



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC)

Thursday, August 14, 2014 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Paul Bergkamp	√	Kurt Klebe	-	Jim Thibodeau	√
Sam Rudman	√	Sandra Lipsey	√	Erin Mancini	√
Bill Benzing	√				

Council Liaison: Claudia King
Staff present: Theo Holtwijk, Amanda Stearns
Others present: -

The meeting was called to order by Sam at 6:00 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes

The draft minutes of July 10, 2014 meeting were approved as written.

2. Growth Area Implementation Work

a. Neighborhood Mapping Analysis

Theo shared the mapping and data analysis that had been done since the last meeting. Approximately two dozen neighborhoods or clusters had been identified in the east growth area. Of those, The Flats had been looked at in some detail. Theo highlighted the nonconformities that had been found relative to lot size, lot width, and setbacks. Pie charts on the map showed how much lot size conformities exist in the selected neighborhoods. A map of The Flats provided a visual indication of setback non-conformity in that area. It is relatively time-consuming to calculate how many feet these non-conformities consist of and if they are front setback, side setback, and/or rear setback. The objective is to reduce the amount of non-conformity in established neighborhoods as that automatically triggers permit applications to be reviewed by Board of Zoning Appeals. Theo reviewed a chart that, when complete, would summarize the non-conformity findings in each neighborhood. The committee was interested to see more data to fill in the chart, but did not see the need to have data on each neighborhood. Theo will follow up with Judy on that.

b. Accessory Dwelling Discussion

Theo reviewed the suggestions he added to the existing accessory dwelling language in the zoning ordinance. He explained that the idea of an accessory dwelling being “subordinate” to the principal dwelling on a property was maintained. Amanda thought that ADU’s could fill

a niche in a range of diverse housing types in Falmouth, but wondered what role they should play. ADU's have been referred to as mother-in-law apartments, but have seen a much wider application. The idea behind ADU's is that they should not change the character of a (single family) neighborhood. Duplexes are treated as apartment complexes and require 2 acres for 2 units, which is not an encouragement for anyone to build them as the ADU requires no additional land. ADU's do come with the limitation that no condominium can be created and ADU's cannot be sold separately. Currently, the BZA issues ADU permits, which allows for abutter comment. In addition, improvements to any non-conforming lot or structure also go to the BZA. Amanda suggested that an addition that requires BZA approval that is later converted to an ADU, should then not be approved by CEO. But, if on the other hand, non-conformities could be reduced, then it could make it easier for the CEO to approve ADU's.

Erin felt it was important to control the aesthetics of ADU's. Amanda replied that the Town does not have architectural standards on the books, except for special projects (such as Tidewater Village) and commercial areas.

Sam noted that some communities require the property owner to live on the premises and that architectural compatibility seems important elsewhere.

Sandra felt that the aging of the community presents an opportunity for ADU's as well as duplexes.

Jim asked for some direction from Amanda. Amanda suggested that the committee look at density and housing type. She recognized that there was an efficiency of services involved with ADU's.

Sandra felt that the desire for ADU's was not an affordability issue, but more one of lifestyle, where people may look for single floor living, for example.

Paul was interested to learn in which areas there is the most permit activity as an indicator where people want to make changes to their homes.

Bill wondered if making changes would add a layer to the permit process, and suggested that if the BZA approves these applications routinely today, perhaps that process was OK. Amanda replied that the BZA does have the ability to add conditions to conditional use applications, but that the Falmouth BZA has many more applications to deal with than similar boards in other communities.

As the next step, Theo will prepare some ADU suggestions for LPAC to react to.

3. Outreach Coordination with CDC

Sam and Sandra reviewed the proposed outreach plan. Some joint and some separate outreach meetings are planned. The schedule is such that proposed recommendations will go to the current Council in 2015.

Paul felt that it may be easier to explain the ADU and non-conformity issue by thinking about it on three levels:

1. Density

2. Dwellings
3. Other rules

He thought that it would add clarity of purpose and could also refer back to the “smart neighborhoods” idea that was in the Comprehensive Plan. He felt it was important to let neighborhoods participate in the details. The question would be how much control does the Town (or on the other hand, applicants) have at each level.

The committee had some suggestions on the proposed letter of invitation. Paul suggested that “maintaining rural character” should be emphasized rather than “reducing the number of homes that could be built.” Bill agreed with that and felt that a negative statement was the wrong way to set the outreach purpose up. Claudia felt that the letter could provide more context language to explain the intent behind the Town’s policies. Jim commented on the potential negative impact on property owners in the rural area, and reinforced, what he felt was a founding canon of LPAC’s comprehensive plan development process and one that he has repeatedly voiced on occasions at multiple meetings, that “no existing properties should be economically burdened or diminished in value due to future ordinance changes.” Sam felt that the outreach will tap into various perspectives and that it was key for people to show up.

4. Neighborhood Mapping Analysis

The committee returned to the mapping work and selected some neighborhoods for further study. The committee also discussed to have Judy Colby-George do the “live” computer modeling work with the committee to explore different densities.

5. Next Steps

The next steps will be:

- for Theo to draft some concept changes regarding accessory dwellings,
- for Judy to do some setback analysis of The Flats
- for Theo to propose some additional study areas besides The Flats and the areas selected by the committee
- for Theo to contact Judy to the “live” demonstrations

6. Next Meeting

The committee will meet next on August 28 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned around 8:20 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, August 21, 2014