Notes from 6/13/18

**9:00 am session**

Attendance: 8 folks

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Renewable energy – add the building of relationships to the final big ideas. Also there were other big ideas that that did not get into the final renewable energy report. That needs to be modified.

For the final report – we need to make sure that the history of the mining and natural gas industries in the county frame our past, present and future.

Q - Westmorland CO – what they did and what they ended up with?

A - similar with the focus groups, had meetings to pick what they thought was important – they came up with 7 ideas – Re-imagine Westmorland county. This will actually be part of a comprehensive plan. You are going to a very specific niche that is very exciting. Excited that you are working with the county. Not seeing videos – would be good to create videos – they are attractive to many. Outdoor activities are huge. They said they are sad that the realtor group has not been as involved. They have programs to help support communities. We need to get the Indiana Relator group with the task force. One goal in the building group was directly related to the real-estate group – highlighting sustainable green structures when selling properties. There is a field now for green environment for real-estate sales.

Farm bureau - Ed – They have an ag lab that goes to schools, where do we lose the interest after they are exposed at a young age? Education is a key factor. Taking groups to a farm to see the BMP is agriculture. Recycling is another issue. Plastic that covers the bales, things that get wrapped in plastic. What do the farmers do with all that plastic here – probably goes to landfills. Other states take that kind of plastic – we need to do that here. Why not bring that industry into the county to use that product?

Abe – there is legislature out there that talks about TDL polluting the water systems, that puts restrictions on building – the real-estate groups has connections with legislation – manure management. We are in a better place in Western PA to do these plans and manage these issues because we have more land. No till practice plan, riparian buffer zones… etc are happening.

Please call/contact us with any ideas additions – web site contact sheet, emails to the facilitators, etc.

Flood insurance is out of site. Taking care of banks is such a big item. Flood insurance program that subsides flood insurance is about to expire.

EPA project announced on May 25th – we won a grant for technical assistance- sustainable practices related to food and security. Related to specific topics -facilitate a process to strengthen relationships between food coop and local producers. How does that impact farm bureau and others in the process? This really grew out of the task force. This may be a good format to share ideas and partner with farmers. They need ways to get information that will not take away from their farm work.

Farmers talked about solar – most is on buildings – not much on land.

Q – How are people talking about farming and sustainability – Farms are often passed from generation to generation – we are losing the next generation – 24/7 job – hard work. They are moving ahead with technology. Broadband limited access is a major problem for farmers in rural America. To be sustainable you have to have kids that are willing to do it and can make a living out of it. Darlene works with farm succession – her dad finally let go of the farm – her family took over and came back to the farm but they talked to their kids (college age) first and said if you are not interested they would not do it. They had farm meetings with them – Both kids want to be part of the farm. The point is that you have to include the kids in the conversation NOW. You have so many risks in farming. The kids will come back if there is something they can come back for and make a living at. They may have to have a day jobs to make a living at farming. We NEED broad Band in the rural areas. Very important to create new jobs. Broad band needs to be added to our big ideas.

The real-estate code of ethics includes…… “All is the land”

Were there any things that ran counter to any ideas in the other groups. Not really – maybe only what the priority was.

12:00 Session

Attendance: 11 folks

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What is sustainability within the framework of your job?

Awareness of the environment and sustainability with long term projects, esp. looking at stormwater, educating the public. Education is a big factor – educating property owners, IE Ownership - not the townships responsibility to fix everything, they do not realize some of it they can do. IE don’t mow your grass into the streets… they do not realize what that does to stormwater drains.

At a township level or home level – doing what needs to be done with what money you have to fix the problem but also need to think ahead – quick fixes and long term – sustainability falls into that.

Sustainability is the ability to meet the demands of today to meet/balance the needs of tomorrow. Ryan is leading effort “2025” – bring in resources to Johnstown and Cambria County region.

Short and long-term grants -some are happening already in the county we just obtained the grant from EPA “Local Foods, Local Places” – really a result of the task force.

Sustainability -every community defines what sustainability is for them. Sustainability has grown over the last years, we are recognizing it is a piece of every thing we do.

Economic, environmental, **equity** – introducing IE multimodal roads, targeting a population that can’t afford cars. Equity is important – for diverse incomes – there are people in town but there are rural areas that don’t have access to certain things. Broad band is huge and very much needed.

What did we miss?

Housing stock throughout the county – some areas have so much in aging housing, vacant houses, it should be a county wide project, they are working in the borough on that but it needs to be looked at. Having a reuse recycling place like construction junction in the county would be so helpful to recycle and reuse components. Empty store fronts are also an issue in many places esp. rural towns/boroughs. How can we work on these issues? There was a prediction that McIntire will be gone in the future because the houses are in such bad shape. They have no local food in the area that is sustainable. Re-energy talked about potential of big industrial places for indoor year-round agriculture with renewable energy. You have to look at areas that are not sustainable and make new projects sustainable. Another challenge is with economic challenges is that some people had make more money in the past now their wages are not as much it is hare for them to keep their homes up.

What else should we be paying attention to?

Leapfrogging – bypassing the empty storefronts and building the newest and bigger new buildings. The malls are going away – what do we do with that property? We need new laws on the books that encourage the reuse of old buildings. The building construction group discussed that a lot. Work with the banks? Zoning? SALVO? Educate or push people toward using old buildings.

Farmers in the area are leaving because their kids are leaving the area. Technology is also evolving in farming – it can help keep younger people in farming.

The younger generation:

It is good that Indiana County has the foresight to look at sustainability. Education is so important and we have to find a better way to do it. It is empowering people. We have to spell it out as to how we are going to educate others.

It is really important to communicate to people why it is important to people NOW. Community outreach is so important. How do we do that? ID the demographic of who you want to reach. Platforms? Radio, Facebook, IUP resources. U-tube, what way is best?

One big recommendation was to start a position or department to lead the charge on sustainability. Mike may be a good person to tap for ideas because he was a sustainability manager for a municipality.

Our county park programs is a great sustainability success in our county

**6:00 PM session**

Attendance: 6 new folks

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On the right page – moving in the right direction. Real-estate needs things like this to encourage people to move to this area. We have good things here we have to get the word out.

Broadband is huge – there is the haves and have nots and there are a lot of people who cannot access it from on line classes, Amish who check their email at the library.

Need to make our community better – our schools are struggling with money – anything that can happen to make more taxes come into the community is a good thing. If we can do things to create jobs

Recycling in rural areas is hard. The federal gov is not going to save us – we have to do it ourselves. We have assets here, agriculture and community minded people.

What is sustainability to you?

Using BMP in technology in farming to keep people involved.

Sustainability may involve two jobs – or making farming equable enough to make an earning for their families.

The government has a broad band initiative – some communities are doing it themselves. But it is important. We need to push the state government to build incentive with subsidies and funding.

We need private, public, and citizen partnerships.

The schools all have broad band, libraries in those areas could also have broad band and make inroads. It is a federal funded program based on the free school lunches. Some of these areas could get coverage. The library gets to see all the people who don’t have the internet conductivity. You can get wireless internet in rural areas – in a statewide system. PA does not have this. We have structural issues but we can work from the bottom up.

DI does have new businesses opening up and seem to be sustainable. Indiana looks good.

Thanks to all!