

MEETING NOTES

Team Haverhill’s Possible Dreams 2013: “Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground”

Monday, January 28, 7-9 pm

Northern Essex Community College

Agenda

Welcomes: Team Haverhill President Alice Mann
Mayor James Fiorentini
Greater Haverhill Chamber President Sven Amirian

Team Haverhill Mission and Service Areas:

An independent, volunteer action group dedicated to making Haverhill a better place to live, learn, work, and play. Primary project areas: Arts, Environment, Community.

Team Haverhill Initiatives for 2013-2014:

Art Walk on the Bradford Rail Trail (2013-2015)
River Ruckus (2013)
Portland Street Playground (2013-2014)
Soles of Haverhill (2014)
Haverhill Farmers’ Market (Annual)
Haverhill Youth Mentor Network (Ongoing)

Two Rounds of “World Café” Conversation:

Key community assets (“Planets”)
Community hopes and aspirations (“Stars”)
Exciting new elements (“Comets”)
Sense of identity/sense of place (“Sun”)

Large Group Session:

Identifying elements of Haverhill’s “universe”
What is possible in this “universe” that has never been possible before?
How can this one year—2013—help bring our best future into being?

Next Steps: Report-back to community: TeamHaverhill.org and e-newsletter
Volunteer opportunities in the above projects—Inquiries to: info@teamhaverhill.org
Next meeting of Team Haverhill February 11, 7 pm, Pentucket Bank Community Room
(One Merrimack Street—rear entrance to grey building)



Summary of Findings

In the midst of a pop-up snowstorm, more than 105 residents turned out for the sixth annual Possible Dreams event, a community conversation about the future, hosted by Team Haverhill. This year's event sounded some strong new themes, and underscored key aspirations from previous gatherings. Overall, the evening's discussion conveyed a strong sense of community pride, affirmation for steady progress, and positive expectations for the future.

Participants this year applauded the new level of co-operation they observe among the various entities promoting the city's cultural revitalization and economic development. This favorable institutional climate was highlighted in remarks to the group by Sven Amirian, President of the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce. "I am so encouraged," he said, "to see this renewed sense of collaboration between the major organizations—entities like the City of Haverhill, Greater Haverhill Foundation, Team Haverhill, and the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce; we are working to maximize each organization's effect, and eliminate duplication of efforts."

Attendees also expressed excitement over potential new additions to Haverhill's community landscape, including a satellite campus of UMass Lowell, a new boutique hotel, new firms that may be recruited to join an "open innovation" cluster, and a co-operative online news source called "Haverhill Matters." During the event, City Councilor John Michitson applauded the group's attention to recruiting new industry and bringing good jobs to Haverhill. "It is a great sign," he said. The group also noted the need for "social integration," and expressed the hope that creative experiences can help youngsters from different backgrounds to connect in a positive way.

Alongside these important new themes, this year's Possible Dreams assembly voiced strong community support for key components of Haverhill's ongoing revitalization strategy. A mandate to forge ahead with downtown revitalization was the most common message from the thirty different table-conversations that took place through the evening. Participants called for:

- An upgrade of the Merrimack Street section of the downtown corridor;
- Continued work on a "bridge-to-bridge loop" of downtown commerce, art, and recreation;
- More river-oriented facilities, such as a kayak or canoe rental dock, and more river-oriented activities, such as River Ruckus;
- Constant attention to aesthetics and cleanliness;
- Further work to establish a new downtown cultural facility; and,
- Effective messaging that presents Haverhill's downtown as the center of a whole "universe" of cultural sites, farms, parks, trails, and recreation areas.

Early in the evening, Team Haverhill rolled out a set of initiatives for 2013-2014, including:

- "Art Walk" on the Bradford Rail Trail—integration of 3 to 5 permanent sculptures into the trail design
- River Ruckus 2013—return of this popular festival on September 7, co-ordinated with Rotary Duck Regatta
- Portland Street Playground—partnership with the City and neighborhood to renovate this area
- Soles of Haverhill 2014—a new edition of the popular shoe-themed public art installation



(cont'd)

- Haverhill Farmers Market—Saturday mornings, June through October, with weekly live music and children’s activities; plus return of the “Ag and Art” farm paint-out and exhibit at Sage Gallery
- Haverhill Youth Mentor Network—school-based, one-to-one mentoring
- Gala Auction Events—focused on the “Art Walk” in 2013, and “Soles of Haverhill” in 2014
- New Website—new, multi-media version of TeamHaverhill.org to go “live” soon

Input from Table Discussions

Each table focused on one of the four categories listed here. Complete lists of responses are found at the end of this report.

Key Community Assets (“Planets”)

Community Hopes and Aspirations (“Stars”)

Exciting New Elements (“Comets”)

Sense of Identity / Sense of Place (“Sun”)



Comments During Large Group Session:

What's possible in this universe that has never been possible before?

- Positive political discourse
- Because of technology, our schools and businesses can reach far outside Haverhill—free media
- To keep growing the Haverhill spirit—gets better all the time
- Set aside individual agendas and work for common good—like tonight!
- Look and see who is not benefiting / being touched by / current efforts—find ways to incorporate the whole city
- Become a small city on the Merrimack playing on a world stage. How?
 - Emphasize the assets we already mentioned
 - Strive for excellence in what we do (architecture, etc.) so the world takes notice
 - Individual businesses improve their online marketing
 - Build on unity of agricultural community—make it know that this is a rich sector
 - multiple options for “pick your own”
 - multiple farm properties with conservation covenants
 - multiple CSA’s (community supported agriculture)
 - “No farms, no food”
 - Comment: We already have “the world” right here—diverse population
- Embrace the phrase “love thy neighbor”: look for the good
- First co-operative online newspaper in this area—“Haverhill Matters”—directed by reader/subscribers. www.haverhillmatters.org
- Educate children for a better future—tie efforts in with the schools
- New level of collaboration—on the verge of real partnership among major entities—asking “What is best for Haverhill and how can we work together?”
- Wear a tag that says: “Proudly made in Haverhill, Massachusetts” (demonstrate civic pride)
- Civic pride overcomes past tendency to fracture
 - Can we find a powerful slogan? (“What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas”)
- To make Haverhill a better place—greater health and safety for our children
- Change perceptions from the inside out.
 - Newer resident comments that her preconceptions were shattered when she actually came to live in Haverhill
 - Brand new resident in downtown housing says she was cautioned by friends and family to “be careful” but has had very positive experience
- Tap into input from children and teens
- Become the “All Star” Gateway City. City of opportunity for those who come here
- Build on key asset of Haverhill Cultural Council. Even though funding from Massachusetts Cultural Council has been reduced from \$150K to \$18 K per year, Council does a lot with it
- Build on Haverhill Classical Academy—experience of attending a trivia night where parents and kids were having fun together



- Improve scores / performance across all the schools--state wants us to improve our schools, quality currently uneven
- Library has terrific events and clubs for children and teens—how to address low attendance?
- Move from “you guys” to “we folks...”
- Clarify Haverhill’s brand and reach out more assertively; don’t take for granted that others know what is available here
- Growth in industry and jobs—spurred by Haverhill Hardware Challenge (contest for start-up companies, looking to draw “mind-share” from Boston and Cambridge, build a reputation for creativity and innovation
- Build on the asset of two locally-based community banks (Haverhill and Pentucket)
- And on a larger stage, what’s possible is.... Peace.

How can this one year—2013—help bring our best future into being?

- Individuals engage in active support of this community’s assets
 - Buy produce from the local farm markets, join the CSA’s
 - Go to local restaurants—even if they cost more
 - Support the local cultural community, such as the five “Cultural Treasures” (Tattersall Farm, Winnekenni Castle, Haverhill Firefighting Museum, Buttonwoods Museum, Whittier Birthplace), Spotlight Playhouse productions and workshops
 - Support the “Y” and other nonprofits working toward the same kinds of goals we are discussing tonight such as Brightside (Earth Day cleanup and Haverhill Goes Green event)
- Specific opportunities mentioned, for residents to strengthen the spirit of community in Haverhill:
 - Spotlight Playhouse (www.spotlightplayhouse.org)
 - “Annie” starts April 19
 - Summer workshops for 2nd-5th grade
 - 4-week session for older youngsters
 - April 12, “Fairy Tale Ball” at Haverhill Pubic Library (<http://www.haverhillpl.org/>)
 - April 9, “Taste of Spring” at Renaissance Country Club, sole annual fundraiser of L’Arche Irenicon (www.larcheirenicon.org)
 - April 20, Earth Day Clean-Up (www.haverhillsbrightside.org)



Complete List of Ideas from Table Discussions

PLANETS – KEY COMMUNITY ASSETS

- 6th annual Possible Dreams!
- Human assets: seniors, college students, diverse mix of backgrounds
- Use technology to reach and improve community and enrich residents
- 5 exits off of I495 and close to 93 and 95
- Scenery of the seasons – rolling hills and autumn leaves
- TV33!
- Railroad – Amtrak and commuter rail
- Close neighbors watch out for each other
- River – needs dredging, look to Newburyport, bike trails
- Affordable housing – cool mix of housing types from Victorians to lofts/ Real estate values (2)
- Interesting mix of assets
- Cute gritty downtown
- Genuine people
- Lots of open/ green space – farmland and working farms, veggie garden
- Why did nobody not mention ind'l parks and Haverhill's jobs as an asset – innovative start-up competition
- UMass Lowell – future asset
- 10,000 square feet of rental space downtown (Gerson?)
- NECC and school system uneven (+&-) – people like their schools but the others have problems. I.e. HHS has to take all students, Whittier Tech is respected now because they can turn down applicants
- HHS Classical Academy
- Opportunity/Potential
- Vibrancy/small city vibe
- Focus for young families with kids/young people participate/involve kids & teenagers
- Promote ourselves
- Good land/farms/agriculture (veggie picking) (5)
- Bison, llamas, cows
- Lots of land/green space/conservation area/great views (4)
- Rural and city mix w/ horse farms/versatility of landscape (4)
- Beach at Plugs Pond (1) & Boating program
- Close to coast/ocean beaches
- Recreational activities
- Ski area (4)
- 2 Hockey Rinks
- Roller Skating
- 2 Bowling alleys
- Cedardale
- Parks/playgrounds (2)
- Swim club
- Golf courses
- Hiking Trails (snowshoeing) (3)
- Nature experience
- Rail trail
- Brewery & Vineyard
- Rocks Village
- Hospital (2)
- Large rehab facility
- Nursing homes
- Colleges (NECC, Northpoint, UMASS)
- Haverhill-based Banks
- Industrial parks
- Retail presence
- Small business
- Interesting History/Attractions/Cultural Treasures (3) (Winnekenni Castle, Whittier Birthplace, Tattersall Farm)
 - Winnekenni (3)
 - Historic Buildings (1)
 - Historical Society (1)
- YMCA
- Good network of community/social service provides (i.e. Emmaus)/non-profits (2)



POSSIBLE DREAMS 2013: "Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground"—January 28, 2013

- Over 30 churches all doing something with the community
- Volunteerism
- How to get those who need it to existing programs?
- Strong community leadership
- Great People/Creative People (2)
- Creative
- Location (5) (strategic, accessibility-close to everything: mountains/ocean, train to Boston & Portland, highway right through Haverhill)
- Train/Commuter Rail (5)
- River/lakes/ponds (5)
- Sturgeon
- Starting first cooperative newspaper – Haverhill Matters (2)
- Library (4) (with historic section, E-books, etc)
- Arts district
- Good local food & restaurants (5)
- Coffee shops
- Nice downtown/revitalization (3)
- Nightlife coming alive
- City that acts like a town (2)
- Restaurant decks to see the river
- Nice sidewalks in Bradford
- VIP Program
- Board Rooms
- Need good community meeting space
- "Proudly Made in Haverhill"
- Single-stream recycling
- Downtown architecture
- Our own town water
- Close to NH (tax free, mountains) (2) – possibly combine with location
- Two charter schools
- School system
- School honors program
- Improve schools – more than test scores
- Schools/colleges (2)
- Mentoring program
- Variety of real estate including mill building converted to condos
 - Hamel Mill Lofts
- Street parking with solar parking meters
- New parking garage
- Diversity (socioeconomic and racial) (3)
- Stadium and park behind it

STARS – COMMUNITY HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

- Lots of land/ Open spaces (2)
- Water access
- Community gardens (2)at 3 local farms
- Teens skate outside
- Portland and Swasey
- Row your boat from lake to lake
- Santa Parade paid/financial sponsor – city holiday
- All children's needs met – health, happiness, safety
- The uncouncted
- Parks and recreation
- For people to get over and get past mistakes (urban renewal) made in the past and focus on moving forward
- Increased attention to all the positives happening around town
- Filling vacant store fronts
- Development of Woolworth building
- Improved education and employment opportunities will lead to an improved economy
- Establishment of a local goods marketplace (like the one at Chelsea Pier)
- Improved esthetics/curb appeal downtown – cleaner, better lighting, safer, but also the buildings, storefronts and windows too/ Need to improve Merrimack Street to a nicer quality like Washington/Improve downtown – need better looking storefronts, garden center (3)
- Improved esthetics of the back of buildings on Merrimack Street to enhance view from Bradford side and rail trail
- Performing arts center



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- Branding/marketing – better promotion of what we have here
- Identity – truthful expression to the outside of what Haverhill really is! Changing outsiders' perspective of Haverhill (2)
- To have a movie theater in Haverhill
- Restroom facilities at Winnikini Park – composting toilet
- More involvement in community programs already established – many library programs unattended, PR?
- A more beautiful wall on Wall St.
- A book store
- Rooftop gardens?
- More real business on main streets – Washington/Merrimack
- Center for the arts
- Arts in the schools – music and art back in full force from elementary to high school
- Increased and improved public access to the river
- Improvement in downtown:
 - More sophisticated city
 - More interesting
 - More rich looking
 - More welcoming
 - More art works
 - A movie theater
- All the schools in Haverhill get a reputation for excellence!/ Whatever it takes to change, improve school system and perception of it/ Better education system, better maintenance (3)
- Share the wealth with parks and city projects (includes a fair distribution of cash/labor)
- Washington Square Park
- Finish bridge to bridge trail
- Continued consistency in local government
- Preservation
- More development on river to attract people to Haverhill
- Historical info/plaques on buildings downtown
- Cultural history of city neighborhood
- Leverage history of Rocks Village, Whittier, Buttonwoods connected
- Enrich community with history
- Smart growth – complete street
- Community preservation act
- House rec
- Responsibility for and desire to improve parks, environment and way to "own" it
- Community theater
- Community café – no cost, healthy, dignity
- More cultural opportunities
- More: activities for families and youth, social integration
- Youth soccer – need better field
- Help attract and train business owners to be more creative, marketing
- Better information network – things are moving
- UMass Lowell coming to town
- Want to see a more vibrant city
- Use art initiatives as a way to further social integration
- River is a good resource need to promote it and attract more visitors
- Safe place to grow a family
- Diversity of the city environment green space-city is attractive
- A community calendar, perhaps on website, heralding the great community activities available that we should all support

SUN – SENSE OF IDENTITY OR SENSE OF PLACE THAT HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER

- Variety & beginning to embrace that variety
- Diversity (5) and tolerance of ethnic, racial & economic diversity
- Affordability Real estate - good value (2)
- Potential for growth of Mt. Washington and Acre neighborhoods
- Partnerships with education Connecting educational institutions (NECC and UMASS)



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- “Haverhill the jewel of the Merrimack” as a slogan
- Geographic (4) Mix of rural – urban – suburban: 36 square miles of lakes, farms, castle, downtown, riverside (questions about cohesion or urban not being connected to rural)
- Location – close to mountains, Boston, ocean yet still affordable
- History (4) (agriculture, heritage, hard work, shoes-former shoe town)
- Historical sites
- Great old buildings
- Revitalization of downtown/urban energy (2)
- City evolving
- Downtown housing
- Downtown restaurants
- Visual arts
- Arts (2)
- Cultural
- Passion/spirit (of community leadership)
- Local agriculture
- Farmers market (2)
- Recreation
- Theater arts
- Ice skating
- Roller skating
- Fishing
- Winnikenni Park
- River, lakes (2)
- Skiing
- Will be good to connect Haverhill & Bradford with rail trail/connect River Walk to playground by yacht club
- School has many different programs
- Commuter rail/train (2)
- Industry (manufacturing) (2) – history and upcoming (Burgess business center)
- Diversity of businesses
- Bring groups together for business expansion and marketing
- Economic opportunity
- Ties to the city
- Sense of community (2)
- Small community feel
- Sense of pride
- Sense of identity (in Rocks Village)
- Strong immigrant community
- New energetic people getting involved (2)
- Committed public servants, elected officials and volunteers all working together/community comes together for big projects (2)
- Resources (2)
- Various volunteer orgs all striving for betterment of community (2)
- Opportunity to make a difference (work with disadvantaged populations)
- Folks who care/nice people (3)
- Family/friends (2)
- Environment
- Knowing lots of people
- Population
- Haverhill has a visitor center

COMETS – EXCITING NEW ELEMENTS

- Embrace farm and green spaces
- Farmers Market – expand, advertise outside of Haverhill (4)
- Eat and shop locally
- American Rowing Association meets at rest area on 110 – utilize river
- UMass Lowell (4) – what to do to leverage that, what need around it (?), rezone Merrimack
- Street to help, trains; UMass Lowell may enhance NECC outreach partnership
- Housing circle tax rates
- Bradford great value
- Taxes lower than anywhere
- Affordability – nice style of life
- Neighborhood
- Services



POSSIBLE DREAMS 2013: "Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground"—January 28, 2013

- Location – ocean
- Schools important for parents or for homeowners – resale value
- Trains can help make Haverhill a destination - downtown, businesses where you can buy things, turn mill buildings into outlet stores with a focus on clothing to avoid sales tax, restaurants
- Downtown experience
- Trains and public transportation access
- New hotel coming (3)
- Mural – huge accomplishment
- Possibility of community gardens at city owned farms
- Donation of land bordering Chadwick Pond for walking trails or future park
- Bradford Rail Trail expansion of art
- Bradford Grange
- Return of Brightside
- Introduction of Frisbee/golf at Riverside Park woods
- Developing a spirit of volunteerism
- Tackling debt = new industry attract wealthy commuters, new jobs
- Post office square?
- Swasey Field, GW Park
- Additional water park, sledding
- New school to replace Hunking
- Waterfront overlay district
- MSGROD (?)
- Economic development
- Boardwalk & docks
- Railroad bridges repair
- Portland Street playground
- Crime prevention (gangs)
- New restaurant – Barking Dog
- Art (2)
- MVRTA Garage
- Burlington Coat Factory
- Rte. 125 reconstruction
- City apps for constituents
- Groveland and Rock Village bridge repairs (2), bridge opening party!
 - River Ruckus fun
 - Restaurant week?
- Brian Dempsey – Political star rising!
- Business Development Center
- Renewed/reimagined coordination between entities in/of the city to forge this path – opposite of urban renewal
- Downtown redevelopment (2)
- NECC is a better community partner
- New shopping
- Parking garage
- Safer
- Agricultural community is unifying!/ Agricultural Commission to bridge the gap between city and agriculture (2)
- Rails to trails – will it be illuminated? Solar!
- Farm day
- Bradford rail trail – renew interest in existing trail system/natural resources
- Box board? Public access to river
 - Chris'/Friends Landing Upgrade social networking – will enhance access to event publications
- Improve foot traffic – maybe inspiring new business geared towards younger/vibrant crowd Enhance opportunities for Landmark and Woolworth buildings and other empty spaces
- Increased volunteer pool enhance cultural activities/ Volunteerism (2)
- Public community theater/ Spotlight Playhouse (2)
- Theater
- Local agriculture
- Organic farming
- Agriculture and arts
- Shoe Town art studio
- Community art classes
- Pentucket Park
- Improving/creating community playgrounds
- The trail
- Rail trail ("Team Waten", safety & vandalism, keeping it clean)



POSSIBLE DREAMS 2013: “Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground”—January 28, 2013

- Restaurants (w/ outdoor seating)
- Lots happening
- Affordable housing
- Business
- Retail stores
- Riverfront development?
- Improving Haverhill High and its reputation
- Tourism
- Making more groups (moms’ groups, walking groups, play dates, classes, support)
- Local News
- Church

