

Categories/ Notes

You should be working on **organizing your notes from individual conversations** under the following six categories:

- Aspirations (What people want)
- Main concerns (What they are concerned about)
- Specific issue concerns (Issues based on main concerns)
- Actions that would make a difference (Where the focus needs to be)
- Whom do people trust to act (Groups/organizations)
- Questions people have

Aspirations

A Place where: one shares--know neighbors--Trust between longtime residents and recent arrivals—Tolerant--Be aware of how lives affect others--Respect for neighbors-- More interaction among people who have lived here forever and new comers-- One where we come together, help in good times and bad, share ourselves and celebrate life-- Foster an amalgamation of 212-ers with oldies. Locals distrust them. It's a two-way street-- Got to do something to knit that strip.

We are all here because we love it. It is truly beautiful.

Quiet, farming, rural

outdoor spaces for community; Venues for interaction; A place where teens could meet and hang out.

collaboration for different projects/interaction—Supportive-- -- One with the library, music in the park, farmers' market--that brings people together-- Maybe the former Grange, Lenny's--that Tony Murad is renovating could be a community center--

Info. Transmission

Intergeneration/youthful energy-- differing groups coming together-- Embrace multiculturalism

self-sufficient (community cares for its own), balance between business & history-- Resilient—businesses & organizations have left, need things that will stay—e.g. restaurants, Theatre Barn, Tannery Pond-- Vibrant, active community with lots of activities-- industry along with what's here-- Businesses to support taxes-- Low Impact Tourism, recreation, ways to retain our historic importance and natural beauty, i.e. Shaker Swamp

Healthy community with things people like

Keep wetlands/open spaces in mind when talking about growth; Town size is good— could grow some. Consensus against large growth (population) or industrialization

Appreciative attitude—not questioning motives when benefits are proffered (exa. Larrabee's picnic), judging motives about what people do for the town

Attractive; Rural Aesthetic—not prevailing for the wealthy

Quieter--Town needs a Noise Ordinance - re: Speedway

Center of town needs to be made more active - needs cleaning up--Unfortunate that there is no natural center, focal point, downtown.

NL has an incredible history, Tilden, Shakers, Native people, Underground Railroad. Was once a spa town. - We should build on that. It has lost a lot-- Other nearby towns have done a much better job of recovering from economic downturns, i.e. Ballston Spa, Kinderhook, Chatham-- Chatham has recovered, revitalized-- Issues we have are common in rural areas. Some towns have discovered ways of mitigating them

Hoosick Falls sign noted in the "Chris you had the newspaper-I can't remember the name of it

Commented [1]: Eastwick Press

Route 20 makes this a "fly through" town; Got to give a reason to stop.

Here 1 year - I want an opportunity to use my strengths. Everybody wants to think they have something to offer and -----I don't know how the needs of the community are marketed.

Here 4 years - We need a database where people can choose where to volunteer

Born here - We need volunteers. People maybe don't know, but we who need volunteers are always reaching out

Here 4 years - A place where people feel connected; where growth, i.e. change is possible

Change scares me. People who live here forever don't want change. Change must come slowly. Growth scares me. There's a lot of resistance. Don't, Don't Stop no change

More ways people could meet, greet and be comfortable

Form vs Content - Feels like there are 2 New Lebanons. Need Cross- pollination

Blueberry Hill has travelers - Bucky's and Stewarts have separate groups

Where are the gathering places? Town is separated into groups. There are at least two New Lebanons.

How change is presented is important. Inclusion of various groups is important in making decisions

I like my town. Personally, people have been kind; no negative stuff against me; they let Mother Ann Lee do her thing; I like it the way it is.

The town has a history of live and let live, i.e. The Shakers

year here - I see New Lebanon as opportunity. People come, buy, restore

A place where people are conscious of all the needs of the community.

A place where people pay attention to need, and help.

Schools serve as hub in the community

Activities for kids—bring community together

School coordinates with summer park program

Broadband access

I want more vibrancy - more availability for people to come together

*Community—key word

Main Concerns

Taxes are too high for services provided-- Expensive to eat out-- While housing costs are lower, taxes are very high-- Economic issues change the character of a community-- Affordable housing an issue --“Career” less and less a reality for young people. How do you develop cooperatives that are free and/or affordable, i.e., health coops designed around holistic medicine? -- Tension between economic development and change via good will-- Teachers no longer live in town. It's too expensive. School taxes are too high. -- The town center needs to be regenerated. It offers no draw to people passing through, nor for residents who live further away.

The infrastructure of the town needs to be addressed. There are other nearby towns who have gotten grants to build small water treatment plants, etc. Without these improvements new businesses are reluctant to come to the town. For example, the lack of a supermarket is largely caused by the need for a large tank to provide water for required sprinkler systems.

The electronic infrastructure is very bad. This discourages young professionals and people who can work from home from locating in New Lebanon. Internet speeds of approximately 8-10 MPS, and with inconsistent service is not state of the art.

Without businesses in the town center, people passing through will not stop.

The flea market brings a few visitors.-- No jobs to keep young people in town-- Must remain an affordable town to the working class-- While housing costs are lower, taxes are very high-- Low-income affordable housing—need to build-- Hard to find housing for people working in town—have to commute to Schodack, East Greenbush, etc. Most teachers live outside N.L.-- Must remain an affordable town to the working class; There are no jobs in this community, no reason for kids to stay, no attraction to newcomers-- No jobs to keep young people in town-- Options—including affordability, dietary needs-- Property taxes-- Look more at specifics things (infrastructure, grocery store) that town can accomplish rather than big picture (ideals)-- Loss of large employers nearby (G.E.)-- Barrier to attracting a builder—is land available?-- Laws enacted to be fair for all economics—commercial zoning a concern-- Farms should not be taxed for more than they can produce in a year. This is an issue that could be addressed by the town.

Town government is broken; not doing what it should--Polarization in government-- People don't show up to participate in town government-- Lax government at all levels does not represent what the majority of people want. -- The town government does not have a good reputation in the town, so issues are not brought to them. They represent the small, loudest group, not the majority. -- - disagreement as to whether they can be trusted. In a small town, if you can't trust the local government, then.....Trust least in local government--have been known to carry gossip in the past which made neighbors' interaction strained-- Board should be trusted but many do not trust them due to past

issues\ Who wants to run for town government? --The Town Board is viewed negatively. "It is where all good ideas go to die." --Board members do not generally feel pressured to respond to residents' wishes.

Grocery/coop would be helpful- Grocery would also help. Store to use local produce (superstore or co-op? Hannaford w/contract to area)—viability of store (investment/money-sustainable)—ties to existing businesses for success (DOT, inconsistent ownership/space); Grocery store—shopping & conveniences [not] accessible in town-- Grocery Store-- Grocery Store-- No Grocery - things are missing-- Food and agricultural activity - currents not visible, have yet to gel-- Ag ties into NL heritage - famous old farms, dry goods store-- Farmers' Market - trying so hard, yet not able to garner support-- Need Economic Development that maintains the character of the town-- Most businesses are gone-- Food hubs - autonomous trade zones-- This is a food desert.-- When people have to go elsewhere for 1 thing, e.g., FOOD, they also find other things, thus taking potentially even more away from Town.-- Voluntary community building within food and farming-- "Ithaca shares" community service earns shares in special bank which local vendors accept as partial payments toward purchases.

Difficult to attract business-- Experimental solutions - with emphasis on service and learning-- Ride sharing, Barter system, -- Blueberry Hill is exception. They have problems with town government about signage-- New businesses not coming -- A group of us at the Abode CSA, from NYC, community activists and health care practitioners, are building community. Not making a living wage doing what we love. --NL should do a better job. Assets are not being realized in connecting with the outside world. -- Experience of knocking on doors shows people have common interests when met one on one-- We need school consolidation. Education taxes are too high. There is a view that "there is plenty of money in this town" to afford the expense. It's not true. There are a lot of people living on low incomes. -- Tourism - There were B&B's in town. Now none. Mgr. at The Red Lion Inn, Stockbridge, regrets she can no longer refer overflow to much less expensive B&B's in New Lebanon.

Transport for the elderly- Transportation is an issue-- Some kind of transportation for teens too young to drive-- Some kind of transportation for teens too young to drive-- Needs of senior citizens (health, housing) -- Shortage of home health aides-- Older population wanting to age in place. Lots of needs; few answers--*Have kids entering the [school] district during the year. Something is attracting them—keeping them here is the challenge- How to keep kids in town after graduation? Perhaps internships - hooking

local kids with local tradespeople. -- Transportation, especially for some seniors is an issue. Should we have a van service, or maybe a calling tree for volunteers.

Community Center with larger scale than the library-- Centers for community have changed. Churches not as important as in the past, elderly become isolated. — Kathy has always lived in towns with free beaches. At Adams Point, one has to pay to swim. Free beaches were places where everyone went-- individuals, families, kids - everyone. A natural place that brought people together. We don't have "free beaches" in New Lebanon-- Missing - space to connect networks-- Meeting people is difficult-- If you don't reach out, you miss --Really surprised - the ability to naturally cross paths outside your network is difficult. Need to get the word out. -- Current situation makes people angry, they crave a close-knit community-- Demise of local churches-- Focus - foster opportunities for growth via proper avenues-- We want novelty - opportunity - fosters more community -- Town: PO! Not much else. -- Sidewalks and lower speed limit-- Maybe a bike lane-- Road signage an issue, though definitely two sides to the story--We need to revive--well create a downtown area. Possibly moving the commercial area off Rte. 20. Up West Street and across. - Sidewalks and lower speed limit-- Maybe a bike lane-- No downtown, no town infrastructure - no water or sewer-- Community Center - Do we need one for formal and informal meet ups? Should use the school as a venue for this.

"We've always done it this way"-- -- Resistance to growth initiatives (sidewalks, beautification of town, etc.)-- Rail trail fiasco - Town Board vs public opinion-- Differences of opinion on improvements to center of town-- Self-reliance is a mantra for some--they don't want to participate-- Divisions (different perspectives of groups within town—not unique to NL)-- -- Robbers' Cave 1960's experiments in group dynamics.-- Physical changes [needed] to make collaborations happen-- Fear of change--Fear adding something will mean something is lost, although *stagnant* is loss-- The worst thing about New Lebanon is the idea of many long-time residents that change is bad. Trying to get a sidewalk in town was a good example of how this idea prevents any small improvements in the town center.

Multiple groups in town—how to bring them together-- Two communities: newbies, transplants vs those here forever. *We vs They*-- Mistrust of goals of various groups fed by misinformation-- Need ways for various groups to find common ground and work together for solutions--Same people at events - separate networks-- Lack of community organizations—Lions Club, American Legion, Scouts, etc. Decrease in community

involvement by these organizations--Connecters—people used to belong to multiple organizations (named above) which led to more cooperation with getting things done

We need more attention to green--Some of us want to make free health clinic

Is difficult to identify people with the necessary skills/that's willing/able to do things--
Need participation - need opportunity --Form over content - artificial qualities-- New Lebanon has a concentration of new farmers. Cheapest land available. How do we build on this? Anna and Paul have monthly potlucks. A group trying to work toward success. -
- Need volunteers-- Need more volunteers-- Core group of about 20 who show up and volunteer for all activities -- Finding people with the time to work on things

Longtime resident - Things are neither better nor worse. 1940's - 60's, everyone was involved because there was nothing else to do. Things evolve. --We try to direct, not control-- It's not *either or*. The more we can agree on a general orientation-- Disagree about change. Change happens without a plan. In 1976, there were several dairy farmers. They've gone out of business. Small farmers just started organically. Skeptical you can *plan* New Lebanon. -- NL just might be paradise. West Lebanon never bothered her or her friends. -- Depends on whom you talk to-- NL has lost much in the last 3 decades-- There are those who say New Lebanon is just fine as is. Let's not change a thing.

NL200 – Bicentennial, Lots of events. Free dinner dance at the high school, not well attended. Why not? It was advertised; Music in the Park 4 times - People don't show up; Form vs Content - how we're presenting these things; Activities/Events people want to take part in, getting people excited about participating

I wish we had a place like a Starbucks, that is open at night where I could go and stay using WIFI to do my work.

As recent newcomers from the NYC area, we are not here to gentrify but to simply our own lives--Has the town ever done a survey on the volume of traffic passing through the town, where it comes from, where it is going, what makes them stop in town?

The Speedway is an issue, particularly for those close by. -- There is urban legend of how much tax support Commander provides to the town-- It's very difficult to sell homes in this area. Realtors won't bring prospective buyers. They either don't know about it or it is not close enough to be a constant annoyance. Some in town have ideas about the noise created by the Speedway. For example, the track could be assessed an entertainment tax. Acreage is disappearing. There is a sense of hopelessness. It's the

main topic of conversation, 'Did you hear the track last night?'; In West Lebanon the noise is annoying and, as studies have shown, detrimental to health. Animals are upset. Outdoor activity on summer evenings can't be scheduled. We pray for rain which brings peace and quiet; There is a lot of misinformation about what the Speedway contributes to the town, both financially and community support. There is a group of people who do not want any regulation and don't realize that that is chaos; The noise issue is getting worse. Attempts at regulating have been unsuccessful. It's indefensible. -- W Lebanon, Speedway, track, noise are issues to inhabitants there-Others know Howie, love him and the speedway. He supports the community. -- Speedway has never been an issue. Happy to see it bringing people in. Now that he hears it's a problem to others, he feels it's his issue also. -- Desire for 'noise ordinance' viewed as 'closing the Speedway'-- Police should be more pro-active in checking for DWI on people leaving the track. Have the police been bought off? -- Track should be taxed as a nuisance or entertainment-- Noise is the most important, particularly in West Lebanon. -- Noise ordinance; There had been a serious discussion of regulating the track and abating the noise, i.e. barriers, limited hours of operation. Accepting that town members who object to the noise have rights.

Home schooling seems to show lack of confidence in school system?? Is also isolating-- Schools and community are another source of conflict

Specific Issue Concerns

How 'bout a pharmacy? People have to travel too far. - Support services (mental health, social services, etc.)—Pharmacy—Pharmacy-- Some of us want to make free health clinic-- Fire Company - only 2 members younger than 50 and can fight fires. What will happen? --Canaan Fire Dept sign with number of emergency calls. Wow! I don't think of such things. Those statistics make me realize emergencies are happening; In an emergency, have to go to Pittsfield or Albany-- Berkshire County for food, culture, music. -- Pass-through traffic—Jiminy Peak competition for convenience store, road improvements, etc.

Yes, to local cell tower: No to radiation from local cell tower-- Broadband access-- Broadband service—for people working from home

Empty buildings (Fresco's, the Triple Nickel, etc.) -- Aesthetic—How presentation is/First impressions—Abandoned gas stations, remove gantry, clean up (screening for

propane farm? Laraby's plants on rooftop?) Unattractive signage-fund to help people aesthetically (look at bigger picture and remember who is driving through town), dumpster cages (temporary or permanent?) -- Unoccupied buildings being back in use

Younger ideas. Who follows up? -- There needs to be a plan and then follow through.

When we try to force things through, nothing gets accomplished

Town: Sponsor events that bring different organizations together-- Family oriented activities, places to go that are low cost or free-- Conflicts with other activities, personal priorities & family obligations-- We want more interactions - yet too busy, not aware, not available

Communicate what is happening in the town more effectively (ex. Town does not have a Facebook page) Social media is the way many people find out about things going on. -- Everybody used to read "The Echo" (newspaper), the single source for all. -- Loss of newspapers--Also, there is no newspaper in New Lebanon so there is no easy way for the public to stay informed. -- Community activities - people don't know about them.

Route 22 South of town is unsafe. DOT says they won't be repaving. We need to make noise that won't end. DOT important player in this

Actions That Would Make A Difference

Committees should be formed that represent the various geographical areas of the town, i.e. West Lebanon, Lebanon Springs, etc.

Could follow up with sponsorships for high school students. --Seniors giving scholarships to high school students

Maybe some local young drivers would welcome a chance to earn money driving elderly to appointments, shopping, etc.-- Volunteering at high school -- possibilities-- Schools could be a center of activity-- More younger kids participating-- The town board and school board do not interact, but function entirely separately-- Follow up with high school kids

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Open the town to all constituents—in meetings, events, etc.

More open forums to address town issues or on specific issues-- Large get-together to share the information gathered

A town-wide List-serv that could handle everything from items wanted; items for sale; services wanted; services available; e.g. rides.-- The Abode has their own "Base Camp" a Google group Listserv would be a great start, connecting people-- A Town website that would invite citizen members to buy, sell and give personal items, post services needed and volunteered - bartered - for sale, post rides both needed and offered, foster community interactions through communications. Would have to be developed carefully and monitored continually-- Sharing web applications-- Better ways to communicate amongst the people who live here

Build town identity --NL200 - One time is not enough.

Grocery store -- has anyone contact Aldi who advertise they're looking-- Grocery store/coop-- Grocery store, replace the Hess station property-- Grocery store—Store-- Dunkin' Donuts, maybe.

Buddy mentoring - pairing up people can be awesome--Utilizing skill sets across age groups, i.e. students helping seniors with their gadgets-- As part of Strategic Plan at Hawthorne Valley, groups of 3 are assigned to work together-- Apprenticeships/internships for the young—school insulated—develop letting kids give back to the community

A way for old-timers and newcomers to meet. Need an organized way-- Neighborhood Party - 35 years of friendships from one party 35 years ago—Dances-- Town Hall sponsor events-- Community softball league-- Bring together people with different backgrounds with events that have a broad appeal

-Community dinners—potluck, assigned seating so people sit with folks they don't already know, cards at table with conversation ideas

Combine events—e.g. At Town Dump Day have another activity going on at Shatford Park

Things [Events] that people participate in vs. things people just watch/listen to (more active)

-Singalongs, Square Dancing at the Pavilion in the Park-- We need social ways to connect with other people in town that we would not meet in our usual social groups. Lebanon Springs has a picnic in July that is well attended. -- Active sports programs (softball league, etc.) for youth/adults-- Events with larger mix of people from different backgrounds in attendance (in addition to Music in the Park which is already

accomplishing this) -- Activities are good. They're the icing. We're lacking the cake.--
Other ideas for "Music in the Park"

Loading blame is not helpful; we need to take the ball and run

Ithaca has a barter system - ex: babysitting earns hours to spend

Finland's "Baby Boxes" - all births greeted --Lydia Davis' program via NL Library to give every new baby in NL "Hello Moon" as first book.

Make the world accessible

Heritage Center open only on weekends—more use if the hours were extended

Bureaucracy impedes - community is much more efficient

More organic change from within; less dependence/expectation on Town Board, i.e.,
Town Government

Follow-ups from Community Conversation

Tool Library (DIY center/makerspace)

Investments in Summer Park Programs

Free Health Clinic-- Medical practices

Assess[ments of] negative reactions to the process[es]-when things fail, initiate an
investigation as to why and build on failures

Things happening organically as opposed to forced changes for the sake of changes

Reaching people who are apathetic or cynical and getting them engaged

Less labeling of different groups in town (insiders vs. outsiders) -- Reaching out to
various groups

Increase support to existing locally-owned businesses

Streamlining of planning & zoning procedures

- easy-to-follow guidelines for people trying to open a business in town
- help businesses navigate state processes that may be barriers

Crosswalk across Route 20

Total reformation—wouldn't recognize the town

School enrollment increased

Community involvement is necessary to drown out the nay-sayers.

For example, the rail trail has a core constituency that drowned out the opposers at the public meeting.

Need to find ways to get the community interested in issues of what the town needs.

Need to reduce school taxes. Shared services between local towns will have to be done. New Lebanon and Chatham both have fully staffed administrative departments. It's a waste of money with no benefit to education.

The library referendum is a prototype for moving popular opinion in the town to spend money for a good purpose. It was a huge success and the library is now one of the treasures of the town.

One on one meetings are valuable

When the Community Conversations and the resulting survey are completed, the findings should be presented to the Town Board. The findings should give some ideas of solutions to the issues and a set of expectations about how and in what time frame the board should respond. This will need to be followed up to make sure something happens.

Don't underestimate local grass roots groups. Example: **Connect Columbia** was the broadband movement. They did the background and presented it to the Board of Supervisors. Showed Columbia County very underserved. Completely changed momentum.

Whom Do People Trust to Act

Town Board

The Behold Museum is a good resource.

Grow the Valley -- some unhappy with GTV backing Rail Trail purchase

Abode

Racetrack

Enthusiastic residents (e.g. Rail Trail, Historical Society, Heritage Center, NL200 Committee)

Community Conversations are good

Trust the young people who are leading the way

Farming community

Schools— [are] increase[ing] efforts to reach out to the community (e.g. Donated use of the Jr/Sr High School for Sup 'n Swing) -- School Community-- Pros and cons about Schools

Schools

Abode—becoming more open to the community (CSA, new café)

Shaker Swamp

Library

Second home owners are a valuable resource. They tend to be more progressive and not intimidated by change.

Questions People Have

Town center: where is it? Mid-Town Mall? Valley Plaza? What could be built on there?

How can we support the Farmer Market?

What may give young people an excuse to stay? Is it better for them to go elsewhere?

How did these Community Conversations come about?

Are there more meetings?

Is the town involved—will they receive the info?

Affordable housing for young families. Who can make that happen?

How many citizens in New Lebanon actually vote?

Has the town ever done a survey on the volume of traffic passing through the town, where it comes from, where it is going, what makes them stop in town?

Tables sponsored by various groups in town at Music in the Park to showcase what is available in town. Name tags (voluntary) encouraging people to mingle?

What about connections between Town and School? Dwindling school population, soaring school budgets. Separate budgets, seemingly little connection or coordination
Was it always so? Can that be changed? How?

Can Mason Hall be used for community events (at corner of 22/20)?

What do people go to Town for? What do people go elsewhere for? What are excuses to bring us together? Healthy ways to be together?

How do we make tourism work? Does it require a Plan? Info from these Community Conversations will be collated and shared

Will lead to further chats.

Where is there funding? For health clinic that is needed.

Need a parallel structure to the town government to implement ideas and bring groups with different foci together to forge agreement on issues

What is possible here? Basically, how can we attract \$\$ investment to NL?

Infrastructure: How did Kinderhook manage a central sewer system?

Town infrastructure needs to be improved significantly - there are grants and funding for this that other towns have used

[Abode] How can we be more a part of the community?