

Freeport Maine Comes to Antigonish!

ANTIGONISH - What do you do when your community is about experience radical, possibly catastrophic change? Find out from someone who was part of the solution!

On Monday, June 14, 2004, the Antigonish Area Partnership will host a two hour, working lunch featuring Dale Olmstead, Town Manager, Freeport, Maine. Since 1982, Mr. Olmstead has participated as a key player in the redevelopment of Freeport. Fulfilling various roles, including Head of the Planning Department and Town Manager, Mr. Olmstead has continued to play an important, dynamic role in the transformation and on-going development of his community.

Twenty-two years ago the Town of Freeport, Maine was faced with the daunting reality of the decline of their most significant manufacturing employers. Prospects were bleak - if you couldn't think outside the box. However, a group of visionaries in the community set out on a course of repositioning and repurposing to remake Freeport into a shopping Mecca and a model of smart, sensitive planning and economic growth.

Located 15 miles north of Maine's largest city, Portland, and 135 miles north of Boston, Freeport is a town of 8,200 residents with a summer population of about 10,000. On any given summer day, they play host to 40,000-60,000 visitors. About 60% of their visitors are from New England and New York.

Since 1982 Freeport has become a model community for land use planning. They have used tools such as Design Review and Smart Growth Ordinances to create a very unique town for residents and visitors alike.

In 1982 LL Bean was a company with 100 million dollars in sales, with a single store in Freeport. Today they are a \$1.2 billion company with outlets from coast to coast and in Japan. LL Bean has worked closely with town officials and citizens to accomplish the goals outlined in their Comprehensive Plan. The results of their success have brought over 100 outlet stores to Freeport. Over 4 million visitors from all over the world visit Freeport annually.

“The Freeport experience will resonate with everyone who has an interest in the direction and character of economic growth in small communities like the Antigonish area,” says AAP President and CEO, Brian G. Segal. “An important principle stated in the Launch Plan for the Antigonish Area Partnership was to foster growth while remaining sensitive to the values of our community. We can learn a great deal from the Freeport experience. Anyone who has been there, and seen how successfully and sensitively they have managed to integrate their business sector into the local environment, will agree that smart growth is not only possible, it is the best option for business and for the community,” Segal explains.

The Results:

The June 14 luncheon, held at the Greenway Claymore Inn and Conference Centre, Antigonish, featured a presentation by Mr. Olmstead as well as a question and answer session and discussion. “The response to this event has been excellent,” says Mr. Segal, “Over one hundred community leaders attended from both the Antigonish area and neighboring counties”