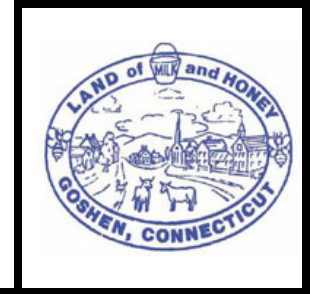


May 3, 2016



COMMUNITY ISSUES IN GOSHEN

Overview

As part of updating the 2006 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), the Goshen Planning and Zoning Commission conducted a public workshop meeting to help identify topics and issues that Goshen residents felt were important to address in the Plan.

This booklet summarizes the workshop results and is intended to help the Commission as they update the 2006 POCD. The meeting format mirrored what was done for the 2006 POCD so the meeting results can be compared to see how community issues and concerns have changed over the past decade or so.

Meeting Arrangements

Goshen residents were informed about the April 26 meeting and encouraged to attend through word-of-mouth, press releases, posters placed around Goshen, internet postings, email, message board signs, and other means.

Over 100 Goshen citizens attended the meeting in the cafeteria at Goshen Center School and participated in some exercises designed to learn about issues important to the community. Attendance was roughly double what was experienced as part of the 2006 POCD.

“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”

Margaret Wheatley
Writer



All pictures by Martin Connor

Exercise 1 - Where People Live

In the first exercise, residents attending the meeting were asked to place a “blue dot” on a map of Goshen to illustrate where they live.

The distribution of dots indicated that residents came from different parts of Goshen and the distribution of attendees was reasonably similar to the overall distribution of Goshen residents. While there were a number of meeting participants from the lake areas, this is also where many Goshen residents live.

As a result, there did not seem to be a “geographic bias” which might have skewed the results of the meeting.

Map of Where People Lived





2004 Meeting Results

In the meeting conducted as part of preparing the 2006 POCD, the following items were identified as “prouds” (with the number of mentions in parentheses):

- Natural Resources (43)
- Open Space (40)
- Community Character (31)
- Community Facilities (27)
- Agricultural Resources (9)
- Vehicular Circulation (9)
- Miscellaneous (9)
- Historic Resources (8)
- Business Development (6)
- Village Enhancement (2)

Exercise 2 – What People Are Proud Of

The second exercise involved asking residents to think of things about Goshen they were proud of. Residents were asked to list these on a card (and submit the card at the meeting) and place a “green dot” on a map to represent it.

This exercise is intended to learn about the types of things that people might want to encourage in Goshen. The exercise can also reveal the types of things that attract people to Goshen and contribute to the overall quality of life for residents.

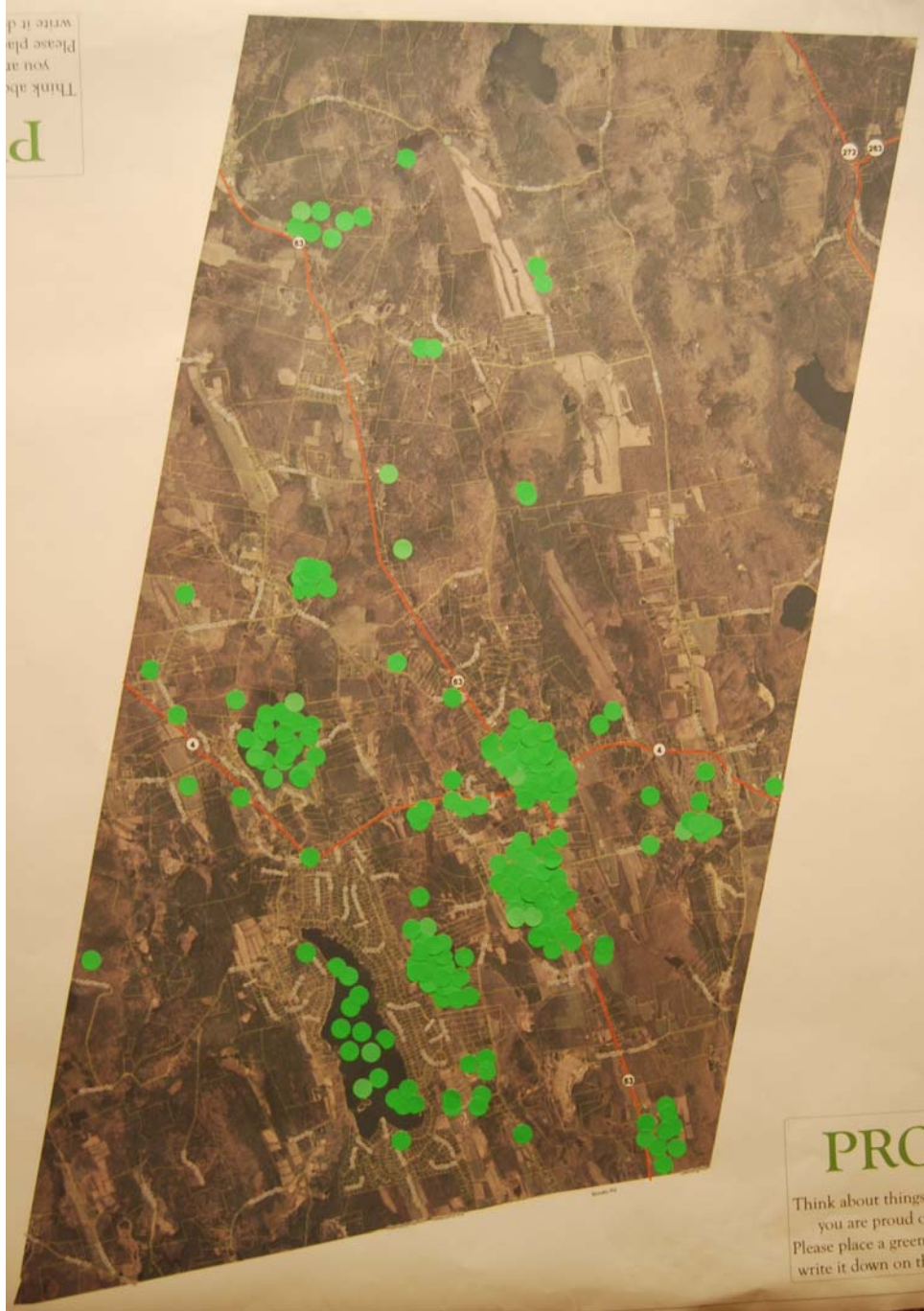
The themes which emerged from this exercise included:

- **Community Character** – participants indicated they were proud of the overall character of the community (people, places, events) that contributed to their quality of life
- **Community Facilities** – participants indicated they were proud of the schools and other facilities and services that meet community needs
- **Natural Resources** – participants indicated they were proud of natural resources, especially the lakes (this might also be considered part of community character)

Tabulation of Main Prouds

Community Character	94	Fairgrounds / Goshen Fair	30
		Vineyards / Chocolatiers / Nodines / Other Destinations	13
		Country feel / Rural look	11
		Sense of community / Friendly people	6
		Well managed Town / Fiscal responsibility	6
		Miscellaneous / Other	28
Community Facilities	37	Schools	12
		Fire Department	10
		Camp Cochipianee	7
		Library	4
		Public Works / Other	4
Natural Resources	35	The lakes / Tyler Lake / Woodridge Lake / West Side Pond / Dog Pond	31
		Miscellaneous / Other	4
Open Space	18	Open Space	6
		Mountain View Preserve / State Forest	5
		Trails	5
		Land Trust	2

Map of Prouds



2004 Meeting Results

In the meeting conducted as part of preparing the 2006 POCD, the following items were identified as “sorries” (with the number of mentions in parentheses):

- Residential Dev. (42)
- Natural Resources (22)
- Community Facilities (22)
- Business Development (12)
- Vehicular Circulation (4)
- Ped. / Bike Circulation (4)
- Village Enhancement (4)
- Miscellaneous (4)
- Open Space (3)
- Community Character (2)
- Utilities (2)

Exercise 3 – What People Are Sorry About

The third exercise involved residents identifying things in Goshen they were sorry about. These were listed on the same card and identified by placing a “red dot” on a map to represent it.

This exercise is intended to learn about the types of things that people might want to discourage in Goshen. The exercise can also reveal the types of things in Goshen that might irritate people or detract from the overall quality of life for residents.

It should be noted there were many cards submitted that either had no writing in the “sorries” area or indicated specifically that there was Nothing in Goshen they were sorry about.

The themes which emerged from this exercise included:

- **Natural Resources** – participants indicated they were sorry about the water quality of the lakes and the lack of progress in addressing it
- **Business Development** – participants indicated they were sorry about the lack of business development and the conditions of some business sites
- **Community Character** – participants indicated they were sorry about the lack of a Town Green and about not having things they desired for Goshen
- **Community Facilities** – participants indicated they were sorry about not having a larger library and some other facilities and services that meet community needs

Tabulation of Main Sorries

Natural Resources	24	Condition of lakes / water quality / weeds / drainage to lakes	20
		Miscellaneous / Other	4
Business Development	19	Lack of business development	7
		Marketplace / gas station	3
		Empty general store	2
		Miscellaneous / Other	7
Community Character	16	Lack of a Main Street / Town Green	3
		Miscellaneous / Other	13
Community Facilities	16	Enlarge library	4
		Schools / school needs	4
		Public works garage / road conditions	3
		Miscellaneous / Other	5

Map of Sorrys



Exercise 4 – Planning Points

The fourth exercise involved people identifying their values or priorities among the topics typically considered as part of a POCD.

People attending the meeting were given 5 vouchers representing 50 “planning points” (one @ 20 points, two @ 10 points each, and two @ 5 points each) to allocate among 12 boxes. Residents were asked to allocate the planning points in the boxes to reflect what they felt was important for the community to address as part of the planning process.

The discussion is organized around three themes that can be used to organize the planning process and a POCD:

- **Conservation Issues** – things the community may want to preserve or protect in the future
- **Development Issues** – how the community may want to address growth or change in the future
- **Infrastructure Issues** – services or facilities the community may want or need



Tabulation of Planning Points

	20 points	10 points	5 points	Total Points
Conservation Issues	1,100	900	420	2,420
Natural Resources	480	360	90	930
Open Space	420	220	75	715
Historic Resources	40	130	120	290
Community Character	160	190	135	485

Development Issues	320	410	235	965
Community Structure	0	0	10	10
Business Development	60	100	60	220
Residential Development	60	70	55	185
Housing Diversity	200	240	110	550

Infrastructure Issues	320	420	205	945
Community Facilities	220	200	95	515
Traffic and Circulation	0	10	5	15
Walking / Biking / Bus / Train	60	90	50	200
Water/ Sewer / Utilities	40	120	55	215

4,330



From the above tabulation, it can be seen that many participants at the meeting want to preserve or protect the overall character and ambience of Goshen. This must be why many people moved here and stay here and so it is clearly part of the “DNA” of the community.

Participants were also aware of the need to consider different housing options to help meet the diverse needs of current and future residents. In all of the community scoping meetings that Planimetrics has conducted over the years, this is the first time that housing diversity has shown up in the “top three” in terms of planning point totals.

Participants also want to maintain and enhance the community facilities which support the overall quality of life in the community.

In the 2004 meeting conducted as part of preparing the 2006 POCD, the planning points were distributed as follows:

	Total Points
Conservation Issues	1,410
Natural Resources	420
Open Space	565
Historic Resources	195
Community Character	230

Development Issues	715
Community Structure	180
Business Development	175
Residential Development	250
Housing Diversity	110

Infrastructure Issues	390
Community Facilities	180
Traffic and Circulation	30
Walk / Biking / Bus / Train	140
Water/ Sewer / Utilities	40

Totals	2,515
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Exercise 5 – Planning Discussion

These results of the planning points exercise were presented at the meeting and the remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing the topics that got the most points.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Conservation – 930 points

- Natural resources are why we live here
 - The resources are irreplaceable
 - We should preserve these resources
 - They are important to our character
 - Development / growth is a threat to natural resources
- Deterioration of the lakes is a concern
 - Development will affect the lakes also
 - How can we make this better?
- Some people are not treating the lake gently
 - Discharging dishwater/wastewater directly to the lakes
 - Poorly maintained septic systems
 - Fertilizer, etc.
 - “Eutrophication” is an issue
- Lakes have invasive species in them
 - Comes from the boat launch
- Road salt is getting into the lake

OPEN SPACE

Conservation – 715 points

- What is “open space”?
- Need a definition / categorization?
 - Dedicated / preserved (by ownership or deed) – ie, land trust, State
 - Managed (by ownership or use) – ie, water supply land
 - Sheltered (by regulation) – ie, wetlands
 - Perceived (potentially developable private land) – ie, PA-490, farm
- Do we have enough open space for wildlife?

HOUSING DIVERSITY

Development – 550 points

- We need housing in Goshen for seniors who want to stay here and for young families that want to come here
- We should try to meet these needs
- AARP reports that 80% of seniors would prefer to “age in place” in their current homes
- Maybe we could look at options for the 20% of seniors in Goshen that want to stay here but seek housing to better meet their needs
- We should also look at ways to include more young people in the community
- We need diverse ages
- We need fire volunteers, ambulance, etc.
- We need to be sure we have things here for young families

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Infrastructure – 515 points

- We need to continue to maintain the community facilities we have in good condition
- This includes Camp Cochipianee
- It also includes facilities to attract young families
 - Playgrounds
- Goshen is going through a significant demographic shift due to the aging of “baby boomers” (people born between 1945 and 1965)
- As a result, the median age in Goshen will probably continue to rise
- What will the community need or want in the future?
- Where will the community want to be in 10 years in term of community facilities?
- We shouldn’t plan based on the past, we need to anticipate the future!
- We should look at ways to expand the library

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Conservation – 485 points

- Agriculture is an important activity in Goshen and part of our history
 - Contributes to the local economy
 - Can help preserve land from development
 - The community should support this
 - We should try to buy local to support local farmers

- People pretty much like the character of Goshen the way it is
- Not much interest in change
- Would like it to be stable

- People like the post office and do not want to lose it
- The post office is like our “general store”
- The Goshenette is another place that helps hold the community together
- Churches are an important part of this also

- Volunteerism is key to the community also
- People participate in local events and this aids social interaction and the feeling of community
- We need to keep this going

- Goshen feels special because it has a small town feeling
- This sense of being a small community is part of the joy of Goshen
- This sense of community helps people feel “invested” in the community and the various activities that occur here

- For some people, the simple act of driving into the community reduces stress
- Maybe our “brand” should be “The Land Of Milk, Honey and Ahhhhhh!”

- Many people like to live in Goshen because it reinforces a sense of “rugged Individualism”
- Low taxes are an attraction also!

- Volunteer contributions /. Groups all help support the quality of life
- This sense of community also attracts people to Goshen

- Historic resources also contribute to the community
- Goshen has a great historical society
- We have a sense of history here

OPEN DISCUSSION

- We probably still have to rely on jobs in other locations to support Goshen residents – pretty hard to have enough jobs in town for everyone
- How can we make it easier for them to find jobs / get to jobs?

- At times, residents have opposed new businesses wanting to come here
- How can we make it clear what we want so this becomes easier?
- Maybe the POCD could clarify what fits into our overall vision

- We should try to make it as easy as possible to start a business in Goshen
- Do the rules in Goshen allow/encourage home-based businesses?
- Do we allow for telecommuting?
- Do we have good internet access to support businesses (and residents)?

- What is our “brand” in Goshen?
- How do we want people to see us?
- Can we use this “brand” to attract businesses and things that enhance and strengthen our community?

- How do we balance some of the key issues that people care about?
 - Physical development
 - Economic development
 - Social development
- Which of these can/should be provided locally and which can/should be available in the region?

- Is there any interest in a small resort in Goshen?
- Would this allow us to provide jobs and enhance our brand?

- Can we learn from the history of Goshen or other towns in terms of what strategies make sense for the future?

- The issue of paid fire/EMS personnel could be an issue in the future
- Overnight response is not an issue
- Day-time response can be an issue when more people work out of town
- Used to be that more people worked locally and they could drop things to respond to emergencies
- Training requirements make it difficult to attract new people
- It is hard to make that level of commitment

- It would be great to tie some of these issues into the school system
 - Agriculture / farming
 - Lakes / water quality

Possible Strategic Directions

As was the case in 2004, the workshop was well received and stimulated interest in the planning process and future public involvement. An open and interactive planning process creates advocates for key planning strategies, increasing the likelihood for the successful development, adoption, and implementation of the Plan. Public involvement efforts should continue as the Plan is formulated.

The Commission may wish to organize the Plan around the central themes that came out of the public meeting. These themes seem to resonate with residents and will help focus attention on the important issues for the Plan:

- **Conservation Issues**
 - Natural Resources - protecting and enhancing water quality at the lakes
 - Open Space / Community Character - maintaining the overall character of Goshen as a rural community

- **Development Issues**
 - Housing Diversity - looking at ways to accommodate changing housing needs / desires as the age composition of the community changes
 - Business Development – seeking ways to improve and maintain business areas

- **Infrastructure Issues**
 - Community Facilities – maintaining and enhancing the community facilities that enhance the overall quality of life for residents

Comparison to 2004 Results

It is interesting to note the changes in local issues / concerns in the past decade.

In hindsight, the 2004 meeting seemed concerned with protecting Goshen from anticipated residential development (protecting natural resources, preserving open space, preserving farms, reducing residential buildout).

In contrast, due perhaps to economic changes over the past ten years, the 2016 meeting seemed to recognize that development interest had waned and perhaps Goshen could look at ways to address declining water quality in the lakes and local housing needs.



