

ng Picture Port Elgin sustainability plan needs input from local residents

By JOAN LEBLANC
STAFF REPORTER

The input of village residents is vital to the successful creation of an integrated community sustainability plan for the Village of Port Elgin.

Earlier this year the village, with the assistance of the Tantramar Planning District Commission (TPDC), embarked on the development of a sustainability plan for the municipality.

"When we talk about a sustainable community, it's one that supports the people, uses fewer resources in that it is more gentle to the environment, lives within its means where it can support its people; and has culture, recreation, activities, places where people meet. This type of plan would focus on the needs of the community for at least the next 30 years," Tracey Wade, a planner with the TPDC said Monday.

She noted that Port Elgin's proposed sustainability plan has been nick-named 'Picture Port Elgin.'

Basically, a sustainable community needs to have basic services such as housing, education, health care, and services for seniors, but there must also be recreational activities and places where people come together as a community, she said. In addition there are also concerns about the economy and the environment.

In March, 2009 the Village of Port Elgin was one of about eight municipalities, a number of federal and provincial agencies in addition to several non-profit groups, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the TPDC who gathered at a workshop held at Mount Allison University and hosted by EOS and Cape Jouri-

main Nature Centre, to discuss many problems faced by communities today.

"A sustainability plan was one of the things that kept coming up in our discussions. Funding has been available to help communities develop their own plans and with these plans communities can then apply for capitol funding and a number of other projects to help improve their community and make it more sustainable," Wade explained.

EOS and the TPDC are leading the projects in each of the four local municipalities including Sackville, Dorchester, Port Elgin and Memramcook. In Port Elgin a 'Picture Port Elgin' plan steering committee has been formed with local residents Sharon Cole, Betty Davis, Leyna Legere, Val MacDermid, Mary Thompson and Bianca Marin as members. Wade noted that the committee is in the first stage of the initiative, helping to gain information, and in April a survey was issued to village residents in an effort to gain more local input.

"The deadline for the survey has been extended until May 31 so all residents can give their opinions on what they believe is needed in the village. The input of its residents will really assist us in developing a long-term vision for Port Elgin. If the community gets behind his initiative, there's more incentive for the village of Port Elgin to make the necessary important decisions for the future," Wade said.

The survey, which is a short questionnaire, is available at both the Port Elgin village office as well as at Cole's Grocery.

Wade noted that currently there are thousands of municipalities across Canada who are developing sustainability plans.

"There are four things that have happened or we have become aware of recently that have a big effect on the future of communities all around the world. That includes the economic crisis of the last couple years and the European crisis which has just emerged recently; the issues of poverty both here at home and globally; the question of availability of oil around the world in the near future and the increasing effects of climate change," she said, adding that if communities don't address these issues now, how are they going change things when they become much bigger problems in the future.

For more information on the 'Picture Port Elgin' sustainability plan contact any committee member, Katie Friars at EOS by email at eos@nb.aibn.com, or Tracey Wade at the Tantramar Planning District Commission by phone at 364 4701 or by email at pictureportelgin@gmail.com.



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