Models of Self-reliance
Empowering Communities to Shape their Futures
NPSG 2018
Jane Lafleur, Heart & Soul Champion and Coach
Camden, Maine
Community Heart & Soul and the Orton Family Foundation
Heart & Soul principles and 4 phases

INVOLVE EVERYONE

FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

PLAY THE LONG GAME

1. Lay The Groundwork
2. Explore Your Community
3. Make Decisions
4. Take Action
Community Network Analysis

Heart & Soul Phase 1
Lay the Groundwork
Sharing Stories
Gathering Stories

Heart & Soul Phase 2
Explore Your Community
Gathering Stories
Stories = Data

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“We became more acquainted with what’s possible. That we can COME TOGETHER to do things as a community.”
Embed H&S STATEMENTS for lasting success

Heart & Soul Phases 3 and 4
Make Decisions and Take Action
Economic development
We value being an active, healthy community that appreciates the outdoors and our connection to the natural environment.
Heart & Soul Case Studies
Models of Self-reliance
Gardiner Maine
GARDINER, MAINE (2010 Census)

Population 5,800
- Decreased 14% since 1990
- 30% decline under age 45
- 20% increase over 45 population
- Losing population since 1960s

- High rates of subsidized and sub-par housing
- High rates of vacant single family homes (11%)
Steady Economic Decline over 30 Years

Lost state offices, retailers, and all the mills shuttered - shoe, textiles, fabrication, and paper industries

- Over 1,000 jobs lost
- Abandoned, blighted buildings
- Many brownfield sites identified

Early 2000’s

- Major Employer (Associated Grocers) placed into receivership – 141 employees lost their jobs
- Gardiner Savings Bank also in receivership
- Village Candle moved, taking 70 jobs

“Kennebec Journal” photo by Joe Phelan
Let’s Build a Business Park out by the Highway!

2002: Built our first Business Park- never filled

2008: $5.7 Million Expansion – consultant said would be filled by 2010
  • Over half of all lots unsold
  • Business Park TIF fund $1 Million+ in debt to City’s general fund
Doing Nothing and Hoping for Better Outcomes was No Longer an Option

By 2011, we needed to..........

• Stop the bleeding and stabilize climbing tax rates
• Update our Comprehensive Plan
• Engage residents and businesses
• Expand volunteer base
Gardiner’s Community Heart & Soul

- Community network analysis and involved community groups and stakeholders
- “Community-run” not “City-run” project
- Board of Trustees and a larger, Community Advisory Team
In the City of Gardiner, our community VALUES:

Family Friendliness- We value spaces and organizations that are available to residents of all ages and income levels.

Education- We value an education system that prepares students for a global environment.

Connection to Nature- We value outdoor recreation opportunities, and the preservation of open space.

History, Arts, & Culture- We value history while continuing to develop diverse cultural activities for residents of all ages.

Strong Local Economy- We value a strong economy that welcomes businesses and entrepreneurs while maintaining the character of the community including the historic downtown.

Sense of Community, Sense of Belonging- We value a community where residents are helpful, caring, and respectful of each other.

Community Involvement & Volunteerism- We place high value on volunteering and civic involvement.

Livability- We value preserving the character of the city while ensuring that residents of all ages and incomes have access to family support systems, transportation, and arts and culture opportunities.

Infrastructure/City Services- We value safe, well-maintained roads, sidewalks, schools, and public spaces that are accessible and clean in all seasons.

Unique Physical Assets- We value the city’s unique natural and built assets that are at the heart of the community’s identity, and believe they should be available to all residents.

Inclusive, Responsive Government- We value open, two way communication between residents and community decision makers.
Assets: Quaint, Historic Downtown
Assets: Newly Renovated Waterfront Park
Assets: Beautiful Built & Natural Resources
Assets: Family Friendly Community, The Arts
Comprehensive Plan

Traditional Inventory and Assessments

Community Input

Implementation Actions
1. Policy
2. Infrastructure
3. Economic/Business
4. Community

CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY VISION

Our Heart and Soul

Our Vision for Gardiner in 2025 is based on the community values developed as part of the Gardiner Heart and Soul (H&S) project. The values were initially distilled from over one hundred in-depth one-on-one interviews in which a broad spectrum of our community were asked to share their stories about Gardiner and what makes it special. The initial values from this “storytelling” phase were then refined at the We Are Gardiner community event. The statement of community values that resulted from that work by approximately one hundred residents became the basis for this Community Vision. The Vision is an attempt to describe what we want Gardiner to be in 2025. It establishes the goal that we are working toward and that the City’s Comprehensive Plan is trying to achieve. The Community Vision addresses each of the eleven H&S values in addition to an overarching desire to see the City grow and prosper.

A Growing, Prosperous Community

Gardiner’s population is growing. Thoughtful, well-planned development is welcomed by the community. New housing of all types is being built. Younger families choose to live in the City to take advantage of our livable, walkable neighborhoods. Older residents choose to stay in the community in housing designed to meet their needs. Our business community is expanding resulting in new jobs for area residents and additional tax revenue to support City operations. People do more and spend more in Gardiner. But our growth is done thoughtfully – it maintains the character of our community while creating new opportunities.
Policy Priorities

- Adaptive Reuse Overlay Districts – added flexibility for older buildings in residential areas
- Expanded home occupation scope
- Updated sign rules
- Added in-law apartment rules
- Added rules for raising goats, chickens, bees, and in-town agriculture
Value our Historic Buildings, Small Number of Allowed Uses

172 year old- Deconsecrated Church

Hard cider company buys Gardiner church, hopes to sell cider by July

By Paul Koenig

GARDINER — The hard cider producer aiming to open in a former church for more than a year has finally bought the 172-year-old building to house its tasting room and a small brewery operation for testing new ciders.

Lost Orchard Brewing Co., which approached the city last year to find a way to open the business in a residential area, plans to open its main brewing operation in a South Gardiner warehouse and have its hard cider, sold under the label Crabby Apple Cider, on shelves by July 4.

David Boucher talks about his plans to use a former church as a tasting room for Lost Orchard Brewery during a tour on Thursday in Gardiner. Staff photo by Joe Phelan
Infrastructure

• Sidewalk Plan funded after sitting on shelf for 20 years!
• Two trails funded with grants and local match
• Downtown façade grants
• Awarded EPA Brownfields grants to assess and clean up old mill sites
• Storm water assessment - city wide

Community engagement and Heart and Soul plans opened up access to grants
Maintaining and Repairing Infrastructure

Sidewalk Master Plan & Investment

• For the first time in a couple of *decades*, money was allocated to sidewalk restoration
• $655,000 to address the worst, annual plan to maintain others
• Made tough choices to eliminate, repair, construct
Investing in “Walkable Community”

- Cobbossee Trail planned since 2004 finally received support in FY17 ($300K+ grant match)

- Harrison Ave Nature Trail

“Kennebec Journal” photo by Joe Phelan
Economic/Business Development

- Gardiner Growth Initiative – invested in 5 retail establishments
- Supported 5 Community Development Block Grants that brought $1.9 million in investment and 55 jobs
  - Central Maine Meats (meat processing facility)
  - Common Wealth Poultry
  - Crooked Halo Cider House
  - Sebago Lake Distillery
  - Food Co-Op
- Develop and nurture Food Hub
- Focus on “Buy Local Campaign” for retailers
- Incentives for Libby Hill Business Park
- Earned state designation as “Business Friendly”
Preserving Historical Buildings By Deploying Modern Businesses
People Lined up to Buy a Donut during Grand Opening
Livestock and Poultry Processing Facilities
Gardiner CO-OP 100% Member Owned
Community Action Plan

“Without engaged people, nothing matters. . .”

- Heart and Soul awakened and engaged many, many volunteers
- Duct Tape Council – council of non-profits and civic groups
- Gardiners Gardeners
- Concerts on the waterfront
- Growing events – Holiday Events, Downtown Trick or Treating, Easter Egg Hunt
- AARP Age Friendly Community Designation - Process
Free Summer Concerts on the Waterfront

Local performing arts center runs with donations from local businesses
Big Block Party – Swine and Stein Event
Gardiner’s Community Heart & Soul
Damariscotta, Maine

Using Community Heart & Soul Values to guide future development
Damariscotta, Maine

We value **working locally** and growing locally owned businesses.

We value **living locally**, being able to afford to live and shop in Town.

We value **community involvement** where people participate in schools, organizations, churches and community events and festivals.

We value having **culture and nature in close proximity**, where we might see a seal or a moose but we also have restaurants, art galleries, local theater and a library, all within walking distance.

We value an **accessible community** where we have easy access to goods and services, to local government and information.

We value a strong **sense of community** where people trust one another and feel safe.

Using Community Heart & Soul Values to guide future development
Biddeford, Maine

Heart & Soul Shaping the Economic Future
Biddeford, Maine
Trash incinerator in the center of town employed 80 people
Through Community Heart & Soul, people felt EMPOWERED
Over $100 million in approved projects
Golden, Colorado

Neighborhood Meetings in every part of town
Cortez, Colorado
Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania
Meadville, Pennsylvania

Focus on What Matters Most
Thank you for joining us as we bring people together to build stronger, healthier, and more economically vibrant communities.
FIVE COMMON THEMES
Q & A

- Involve and engage everyone in new ways
- Collaborate and cooperate with diverse partners
- Focus on what matters most to your community – find out what your community values
- Leverage outside resources - don’t retreat to silos even though it is hard
- Build local capacity and long term local ownership
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<th>Title/Position</th>
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Thank you.