

Henniker Community Profile

Celebration Summary

*Nature Tourism
Improving Town Communications
Riverwalk / Azalea Park
Chamber of Commerce*

May 7, 2010

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. The process provides a method for citizens to affirm community strengths, find collaborative approaches to meet challenges creatively, and manage change.

The Community Profile project is facilitated by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension in partnership with the Town of Henniker. For more information, go to <http://extension.unh.edu/CommDev/CACPAP.htm>.

Initial Suggestions

Below is a list of all suggestions initially gathered through the Community Profile process. Each section was voted on by community participants. The winning projects, i.e. those that obtained the most votes, are starred (*) for your reference. Blocked in gray are the projects that birthed forth into citizen action as a result of the Profile. Since April 2009, generous amounts of time and thoughtful participation have been given by many volunteers within the town of Henniker, in an effort to move from idea to implementation. ***As a leader within the community, we hope you will take the time to get to know and support these initiatives, as well as take into consideration what role you can play in encouraging, refining or shaping the many visions and wishes expressed through the Profile process.***

1. Meeting Needs of All People in Town

- A. ***Comprehensive Facility (CF)** – research and look at other towns regarding a comprehensive facility. A centralized facility that coordinates many programs now in separate locations, e.g., after-school, health, education, recreation, athletics for all members/ages of community.
- B. **Director of Community Programs** - Paid person who oversees and coordinates the various activities, opportunities, programs, volunteering in town that presently exist in town. This will include recreational programs, after-school programs, wellness programs, and international programs. Central force – not volunteer based.
- C. **Welcoming Committee** – Welcoming packet; new neighbor’s potluck; people to visit new people in town and follow-up visit; welcome basket.

2. Improving Village Vitality

- A. Create a **Chamber of Commerce**
- B. Pursue a **Main Street USA Grant**
- C. ***Create a Riverwalk project**

3. Natural Resources/Rural Character

- A. ***Conduct a study that shows the socio-economic potential of the natural resources** and maintaining the rural character that will define the town’s natural resources; and how to promote/market for town benefit.

- B. Investigate ways to **promote and preserve local farming** (tax incentives, working farms, farmer’s market and community gardens)
- C. Develop **aesthetic standards** for development and historic preservation
- D. Promote and **encourage current use, land conservation and land donation**

4. Communication

- A. ***Improved Website**
- B. **Improved communication with Henniker & NEC** - Leadership meetings/forum. Promoting NEC events. Partnership programs.
- C. **Improve low-tech communication** - Bulletin board available to everyone at all times. Welcome wagon. Frequent newsletter.
- D. **Communication/Recreation Coordinator** – Coordinate cultural events, recreational, community center.

5. Volunteerism, Citizen Participation, & Leadership

- A. **Recognition for volunteers** - event such as dinner; tax credit
- B. ***Improve communication about volunteer opportunities** and what is required of volunteers by: personal contact; Outlook newsletter more frequently; e-newsletter
- C. Make better use of high school and NEC **community service volunteers**

Nature Tourism

Team Members: Terry Stamps, Dale Jennings, Erling Jorgenson & Kate Bartlet

Our Charter: Identify the key development steps for expanding nature tourism in Henniker to achieve the specific goal of improving our economic vitality while capitalizing on and protecting our natural resources.

We have partnered with New England College and Plymouth State University in this multi-phased project.

A determined group of NEC students, under the direction of Professor John O'Connor, has been surveying visitors in key locations throughout Henniker. The aim of the survey is to get demographic data and to gain better understanding of what entices people to be here, and, just as importantly, to get feedback from our visitors concerning anything that is not up to par.

The surveys have been passed on to Plymouth State, where the 'Community Research Experience Class' will data enter and analyze. Both the NEC and PSU teams will be continuing the study throughout this spring. An upcoming activity for the teams will be to interview business owners to gain input on how Henniker can better serve the business community in taking advantage of the vast New Hampshire tourism business. The ultimate goal is to understand the economic impact if nature-based businesses and activities in Henniker are expanded or added.

Improving Town Communication

Committee Members: John Kjellman, Chad Carter, Craig Blouin, Nicole Gage

Town Administration: Russ Roy, Peter Flynn

The following are the website specific outcomes from the Henniker Community Profile for Communication ~ Improved Website:

- Central calendar – ALL community events
- Destination: Henniker
- Easy navigation/user friendly
- Professionally developed and maintained

Over the past year the committee has focused on improving the town website beginning with ideas that came from the Henniker Community Profile (see the list below).

The committee brainstormed and came up with a few more ideas; related to those that came from the event, then it reviewed how best to present suggestions to the town administration. Recently with in the past couple of weeks the committee has been actively working with the town administration and Webmaster to review potential website solutions. At the present time the committee's suggestions are

proving to be positively received and a decision will be made in the near future as to an updated and improved website for the Town of Henniker.

Some of the steps being worked on right now include: making the website more user friendly, easier to navigate, along with an updated design. Once a solution has been found, training of the chosen web solution will begin as well as a conversion from the old website to the new website. The committee is happy with the progress that is being made and is looking forward to improvements to the town's website.

Brainstorming ideas included:

- Website Organization
- Website Development
- Design Changes
- Email opt in (for Town residents to receive town notices and possibly the summary of the Outlook or other publications)
- Calendar of Events

Some of the goals of a new website solution:

- Re-configured layout to better incorporate needs of all departments
- Allow easier and quicker updating to keep the site more current
- Allows multiple users to update for better efficiency
- Reasonable price with many features and functionality
- Addressing the items that came from the Henniker Community Profile

Riverwalk / Azalea Park

Committee Members: Martha Sunderland, Joan O'Connor, Daniel DaCosta, Jeffrey S. Connor, Gail T. Hayden, Robert F. Stamps, Jr., Linda C. Connor, Tara D. Marvel

The new Henniker Riverwalk/ Azalea Park Committee was formed as a result of the Community Profile held last spring which suggested that improved access to the river would be beneficial to the town's future. The committee is now an official town committee and meets the second Monday of every month at 7pm in the Grange. The committee began its work by conducting a series of site visits of existing trails here in town and of similar types of projects in other towns, such as Peterborough and Keene. Initial planning identified Azalea Park, located behind the Henniker Community School, as a focal point for improving river access from the downtown and this will be phase 1 of the committee's activity. Phases 2 through 5 of the committee's long term plans are to formalize and publicize the various networks of riverside walking and biking trails throughout town as well as other river recreation focal points.

Initial work on Azalea Park is intended to make it a safe, accessible and inviting space for use by citizens and visitors to Henniker of all ages. Proposed groundwork includes shoring up the river bank, improving visual access and foot traffic from Main Street, and installing amenities such as benches, outdoor classroom spaces and possibly lighting. The committee is currently working on the specifics of the work needed to accomplish this including drawing up plans, acquiring required permits and identifying and

pursuing funding sources. Don Blanchard has agreed to help us with planning and design work and he and Marty Curran from the Army Corps of Engineers met with several committee members to look over the park and see what we had in mind. A report will be given at our next meeting on May 10th.

Interested citizens are needed to assist in planning, plan drafting, site work and safety design. It would also be wonderful to hear about memories of the park from earlier times.

Chamber Of Commerce

Committee Members: Kate Bartlet, Jennifer Connor, Louise Cyr, Scott Dias, Judy Nelson, Ruth Funk, Heidi Galster, John Kjellman, Leon Parker, Amy Patenaude, Mary Ellen Schule & Janis Yarde.

Chamber of Commerce Committee Summary: Determine the interest and commitment in establishing a Chamber of Commerce

Phase 1:

- A forum was planned and held on January 18, 2010, for all interested businesses/community citizens to gain information about the feasibility of having a Henniker Chamber of Commerce.
- Over 50 people attended to gain information about what a Chamber could do for Henniker.
- Jack Burnett – Peterborough Chamber, Laura French – Kearsarge Area Chamber, Leon Parker & Kate Bartlet – Henniker business owners were invited to share insights about starting a Chamber.
- As a result of the meeting, about 30 people expressed interest in becoming part of the next steps.

February 9, 2010, Community Meeting:

- determine the direction of the Chamber,
- create a Statement of Purpose draft.

March 1, 2010, Community Meeting:

- confirm the Statement of Purpose,
- outline the tasks for the key priorities,
- appoint a Board of Directors.

Phase 2: - Launch the Henniker Chamber of Commerce

Mission Statement:

The Henniker Chamber of Commerce will

- Promote Henniker's growth & prosperity through membership participation and community leadership
- Welcome visitors and newcomers
- Promote the area and its businesses
- Provide educational opportunities to its members

Board of Directors: Paula Amato, Kate Bartlet, Jennifer Connor, Scott Dias, Rob Howard, Lisa Hustis, Lee Martin, Suzanne Pinkham, Lori Rowell, Paul Sheppard, Ed Ulmer & Janis Yarde. The Henniker Chamber of Commerce Board held its first meeting on April 30, 2010.

Quickly formed three committees around the priorities:

- *Communications*
 - ✓ Research, interview and choose a designer for a Website, *The Face of the Henniker Chamber of Commerce*, and all other tasks involved in its creation.
 - ✓ Facilitate the design of a logo.
 - ✓ Research & Apply for State funding.
 - ✓ Other Media
 - Print
 - Social Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter...)
 - ✓ Maintain communications between chamber, businesses, community...
 - ✓ Information for tourists & newcomers

- *Finance/Legal*
 - ✓ Establish and Maintain a Bank Account
 - ✓ Prepare a Budget
 - ✓ Keep Financial Records
 - ✓ Register legal work with the State
 - ✓ Generate By-Laws

- *Membership*
 - ✓ Formulate an Application and Dues Structure
 - ✓ Recruit members
 - ✓ Kick-off a Membership Drive - Memorial Day - May 31, 2010
 - ✓ Maintain the Business Listings Data Base
 - ✓ Plan Events

Henniker Chamber of Commerce . . . Bridging Business and Community