



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Wednesday, March 4, 2015 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Sandra Lipsey	√	Phil Bixby	√	Janice DeLima	√
William Lunt III	-	Anne Theriault	√	Dimitri Balatsos	√
Pam DiPietro-Hale	-	Chris Wasileski	-	Luc Walker	√

Council Liaison: Charlie McBrady
Staff present: Nathan Poore
Others present: Jim Damicis, Rachel Selsky

Janice DeLima (acting Chair) called the meeting to order at 2:45 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of February 18, 2015

As no quorum was present yet, the review of the draft minutes was tabled.

2. Review Priority Project List

Janice reviewed where the project was and what the next steps were. The Committee agreed to have Nathan and Rachel facilitate the discussion while Jim provided technical assistance. The Committee agreed to spend 30 minutes on each of the four Goals to best manage its time.

Janice disseminated copies of her comments and suggestions which were referenced throughout the meeting.

The Committee decided to review each Goal language and offered suggestions that made the language more direct, such as replacing words like “enhance” with “improve”. The consultant took notes based on the suggestions and will provide a revised draft prior to the next meeting.

The Committee also reviewed each specific Strategy under each goal. Again, the consultant took detailed notes and agreed to update the strategies based on input at this meeting. A new draft will be submitted prior to the next meeting.

The committee made the following revisions to the project list:

Priority Project List

Goal 1 – Improve Falmouth’s Business Climate

Strategies:

- A. ~~Consider an alternative organizational structure of economic development.~~ Create and implement an organizational structure for economic development.
~~Implement a regular business engagement effort.~~
- B. Review the existing site plan review process to streamline and increase certainty in outcomes process for businesses.
 - a. Review the vision and codes so ~~that the rules can comply more easily~~ that it is easier for applicants to understand and comply.
 - b. Establish goals for customer service including set timelines and measurable goals.
 - c. Develop a roadmap for the process that is easily accessible and available to the business community.
 - d. Consolidate reviews whenever possible and establish a point person for all business ~~inquires-inquiries~~ to help guide-navigate the process.
 - e. Create a feedback system and/or appeal process to allow for the process to be improved (surveys, questionnaires, etc.).
- C. Review all existing zoning ordinances to ensure they are properly aligned with economic development goals of the Town.
 - ~~f.a.~~ Revisit signage and way-finding regulations in cooperation with ~~retailers~~ local businesses to design regulations that fit in with the community aesthetic while at the same time attracting shopper-meeting the business needs.
 - ~~e.~~ Revisit way finding and other sign ordinances.
- D. Improve engagement and dialogue to promote the future of economic development in Falmouth. Include all partners in the discussion to encourage open communication and collaboration.
 - a. Establish a regular Falmouth Future Forum to discuss issues around economic development in Falmouth.
 - ~~g.b.~~ Implement a regular business engagement effort including continuing business visitation meetings with ~~major~~ employers to discuss issues, opportunities, and listen to any concerns.
- ~~G.F.~~ Be active in Engage with the Maine-ME business/real estate community and present Falmouth as an alternative for a viable option within the Greater Portland, Scarborough, Westbrook, etc. region. Emphasize schools, recreation, transportation, accessibility, quality of local workforce (education levels).

Goal 2 – Enhance ~~Commercial Business and Professional Attraction, Creation, and Retention Efforts~~ Recruitment, Creation and Retention Efforts of Commercial Businesses

Strategies:

- Market Route 1 ~~North and Route 100~~ to state and regional businesses ~~who may be interested in a campus type corporate headquarters that includes Class A office space.~~ Focus on the targeted

industries of Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Finance and Insurance; and Health Care.

~~Market Route 100 areas for development opportunities around back-office operations. Focus on the targeted industries of Finance and Insurance and Health Care.~~

- Focus on development of Class A office space in growth zones, including the reuse of vacant or underutilized space.

- Re-envision the Falmouth Shopping Plaza as an important property in the Town.

- o ~~Initiate a specific visioning and redevelopment project around the Shaw's property.~~ Work in partnership with the property owner, developer, and development community to create a strategy for redevelopment.

- o ~~to re-envision the Shaw's property as the entrance to the community.~~ Consider necessary zoning changes, incentive programs, and other initiatives to help encourage the reuse of this and other vacant sites.

~~Implement regular meetings with major employers to discuss issues, opportunities, and listen to any concerns.~~

- Review existing infrastructure and transportation networks and identify areas for improvement to serve the business community including the continued use of the Capital Improvement Plan and Tax Increment Financing.

- o Improve infrastructure to serve businesses and employees such as pedestrian amenities, bike lanes and lighting to encourage ease of transportation movement throughout the ~~county~~town.

- o Expand public transit options linking Portland and other residential areas with Falmouth office/employment locations

- o Strongly consider support the commuter bus alternative from Portland up to Brunswick, with stops in top part of Route 1 and also in retail district. linking Route 1 retail and commercial areas.

- o Study potential options for the reconfiguration of existing Turnpike-Route 1 interchange.

- Review zoning requirements to ensure that buildings in the designated growth area are able to include cafes, gyms, and other mixed-use type amenities.

~~Expand rapid transit options linking Portland and other residential areas with Falmouth office locations.~~

- Create and promote electric car charging stations, solar power usage, and business recycling, to enhance sustainability of Falmouth locations.

- Encourage development of smaller residential spaces (e.g. condos, apt) suitable both for young workers and seniors who want less maintenance. This space is "affordable" but not Section 8 housing affordable (for incomes at 80-100% of Portland average).

- Strongly consider the commuter bus alternative from Portland up to Brunswick, with stops in top part of Route 1 and also in retail district.

~~Review existing infrastructure and transportation networks and identify areas for improvement to serve the business community. For example, the reconfiguration of existing Turnpike-Route 1 interchange.~~

Comment [RS1]: I combined this into Goal 1 D.b

Goal 3 – Enhance Recruitment, Creation, and Retention Efforts of Retail Businesses.~~Retail Attraction, Creation, and Retention Efforts~~

Strategies:

- Market Falmouth to local and /or regional retailers that will act as a destination and provide additional unique options to the existing retail market~~distinct retailers.~~
- ~~Revisit signage and way-finding regulations in cooperation with retailers to design regulations that fit in with the community aesthetic while at the same time attracting shopper.~~
- ~~Support buy local campaigns.~~Support programs and events that encourage patronage of local businesses and community organizations.
- ~~Establish~~Expand and market the town's a farmer's market ~~in the Route 1 corridor.~~
- Work with local and regional partners to build up Falmouth as a “foodie” destination including attraction of restaurants ~~with more than 30 seats.~~
- Research opportunities for enhanced recreation options such as health clubs, racquet clubs, indoor swimming, other multi-function spaces.
- Research potential for hotel and conference space to serve the Greater Portland region with integration of a co-working space for home professionals.
- ~~Encourage establishment of retail (e.g. coffee shops, recreation, local services) that will entice both local residents and local workers to keep it local.~~

Goal 4 – Cultivate an Innovative and Entrepreneurial Community

Strategies:

- ~~Consider~~Support and encourage additional a small co-working/conference space, potentially in a community center like the library, or developed with an existing business in Falmouth with whowhich has excess space.
- ~~Make~~Explore the potential to make the Route 1 retail area “wireless” and/or “gigabit” enabled.
- Explore how the town can support and possibly be a partner in the expansion of broadband. (Note from Nathan – this could also be under infrastructure section in Goal 2)
- ~~Establish~~Support and participate in regular meet ups, networking events, training programs and communication with the existing entrepreneurial community and start-up companies.
- Work with local developer to establish a co-working space in Route 1 corridor, with expansion possible to larger, but not big (1,500-4,500 square feet) Class A office spaces.
- Build the town's informal or formal brand as a healthy, active, and intellectual community by leveraging existing assets and continuing to build on the recreation, arts and culture.
- Establish partnerships to support education efforts around STEM in the primary schools to encourage increased innovation, entrepreneurship and technology use throughout the community.

3. Next Steps

The Committee agreed to meet for two hours at its next meeting to be sure that there will be enough time to go through the revised Goals and Strategies for a second time. The Committee also agreed that it would discuss the remaining process and design the public input process at the next meeting.

4. Other Business

There was no other business.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting is March 18, 4:00 to 6:00 PM.

The committee adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Nathan Poore, March 6, 2015