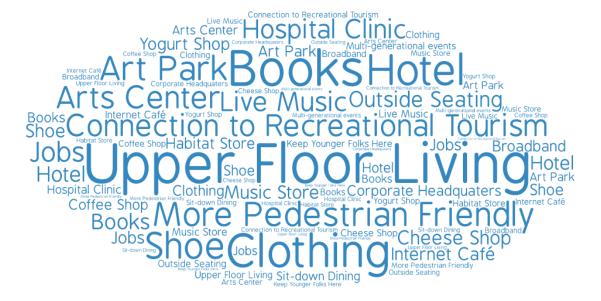
# **Antigo First Annual Meeting Follow-up**

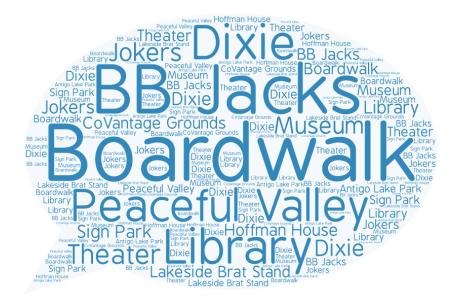
Over 50 people gathered in the community room of CoVantage Credit Union in Antigo on the evening of February 16<sup>th</sup> to build a network of interested citizens to support the work of Antigo First in its drive to bring vibrancy to downtown Antigo. The meeting began with introductions and sharing of a memory of downtown. The point was not to relive the past or lament that things are not that way anymore, but rather to illustrate the fact that no matter how long someone has been connected with Antigo, downtown evokes a memory. The second point is that memories are created every day and those gathered have the power to create new memories for themselves and those who have yet to visit their community.

We spent some time sharing dreams for downtown and then participants broke into small groups with a map of downtown where they identified their favorite places, places that draw others from outside the community, challenges in downtown, and spaces that are working well. The word clouds below represent those discussions.

#### **Downtown Dreams**



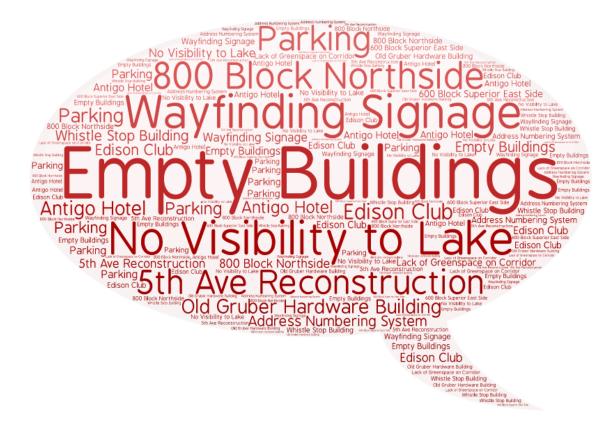
#### **Favorite Spaces**



## Spaces that Draw from Outside of Antigo



## **Downtown Challenges**



#### Spaces that are Working Well



At our next meeting we will use this information to begin strategic action planning through the Strategic Doing approach. This will be an opportunity for those in attendance, and those who were not, to help shape the future of downtown Antigo. The larger group will be separated into focus areas of:



Revitalizing a downtown or neighborhood commercial district requires focusing on the underlying Economic Vitality of the district. This work is rooted in a commitment to making the most of a community's unique sense of place and existing historic assets, harnessing local economic opportunity and creating a supportive business environment for small business owners and the growing scores of entrepreneurs, innovators, and localist alike. With the nation-wide growing interest in living downtown, supporting downtown housing is also a key element of building Economic Vitality.



A focus on Design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical elements of downtown while capitalizing on the unique assets that set the commercial district apart. Main Streets enhance their appeal to residents and visitors alike with attention to public space through the creation of pedestrian friendly streets, inclusion of public art in unexpected areas, visual merchandising, adaptive reuse of older and historic buildings, more efficiently-designed buildings, transit oriented development, and much more.



Promoting Main Street takes many forms, but the ultimate goal is to position the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and the hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics. This can be done through highlighting cultural traditions, celebrating and preserving important architecture and history, encouraging local businesses to market cooperatively, offering coordinated specials and sales, and hosting special events aimed at changing perceptions of the district and communicating to residents, investors, businesses, and property-owners that this place is special.



Think of this as your public relations arm. How will you share with stakeholders and the outside world the progress that is happening in downtown Antigo due to your efforts.

If you plan to participate, even if you can't attend our next gathering, think about which focus area fits your passion and interest and come prepared to leverage your assets with the others who seek to make a positive impact in downtown.







