

LH River Town Team sets goals

By KATELYN HIBBARD

khibbard@lhup.edu

LOCK HAVEN — The Lock Haven River Town Team has met twice now, each time starting with an overflowing agenda and ending with hopeful smiles and high expectations.

Since Lock Haven was declared a "River Town" by the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership via an application by Downtown Lock Haven Inc. earlier this year, team members are hoping to find more ways to make improvements to and enhance the city.

Supported by Downtown Lock Haven Inc., Lock Haven City Council, Lock Haven University, Clinton County, Clinton County Economic Partnership, local merchants and civic groups, the potential for the team to develop new projects and meet its goals is good, said Alice Trowbridge, a registered landscape architect with SGP.

"Set your goals high and work toward them," she told the team consisting of 10 to 15 people. "You have to have the three legs of the stool in order for there to be balance."

Those three legs of the stool refer to business-industry, environment and community — which, Trowbridge said, Lock Haven is uniquely capable



KATELYN HIBBARD/THE EXPRESS

Alice Trowbridge and Zach Pyle of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership discuss ways to enhance downtown Lock Haven and its surrounding environment at a meeting June 3 at Avenue 209.

of providing.

"You have all the conveniences of a city... with a forest in your backyard," she said.

The team is developing ideas for improvements. Among those ideas being discussed are:

- Attracting an outfitter to downtown to offer kayak and canoe rentals and kayak trips on the river, plus sell outdoor wear and merchandise.

- Marketing the city as a destination that is only "min-

utes away" from popular hiking and ATV trails, prime fishing and hunting spots.

- Erecting an informational kiosk downtown listing stores, amenities, services, the designated water trail on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and more.

- Finding ways to establish a camping area in or just outside of the city for those making trips on the river.

- Promoting connection of the Pine Creek Rail-Trail to Castanea, and then

to downtown.

- Developing an "Arts on the Water" event in partnership with the Clinton County Arts Council, placing artists on the levee walkway for an annual or semi-annual event — perhaps focusing on the natural environment — while also offering musical entertainment and more.

- Building a new culture to promote Town-Gown relations between the city

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and Lock Haven University. ■ Developing a bike path in and through the downtown.

■ Further promoting the many existing or traditional, family-friendly events and venues here.

The team intends to build on these and other ideas, prioritize them, determine what is feasible and find resources and funding to make them a reality.

The team has a dearth of information and opinions from a March 27 public forum, where residents listed pros and cons of Lock Haven, and offered opinions on needs to strengthen the community economically, in

community life, and as a tourism destination.

A big goal is to attract more young people, particularly by creating a better connection between town and gown.

The team continued talking about development of an App, and is enthusiastic about creating a QR code to be placed at businesses and local attractions. People would be directed to Downtown Lock Haven's website

(www.lockhaven.org) when they scan the code with their smartphones. City Planner Leonora Hannagan expressed interest in setting up an informational kiosk downtown and/or possibly near Lock Haven University.

Downtown Lock Haven and the city are looking to apply for a Susquehanna Greenway Partnership mini-grant of up to \$5,000 for a kiosk downtown. Later, the River Town Team may investigate the possibility of a peer-to-peer grant through the state to provide technical assistance.

Lock Haven University members geography

Professor Todd Nesbit, English Professor Bob Myers and Provost Donna Wilson agree that asking university students to help with web site and technology enhancements, along with marketing - among other projects - is a good way to integrate town and gown.

The team would also like to improve bike-ability in the downtown area. Many locals enjoy how walkable the area is and the "sense of community" it provides, but would enjoy it further if the city was more bike-friendly, the team agreed.

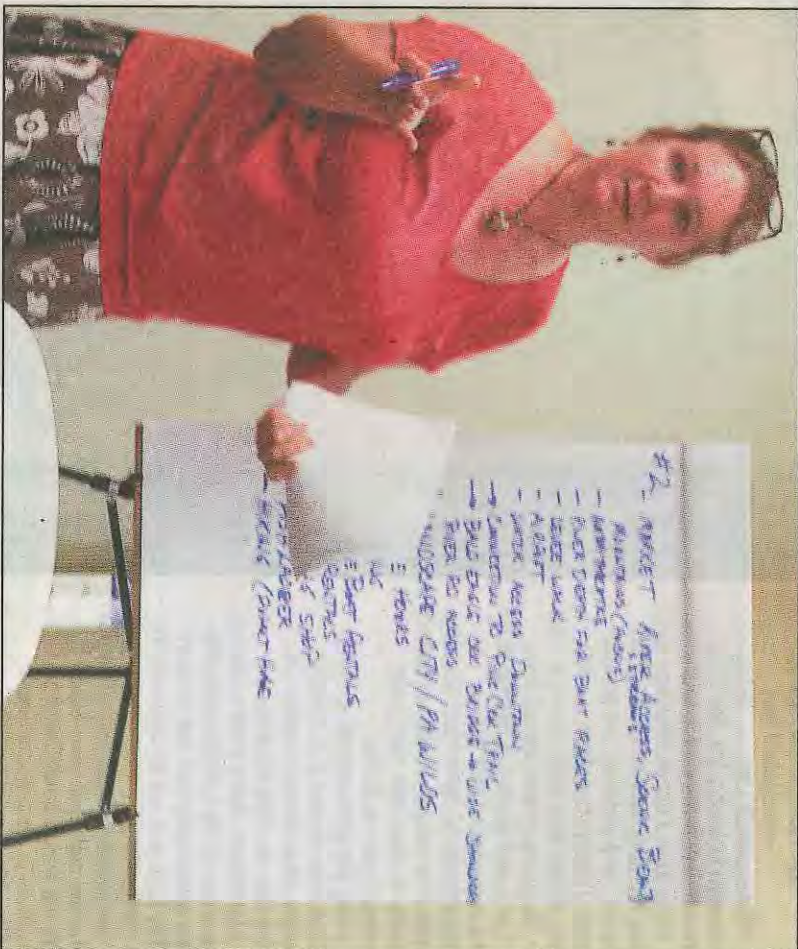
More bike racks were discussed, along with creating a bike route via under-utilized back allies.

By putting the back allies to use, the city would be able to budget for better green infrastructure and lighting as well as deter unwanted activity that might normally go unnoticed, team members said.

There has been a lot of discussion on the city's need to attract new businesses - more private investment. Downtown Lock Haven has changed the name of one of its committees to Asset Enhancement, with members talking more strategically about business recruitment.

Until more businesses are brought in, residents said they would like to "dress up" vacant storefronts in order to make streets more attractive.

The River Town team would also like to improve Lock Haven's attractions beyond the busy streets.



Alice Trowbridge of the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership speaks at a meeting yesterday at Avenue 209 in Lock Haven.

Much emphasis was put on promoting kayaking and canoeing on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.

The team discussed a city idea to install docks on the city side of the river to allow boaters direct access to downtown.

Upcoming events that help support Lock Haven as a destination for outdoor enthusiasts are the National Canoe Association's national championships on the river here in mid-August, while at

the same time a sojourn of kayakers and canoeists with the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership will stop by overnight during their trip from Renovo to Jersey Shore.

Trowbridge encouraged the team members to keep developing ideas - and vision.

More decisions will be made at the next River Town Team meeting scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, July 16, at Avenue 209 coffee

shop on Bellefonte Avenue. The meeting is open to the public.

Meanwhile, the group decided on a time and place for the official designation ceremony of Lock Haven as a River Town.

The ceremony will take place just after 6 p.m. on Sunday, July 27, on the floating stage at the J. Doyle Cornan Amphitheatre. The ceremony will take place just prior to the Hybrid Ice con-

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