

Rye Town Center Charrette

May 31st & June 1st

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Charrette?

A charrette is a community discussion. Specifically, a Plan NH charrette brings together diverse professionals --from preservationists to civil engineers -- to brainstorm recommendations to address challenges a community face. Over a two-day period, the team visits the “target area” (eg, Rye town center), talks with community leaders, holds listening circles with residents, and develops recommendations based on what they have seen and heard. The goal is to develop design recommendations to contribute to a healthy and vibrant community.

Why do we need one?

A group of citizens approached the Select and Planning Boards to hold a community charrette to help assist our town in addressing its challenges. Although the Charrette will not focus on one building or one issue, it may help us determine how to handle the Parsonage building, located next to the library (whose lease is not being renewed by the Housing Authority) as well as provide insight about the future renovations of Town Hall and best uses of other buildings in the area.

Together, we co-wrote an application in which we asked for assistance with

- Finding ways to lift the community spirit and bring the community together more, either with a multi-purpose building, zoning changes that would add retail opportunities in the center, or special events that bring the town citizens together. Identifying how the town center can “enhance the health, vitality and cohesiveness of the area and a sense of community among Rye’s citizens.”
- Attracting younger families to town, while providing needed services to older adults.
- Improving pedestrian safety and increasing walkability.

Who wrote the application?

The application was co-written by the following residents with varied interests:

Application group consisted of: Victor Azzi, Mae Bradshaw, Burt Dibble, Bill Epperson, Beverly Giblin, Jaci Grote, Sally King, Stephen King, John Loftus, Karen Oliver, Tom Pfau, Keriann Roman, Dana Truslow and Patty Weathersby. The effort was led by Steven Borne and Paula Tsetsilas.

A supporting letter was provided and signed by the Select Board and the Planning Board Chair.

When will the Charrette take place?

There will be two public listening circles held on Friday, May 31st in the Rye Junior High cafeteria. The first will take place from 3:30 – 5:00 PM, the second from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Each will be conducted in a small group discussion format, with Plan NH Team members acting as facilitators and scribes. The small group format gives every citizen an opportunity to speak and be heard. At the end of each session, there is time allotted for general discussion. On Saturday at 3PM, the team will “reveal” to the public what it has seen and heard, and what its recommendations are.

What happens after the Charrette takes place?

After the Charrette takes place, the recommendations will be provided to the Select and Planning Boards. It will be up to these Boards, and the will of the residents, to follow through and implement change. It is possible a public forum will be held to discuss them in an open venue.

Who pays for it?

In some communities, the Charrette is paid by taxpayers from the town’s/city’s budget. In Rye’s case, we are seeking private donations. Funding for a Charrette appeared on the 2018 Town ballot as a citizen’s warrant article. Because it did not pass in 2018, the “no means no” law states the Town can’t expend money for a one-year period. The sponsor group offered to conduct a fundraising campaign so that the Charrette would not be put off any longer.

We hope you will consider donating to reach our \$7,500 goal! Although not championing the effort, the Rye Civic League has offered to process donations. Please consider making a secure online donation thru PayPal at <https://tinyurl.com/PlanNH> [click here](#). Also, checks may be mailed Rye Civic League, PO Box 971 with a notation for PlanNH. The budget may be found on RCL’s website under “Plan NH” section.

What can I do to part of it?

Your voice matters! Any resident can participate in the listening circles, and we hope you will! Please take a couple hours of your time to provide input into the process, and then plan to attend the “reveal” at 3:00 on Saturday.

On May 31st the first listening session starts at 3:30pm. At 5pm there is a break and possibly a community pot-luck dinner. The second listening session will start at 6:30pm.

Who is Plan NH?

Plan New Hampshire, The Foundation for Shaping the Built Environment (Plan NH), is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1989.

Plan NH’s Mission is to foster excellence in planning and design and development of New Hampshire’s built environment to support a Vision of healthy and vibrant communities in the Granite State.

Their membership includes architects, landscape architects, engineers, planners, building and real estate professionals, lawyers, financial and insurance firms and others with an interest in promoting and supporting environmentally, economically and socially healthy communities.

This diversity of membership brings a unique variety of views and perspectives to their collective approach to shaping New Hampshire’s built environment.

Plan NH champions principles and ideas that balance what we build, where we build and how with

- The needs of people – where they live, how they get about, what services are necessary, what they value.
- maintaining the “sense of place” of our towns, cities and villages that makes them unique
- protecting our air, water, flora and fauna

The charrette program was started in 1996 and over 65 charrettes have been conducted in 62 communities of all sizes across the Granite State.

Please visit <http://plannh.org> for more information.