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PRINCE GEORGE FREE PRESS

Smart Growth plan grows after meetings

By Allan Wishart - Prince George Free Press

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The latest stage of Smart Growth on the Ground started Wednesday in Prince George, and SmartGrowthBC outreach co-ordinator Amanda Mitchell was happy with the meeting.

"Things went well. The brainstorming sessions were really enjoyed by the participants."

The format for the two meetings (the second one was held Thursday) was basically the same, she said.

"We gave a report on what we have heard to date from people here at other meetings. Then we had Cameron Chalmers, the director of planning for Squamish, do a presentation on how well Smart Growth has worked there."

Chalmers said the process, as intended, has influenced civic planning and the Official Community Plan, but has also had some unexpected benefits.

"They've received international exposure for what they've done," Mitchell said. "An official in China who designs villages read about Squamish and they brought 40 people over to see the process in action."

"They've also had a wind-energy group look at



Allan WISHART/Free Press Greg Anderson outlines the area of downtown Prince George under discussion at Wednesday evening's Smart Growth on the Ground meeting.

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establishing its headquarters there because of the emphasis on alternate energy."

Energy was one of the main focuses of the Wednesday meeting, with much of the discussion centred on biomass. Mitchell said the group was split up and heard six different research presentations on topics from air quality and rainwater management to energy usage, both residential and business.

There was one minor glitch in the process, though.

"We were hoping to get a resident of downtown to join the charrette groups we'll be holding in May, but we didn't get anyone.

"As soon as the meeting was over, someone came up who lives just outside the area and expressed interest."

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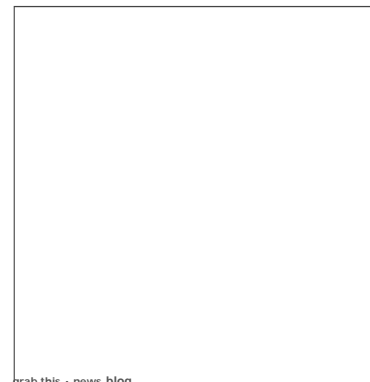
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