

Public Meeting on Kitchen Table Conversations

Overview of KTC Results

October 23, 2019

1. How People Are Currently Engaged

- A wide range of communication tools are available - many people were surprised to learn of the options
- Great diversity in how people currently get information:
 - Widespread use of Town Website, Library and other newsletters, the local press, the trash & recycling calendar, public sandwich boards, School website, Town emails and alerts, Town Councilor emails, local community groups, and many others (see detailed survey and discussion results)
- Residents engage with the community through local community groups, churches, the Boys and Girls Club, and many other organizations and activities

2. General Hopes and Concerns

- Do more to encourage engagement by a wider range of residents (age, income, background)
- Find ways to engage new residents – including folks in the new condos and apartments
- Encourage connections with people beyond neighborhoods, and deepen roots within neighborhoods
- Improve ability to find and use communication tools
- Improve the quality of communication tools (Town website, town meetings, local media)
- Improve two-way communication with Town elected officials and staff
- Support citizen engagement in visioning, planning and accountability

3. Issues Related to Engagement and Public Outreach

- Need a single place to go to for information – e.g. on town events (government and community) and on where to go for different types of information
- Looking for better ways to hear from and engage with town leaders
- Need better two-way communication, e.g. consistent responses to inquiries, report back on how public input has been used
- Interest in better Town use of social media (FaceBook page, Twitter, ...)
- Need more consistent on-going communication – not just when a big issue arises ...

4. Broader Issues Discussed by KTCs

1. Ways to preserve and enhance Watertown's culture and values

- Don't want development to erode Watertown's strengths
- Use the Charter review to revitalize and renew commitment to Town values, with multi-lingual and inclusive process
- **Sponsor more public amenities and events**, with opportunities for younger and older residents to meet, interact and create together
- **Educate citizens about the issues**

- **Publicize volunteer opportunities** : provide on-going, updated information on opportunities – be responsive to volunteer offers
- **Promote safe use of roads and bike paths** – distribute helmets & lights, conduct workshops, Police educate the public and enforce the laws

5. Summary of Key Recommendations from KTCs on Potential Engagement and Public Outreach Actions (see detailed survey responses and detailed lists)

1. Communications and Information

- 1a. Improve Town website
- 1b. Publish calendar with both town meetings & community events
- 1c. Engage a communication specialist
- 1d. Develop a communications strategy
- 1e. Create a 311 system
- 1f. Create a single place to go for “All Things Watertown”
- 1g. Provide/improve awareness of notification options
- 1h. Develop an interactive construction map
- 1i. Improve notice of road closures and construction

2. Welcoming Environment

- 2a. Sponsor and support neighborhood groups
- 2b. Provide introductions for newcomers, including welcome packages with information
- 2c. Sponsor events and activities that bring people together

3. Communicating with Town Leaders

- 3a. State of the Union report
- 3b. Town Council newsletter
- 3c. Walks and Talks with Town Councilors
- 3d. Town staff open office hours
- 3e. Designate a visible spokesperson

4. Public Meetings

- 4a. Consider alternate meeting times
- 4b. Provide accessibility & translations in top 2-3 non-English languages
- 4c. Provide interactive options – discussion boards and interactive streaming for non-real-time engagement
- 4d. Use neutral facilitators for public input meetings