

**Accessible, Walkable, Bikeable Ellsworth**  
**May 20, 2008**  
**Meeting Notes**

**Attended:**

Helena Peterson (Union River Healthy Communities), Phyllis Young (Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce), Cathy Kozaryn (Union River Healthy Communities), Tom Stipe (Union River Healthy Communities), Denise Hue (Ellsworth Downtown Business Association), Jane Freeman (Union River Healthy Communities)

**Regrets:**

Josh Torrance (Woodlawn Museum), Kristie Billings (Shoe Gazer), Kelly Cochrane (Cadillac Mountain Sports), Amy Tunney (Cadillac Mountain Sports), Michelle Gagnon (Planner-City of Ellsworth), Jef Fitzgerald (Planner-City of Ellsworth)

**Goal:**

*Our goal for the afternoon's meeting was to dialogue about how we all can work collaboratively to bring about positive changes in making Downtown Ellsworth a more accessible city for residents and visitors.*

**Introductions and Reasons for Attending:**

Helena gave all of us a brief history of the role Union River Healthy Communities (URHCC) has played in making Ellsworth a destination. This included the health plan that URHCC created in 2003 and the creation of an assets map. Helena mentioned that Ellsworth is on the road to being a healthier place to live and visit

Tom, who has been wheelchair bound since a bicycle accident, mentioned that we need to think about the city through the perspective of smartgrowth. He developed a website, "From Where I Sit," to help illustrate some of the areas that are barriers to people using wheelchairs, bikes, or strollers. Getting back to the ideas of living in a more compact area as we see in the downtown area of the city rather than spreading out will help.

Denise, who is the owner of Pyramid Studios, discussed the need for downtown Ellsworth to be a more sustainable community and one that focusses on the city's assets and is attractive to visitors. Connecting parking to sidewalks so people can do more walking and not move their car from one spot to another would be a great health benefit. Her hopes are that this first discussion would help others to get involved and collaborate more so all of our ideas would develop into a clear and effective plan for a more accessible downtown Ellsworth with better pedestrian signage. A downtown assets walking map would be great.

Phyllis mentioned that the Chamber has a role in providing visitors with materials to help them enjoy the city rather than just passing through it. Phyllis also does a considerable amount of walking around the downtown and sees a more accessible downtown Ellsworth as a place that will be safer and allow people to get more exercise. Looking at the whole city rather than small pieces will help everyone to see the BIG picture.

Cathy has a young family and lives in the downtown area. She would like her family to be able to enjoy all of the assets that the city offers in a safe and walkable way for her family.

Jane facilitated the meeting and mentioned that walking around the various sections of the city are a great way to get exercise, shop in the downtown area, and visit some of the parks that are located in the town (Birdsacre and Woodlawn).

**Discussion:**

All of the attendees discussed the fact that we need to see the big picture for downtown Ellsworth with collective collaborations rather than from our own individual wants.

Collaborating with the city planners, using the Bike Ped Plan, “From Where I Sit” website, the Community Health Plan, and other studies that have been done will help to accomplish a more accessible town. More studies may not be the answer at this time.

**Noted Assets:**

- Attractive scenic parts in the city
- Library
- Birdsacre
- Chamber of Commerce
- Waterfront
- Historic walking tour map
- Assets map
- Schools
- Apartment complexes
- YMCA
- The Grand
- Maine Grind
- Shangri-La
- Church
- Courthouse
- Downtown area

**Other issues/concerns that were discussed:**

- How we can work with the city to get the downtown sidewalks fixed so that they can be accessible to all?
- How can we improve parking areas so people will park in one spot and walk to their various destinations in the city?
- How can we work collaboratively with the city to develop a comprehensive downtown assets based map that promotes safe walking, biking, accessible paths/sidewalks/roads for people to use rather than have many maps?
- How can we shift our thinking so people will want to bike, walk, etc. in Ellsworth so the city is a final destination and not a pass through town.

**Who Else should be at the table?**

Leslie Harlow-Maine Grind

Kelly Cochrane and Amy Tunney-Cadillac Mountain Sports

Joshua Torrance-Woodlawn Museum

Nancy Mayo-Eagles Lodge

Other businesses, associations, institutions (banks, school representatives, etc.)

**Action Steps:**

- This group would like to meet with the city planners to discuss ways we can work collaboratively. (Helena and Jane to contact Michelle and Jef)
- Items to include in the discussion:
  - Bike/Ped Plan
  - Various projects that are on the table, and
  - How this group can be actively involved
  - Discussion of parking issues and how to incorporate parking with making downtown Ellsworth a more walkable city
  - Map some Ellsworth walking/running routes that give how far people have traveled (not by car) and include exercise tips

Notes submitted by Jane Freeman-URHCC Advisory Board Member