

Auburn Community Conversation #3

Location: East Auburn Community School

Date: September 25, 2013

DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Given the difficult decisions that our community must face, and the reality that property tax increases must be minimized, what are our priorities for Auburn's future?

PRIORITIES INTRODUCED BY RESIDENTS

Listed in order of priority as discussed by residents.

- Education
- Parks and Recreation
- Improved communications
- Other

DISCUSSION NOTES

Points of view included:

Education ---identified as the top priority.

Quality:

Excellent schools needed to attract and retain families.

Important to attract people of all ages; quality of schools is linked to property values.

Also quality of schools is important to attract businesses.

Lots of new professionals recruited to CMMC now choose to live elsewhere because of schools. (Yarmouth, Falmouth)

Will move elsewhere if East Auburn School is closed.

Want there to be high expectations of all students.

No social promotion.

What is done to ensure competent teachers?

Facilities:

Need to be maintained better.

New High School—really on the state list? What if don't get state funds?

Accreditation:

Very serious impact if lose accreditation.

Property values will go down if schools are not accredited.

Issues related to aging population

Impact of property tax increases on people with fixed incomes-a problem

It is responsibility of people of all ages to educate people of all ages. It takes a village, and we are all members of the village.

Understanding what schools need

Need a process to help the community understand what is needed in education today.

More asking and listening, less debating, confronting, and arguing—on everyone's part..

Get more people involved, otherwise there is a disconnect when it is time to vote.

Invite more people to help in various ways.

Need more understanding of the priorities, in order of need, so that more people can understand what needs to be addressed, when. Can't do it all at once. Do a 15 year plan.

Need more platforms to get information shared.

Need more forums for safe, open, discussions.

Parks and Recreation

Important to quality of life.

More recreation trails that are linked.

Maps showing them all?

Recreation loop around Lake Auburn—very good! A major project-could be special. Lots of potential.

Volunteers can help make it happen.

A linked trail system for running and cycling could be an attraction for people to live in, work in, and play in Auburn.

Get all the trails on the City website.

Improved communications in the community

Elect people who can get along.

Want a city that works together. How to achieve that?

What civility in dialogues by everyone involved.

Want a community process that brings people together.

Wants School Committee to be more attuned to listening to what people are trying to say.

Wants processes with more opportunities for input.

Meetings not just in Auburn Hall. Trade-off with TV coverage is limited attendance.

Speaking at City Council meetings is intimidating.

Be intentional in creating an "us."

Other

How to help struggling homeowners? Many people in Auburn on a fixed income.

Need to help people in poverty and who are struggling economically.

Need to broaden economic base. Jobs!

Marginal tax increases can leverage big improvements in quality of life.

What can make Auburn unique?

Improve gateway appearances, from the Turnpike exit all the way into town.

Provide city guidance on how to clean up unattractive buildings.