

Best Practices When Developing Enhanced Energy section of Town Plan:

-One amazing take away I got from this, which I think would be a good idea for Pownal to do is similar to Dorset: In mapping their "preferred areas" for renewable energy development, they are personally reaching out to every land owner that falls within those preferred areas. They ask for their consent to map their property. This does NOT set it in stone one way or the other for development, but allows a clearer picture of what areas truly are "available" with ease for a developer to consider. They ask each landowner for their input, which can be included in the plan, and increases community participation in the process.

-Allow for flexibility in planning. Focus on size of installations, not KW/MW. Technology will change, and change quickly. right now 150 KW or solar covers an acre, 75 to a 1/2 acre. However, it is possible through new technology such as Tesla panels used as shingles on a roof that they could achieve above 75 just on the small area of a roof! So, if we focus too much on wattage as opposed to area, we could be kicking ourselves in the foot in the long run. This flexibility in language actually allows for better protections on our natural resources and local natural beauty, etc...

-The Energy Committee is "responsible for achieving our renewable energy goals". I suggested that this cannot be the responsibility of a government committee alone, that this must be done in conjunction with private sector/developers/businesses. I will continue to speak to Jim et al regarding this, and learning about exactly what can be achieved by committee. But you can write into your plan what you feel the specific responsibilities of the energy committee are for delineation and clarification as to role in renewable development itself (as opposed to planning).

-a side note: Jim used Pownal as an example of a town that has nearly met ALL of its solar goals already. Therefore, he said, we have the room to be very stringent in our solar mapping in particular. He said we could map for barely any solar and the BCRC would still ratify our plan because we have already achieved so much. Good opportunity to plan for distributed and personal solar should the town decide to prefer that route to large scale installations which don't garner much support in town.

BCRC Brownfields Redevelopment Program:

-The presenter offered many examples of projects this Program has worked on. He described a 2 phase process, the first being investigatory and the second remediation/corrective action. Mack Molding was one example, however, only completed Phase 1, which did show the presence of toxic elements needing remediation. The money in the grant ran out, and Phase 2 was never completed. If you would like (if it hasn't already been done), I would be happy to speak to him more regarding this, to see if there is anything the town can do to help push corrective action. Completing phase 2 would make that property more viable for use and/or sale, a good opportunity for increasing our tax base.

-If there are any brownfield sites in Pownal that have not been looked at yet, we can present them to this Program to see if we can have them investigated. The program consistently applies for grant money to have a steady stream of fund to be able to perform these actions.

Cultural Planning Grants:

-These are grants for up to 45K focusing on the arts and cultural organizations. These grants were created through "cultural summits" with all the regular ways of creating programs and grants (i.e., steering committees, mapping assets, identifying issues, looking and the district and regionally, and adding to our town plans). Chicago and San Diego are considered the "leaders" in this model of grant, and I would like to pursue further to see examples of these grants in rural areas like ours.

-a takeaway from this presentation was that many towns are opting to create a separate section in their town plans dedicated to the arts and local culture. This might be a nice way to showcase our arts, and perhaps also creating separate small sections for the trades, local workforce, small farms and industry. These sections can be created in the same way as the larger grant (steering committee, mapping assets, etc.)

CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy):

-This was presented as a marketing program to "bring in more workforce talent into our region". They have created the slogan "So Vermont" to market to outside workforce who might want to relocate to Vermont (or within Vermont from other regions). The presenter stated that there are 100's of job openings in our region with no one to fill them, and that unemployment is "not really an issue" here. The assumption is that the real problem with the workforce is dwindling population not lack of jobs. This marketing campaign will hopefully bring new families to the area to fill these empty job openings, increasing our economic sector. The presentation was at the end and unfortunately shortened because of it, but I would love to learn more about this Program. I saw that Shannon is in the "Red Group", which is the core group made up of business and community leaders....so I am assuming that she has already shared the details of this program with everyone, and knows far more than me!

As usual, would be happy to research further and look into any of the above mentioned programs if it serves Pownal in any way. Also if you would like to speak to me either at a meeting or personally, let me know. 413-652-1229

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