

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### 1. *How do you feel about your community?*

#### a. *What is wonderful about this community?*

- Revitalization
- Everybody knows your name, close, small town, not a 'big-city' feel, everybody knows each other
- Helpful community, people willing to lend a hand
- People are nice, even if you are 'from away', people are still nice, still feel like a part of the community
- Sense of connectedness across towns
- Community like a family, inner-connected community, generations of families rooted here, grandparents came from away, created close-knit town, families stayed tight
- Welcoming, not a sense of people 'from away' attitude
- Hard-working survivors, morph into what needs to happen, community survives, grows, thrives with changes, even though not everybody likes changes
- Used to be a 'mill town', now a 'town with a mill in it'

#### b. *What needs to improve?*

- 133 entrance could be cleaned up, 'gateway into town', some buildings covered in typar wrap, visual improvements needed
- Downtown is looking pretty good
- Grass growing up in sidewalks, hear complaints from residents, little changes like this could change the image of the downtown
- A challenge is that the town workforce (public works) has been cut back
- TIF available to some businesses, but not all, could funds be made available for façade improvements?
- Potential brownfield sites?
- Nothing for kids and teenagers to do

## Franklin Hills Arts, Cultural, and Heritage Plan

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- Lots of kids with free time on their hands
- Lack of entertainment, things to do for youth and for everybody
- Lack of family activities
- Spruce Mountain is available during the winter but is competing with surrounding mountains and needs improvement
- How to consistently promote assets like Osgood Trails in Jay
- Few options for large venues for events
- Limited venues available
- People need things to do, lack of entertainment prevents people from moving to the area
- Boat launch is adjacent to a scrap yard, could build another across the river at Spruce Mountain

c. *What role, if any, do you think arts, culture, and heritage could play in addressing the above “needs to improve” items?*

- Improving Spruce Mountain (already a natural amphitheater) and other outdoor assets as public spaces for entertainment, this could provide space for youth and others to gather
- Need to find ways to draw in volunteers
- Highlighting local talent as a means of providing entertainment/fundraising opportunities
- Benefiting from rising housing prices in the LA area, people are looking to surrounding areas for more affordable housing, need to make the area attractive to potential home-buyers
- Mentoring benefits older & younger generations
- Norlands has a 200-seat venue in the church that is available

2. *Please tell us about this community’s leisure time offerings: entertainment, recreation, arts, historic or cultural offerings?*

a. *Please tell us about the events or programs available in the region.*

- Osgood trails in Jay
- Paper Museum offers regular events



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- Norlands Living History Museum, series of annual events, every other year they host a big civil war living history weekend, about 200 re-enactors from around New England, big crowds for Maine Maple Sunday from outlying areas, they come to this area for ambiance, seasonal festivals, Christmas festival, promoted through social media, newspapers
- Apple Pumpkin Festival (big community draw)
- Sled-in, Spruce Mountain
- History Night, downtown Livermore Falls, historical fair in May
- Jay Historical Society has 1 event yearly, annual open house
- Spruce Mountain
- Home & Leisure Show at Spruce Mountain High School
- Schools have drama performances, they are staggered so they aren't all happening at once
- Smart robotics team is fairly competitive
- Livermore Community Band
- High School Band
- Parades, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Memorial Day
- Trek down Androscoggin (Canoe), Source to the Sea (Androscoggin Watershed Council)
- Trying to get a lot happening at Spruce Mountain
- Bowman Field Fly-in (big community draw)
- Wilton Farmer's market at old Tannery, two in Farmington
- Have attempted a farmer's market where Dollar General is now, used to be by Gazebo, support to local farmers would be great
- Berry's fruit farm

### 3. *Imagine it is five years from now. Imagine there are arts and cultural activities for everyone who wants them:*

#### a. *What kinds of activity would you like to see?*

- Sidewalk art festival
- Plays, historic-based plays
- Might need additional venues for plays, Norlands seats 200 people and isn't always seen as a community 'venue'
- Broadband



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- Transportation, used to be a regular bus service between towns, need to get people to and from
- Is there a way to coordinate bus service, create itineraries for people coming into Portland on cruise-ship
- Rail still goes through area, potential for the future?
- Pedestrian bridge over Androscoggin river, ideally to Spruce Mountain
- Public transportation is key
- Marketing is key for businesses to stay viable and continue operating
- Entrepreneurism, providing services to promote entrepreneurship, basic skills like how to write a business plan
- Overcoming barrier of 'it can't be done here', negative perceptions, how to get people pumped up to try new things?
- Building on local community pride, looking to heritage for inspiration, generations of stories
- We're losing information across generations, need to maintain generational knowledge, skills

*b. Where could these activities be offered? At what times of day? Of the week? Of the year?*

- French Falls could be expanded, pavilion, outdoor concerts, more well-known musicians, combine with food
- Combining events, offerings, provide something for people with different interests
- Pedestrian bridge from French Falls to Spruce Mountain over Androscoggin?
- Whistle stop
- ATV Trail
- Coordination with other towns for local events to avoid overlap
- Year-round events, people get stir crazy around March, providing things to do to get people out
- Events that are family friendly and affordable
- Finding passionate people to help
- Many events funded through local business sponsors and small donations