

Community based town planning through utilized local resources

— A case of Fukura Town Development Promotion Council —

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1. Research background

The department concerning declining population issue under the Japan Policy Council has issued a list in May 2014 that consists of 896 cities with potential of population extinction which has been considered as a severe problem in Japan. This problem has also risen the awareness of stakeholders who are associated with local government. The “Policy Act of Town, People and Occupation” (Machi, Hito, Shigoto Sousei Hou) was issued in November 2014 to encourage local governments to have their own town planning policies and objectives to become a sustainable region. However, due to the declining population, the budget plan and local government's administrative service have been reduced. Even though a wide-area of municipality administratives recently have merged to solve this problem, the service could not cover the whole merged area. Since World War II ended, the government's top-bottom entity is still continued and the system needs to be changed, therefore a community-driven town planning policy is necessary.

Minami Awaji City in Hyogo Prefecture is one of the cities that was listed which has potential of population extinction. As a countermeasure for this problem in Minami Awaji City, the city government established 21 community centers in each of the merged old towns and villages. This new system is still in the initial stage, therefore the residents of Minami Awaji City could not understand it well.

On the other hand, Fukura District of Minami Awaji City is still in the process of transition from the conventional property management to the common property management system. Moreover, based on the conventional management system, the Fukura Town Development Promotion Council was established in 1984. The service ranges not only asset management but also community development activities such as disaster prevention and tourism.

In this research, necessary components for urban development such as organization structure, management and activities of Fukura Town Development Promotion Council will be observed. This observation aims to achieve better understanding in a community-driven town planning required in the future society.

2. Property management of Fukura district

After the conventional property management system has been transitioned to the post-war management system, Fukura Town Development Promotion Council maintains not only property management in general but also the future expansion of a property which will grow and increase the budget for infrastructure and community development activities. The contribution through the property management has given a large impact and it managed to integrate the community people and increase their community development skills. Currently, it has become the factor that resulted as a positive regional activity.

3. The Role of Fukura Town Development Promotion Council

The role of Fukura Town Development Promotion Council related to community development activities in their recent initiatives was observed. First, providing possibility for various organizations to collaborate. The council composed of 14 stakeholders which consist of not only local organization but also fishermen union and tourism association, Chamber of Commerce and Industry which belongs to an industrial development organization. These stakeholders have possibilities for collaborate with each other in order to enhance the regional community development activities. Second, providing the opportunity for people from various age to participate in exchanging opinions and ideas. For example, the re-utilization of Nandan Government Office that the young people have discussed about. Through this discussion, the sense of belonging of these young people has improved which led to establishment of a new NPO. The establishment of the NPO has become a proof that the community development activity carried out by the residents has shown a good result which should be inherited from generation to generation.

4. Conclusion

The analysis on Fukura District in Minami Awaji City resulted in the indication of 3 elements that are required in their community development. The first element is managing the regional resources through common property management system, by utilizing the local people's 'initiative' and 'sense of ownership'. The second element is the development of the town planning for based on the conventional property management. The development resulted in the establishment of Fukura Town Development Promotion Council, various organizations participated in the council, provision of a venue where the residents can discuss issues occurring in the region. The third element is the management system of shared regional resources that has been carried out until today. In order to establish an independent town development, autonomous investment property is integrated into the town planning. In this way, community development in Fukura District's town planning can be considered as a successful example of a combination of the 3 elements. Therefore, this town planning can be used as a reference by the Regional Planning Council of Minami Awaji City as well as other towns and districts in Japan.