

Chestertown World Cafe

Tuesday June 15, 2010
Chestertown Fire Hall - Chestertown, MD

MEETING REPORT

Produced by:
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“If you want a future that’s distinct from the past, you have to be with people who you aren’t used to being with and have conversations that you’re not used to having.”

- Peter Block, author of *Community: The Structure of Belonging*



What was the Chestertown World Café?

The Chestertown World Café was a meeting of over 160 of people from the greater Chestertown area using a World Café meeting design created by Juanita Brown and David Isaacs as outlined in their book *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures through Conversations That Matter*. The intent of the meeting was for the Town of Chestertown to use the opportunity of a new decade and the challenges of an economic downturn to bring the community together and begin a conversation about its future. The Chestertown World Café was an exercise in democracy and provided a forum for civil discussion around important issues. It was also an opportunity for stakeholders to use conversation to strengthen relationships, build trust, and identify common ground themes from which to work.

Why a World Café for Chestertown?

It has been shown that bringing together the whole community allows for the “possibility of a future different than the past”. While it didn’t bring every community member literally together, the Chestertown World Café worked with a planning committee who represented all parts of a community and helps design the meeting and invites those in their community to attend. From there, the meeting is set up on talking, sharing ideas and opinions, and identifying common ground concepts. The event and outcomes often serve as a springboard to more in-depth visioning and action planning.

According to Peter Block, the author of a book entitled *Community: The Structure of Belonging*, a major element of building a plan for the future requires broadening the conversation and getting people into a room who aren’t used to showing up. This accomplishes a few things including opening the door to interactions among diverse groups of people, providing space to share important ideas and create bonds, and building the groundwork for the development of a future vision owned by all.

For communities like Chestertown who have tremendous opportunities but also face challenging issues hosting a large scale community conversation like a World Cafe offers an alternative to simply “solving problems”. A World Café event allows the group to focus on what can be created. Chestertown World

Café is the start of a process that moves away from focusing on short-term results and was designed with the understanding that if our conversations are limited to measurable outcomes, we are simply getting better at a system, not creating a new future.

Who Sponsored and Planned the Chestertown World Café?

The Chestertown World Café was planned by 19 dedicated community members representing different segments of the region including youth and education, economic development, seniors, Washington College, civic organizations, arts and cultural organizations, historic preservation, county government, land use planning, African American heritage, Chester River Hospital Center, health department, area businesses, and tourism. The planning committee members were:

Steve Atkinson, Jana Carter, Muriel Cole, Ken Collins, Diane Daniels, Dan Danko, Holly Geddes, Susanne Hayman, Katie Hughes, Elisa Medrano, Gail Owings, Leslie Raimond, Jeanette Sherbondy, Karen Somerville, Liz Starkey, Bart Stolp, Julie Vallecillo, Bernadette Van Pelt, Linda Wilson

The event was co-sponsored by the Town of Chestertown and the Center for the Environment and Society at Washington College and funds were provided by the Town, PNC Bank, Chesapeake Bank and Trust, Peoples Bank, and Kirby and Sons Construction. Jennifer Hicks of Sustainable Delmarva guided the committee through the planning process. And with the help of her associate Michael Hardesty, of Washington College's Center for the Environment and Society and graphic documenter Thomas Briggs, Ms. Hicks lead the June 15, 2010 World Café event.

Planning committee members met three times to determine:

- Who should be invited to this conversation so it would allow the broadest possible spectrum of citizens to have a voice about their hopes for the future of the greater Chestertown area.
- What questions should be asked at a World Café that would allow the participants to offer the most insight about the future of Chestertown
- Where to hold the World Café, how will it be set up, and what food/drinks will be served
- Roles the committee will play during the World Café event
- How to use the results of the Chestertown World Café

The committee members were responsible for directly inviting members in their community. The planning committee members were committed not to specific agenda outcomes but rather a successful event in which many are involved.

What is Sustainable Delmarva?

Sustainable Delmarva (www.sustainabledelmarva.net) is a project that brings together diverse stakeholders within communities of the Delmarva Peninsula to envision and plan for their future and the future of the region. The project emphasizes the important role of local communities as a catalyst for change for Delmarva by providing the tools to strengthen relationships, determine their desired direction, and connect with other Delmarva communities to share ideas and resources to move closer toward sustainability – economically, socially, and environmentally.

What Happened at the Chestertown World Café?

The Chestertown World Cafe transformed the hall at the Chestertown Fire Company into a warm and friendly café complete with small tables with five to six chairs, flowers in vases, and table cloths (really sheets of paper on which participants could write). Each participant was assigned a table randomly to ensure the likelihood of unacquainted people sitting together.

Everyone who arrived was greeted by several of the members of the planning committee and received a meeting packet, name tag, and a table assignment. In addition they were invited to enjoy the food being served at buffet tables prepared by the Fire Company Auxiliary. At 6:30pm sharp the participants were asked to find their seats and the proceedings of the event began with a hardy welcome by Mayor Margo Bailey. She thanked those in attendance for coming and participating in this large conversation about the community. She also acknowledged the event sponsors and public officials in attendance including the Kent County Commissioners and some of the Chestertown town council members.



Mayor Bailey then introduced the Director of the Center for Environment and Society at Washington College, Dr. John Seidel, who also welcomed those in attendance. He expressed his excitement about the possibility an event like this has for the community and provided an overview what could come from this evening including future activity that continues this type of visioning.

Facilitator Jennifer Hicks then offered her congratulations to the group for making the effort to be in attendance and how it demonstrated their tremendous commitment to their community. She acknowledged the World Café planning committee for their hard work to make this event happen.

Ms. Hicks explained the “who”, “what”, and “why” of the event and the significance of the gathering of so many people. She described what the group would be expecting: three 20 minute conversations answering three “questions that matter” about the future of Chestertown. She explained that after each conversation everyone except a designated “table host” would be moving to another table to have the next conversation with new people. She reviewed the etiquette that is followed during a World Café and encouraged all participants to really listen to each other and for common ground themes.



Once the instructions were given and participants were ready to begin the group was provided the first question: “What brought you to the Chestertown area (work, school, born here, family, etc.) and what keeps you here? Twenty minutes later the participants switched tables and the second questions was asked: “What are the advantages and disadvantages of living and working in the Chestertown area?” After round two finished the third question was posed: “What are your hopes and dreams for Chestertown?”



After a break, the group reconvened to hear reports from paired up table hosts. Each pair of reporters provided a summary of the three discussions that occurred at their tables including the three most prominent issues and the underlying themes. The facilitators documented what was said in the reports.

Once the table host reports were completed, the meeting mural created by graphic documenter Tom Briggs was presented. It reflected the common themes heard from the conversations. In addition, Ms. Hicks presented a preliminary set of major themes that had emerged from the conversations.

The final discussion focused on next steps. Several participants provided ideas verbally and others submitted them in writing (see page 14). Ms. Hicks recommended that the community take on a more in-depth planning process, using the Future Search model, on one of the major themes as a way to create a blueprint for action. A Future Search conference brings people from all walks of life into the same conversation for 16 hours spread across three days using dialogue to discover their common ground and make concrete action plans.

The following pages contain the major themes from the Chestertown World Café (page 5), notes taken during the Table Host reports (page 6), notes written on the table cloths at each table (page 8), and a list of next steps submitted by participants of the event (page 14), participant feedback about the event (page 17), and a participant list (page 19). Please review the notes and the ideas for next steps and decide where YOU want to take this process. There are a few options:

- *Continue the conversation on the Chestertown World Café blog:
<http://ctownworldcafe.blogspot.com/2010/06/great-world-cafe.html>*
- *Get on the Town of Chestertown's e-mail list to get news from the Town. Send a request to be placed on their list to office@chestertown.com*
- *Get on the Chestertown World Café e-mail list to get updates about the community visioning process, update us on World Café "ripple effects", or express your interest in particular next step ideas. E-mail jbicks@sustainabledelmarva.net*
- *Visit the Sustainable Delmarva website for updates about Chestertown's visioning process, as well as, the updates for other Delmarva communities:
www.sustainabledelmarva.net/current_delmarva_projects.html*
- *Attend the final World Café planning committee meeting – send a request for information to jbicks@sustainabledelmarva.net*



Common Ground Themes from Chestertown's World Cafe

Retaining the youth, having their active participation in the community, and ensuring that they have the resources needed to stay and thrive is important.

The rural character, the quiet small town life, the close proximity of the college and hospital, the geographic location, the rich heritage, and the waterfront are community assets and should be protected and enhanced.

Cultural, social, racial, and generational divisions block opportunities to completely realize a true sense of community.

Adequate physical and organizational infrastructure including public transportation, telecommunication services, bikeways/walkways, community centers, workforce development programs, and healthcare services strengthens our community.

Housing and shopping in our community should be affordable and high quality, and needs to cater to the local population, both in and outside of the downtown district.

Economic development should be generated through the creative use of existing resources and the encouraging of industries that are appropriate for our community.

Notes Captured from Table Host Reports

What brought you to the Chestertown area (work, school, born here, family)...

Wanted to live in a rural area and/or small town
Wanted to be centrally located but not in metropolitan area
My family lives here
The College
Can easily retire here: close to hospital, water, college
Wanted to live near waterfront, have access to water
Was born here
Work
Bought a 2nd home for vacation
Arts community
Desire to farm

...and what keeps you here?

People watch after my house, people are friendly
My friends, have made more friends living here than anywhere else, have met a lot people
I am content with where I am.
Warm friendly feeling
Peacefulness and tranquility
My family
Sense of place
Honest community
Joy of living here
The environment and weather
Cultural events
Work

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living and working in the Chestertown area?

Advantages:
People are friendly
The area is centrally located between major metropolitan areas.
College Town
Maintained waterfront
Location to big cities
Sense of community
Access to natural environment
College brings in new crowds every year
Access to reasonable health care
Close to three major cities
Great place for children to grow up
Downtown: can walk to a lot of places, nice historic district
Minimal traffic
The small businesses

Disadvantages:

Not too many disadvantages
Not enough low cost housing
Inadequate medical service
Lack of jobs/weak job market
Not a lot for youth
Lack of low-income working class, serious poverty
Cost of housing too high
Low quality schools
Not a lot for young professionals
Racial & cultural divisions, division between “from heres” and “come heres”
Lacking infrastructure (cell phones, internet, transportation)
Lacks quality and affordable shopping that serves the local population
Increase in crime/vandalism
Lack of involvement of college in town
Lack of ethnic restaurants

What are your hopes and dreams for Chestertown?

We have to learn not to fight for what it is, but to fight for what you want it to be. (This was in regards to Stepney Manor), no more condominiums
We have to build infrastructure, re-establish the railroad system, Historic District bus service
Keep the youth, involve young people, more transport for youth, target youth
Create opportunities for younger residents, keep people from next generation here
An exciting arts center, buy Armory for arts center
Get students from College more involved in town, provide affordable housing for professors.
Improve public school system, vo-tech high school
Support all volunteers
Come together more, establish a community center
Support local business for cottage industry while preserving the environment
Racial and social integration in town, a better racial connection, work towards more racial integration, establish sister churches
Need more villages that are walk-able, make walking to shopping centers easier
Maintain waterfront
Downtown needs to be more vibrant, grocery store down town
Cater to local populations with more affordable stores, functional stores up town where people can buy average priced clothes
Cleaner environment – water, Bay
Better relationship between town, state, county; better relationship with QA County,
No bridge
Build a bypass, don't build a bypass

Notes Captured on Table Cloths



Every table at the World Café was covered with craft paper where participants could write down their thoughts for others to read. Below is a transcription of the notes from the table cloths. The ideas have been clustered for easier reading.

Community Planning and Growth

Grow crops not population

No bridge

Avoid thoughtless growth!

Not just slow...planned growth

Work within walking distance

Washington Ave. need to turn into a tree lined avenue. Consider creating green islands to calm traffic

State needs to take Chestertown seriously – start implementing our plans

Upper High St. is slowly getting better but need landscaping form Dixon Valve north

Upper High St. needs trees

Landscaping on High St. (green islands on Main St.)

Both shopping centers need less asphalt and more landscaping

Slow traffic in Chestertown and all of Kent County

Can live/work in almost any part of town

Community gardens at rear of 215 Washington Ave

Quality not quantity: we could have become Williamsburg...(Busch Gardens in Centreville with plenty of jobs)

Growth is death to a small town. Small is one of the reasons why we like it now

2010 population 20,000, 1910 population 18,000 – why grow now?

Lower income housing = growth → a Chestertown with 80,000 people will no longer be Chestertown

We need a viable downtown

Need a bypass

Planning & Zoning meeting to save the ponies June 17, 2010 5pm Please help!

Would like growth to be gradual or organic

Need to increase tax base – like it to be a small town, but property taxes are too high

Traffic on Washington Ave. → going too fast and is unsafe for kids

Make the town safe for pedestrians

Rural – open space → but this may be thwarted by Planning and Zoning (decreasing farm and pastureland)

Not much population growth -> tough for hospital

Retain small is beautiful → make it financially feasible to keep it that way

Smart Growth, Sustainable, Smart Growth

Use of the School Board building: artists, studio apartments, community space, coffee shop

Stuck with re-design of Kirby

Disadvantage – local folks are not going to be the ones move into the Stepany Manor
No secondary bridge
Expand nice feeling of Saturday's farmer's market population

Housing

Attention to mid-level housing
What about all those people that would love to live in Mid-Manhattan...and can't afford the housing?
Concerned about additional 200 – 300 homes in development. It will not provide jobs, it will complicate traffic and it will further stratify our community
Appropriate/affordable housing
Affordable housing not available → report sent to Commissioners 4 years ago re: working class housing
No McMansions – houses more in fit with rest of town!
Too many houses in the future?
Cost of housing
Affordable housing
Low income new housing promotes no open space. Focused on mass people together. Doesn't promote integration

Small community life

This place feels like home
Opportunity for social change
Possibility of having some impact on the community
Quiet, friends, lots to do in the community
It's easy but it's hard because everybody knows me. But everybody reaches out. Safety net
I know my customers
I keep making friends
In a small town the advantages are also the disadvantage: We need to be open to change,
Quality of life
Takes a long time to do things
Can't put a price on quality of life here
Perspective → coming from Baltimore this seems safe and peaceful
Community "safety net"
From Annapolis = hustle, hustle
Kept here by quality of life, sense of community, river and recreation, people/friendliness, small town
Easy to meet people
Happy that it not important what kind of car you drive
Keep Chestertown Charming
The friendly aspect of the locals – my wife and I have more friends here than we ever had in NJ
Rural area great although too touristy
Biggest advantage – small community = high level of comfort, friendliness, willingness to help
Sometimes difficult to keep public life and private life separate
Rumor mill
Professionally know 90% of shop owners, employees but also means hard to get away from job
Lots of cultural opportunities on a more personal level than in cities
Feels safe
The culture is not being threatened like other counties are → laws, agriculture, lack of invasive
Area has a European small town feel
The people are nice, sense of community, easy to feel welcomed, inclusive

Environmental protection and enhancement

Keep it clean! No pollution contamination!

We want trees!

Kelly doesn't like Walgreens b/c they leave lights on 24/7 –even when they are not open

Take long wharfs out of Chester River channel

Art

Reorganize art to be more useful to the whole community and useful to the children and their future

Less art more Earth!

Along with arts – culinary classes

Artist center, classes for kids

Government

County and town governments need a better working relationship

Would like to see Town and County become more inclusive

Economic development & jobs

Organic food for poor people

Economic development, create jobs,

My job is good for one more year

We have no new industry coming in

Need more people to buy from our stores

Diversification of employment

Lack of local practical stores

Paradee Gas must go

No Walmart

Most people I talked to go to Easton or Annapolis for groceries – there's already 4

Came to Chestertown for work

Work here but don't live here

Came here to work at a community hospital

Came here to work for Echo Hill Outdoor School

Green jobs availability?

Vocational/technical training

Telecommuting

Came to work, stay for quality of life

More job opportunities for younger members of the work force

Need an infrastructure (educated and trained workforce) to create a ready labor force

Build jobs off of college graduates

Develop tourism → improve pedestrian flow

Need more jobs: College, banks, lawyers, Government, Dixon Valve, Hospital, schools

Fleecing of the tourist

Aqua/Agri - culture

Eel Farm, mushroom farm, tomato farms

We don't see our rural farming neighbors

Agricultural land preservation for locavore

We love the farmers market

Agriculture (Colchester Farm/organic farms) – grow local buy local → needs to be developed

Farmers market → winter expansion (make Farmers Market year round)
Farmers market
Like that the Farmers Market has expanded to Wednesday

Washington College

We seem to see more relationship between Washington College and town
Not a big impact on the town from the college
We need more involvement from community with Washington College foreign students
College needs more integration with community
Came because of the college → intellectual stimulation
Moved here because of the college and the vibrancy of the academic community.

Racial, cultural, generational divide

We need more integration. The segregation is palpable
Pay more attention to green, diversity of cultures, integration
We are a community of “haves and have nots”
We are a very segregated community
Where are the African Americans? We need their talents and their perspectives
There is hope in the African-American community – reintegration
Concern: town too unsophisticated? → yet 5 bookstores
Bring back the Pow Wow!
Need a social café center for Chestertown residents like this – all cultures to meet
There is a separation of groups – age, race
The whole of Chestertown to come together
To have a community magnet: past going toward future like this World Café – civic center, something, some place to go to talk to neighbors in this community
More inclusive community
Black community
Culture, community, representation
Tea Party – segregation is visible
People feel shut out

Native vs. non native

Been here a long time – one native here
Longest resident at this table in conversation #1 - 1960
Came to Chestertown in 1970
Think of the natives
Born here
Not very many local people here – not seeing African American people
Came here 30 years ago to get away from Philly as a second home → last 3 years living here full time,
Does question (what brought you here) really address “born here’s”?
50% came or stayed for college
Most lived in big city, moved to town wanting a smaller community

Youth & education

A park for kids to play (space at middle school)
We don’t have jobs for our kids, our kids are migrating to private schools
More resources for youth programs

Improve education
Hope for more with The Alley
Chesapeake College buys Board of Education building
More activities for teens – community center
Young people need employment opportunities to stay here
Get young people in local government
Increase and strengthen activities that foster cooperation especially for young people to help them be better rounded citizens – sports, arts, music, ensembles, plays, cultural and recreational areas
Fix school system → improve local schools
Have biker clubs help out with discipline and teach classes

Seniors

Awareness and attention to our aging population
Retired - don't have to worry about work and take full opportunity of leisure time

Services

We need internet!
Improved Broadband capability
Town-wide WiFi
All electric wires underground
Adequate services – hospital, river, college
Trails to Worton, Maybe Rails to Trails
Develop bicycle paths in town
Improved medical resources, problem: getting medical services (immediate, routine)
More and affordable healthcare
No mention of a good quality healthcare system → it is here!
How do we keep small town ambience and provide more services?
More ethnic food
Restaurants could be better
Health food store
Lack of shopping – fabric, variety of the everyday
Target
Public transport for elderly going to doc appointments
Transportation issues
Need transportation
Transportation development (bus, trains)
Better public transportation
No change – but expansion of public transport. How about bus to Wilmington/Baltimore?
Community college bus
Small airport
Closing mental health hospital was a shocker
What if Heron Point & Wash College weren't here?
Please bring Trader Joe's or Giant
Put Trader Joe's in Dollar General
Services can be limited – have to travel but also an advantage
Community center?
Community garden at Chestertown Middle

Safety

Afraid to walk downtown
Drugs and guns around
Chestertown is loud and unsafe
Noisy
Address drug/alcohol problems
Addiction – alcohol, drugs, etc.; adult tolerance for kids addictions; money from selling drugs more attractive than a job

Location

Short commuting
1.5 hours away from the rest of the world
If live downtown, can walk to stores
Great location, easy to access from cities
Great location re: DC, Philadelphia, Wilmington
Advantage – not on the beaten path, trade off - to live here and have to go to Middletown

Miscellaneous

Comfortable
Need change
A lot of resources
Advantages are also disadvantages
Weather if very nice
Horses can stay in Quaker Neck
Rodeos at Wilmer Park – no rodeos!
Horse shows
Access to the water – the river
Legalize marijuana
Stools at Stams
Dogs at Tea Party – no dogs!
College, hospital, friendliness, culture, smallness, and being centrally remote keep people here
Advantages? Geography, beauty, water, sense of community, college, county seat, proximity to 3 large cities, strong interest in keeping county rural
Rose's fine? You've got to be kidding!
Keep coming back – here to stay now
Stayed b/c of diversity, arts, college, sense of community
Went to college here. Loved countryside, small community. Kept coming back until opened business 1987. Sold business and now more involved with community. I stay for the community and body of like-minded people
Came 15 years ago to retire from DC. Bought fixer-upper. Like the community spirit, water, lot of retired people
How to define quality?
Avid sailor → discovered the Bay and the river
Part of SCORE: Senior Core of Retired Executives, who give free advice

Next Steps Ideas from Chestertown World Café Attendees

The range of responses from the participants about possible next steps was wide. However, many have similar themes and so they have been clustered by main ideas.

Have a follow up meeting/visioning on World Café ideas:

- Another charrette idea: brainstorming on what town would look like and what activities would take place. Build long term plan for range of cultural and art attraction for local and also destination tourism
- Have more “café’s” on a regular basis – maybe every 2 years and include high school students
- Breakdown into smaller groups, addressing more specific issues
- How do we take advantage of what’s appealing about “here”, why people come here to visit...water, history, arts...without risking it? Ex: Convention destination, arts events, sporting, we need a visioning and a plan.
- Strategic planning on economic development: tourism, consulting firm, environmental research & development
- Focus on more narrowly-defined issues step by step to come to conclusions on each in order to carry forward tonight’s discussion. This could take place over 1-2 years, but where do the recommendations go?
- World Café for high school students or even elementary school students. This will have to be guided a bit more but I would be very interested in seeing their responses. Involving kids may help to get more community members involved because they will go back and talk with their parents about what they did in school.
- What should Chestertown look like in 5, 10, 20 years? How big? What industries?
- Organize a county-wide World Café
- Prioritize needs and wishes
- Another meeting with specifics
- Another Café on specifics
- Need at least one other World Café with a narrower focus

Reporting on and implementing World Café outcomes:

- Seek out institutions and volunteers to help implement the development of a community master plan of actions with specific targets
- Report out to community on what happened, result, ideas...
- Plan how to take this initiative to next steps, keep and build momentum
- Pass results on to Rich Josephson of the MDP for Plan Maryland research and also on to Jon Laria (c/o MD Dept of Planning), chair of Task Force on the future of growth and development in Maryland (MD Sustainable Growth Commission effective 7/1/10).
- Keep the college involved

Involving those who were not in attendance:

- Outreach to those communities not represented: school population & youth, to the black population, through the churches
- Think of the voices who were not there and foot walk through town to engage those people who did not come tonight
- Increase the involvement of other interest groups (farmers, watermen) in this community dialogue
- Effort to gain insight in to hopes and dreams from those who may not feel included by using same questions as those used tonight

- Maybe some sort of community survey: house-to-house questionnaire with more specific questions about guiding our community into the future.
- Outreach to Kent County communities

Engaging & supporting youth:

- School bus run to take youth to Worton Community Center in summer. Volunteers provide learning opportunities arts, at center to engage youth.
- Keep youth engaged
- Increase opportunities for youth and low income groups (e.g. establish trade schools, teach trades in schools)
- Make community center accessible and of interest to our youth! First you must get them there...
- Incorporate more youth activities especially involving animals as some youth respond well to gentle animals, and it can teach youth how to be calm and easy.
- Get the school system straighten out – reduce the high end staff that do not help the system (just collect high salaries). Rebuild the vo-tech system for youth. (They aren't all college material)

Arts

- Arts center
- Plan for cultural and art center
- Development (further development) of art and theatre resources

Transportation:

- Establish public transportation through out the county
- Bike path
- Better consideration of pedestrian traffic
- Use the railroad to move kids from around the county to Worton

Economic development:

- Take advantage of our agricultural base and focus on diversifying. What happened to mushroom farm? More vineyards and eel farm? Grow more organic produce.
- Encourage more people to start storefront businesses and organize sources for grants and funding
- Identification of current assets/resources that can provide base for attractive new business (if Dixon Valve can succeed here, why not other companies?)
- Continue to recruit sustainable small business
- Move ahead on plan to improve county-wide coverage of broadband services ASAP and hence encourage creation of “work-at-home” jobs
- Expand local farming and sustainability, keep our farms farming

Connecting the community

- Invite churches to link with each other – the way they do with churches overseas or in other parts of the country. Have social events like fish fry or pool parties; or joint service projects, get their congregations together in a meaningful way.

Access to health care

- Mobile health clinic with regular schedule to offer basic service and identify people with health issues early!
- Develop better coordinated medical services to improve access to specialties such as neurologists, geriatric psychiatrists, cardiologists, ophthalmologists, eye surgery, etc.

Town Development

- The area that is for sale at the triple stop sign being a park, not commercial. Can you imagine the traffic of commercial?
- Corner of Flatland Rd. and Rt. 20 – no convenience store – in fact no more anywhere. They are ugly and a source of litter.
- Buy property at Stepney from Kirby and don't build houses there. Don't let Chestertown become another Centreville or Middletown
- Buy the Armory – best suggestion: do what the town of Green Bay did when they bought shares in the Packers
- Enhance the quality of living by promoting sound and sustainable environmental management
- Use all possible regulatory authority to prevent overdevelopment, particularly, without attendant infrastructure
- Stop mass high end housing development
- Stop the new buildings of business who's architecture does not fit in Chestertown
- Make sure we never become the Eastern side of a bridge
- No bypass – opens county to urbanites to drive up land prices,
- Build bypass
- Demand low income housing from developers or no permits
- More availability of general services (stores) for downtown local rather than tourists
- More senior citizen rentals – one story – with convenience to stores, transportation, etc.
- Preserve our rural way of life.
- Get creative about integrating spaces

Leveraging resources:

- Talk directly with the people that have the money and the influence when it comes to starting new initiative like capital projects
- Utilize the resources of the college and the proximity to Annapolis, Baltimore Washington, Philadelphia, Wilmington

Participant Feedback after the Event

Below are transcriptions of e-mail messages sent in response to the June 15th event

- Thank you for organizing last night's meeting. I am sure you are aware of the missing groups: the farmers, immigrants, African-Americans, poor, uneducated, and homeless. If a population growth happens here, I hope it is after I have lived out my life in the Chestertown, Kent County the way it is now.
- First of all I thought last night was terrific! You are a really good motivator, moderator, and task manager. Bravo! As for the attendance demographic, those in groups such as farmers, Blacks, less educated, are perhaps not comfortable with this format. It did remind me of a cocktail party in a way, which causes discomfort to some people. In fact, 2 elderly people did not stay when they realized the format to be used (separate tables for couples, etc.). Nevertheless, the discussions were invaluable, in my view, and thought-provoking for those that were there. People seemed to welcome the opportunity.
- We thought last evening was wonderful thank you.
One thought (of several) that might be actionable ... We keep hearing about the lack of "middle income housing". (I've heard "low income" too ... but last night "middle" was the issue ...) It would be useful if the town could establish whether this is true, or is a local urban legend. Assuming there are parameters for what is "low", "middle" and "high", using tax assessments, perhaps the town could establish how much housing we have in each category, decide what percentage is appropriate for our needs, and be able to either put this "complaint" to rest, or develop a plan to work to develop what is needed. At the very least, it would enable our town leaders to be able to say "xx% of our housing is classified "middle"". Facts instead of people just saying we don't have something. (If there aren't parameters, then some would be established.)
Many thanks again for your leadership in this worthwhile endeavor.

Bill Ingersol responds:

The facts are that low and moderate income housing has been Town priority since 1975. It's how I first started with the Town, eliminating slums and building Calvert Heights, Satterfield Court, Morgnec Village, The High Steps, and assisting in the creation of Chestertown Landing (on MD 291, not to be confused with Chester River Landing on MD 289), the Cove Apartments, Lord Calvert Gardens and Brookmeadow I and II. These are all rental projects and their waiting lists are the best indicators of need in the rental category. Ironically, some of them have no waiting lists and are struggling to get tenants with acceptable tenant histories. Low and moderate income ownership housing, workforce housing, inclusionary housing for homeowners and condo owners has been similar as a Town priority with the most recent successes like Hilltop, Oakstreet and even Coventry where State (DHCD--see their website) and Federal programs(USDA) (or builders' programs) made it possible for middle income homeowners to have their own home. We have had many smaller instances of successes on the homeowner front on infill lots in communities where lots were inexpensive or written down by our grant programs. It is probably the least known and most overlooked achievement of the Town. People always say that opportunities are not there, but they are. I have often set people up with homes who thought they could never have one. I put a booklet together that simply listed the subsidized rental opportunities in Town and reprinted website info of the programs available for homeowners. One of the overwhelming feelings that I had after the Cafe was that there were several items of concern that really are being addressed or have been addressed. I see that as either of two things: 1) that we don't get the word out well enough or 2) that

some people are happy enough to have a vague knowledge of the more serious issues in the Community and it shows when you really focus on the issues.

- Chestertown's environment is not holistic. It might have served a useful purpose to designate 1/4 of the attendees into geographic or socio-economic segments such as the historic district, the college, Heron Point and hospital region, upper High Street extending out toward Flatland Road and the non-walkable shopping areas. Or: retirees, working people, people seeking employment and recent arrivals to the area. The responses you would have gotten had you chosen 4 foci would have provided an entirely different array of information. I'm afraid the mostly white, mostly affluent and older than 50 year old audience gave you a limited variety of responses. Chestertown, and Kent County for that matter, is too small to achieve the critical mass needed to undertake ambitious change. The change I've seen since my first visit, prior to moving to Kent County, has largely been positive and this trajectory should and can be maintained with good governance and keeping a tight rein on planning and zoning. Some of what is "wrong" with Chestertown was achieved prior to tightening zoning regulations. Namely the dreadful strip mall shopping centers north of town, yet in town, off Rte. 213. Serious landscaping, while eliminating perhaps as much as 1/4 of the available parking at these locations would be a good start. In my 17 years here I've never seen those lots half full. Traffic has grown exponentially over the last dozen or so years. A bypass should be a first priority. Affordable, reliable shuttle service throughout the county would enhance the access to shopping and cut down on traffic that originates in the outlying towns and villages. Rock Hall has an entrepreneur who founded the Rock Hall Trolley, a tram that serves well as a people mover to and from events and around the marinas. Chestertown might take a page out of Rock Hall's book. Aside from the affluent, artsy set, Chestertown and vicinity has a working class that needs affordable shopping venues better than the ubiquitous Dollar this and Dollar that and Roses. Maybe keeping Walmart out was a mistake? Start with a huge increase in street trees from the RR tracks northward on High Street. Install green islands on Washington Avenue from Kent Street to just above Maple Avenue. We visited Wellsboro, PA recently and were impressed with the change of perspective planted islands can make in an historic downtown. Why are we slaves to speeding truck traffic? Calm traffic and annoy the heck out of people passing through Chestertown on their way to someplace more important. It wouldn't be a bad idea to mandate landscaping around the Rte. 213 gas stations such as Bennetts and Suds and Soda. If Freeport, Maine can do it, why not Chestertown? So, there, I've had my say. Bypass, landscape, rip up asphalt and last but not least, bury the utilities in the historic district. Easton did. So can we.

Chestertown World Café Participants

Audra Weissert & Shane Brill	Garrett Byron	Ellen Walmsly
Karen & Roy Kirby	Ellie & Tom Noble	Jeanette Sherbondy
Roy & Judy Crow	Leslie and Andy Price	Marty Stetson
Miles Barnard	Francie Miller	Leslie Raimond
Georgette Mercer	Betsy Kulman	Doug Gates
Barbara Jorgenson & David Bowering	Megan Milliken	Pam & Bob Foss
Mickey Elsberg	Bonnie Clark	Phillip Dutton
Carla Massoni	Brook & Trish Hardwood	Andy Goddard
Samantha Bulkilvish	Kevin Walsh	Nancy McGuire
Jill Oglire Titus	Pete Weed	Marilyn Klompus
Liz & Grant Gross	Carl Gallegos	Craig Damon
Liz Starkey	Karen O'Connor	Liz Seidel
Jim Barry	Earl Runde	Sandy MONTEFERRANTE
Bart Stolp	Dianne Turpin	Steve Frohock
Rev. Ruben Freeman	Patricia Molloy	Holly Geddes
Adajah Reese	Bonnie & David Keating	Steve Atkinson
Morgan Ellis	Dick Conrad	Sandee Trakat
Craig O'Donnell	Jimmy and Mary Price	Barbara Foster
Mary Prichard	Ed Mikch	Bernadette Van Pelt
Tim Lloyd	Natalie Butz	Jim Ross
Katie Hughes	Bill Trakat	Suzanne Street
Fred, Elizabeth, & Elizabeth Keer	Vincent Raimond	Alice Macnow
Larry Slague	Lucia Foster	John Seidel
Kevin Kelmartin	Anne Charles	Annie Warhurst
Elisa Goldsborough	Ron Fithian	George Lehmer
Eumoni May	Peter Newlin	Ann Hedgepeth
Kate O'Donnell	Hope Clark	Margo Long
Carol Wagner	Chief Rob Edler	Don & Dianne Cantor
John Wagner	Brent Hunsinger	Lori Kern
Nina Houghton	David Foster	John LaFerla
Bill Ingersol	Linda Dawson	Peter Heck
Carla Gerber	Sandra Bjork	Pat & Jim Gatto
John Dillman	Michelle Timmus	Meghan Siudzinski
Dick & Nancy Swanson	Julie Vallecillo	Jane & Gordon Chapman
Brenda Strange	Colin and Janice Dickson	George Shivers
Keith Huntley	Armond Fletcher	Connie & Larry Schroth
Dick Barker	Carol Mylander	Alice Horner
Bob Foss	Ken Collins	Andrew Helms
Diane Daniels	Barbara Harrison	Charles Downes
Bob & Margo Fallaw	Judy Warner	Michael Hansom
Rob Busler, Cathie Kempf	Diane Fitzgerald	William Pickrum
Martha Holland	Muriel Cole	Paul Showalter
Karen Cotton	Ricky Sears	JoAnn Fairchild
Betty Spence	Bill Wise	Jana Carter
Gail Owings	Joan Wise	Sheila Leyden
Loretta Lodge	Owen & Nanna Bailey	Elizabeth Houser
Garrett Byron	Mary Moran	Kiara Henry
Natalie Baranyk	Emmy Savage	Sydney Brooks

