

**Cornwall Public Library**

**Community Conversations Workshop Series**

**Session 1: May 25, 2016**

*For the initial session of our new series, we had twenty participants from all walks of life. This conversation focused on their aspirations for the Cornwall community; the challenges we face reaching those aspirations; and what new conditions or changes would need to occur in order for these ideals to be realized. The following are the notes taken from the conversation.*

**Why are you here?      (What brings you, keeps you, and interests you, in Cornwall?)**

- It's an enchanted place
- Fundraising-community comes together
- Arts, Little League, Playgrounds, History
- Sports programs
- Embedded in community
- It's a place to participate
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July and other celebrations
- Great schools, teachers, parents
- Preservation of the area, bandstand, parks
- Environmental issues
- Community theater interests
- Digital accessibility to what's going on
- What makes community tick?
- It's a community of generations
- How to get the young people staying in Cornwall
- Sense of place
- Natural beauty
- Military family connection
- Hospital
- Churches
- Connect with young people
- Chose to live here
- Feel rooted here
- Young voices to be heard
- The whole package

**Aspirations** (*How would you like to see us grow as a community?*)

- Balance-longtime residents, “special groups,” and millennials/newcomers
- Learn how to create community; better communication; digitally accessible information; welcome newcomers
- Keep quality of life & feeling of small town feeling in spite of growth and influx of newcomers
- Library as the hub-central to the community for lifelong learning
- More energy & attractions for all ages – establish a “First Friday” (like Saugerties) community event involves everyone, including teens; town-sponsored recreation center; sports leagues for older adults (need more access to schools)
- Support for working professionals & unemployed at library – free access to certification prep sites
- Support lifelong learning initiatives
- More cultural diversity
- Share our rich history
- Become more “Cold Spring” like
- Improve Main Street and Hudson Street – more businesses!
- Improve elementary school playground in the village
- Make the town and village more physically and digitally accessible.
- More places to stay – boutique hotels, B & B’s etc.
- Encourage people to “Travel the Triangle”-Woodbury, Cornwall/Storm King, Highland
- Provide business tax breaks

**Challenges** (*What challenges do we face in reaching these aspirations?*)

- Restaurants in Town close too early to keep people downtown
- More opportunities for people to stay are needed for tourism
- Transportation and parking issues abound
- Need opportunities for other cultures to thrive
- Places for young adults to go at night
- Outlets for teenagers – a skate park, more jobs, etc.
- Volunteerism – volunteer- run projects don’t endure. Volunteers burn out and no one is there to replace them
- Some longtime issues not being addressed
- Get feedback from teens (hold a forum at schools)
- Better welcome for newcomers- like the “Welcome Wagon” concept
- Our events may be too successful? Crowds, traffic, congestion

- Power lines in town need updating
- Connecting different communities/getting groups to work together (i.e. Town/Village Historian, Historical Society, Chamber, Library, Schools, other organizations)
- Funding issues
- Succession planning-no one to carry on when leaders change
- Taxes are high
- Who can address “managed growth” issues?
- Convincing those resistant to change that change can be good

**New Conditions** (*What changes are needed to reach our aspirations?*)

- Start the conversation
- Communication and cooperation
- Make someone responsible
- Encourage more people to volunteer and get involved
- Newcomers Forum
- Visitors center-link with Sands Ring Museum
- Strike a balance with those who want growth and those who don't
- How to bring all resources together?
- Virtually “sub-divide” town areas to be more involved in helping maintain the “small town” feel
- Smart growth
- Visual improvements
- Funding – finding new sources of revenue, incentivize businesses, make more innovative proposals

**Future Conversations** (*What else do we need to talk about?*)

- Technology and social media to bring info to people and involve the younger generation
- Business focus – attraction and retention
- Seniors, real estate issues
- What's our demographic?
- Orange County issues – outreach to larger issues and focus on local

NEXT COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: Wednesday June 22, 6:30 p.m. Library Community Room