

Councilman Peter Russell read the following statement at the start of the March 14 Town Board meeting.

First I want to thank Supervisor Randazzo and the Board for their work towards restoring Sands Ring Homestead. The significance of this project to Cornwall, I believe, is self-evident, but if there were doubt, please attend a presentation by John Gibbons, from the Smithsonian Institute, who, coincidentally is speaking at Munger Cottage on (Monday) March 28th at 7pm on the *Importance of Cultural and Historic Preservation*. I would think that the Sands Ring restoration fits in such a category.

As for our new found progress on the Sands Ring restoration project, in my opinion, a simple change in attitude, *from reactive to proactive* should receive the credit. As Supervisor, you [Supervisor Randazzo] often are responsible for setting the tone, so let me give credit where it is due. Thank you.

Now, I will ask you to consider another area that, again in my opinion, is in need of an “attitudinal adjustment” and that is the Board’s position towards Community Growth and Development. To date, I believe to TB has acted *reactively* and our community has paid the price, for example:

We have a High School with a New Windsor zip code where the taxpayer paid for & continues to pay for a Football field where **not 1 game** will ever be played. Ever! When the H.S. moved away from downtown, so did a large segment of business customers; Helen [Bunt] owned a Deli on Main St at the time, she informed me that her gross income dropped by 50 % after the H.S. move. The Deli eventually closed and now Main St no longer supports a Deli type business.

We have our own “**Zombie Building**” at 296 Main St. A foreclosed, bank-owned property which is in poor repair and should be considered a “black eye” for our downtown. Even more troubling, it quickly may

become a structural problem for the buildings adjoining it.

The infamous **well-field** on Rt. 32, for which the taxpayer is financing the Town's cost of on-going litigation; that same taxpayer should consider that at least two commercial developers proposed projects for that same parcel (before KJ acquired the land), but the developers were met with a negative reception. So now, we all **pay a great cost** for the parcel, more than we can ever expect to collect in tax income revenue.

These are outcomes of a recent "no growth" posture; examples of a position which has resulted in a negative perception of Cornwall for business ... where the cost of doing business outweighs the benefits. That is not our history. In fact, Cornwall has historically embraced **commerce** and was rewarded with infrastructure, such as our own hospital and our Town pool; new housing to accommodate population growth and retail businesses to support the community. Before "**suburban sprawl**", focused growth was the historical standard, and now, I would strongly suggest, the answer to many community issues.

Popularly known as "**Smart Growth**", defined by the Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (a local planning & research think tank) as:

...focus(ed) growth where there is existing infrastructure, transit and amenities that may prove attractive to primarily, but not limited to, millennials in an effort to create a resurgence of growth in these areas and yet avoid prior patterns of sprawl while protecting the region's environment.

Additionally, another key element of Smart Growth is planning, particularly long-term **pro-active** planning. The Town of Cornwall has a Comprehensive Plan, but it seems to me that this Board ignores our own plan. I suggest it is time this Board reflects on the research and empirical data in the Comp Plan in order to inform our decisions. Additionally, our new Chairperson of the Town Economic

Development Committee donated a book to the Supervisor's office, it's titled, "The Smart Growth Manual"; I suggest everyone take the time to read through this book.

Finally, when the TB considers the zoning change for the Maplehurst property; are we only voting to potentially "make concessions just to benefit the developer"? Or are we actively planning the future of our community? If we are **actively planning**; planning "smartly", then we will all realize the benefits. I suggest that the proposed development of the Maplehurst property, reduced to 13 parcels [an increase of only seven more homes from existing zoning], is an example of focused growth and supported by our own Comprehensive Plan. As for examples of areas of density similar to this proposed project, we need look no further than across the street from Town Hall; or **walk** downtown, or **walk** west of Willow Ave or **walk** throughout the Village... again, I suggest our history provides the answer to our future.

Respectfully,
Peter Russell