

Speak Up, Hampstead! was the realization of Pat Gelinas’ dream to create the opportunity for Hampstead residents to share hopes, dreams, and concerns about the town in a friendly, non-political setting, under the motto “Planning the Future with Respect for the Past.” The methodology for the events, facilitated by the good folks at UNH, was designed to elicit from the citizens a common vision for the future of the town and document that vision in a Community Profile.

Over 200 residents met at Hampstead Middle School on April 1-2, 2005 to develop the Community Profile.

On Friday evening, April 1st, the Profile event began with a pot luck supper. After presentations by the Steering Committee, the lead facilitator asked the participants to share their positive or negative feelings about their community now and what they would like the community to be in the future. All responses were recorded for inclusion in the final report. The participants were then assigned to eleven small groups to brainstorm ideas. (Please see Speak Up Hampstead’s Website for the list of the eleven topics)

On the morning of Saturday, April 2nd, the lead facilitator asked the participants to list the key issues they heard the previous night in the small group discussions. These were then classified into six broad themes by consensus of the entire group. Once completed, participants chose a theme and broke out into six small working groups. The small groups defined the problems, opportunities and what they hoped to accomplish in the form of project goals. Potential problems or opportunities were proposed and rated on an impact-feasibility basis. Three projects in each theme were selected by each working group to bring to the entire group by lunch time.

Before lunch, every participant received six adhesive dots to “vote” on the projects they thought were of immediate importance for Hampstead. It is worth noting that “Communications—or lack thereof” was a recurring concern in most groups. The project ideas submitted by the working groups and the corresponding voting tallies were:

1. Business

- A. Create a business development commission - 59 votes
- B. Development of code for architectural style compatible with town “character” - 6 votes
- C. Exploration of best practices of our town and other towns - 3 votes

2. Community Involvement

- A. Increase communication by better publicizing events and soliciting input from citizens (i.e. newsletter, web calendar, Cable TV, info sessions, and Speak Up Hampstead follow-up) - 45 votes
- B. Educate citizens about government roles to encourage involvement; classes about roles, more public process, original chart of town roles - 13 votes

- C. Bridge the gap and build a common vision – group to group communication, student ambassadors, better school/town Board communication - 10 votes
- 3. Community Human & Education Services
 - A. Community Center – to build or establish from existing structure - 34 votes
 - B. Inventory and assess usability of current facilities, programs and resources in town - 23 votes
 - C. Groups/individual to coordinate and publicize our organizations, programs and resources - 12 votes
- 4. Recreation
 - A. Upgrade specific recreational facilities: town beach, Ordway Park, conservation trails - 43 votes
 - B. Widen streets - 17 votes
 - C. Expand Depot Road: playground, running track, skate park, multi-purpose fields - 8 votes
- 5. Planning/Zoning
 - A. Create and implement Hampstead Master Plan (must be enforceable and updated at regular intervals) - 58 votes
 - B. Community Planning Project including mapping of Hampstead (*i.e. use of* geographic information system) that creates assessments and identifies potentialities - 7 votes
 - C. Communication Project that addresses internal constituencies and creates external interfaces - 0 votes
- 6. Communications
 - A. Town Newspaper - 37 votes
 - B. Communications Clearing House - 28 votes
 - C. Neighborhood groups/ reps - 0 votes

At the end of the session, Action Teams were formed to investigate the feasibility of the following initiatives and report on April 18th:

- 1. Create a business development commission.
- 2. Increase communication by better publicizing events and soliciting input from citizens (*i.e.* newsletter, web calendar, Cable TV, info sessions, and Speak Up Hampstead)
- 3. Community Center – to build or establish from existing structure.
- 4. Upgrade specific recreational facilities: town beach, Ordway Park, conservation trails.
- 5. Create and implement Hampstead Master Plan.
- 6. Town Newspaper.