

THE THAMESFORD MILL PROJECT VISIONING EVENING EVENT

NOVEMBER 12, 2009

SESSION FOCUSES ON GENERATING CREATIVE IDEAS FOR MILL ADAPTION

On November 12th, over twenty community members participated in a visioning session to ‘brainstorm’ on potential adaptive re-use options for the Thamesford Mill. The 2-hour session was held in the Beaty Room at the Thamesford Public Library which was a perfect venue to accommodate such an event. Sketch paper, photographs and recently completed computer-generated drawings of the mill were prominently displayed in the room. Dave Whitney—from The Thamesford Taking Action Group (T’TAG)—chaired the evening, and Thor Dingman and Laura Dent (heritage consultants) co-facilitated the evenings activities. T’TAG was extremely fortunate to have in attendance Mayor Margaret Lupton from the Township of Zorra, and Vicki Luke from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

To set the stage for visioning, participants were asked to close their eyes and imagine the mill TODAY and in the FUTURE, and were asked to describe what was

important to them about the mill. The results from this ‘warm-up exercise’ are illustrated on the next page.

Thor presented a slide show of images of the mill, and small-group discussions followed which focused on having people discuss various ideas for the mill. The following questions were posed to spur-on discussion:

- What use is the mill property best suited for?
- What should the mill and surrounding grounds look like?
- How could the mill property best serve the community of Thamesford?

Dave Whitney says that the feedback from those attending has been nothing but positive and that most left the evening with a “sense that this project can really happen!” A few participants have even approached Dave to formally join the mill committee.

A flurry of ideas were discussed and shared and it is now the task of T’TAG, with the heritage consult-



VISIONING SESSION AT THE BEATY ROOM,
THAMESFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

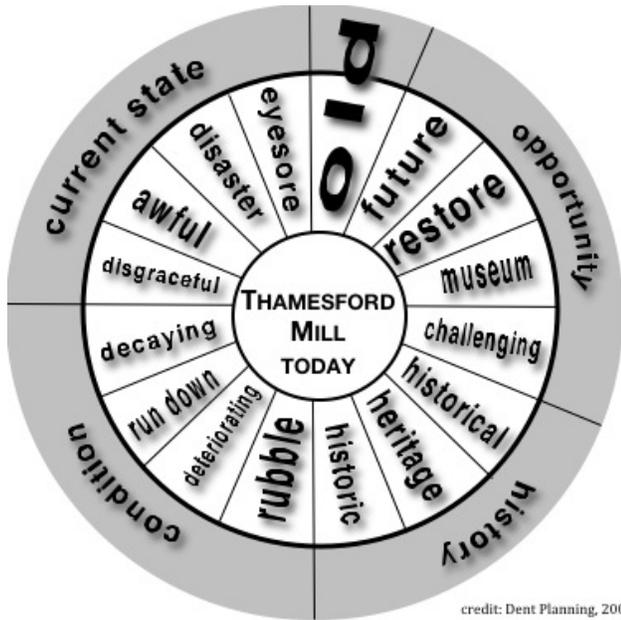


ants, to begin to narrow down options. T’TAG hopes to use this information to have a conceptual drawing prepared for press and marketing purposes as

the project moves forward in the months to come.

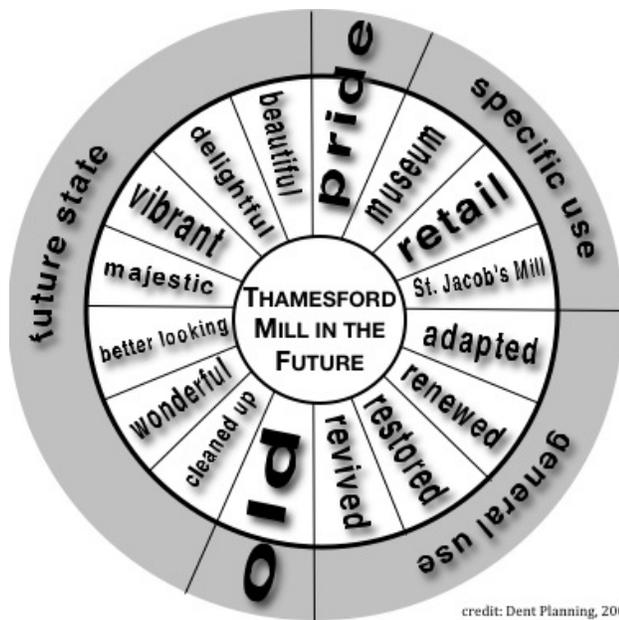
So keep a look out for your ideas captured in print.

VISIONING THE THAMESFORD MILL: TODAY & TOMORROW



credit: Dent Planning, 2009

WORDS DESCRIBING HOW PEOPLE SEE THE MILL TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE



credit: Dent Planning, 2009

What does the Old Mill mean to people in the community? What words would they use to describe the mill today, and how do they envision the mill in the future? This is exactly what participants were asked as part of warm-up exercises used to energize imaginative, innovative thinking prior to small-group discussions at the visioning session. Participants were asked to pick only one word and not to think too hard, so responses are really right 'from-the-gut'.

“The Thamesford Mill is a vital landmark for this village. It is something that we can leave for our children and grandchildren.”

Participants were also asked to think of **why** the mill is important to them, and the descriptions written down were very rich with detail and insight. People clearly see the mill as an important historical landmark and focal point in the community. Many also stressed its economic development potential for Thamesford through tourism.

“It is a historical building and a lovely property that is worth preserving and potentially a benefit to our village.”

It is clear that this exercise highlights the diversity of perceptions about the mill. It also shows us that in spite of the challenges that may be ahead, people for the most part are optimistic and see the mill as having a future role in the community.

The word-wheels to the left illustrate participants' visions through words. The inner 'spokes' are the exact words participants chose, while the outer ring 'tire' represents themes that summarize the words chosen.

“The mill is potentially useful for Thamesford's 'branding'.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION?

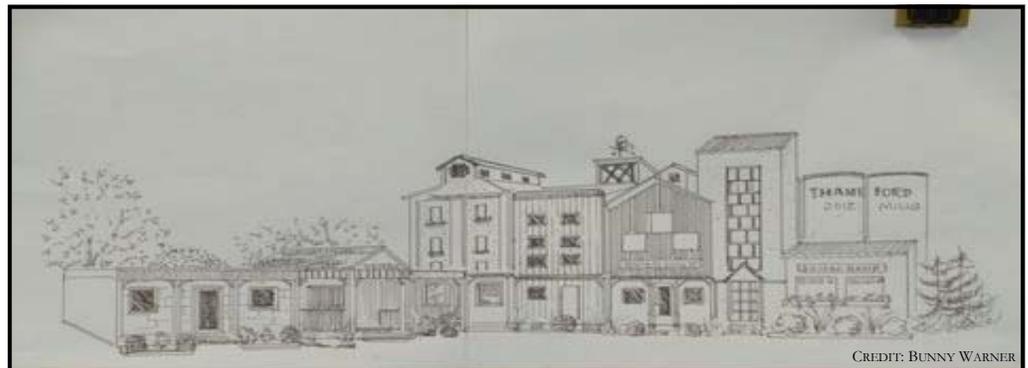
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CREDIT: BUNNY WARNER

CONCEPTUAL SKETCH DISPLAYED AT THE VISIONING SESSION