Event Management – big need
 - Sustainability
 - Lack of succession planning
 - Role of church dying
 - Lack of time
- Loss of open land e.g. village farm
 - Keep farms working
- (Farmers) Market
 - Lack of scale for support
 - Getting youth involved
- General Store
- Better outreach needed
 - Interrelates between circles [image of overlapping circles]
- Bulletin Boards
 - Kiosk
- Economic diversity and housing availability
- Transportation
- Cellular Service
- Aging Population, AWIP

Action Ideas

- Better Communication
 - Multi-faceted program to be sustained
- Transfer Leadership
 - Succession plan, communication element
- Explore conservation options for e.g. Village Farm
 - Keeping land open, Shaw Farm for example
- Affordable Housing Options

- e.g. Zoning, Peacham Community Housing incentivize, tax issues, density in village
- New Venue Needed
 - Tennis Court
 - + Church
 - Small performance hall
- Village as Magnet for Young People
- Transit Connection
 - EV Station (Charging)
- ATM Machine
- “Destination” Carousel, Farmway, etc., “whispering bench”
- Diversity initiative

Top Action Ideas by Group & Group Vote Count

Each discussion group voted for their own Top 8 Action Ideas. During this vote, each participant was given eight votes that it could distribute in any way desired. For example, Participant A might like Action Idea One and Three, and nothing else; Participant A could split their votes amongst just two Action Ideas, with 4 votes for Idea One and 4 votes for Idea Two.

DISCUSSION GROUP: COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IDENTITY

ACTION IDEAS	PERCENT VOTE	COUNT	RANK OF TOP 8 ACTION IDEAS BY GROUP
Better Communication	20%	16	1
Diversity initiative	18%	14	2
Explore conservation options for e.g. Village Farm	16%	13	3
New Venue Needed	14%	11	4
Transfer Leadership	13%	10	5-tie
Affordable Housing Options	13%	10	5-tie
“Destination” Carousel, Farmway, etc., “whispering bench”	4%	3	7
Village as Magnet for Young People	3%	2	8
Transit Connection	1%	1	-
ATM Machine	0%	0	-

DISCUSSION GROUP: RECREATION RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

ACTION IDEAS	PERCENT VOTE	COUNT	RANK OF TOP 8 ACTION IDEAS BY GROUP
Community Calendar	21%	16	1
Tennis Court	17%	13	2
Volunteer Mentorship Program	14%	11	3
Engage School, Formally, for Volunteers	14%	11	3
Re-form Town Action Committee	9%	7	5
Access to Activities	8%	6	6
Investigate Liability Coverage for Community Events	6%	5	7
Community Rec Center	4%	3	8-tie
Opportunity to Grow Non-School Activities	4%	3	8-tie

Use a Public Board	3%	2	-
Opportunity to Connect with Non-School Activities, Groups, People	0%	0	-

DISCUSSION GROUP: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION IDEAS	PERCENT VOTE	COUNT	RANK OF TOP 8 ACTION IDEAS BY GROUP
Revitalize Village Center	11%	11	1
Develop Affordable Housing for All	9%	9	2
Improve Connectivity	8%	8	3-tie
Develop 15-Year Energy Vision for the Town	8%	8	3-tie
Build a Community Fund for Peacham Initiatives + Projects	8%	8	3-tie
Create a Time bank to Exchange Services between Community Members	8%	8	3-tie
Support Working Farms (Policies and Market Development)	8%	8	3-tie
Redevelop the Town Hall Complex	8%	8	3-tie
Develop a Senior Housing Plan and Identify Living Spaces	7%	7	-
Build Economic Development Task Force	6%	6	-
Actively Promote Tourism and Visitors Services to Support the Local Economy Year round	6%	6	-
Convert Peacham Store Building for Community	4%	4	-
Welcome Community/Packet for New Residents	3%	3	-
Install an EV Charging Station	2%	2	-
Develop a Store in Peacham	0%	0	-
Develop Attract a Dinner Restaurant	0%	0	-

II. Day #2: Saturday, October 23rd, 2017@ 9am, Town Gym

GROUND RULES

- 1) Be Respectful & Polite
- 2) Listen to Others
- 3) One Speaker at a Time
- 4) All Ideas Are Valid
- 5) Share the Floor
- 6) Challenge Problems Not People

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
 - a. David Jacobs, Selectboard Chair
 - b. Geoffrey Sewake, Planning Commission Chair
 - c. Jenna Koloski, Community & Policy Manager Vermont Council on Rural Development
 - d. Alison Low, Senior Planner, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
2. Overview
 - a. Geoffrey Sewake, Brief introduction to the process and program
 - b. Jenna Koloski, Review of agenda, process and next steps
3. Review of Topic Ideas for Action – *Jenna Koloski, Facilitator; Alison Low, Co-Facilitator; Geoffrey Sewake, Scribe*
 - a. Participants review Top Action Ideas from Day #1, and are given an opportunity to modify, clarify or add to the Action Ideas
4. Voting for Top 8
 - a. Participants vote for their preferred Top 8 Action Ideas
5. Championing Priorities – *Jenna Koloski, Facilitator; Alison Low, Scribe; Geoffrey Sewake, Scribe*
 - a. Participants are given a chance to discuss the Top 8 Action Ideas and advocate for them
6. Voting for Top 4
 - a. Participants vote for their preferred Top 4 Action Ideas
7. Sign Up for Action
 - a. Participants are encouraged to sign up for action groups
8. Closing
 - a. Geoffrey Sewake, Thank you
 - b. Jenna Koloski, Thank you and next steps

Top Action Ideas from Day #1 & Voting Results

The Top Action Ideas from Day #1 were transcribed onto new sheets for voting and comment. Those most similar were combined to form a single Action Item. Those that needed clarity were worded in a more understandable manner. One additional Action Idea (“Develop Community Resiliency Center”) was added to the list by suggestion and vote by the participants. Another Action Idea was separated from a combined Action Idea to be voted on separately (“Tennis Court Redevelopment” separated from “Redevelop Town Hall Complex”). Participants were asked to vote for their Top 8 Action Ideas. In this round, each participant had 9 votes that it could distribute in any way desired. For example, Participant A might like Action Idea One and Three, but nothing else; Participant A could split their votes amongst just two Action Ideas, with 6 for Idea One and 3 for Idea Two.

ACTION IDEAS	PERCENT VOTE	COUNT	RANK OF TOP 8 ACTION IDEAS
Support Working Farms & Land Conservation with Policies and Developing a Market for Their Products, including the Village Farm	13.30%	40	1
Develop More Affordable Housing Options, especially younger people	9.30%	28	2-tie
Create a Time Bank to Exchange Services Between Community Members	9.30%	28	2-tie
Improve Broadband & Cellular Connectivity	9.00%	27	4
Develop an Accessible Community Calendar	8.60%	26	5
Tennis Court Redevelopment	7.60%	23	6
Develop a 15-Year Energy Vision	7.30%	22	7
Volunteer and Leadership Mentorship Program	6.60%	20	8
Redevelop Town Hall Complex	5.00%	15	-
Revitalize Village Center	4.30%	13	-
Develop a Community Fund for Peacham Initiatives & Projects	3.70%	11	-
Improve Access of Activities to All	3.30%	10	-
Pursue Liability Coverage for Community Activities & Events	2.70%	8	-
Reboot the Peacham Events & Activities Committee	2.70%	8	-
Improve Communication and Coordination Between Groups and Municipality	1.70%	5	-
Engage With School to Develop Student Volunteers	1.70%	5	-
Develop Peacham “Destination” Attraction	1.30%	4	-
Develop Community Resiliency Center	1.00%	3	-
Explore Ways to be More Diverse: A Diversity Initiative; Bring together groups and residents	1.00%	3	-
Explore the Development of a Performance Space Venue	0.70%	2	-
Explore Development of a Community Center	-	0	-

Top 4 Action Ideas & Voting Results

The Top 8 Action Ideas were transcribed onto new sheets for voting and comment. Those that needed clarity were worded in a more understandable manner. Participants were asked to advocate and discuss the 8 Action Ideas. After a thorough discussion of the Top 8 Action Ideas, participants were asked to Vote for their Top 4 Action Ideas from the remaining 8 Action Ideas. In this round, each participant had 6 votes that it could distribute in any way desired. For example, Participant A might like Action Idea One and Three, but nothing else; that Participant could split their votes amongst just two Action Ideas, with 3 for Idea One and 3 for Idea Two.

ACTION IDEAS	PERCENT VOTE	COUNT	RANK OF TOP 4 ACTION IDEAS
Develop More Affordable Housing Options, especially younger people	24%	32	1
Support Working Farms & Land Conservation with Policies and Developing a Market for Their Products, including the Village Farm	16%	21	2
Create a Time Bank to Exchange Services Between Community Members	15%	20	3
Improve Broadband & Cellular Connectivity	14%	18	4
Tennis Court Redevelopment	11%	14	-
Develop an Accessible Community Calendar	8%	10	-
Develop a 15-Year Energy Vision	8%	10	-
Volunteer and Leadership Mentorship Program	5%	6	-

Sign Up for Action Groups

After voting, participants were asked to sign up for action groups if they wanted to continue to move the Action Ideas forward. Geoffrey Sewake agreed to help lead the groups as they got started and encouraged members to reach out to other members in the community to participate.