



## News

### City, Upstate Forever want to focus on 2030

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You've seen the results of Clinton Focus 2007. You've heard of the proposals for Clinton Focus 2013. But last week, Clinton took a very long view for Hometown 2030.

The city, in connection with Upstate Forever, held a community workshop Friday at Broad Street United Methodist Church focusing on "the planning needed for expanding the retail services sector of the local economy," and the long-term planning needed to direct future development overall.

On Thursday night, city officials and Upstate Forever co-hosted an orientation program at 120 Musgrove to introduce participants to the concepts of city planning and to help identify Clinton's current and future needs.

Ned Barrett, program director for the Spartanburg office of Upstate Forever, praised the region for its beauty and emphasized the importance of protecting it.

"People come here because it's beautiful, because they want to be outside," he said.

But the Upstate's natural beauty is threatened by the area's own growth and economic success. By 2030, Upstate Forever estimates the 10 upper counties of South Carolina will add 234,000 new residents, 118,000 new households and 203,000 new jobs, leading to massive residential and industrial urban sprawl into the countryside if left unchecked.

"Community involvement is what's most important," Barrett said. "Without that, either it's not going to get done or it's not going to be done well."

Fred Johnson with the F.A. Johnson Consulting Group said Clinton got off to a good start with the Clinton Focus plans. "The way you divided into committees is essential for deciding the details of implementation," he said.

Johnson said he wanted to engage the community in a discussion of the issues, and divide the audience up for "tabletop" work sessions.

"We want to think together, but not alike," Johnson said.

The main speaker Thursday was Chris Plein, a professor at West Virginia University who specializes in development and conservation issues.

"I haven't been to Clinton before, and yet I have," Plein said. "How can I say that? Every small town is distinct, but they're not unique. They all have common attributes, and with them come common problems."

The West Virginian said most communities like Clinton have a better idea of what they don't want their town to be than what they do want. Good community development, he said, falls somewhere between the "utopia trap" and the "inevitability trap."

"Some people want to project the past into the future. To them, the old days were the golden days, when there were no problems and everything was stable," he said. "You have to remember we live

with constant change, in demographics, in economy and in land use patterns... Utopias are static, overly prescriptive. They try to freeze things in amber.”

At the other extreme is a fatalistic attitude that accepts whatever happens to the community as “inevitable.”

“The inevitability trap says whatever’s going to happen is going to happen,” Plein said. “But you can’t accept the inevitability model. Somewhere between inevitability and the perfect world is the process of community development.”

In the end, the important thing to remember, Plein said, is that growth and change are good things. “You’re lucky. My experience in this field has been with declining populations and shrinking communities,” he said. “My state is shrinking, yours is growing.”

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