

## WELL-PLACED WORDS HELP BRING MONEY, ACCLAIM AND COLLABORATION TO COMMUNITY PROJECT

2009 was a tough year for The Dennis Port Revitalization Committee (DRC). The committee, appointed by the Town selectmen, had been charged with finding ways to improve the village of Dennis Port, a semi-urban portion of the Cape Cod town of Dennis, Massachusetts.

The committee had massive roadblocks. New leadership had new ideas but was hampered by a 12-year history of failure on the part of the committee to make any significant improvements. Through attrition and disinterest, the committee had shrunk from 10 to 6 people over several years. To lay the groundwork for the new community planning tool the DRC wanted to try, these remaining six people had to log hours of work per week for nearly two years. To make matters worse, the community planning tool was virtually unknown on the Cape, had never been tried locally and had a French name-Charrette-that rubbed some wrong. The DRC then discovered that some community leaders who they thought had the village's best interests at heart were actually suspicious of the committee's efforts.

The DRC forged ahead, believing that their locally untested plan to apply a proven tool was the best action to move the village toward revitalization. Among the assistance the overworked committee needed was a copywriter and a publicist to get the word out...*and fast*.

That's when Shannon Goheen stepped in and offered the DRC her services. She worked with committee members and volunteers to write content for their fledgling website, [dennisportrevitalization.org](http://dennisportrevitalization.org). She re-wrote the lead-in paragraphs of a crucial grant application, changing the matter-of-fact draft to a compelling story about the plight of Dennis Port. This was significant because the Chairman of the DRC had been told by the funding organization that he could apply but probably wouldn't receive any funding. Instead, the DRC was awarded a \$13,000 grant.

Shannon went on to compile a mailing list and wrote a letter to local business owners to get them to attend a planning meeting. She wrote a script for 30 sec. television ads on the local channel. She ghost-wrote a Letter to the Editor for the Chairman of the DRC. About two weeks prior to the event, she sent a press release to newspapers, radio and television stations on Cape Cod and Boston, some followed up with phone calls. As a result, the Chairman of the DRC was interviewed and the topic discussed on two local radio stations and in several newspapers. Finally, Shannon sent a well-timed Letter to the Editor of the Cape Cod Times that told an enticing story about the upcoming Charrette, written in first person. The letter ran the day of the event.

130 people from Dennis, surrounding towns, towns from across the State, some selectmen and a State Legislator attended the opening night of the Charrette. And the DRC? They were thrilled with the attendance and felt that they had, finally, been heard...and taken seriously.

Shannon Goheen  
774-487-0021  
[Shannon@SecondNatureCopywriting.com](mailto:Shannon@SecondNatureCopywriting.com)