

Plan Commission Hosts Special Meeting for Resident Input

August 4, 2004. Before this special meeting of the Town of Oconto Falls Plan Commission, a postcard invitation was mailed to all town property owners to invite them to attend. Approximately 60 residents took the Plan Commission up on its invitation and attended the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was twofold:

- 1) To review the planning program and its activities and draft materials developed to date
- 2) To obtain as much resident input as possible to help the Plan Commission in development of the Town of Oconto Falls Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan.

Amy Emery of OMNNI Associates, the Town's Planning Consultant, facilitated the meeting. To begin, she presented a 30-minute overview of the planning efforts. This included highlights of several of the maps that have been developed and answers to questions like:

- What is Smart Growth?
- Why Develop a Plan?
- What is a Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan?

Several residents asked specific questions during this portion of the meeting. Ms. Emery and Dale Seeling, the Plan Commission Chair, responded to the questions.

Next, everyone had the opportunity to participate in a **visual preference survey**. In this activity, participants are shown a series of 24 different images. The photos included areas from the Town and areas beyond. The images included natural areas, farmland areas, housing, and commercial uses. Participants were asked to rank (on a scale of -5 to +5) what they felt were the images most consistent with what they would like to see developed in the community. The results of this exercise will be presented to the Plan Commission and posted on this web site in the near future.

Finally, Ms. Emery facilitated a **cognitive mapping exercise**. Cognitive mapping is a planning tool used to determine desired future development. Cognitive mapping is two-part process. Participants first have the opportunity to create an *Attitude Map* to express their ideas about what areas of the Town are attractive and unattractive. These maps also indicate important local travel routes and places that have special meaning. A *Composite Attitude Map* will be provided in the plan. That map will show consistent patterns and ideas

represented on the maps prepared by individual participants. It is not a direct translation of any single map created during the exercise.

Next, participants had the opportunity to develop *Individual Future Land Use Maps* based on their ideas, perceptions, experiences and beliefs. A *Composite Future Land Use Map* based on the individual maps created will be provided in the Plan.

Many residents commented at the end of the meeting that they appreciated having the opportunity to provide direct input for the Plan Commission and they enjoyed the exercises.

Please check this web site again for meeting dates, times and locations.