



## Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

**Wednesday, January 8, 2014**  
**Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Ann Armstrong	√	Phil Bixby	√	Janice DeLima	√
William Lunt III	√	Anne Theriault	-	Sandra Lipsey	√

**Council Liaison:** Councilor Anderson-  
**Staff present:** Theo Holtwijk, Nathan Poore  
**Others present:** -

The meeting was started around 3:45 PM.

**1. Draft Minutes**

The draft minutes of December 18, 2013 were unanimously approved as corrected with accurate Chamber member figures and fixing of some typos.

**2. Economic Development Plan Discussion**

Theo briefly reviewed the two handouts he had prepared. One outlined the typical categories of an Economic Development Plan. The other was an example of an economic development plan, that of the City of Portland. The need for Falmouth was articulated in the Council's Work Plan as well as the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan. The conversation about such a plan started at FEIC and was expected to be taken to the Council for further direction.

Councilor Anderson stated that it would be helpful for the Council to hear from FEIC what the process for developing a plan should be and who should be involved. He stated that the Council had not yet prioritized the 70 recommended actions in the plan.

Sandra felt that as a minimum the FEIC should review and comment on an economic development plan. Therefore, she felt, it was important for the FEIC to familiarize itself with such plans and raise its awareness of it.

Nathan stated that the Council was tentatively scheduled to receive an introduction on this topic on 1/27.

Janice asked what prompted this action. Nathan replied that the purpose of a plan is to bring focus to the Town's efforts. Where should it spend time and energy, and where not.

Bill felt that it was important that the business community be involved in the development of such a plan. He also felt it was important that there was Council support and commitment for doing a plan and that the Council should state how far it wants to go with such a plan and what type of businesses would be welcome in Falmouth.

Nathan replied that the Council may not know yet how far to go with a plan and that the process of doing a plan would dictate that.

Janice asked what problem the Town was trying to solve. There was some discussion on the history of such efforts and that with the creation of the FEIC there was a different attitude by the Council on this. A plan would help to indicate where the Town wanted to have its priorities. Currently, that is unknown and the Town cannot do everything.

Russ stated that a plan would include the current state of business development and how receptive the Town was. A plan would seek to improve on the weak parts and strengthen the strong parts of such an assessment.

Sandra added that LPAC+ had observed that the problem was that there was no existing plan.

Nathan stated that staff had met with Matt Jacobson, formerly of Maine & Company, who had stated that it was important that a community figure out what it wants. A plan would help to do that.

Ann A. stated that she concurred with Bill and that it was important to know how far the Council wanted to go with a plan. Bill cited the example of the Workforce Housing project, where a lot of committee time was spent and then the efforts were halted. He did not want the FEIC to be in the same position.

Nathan felt that this effort was different in that the workforce housing project was a very specific effort, and an economic development plan would be a very broad effort.

Councilor Anderson suggested that the FEIC, if it were to work on a plan, may need to be expanded temporarily for such an assignment.

Nathan stated that first a plan to develop a plan was needed, and that maybe the FEIC could help with the first step. Janice felt that a community vision was needed first, before that could be done. Councilor Anderson stated that a vision is already in the adopted

Comprehensive Plan that speaks to economic issues. There was discussion that developing a plan to prepare a plan should be this winter and be ready by early spring.

Phil wondered what this meant for the Route One Communications Campaign and the role that FEIC may have with that. It was clarified that this issue will come back to FEIC after CDC has had a chance to discuss it on 1/27.

Sandra moved that the FEIC recommended to the Council that it be charged with developing a proposed plan or approach to prepare an Economic Development Plan for Falmouth. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **3. Other Business**

#### **a. Route One and Natural Gas Update**

Bill asked Nathan to give a Route One update. Nathan stated that the final cost figures had been obtained from CMP, resulting in a reasonable budget for the project and that bid documents were finalized. He expected that bids would come back around mid March. Councilor Anderson added that some project elements had increased in cost, where others had gone down.

Bill asked what was being bid on for the project. Nathan ran through a list of improvements and clarified that about 1/3 of the total cost are fixed fee utility items that are non-negotiable and will not be bid on. There is still a responsibility for the Town for some of the utility work.

Bill asked if natural gas was part of the project. Nathan replied that is including cross connections and that this was entirely at the cost of the gas company. A Town handout was distributed that explained the natural gas status for the entire community. This handout was sent to property owners and is also available on the web at [http://www.town.falmouth.me.us/Pages/FalmouthME\\_Bcomm/natgasproject/natgas\\_newsletter\\_121713.pdf](http://www.town.falmouth.me.us/Pages/FalmouthME_Bcomm/natgasproject/natgas_newsletter_121713.pdf).

#### **b. Falmouth Business Association Feasibility**

Nathan explained that recent discussions prompted the Town to take the lead on exploring the feasibility of establishing a Falmouth Business Association. He and Theo developed a proposed approach, which was distributed to the FEIC. Nathan mentioned that the Chamber, through Barbra Esposito, requested an update on this effort. Ann A. suggested that Foreside Place may make a good meeting place. She hoped that more business owners would be involved with such an effort. Bill suggested the Foreside Tavern. Sandra felt it was important that such an Association be independent from the Town and the Chamber. Nathan and Theo confirmed that the Town has no interest in managing such an organization. Janice wondered what happened to the earlier momentum in the private sector to establish a business association. Nathan stated that the initiators had approached the Town for funding support,

but initially only wanted local businesses to be eligible for participation, which was a problem for the Town. Clarifying the scope of an organization and seeing if there was sufficient interest seemed to be the next logical step. Sandra stated that the Chamber was supportive and interested to help make this effort happen. Nathan will brief the Council of the status of this effort.

**c. FEIC Appointments**

Nathan reported that Janice had been reappointed to FEIC, and that Ann A. had agreed to renew her membership. There is one applicant for the current vacancy who needs to be interviewed by the Appointments Committee.

**4. Next Meeting**

The FEIC will meet next on January 22, 2014.

The committee adjourned around 5:00 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, January 9, 2014