



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Tuesday, January 3, 2017 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Sandra Lipsey	-	Dimitri Balatsos	√	Pam DiPietro-Hale	-
William Lunt III	√	Chris Wasileski	√	Karen Farber, Council Co-Liaison	√
Charlie McBrady, Council Co-Liaison	-	Nathan Poore, staff	√	Theo Holtwijk, staff	√

Bill started the meeting at 5:33 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of November 16, 2016 Meeting

The draft minutes of November 16, 2016 were approved as written.

2. Review Project Update and Economic Development Strategy Work Plan

Assignments by Town Council and recommend any Future Work Plan Items

Theo gave a brief introduction to this topic and distributed a draft of the status of current projects being worked on by the Town. Dimitri stated that he was looking for a shortlist of priorities where the FEIC could add value. Nathan mentioned an upcoming Finance Committee meeting and Dimitri expressed interest in attending that. Chris stated that now with the quorum amendment approved, the FEIC seemed more settled and is willing and able to be helpful.

Karen asked the committee what it would like to do. She said that the Town Council felt that the Economic Strategy Plan was overarching and that the Council struggled with what to ask the committee to do as most of it was work for staff. Perhaps it was overseeing the implementation of the plan and liaising with other committees. The council wondered for which of the recommended tasks in the plan a committee would be needed to execute it.

Dimitri said he wanted to see something actionable. Karen suggested action #4, a feedback system in the site plan review process. Nathan stated that the committee could develop survey questions building on the survey it did earlier this year. Dimitri felt that if the committee only met four times per year members might lose interest.

Karen noted that with the master planning work completed and under way in the three commercial, mixed-use areas – Route 1 South, Route 100, Route 1 North – much of the work was being done that otherwise might fall to a committee such as FEIC. Nathan stated that the economic plan was important and that he has cited it to support funding requests. The

current Capital Improvement and TIF work reflected the approach taken by the Comprehensive Plan as well as the Economic Development Strategy and he suggested sending the proposed CIP and TIF plans to the FEIC for review.

Chris mentioned action #23 concerning the Falmouth Shopping Center as a possible task and the role of FEIC members being liaisons to other committees.

Bill stated that some growth areas do have complete utility infrastructure. He suggested that if the Town wanted through its recent zoning changes smaller lots, then water and sewer service in the growth area was important. Nathan stated that a water system study and Broadband study had been completed and a sewer master plan was being completed. These showed the relatively limited needs of these systems. Chris mentioned an NPR story on fiber service to rural communities. Karen corroborated that water service is mostly available in the growth area. Bill mentioned needs in the Middle Road area and his desire to have the Town make an investment that could be paid back by development that would take place as a result of it. Nathan said that he would make the utility reports available to the committee. Karen was wondering if proposed road projects should be reviewed by FEIC as well, so it knows what the Town is working on. Dimitri said that the question was how the tax base can be diversified. Nathan mentioned the outreach to TD Bank and Tyler Technologies. Both are happy with their broadband service. Chris stated that fiber in the town's rural area is more important now for telecommuters. In conclusion, the committee agreed to have a utility-focused meeting and a CIP/TIF focused meeting.

The committee discussed its meeting schedule. Karen wanted to make sure that Councilor McBrady was invited to FEIC meetings as he was a co-liaison. Bill felt that sticking with monthly meetings was best.

Nathan stated that a third task that could be completed was the feedback survey, by building on the previous survey and having it executed on an ongoing basis. He also noted that business fair was being organized with the local Chamber and he could use FEIC volunteers for the next Very Merry Falmouth event. He mentioned that the kick-off to Falmouth's 300th celebration will be at the Very Merry Falmouth December 2017 event. He thought that it was important to let the FEIC know what is being done by the Town.

3. Other Business

Bill requested that the committee review a proposed cell tower off Falmouth Road as this was an economic development issue. Karen and Nathan gave some background to this project. Karen stated that a very specific checklist of submission requirements was being followed by the applicant and that the Town was at this time waiting for additional submissions. Nathan added that this was a study if alternative locations should be considered for this tower. He said that the Planning Board was a quasi-judicial committee and that as a rule Councilors did not get involved in the work of that board, and that the FEIC as appointed committee by the Council should perhaps do the same.

Karen stated that she had not given this matter any thought, but that the FEIC could always weigh in at the Council level and, of course, as individual citizens where and when they wanted. Nathan will distributed the cell tower information that the Council will receive to the FEIC, so it can review it and determine whether or not, and how, to comment on that project.

He stated that a Tier 2 tower was proposed. Bill stated that the Town's rules often say "yes, this use is allowed," but then have all sorts of requirements that require applicants to invest money without knowing if their proposed use is truly allowed.

4. Next meeting

The committee agreed to meet again on February 15 at 5:30 PM to review proposed CIP and TIF plans. The 5:30 PM time will be the new regular time for the committee.

Theo will add Councilor McBrady to the distribution list. Nathan suggested that the committee talk some more about its ideas on taking positions on controversial permit projects before such projects were proposed, so it was clear how to handle those when they came up.

The committee adjourned at 6:42 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, January 6, 2017