



## Long Range Planning Advisory Committee + (LPAC+)

### Thursday, November 10, 2016 Minutes

#### Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Paul Bergkamp	√	Kurt Klebe	√	Breana Gersen	√
Sam Rudman	√	Sandra Lipsey	-	Becca Casey	√
Tom McKeon, PB representative	-	Ned Kitchel, Council Liaison to LPAC	√	Sarah Boudreau, Conservation Commission representative	√
Caleb Hemphill, Council Liaison to LMAC	√	Ted Asherman, LMAC representative	√	Jenny Grimm, Falmouth Land Trust	√
Lucky D'Ascanio	√	Bob Shafto, Open Space Ombudsman	√	Theo Holtwijk, Staff	√

Sam started the joint meeting with CDC members (Kitchel and Hemphill) at 6:01 PM.

Everyone introduced themselves. Theo gave brief intro of the LPAC report item.

#### 1. Review of Minutes

The draft minutes of the August 25, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved as written. The draft minutes of the September 8, 2016 minutes are forthcoming.

#### 2. Review of reports on Street Standards and Resource Conservation Zoning Overlay District with Community Development Committee

Theo gave a brief review of the Street Standards reports that had been recently completed by LPAC. A key consideration was the inclusion of a waiver criteria that speaks to the extent to which projects in the rural preserve rural character and projects in the growth area encourage development if a specific waiver request is approved or not. Caleb felt that this fit well with the direction of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Ned asked if the Town standards included a requirement that roads be paved as he knows of an erosion problem with an unpaved private road. All Town roads are required to be paved. Town enforcement of erosion issues on private roads is possible. Theo stated that if the CDC and Council are OK with this report, a few ordinance amendments would be needed, but that the bulk of the work is for staff to develop the missing and outdated technical standards. Ned and Caleb said they were comfortable with the report as written.

Theo gave a brief review of the RCZO report. LPAC members acknowledged that working out the mechanics of the Density Trade Fee Option idea was complicated and that it did not know yet to what extent developers would want to take benefit of it. There was a discussion where the collected fees would be spent, in the rural area or the growth area. The suggestion was to take the idea out of the RCZO report, but do more work on the Density option after, or as part of, the Greening of Falmouth update work. Ned thought that the option at \$50,000 per lot, as suggested, would be a desirable tool for developers in the Foreside area. LPAC agreed to delete item 6 (Density Trade Fee Option) from its final report so as not confuse its recommendations. There was additional discussion on the proposed change to go from 30 to 50% open space in the rural area. It was felt that this was a compromise as the 30% is being maintained in the growth area with 0% for very small projects in the growth area. Ned and Caleb were comfortable with recommending the revised RCZO report to the Council. Theo will produce a revised RCZO report.

### **3. Discussion of Approach to Greening of Falmouth 2.0 Project**

The representatives of the other Town committees had arrived (see list above) and another round of introductions was made. Theo explained the key documents that he had made available and said that tonight was an opportunity for an open discussion to see how the group wanted to approach the Greening 2.0 task. Each person spoke as to what expectations they had for an updated plan.

Ted stated that he hoped to get out of the new plan integration and tie in with the Town's 2013 Comprehensive Plan and the new zoning that had been adopted.

Caleb said that 10 years ago he was on the Conservation Commission which initiated the work on the 2006 Plan. Since then active land acquisition occurred, trails built, and trail connections established. He felt it has been a decade of remarkable accomplishments including referendum support by Falmouth voters. The players involved at that time have now changed and he has heard some in the community ask "are we done?" Caleb stated that he did not think so, and that he hoped the new plan would continue the legacy of the open space program and the support it has encountered.

Breana said she hoped the plan would further improve connectivity of parcels, but also look at how land is used. This required a reaching out to the community. The open space work will be important as development pressures will continue to exist.

Kurt stated that as the current chairman of Maine Coast Heritage Trust he deals with a lot of open space matters. He felt that Falmouth has been very fortunate. He felt that the effort was done well as it was a town-based effort that had a great sense of community engagement. He said that the next generation needs to be made aware of this effort, the work that went into it, the spaces that exist and how they are used, so continued stewardship can be assured. The Town should create a resource we can use.

Ned stated that he was on the Town Council in 1997-2003 when the open space effort started with the purchase of the Zacharias farm through a bond that was supported by the community. He noted the current Council's intent to set aside \$300K annually to build up an acquisition fund so the Town can respond on a moment's notice when opportunities come

up. He thought that one councilor had no interest to purchase more land, but he disagreed with that. He felt that a cerebral commitment to the effort was needed.

Jenny felt that Falmouth was lucky. She felt the update effort would be a success if it generated as much momentum and support as the effort to date. For that to happen she felt it was important to spell out the values that the open space properties provide. She agreed that the open space plan should be integrated with other plans and fit into a larger lexicon. She noted that not much had happened with the “jewel” properties and wondered if there was a need for a balance.

Lucky said that her department had done some awareness of the open spaces, such as Discovery Days, hikes, etc. She would like to do more programs, such as “kids in nature” programming. She believed that the appreciation for open space has evolved as she hears from people who have moved to Falmouth because of its open space and trails. She would like the new plan to increase awareness, include stewardship programs, and pay attention to the management plans for the various spaces.

Becca felt that access and connectivity was important, including being able to access trails and open spaces from one’s house without having to get into a car. Sidewalk systems also play into that. She thought there was recently more energy around agricultural preservation.

Sarah stated that working farms should be kept at the forefront of the new plan, and that she looked for integration with other plans and cohesion with other Town efforts. She would also like to see more awareness of what exists.

Sam felt that education was important. He has heard some people say “we have enough open space” and he wondered what that looked like. Ned asked how one determines what enough is. He felt that open space acquisitions would over time get more expensive. Sam said that setting aside \$300K per year is a lot of money. He felt that education was important to make the case for continued open space purchases.

Kurt felt that it was a perception issue when people say we have “enough,” as much land that is currently undeveloped is not all preserved and could be built upon. He was interested to look at some forecasting of growth. The questions he felt that were important were: How much is enough for what purpose? Can I walk out of my house to get open spaces? What kind of wildlife diversity do I want to have? He said that these were some of the questions the Town should wrestle with.

Becca added that these ideas should be tested out. What is the ideal situation? The plan should set, what she called, some BHAGs – “big hairy audacious goals.” Jenny stated that metrics were important for that, and that those depend on what you are measuring. Kurt felt that such an approach would allow the Town to be tactical in its work.

Paul said that the 10-year report mentioned four challenges that should be addressed and he asked to hear more about that. Caleb said that the role of the land trust was one of them. It has acted as an equal partner with the Town and has a role in conservation easement oversight. Lucky said that LMAC has emerged as a key entity since 2007/8 and evolved from a team that included herself, the Town Manager, the Trails Advisory Committee and the Open

Space Subcommittee. Initially not much was known about the properties the Town already owned and she would have to Google the properties to learn more. Now there is a clearinghouse of information, a folded open space map, and updated website, and LMAC has been overseeing these activities.

Jenny agreed there was a close relationship between the Town and the land trust. She felt it was important to identify the different functions that each of them has as there appears to be confusion with the public.

Lucky stated that that may have come because the Town has financially contributed to open space acquisitions by others.

Bob said that it was important to build a system for acquisition as well as management. That involved policy decisions by the Council. He said the goal has been to build an interconnected system around a 100-year vision. He said the work started with a year-long effort of background homework as there was land the Town owned that we did not know about. Support for the program had to be created. A Falmouth Conservation Corps of volunteers was established, as well as relationships with many other entities, such as the Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW), the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

Bob state that his fear was that open spaces would be viewed as parks and not as conservation areas. Many of the areas are complex ecosystems and provide various values. The Town's needs must be established at the community level. What function should these spaces have, not just now, but 1,000 years from now? He said that there are conflicts in considering what one can do with the open spaces. For example, the recreational use has driven hunters away, yet the town has 22 deer per square mile and needs hunters as that is too many to be sustainable. A space like the Nature Preserve has become a virtual dog park, and such uses have consequences.

Bob continued by stating that continued population pressures will make the open spaces we have into oases. He has seen that happen elsewhere. The vision needs to answer how many people does Falmouth want to have, and how much development. He felt both questions needed to be asked.

Bob said that he was now on his fourth Town Council and he wondered how best to maintain support for the program as people come and go. He also felt there was an education opportunity regarding the existing open space properties.

Paul asked if Falmouth had 15,000 or 20,000 people, what percentage of the town needed to be protected to have good balance. Bob stated that in recent years the town has doubled in population.

Jenny stated that there is a suite of ecosystems out there in the protected lands and the question is how much money has been saved by the Town by protecting that land and safeguarding those values.

Bob felt that that was an esoteric approach to figure out cost savings. In his work what matters is the appraisal value of the land, which means the development value. Wildlife does not factor into that. He added that the Town now has a rating system that articulates the Town's priorities for open space acquisition. Ned asked if Bob had seen Tom Armstrong's inventory of open spaces. Bob said he had, and that he has a list of properties that are of conservation interest.

Ned believed there was Council support and that the rating system was important. He hoped the updated plan would come with a surge of pride that people would feel for the open spaces, and that they would realize the value of these assets. Regarding the notion of park versus preserve, he felt there was some low hanging fruit.

Bob said that people have become more afraid of ticks and going into the woods, and that kids do not play outside any more. He was worried about the implications of that. But he also saw opportunities. Currently there are four land acquisition deals in the works, and that there was a farm property that may become available.

Ned mentioned that there were a few people who have been critics of open space acquisitions in the past. Bob said that the 2006 plan on purpose did not include any maps. The Woodville charrette involved maps that showed development and that had made many people upset. Instead, he had worked with a map that showed green blobs to show the intended connectivity of open spaces, instead of specific properties that might make people upset. He also stated that for many years the Town was the only interested buyer for certain parcels as there was no market demand.

Ted commented that Bob had been a large part of the success of the open space program and that he knows everyone in this field. Bob said that he has held the half-time position as Open Space Ombudsman since December 2006.

Kurt asked if Bob would have maps for the committee to use, so it would know what the bank of existing open spaces is.

Sam asked if Bob was going to retire and how he would be replaced. He also wondered if there were parcels that have been targeted for acquisition.

Bob said he had a list, but that it was not public. He also noted that LMAC had turned down offers to buy land when they did not meet the acquisition criteria. He said the 2006 plan was not an anti-development plan, but instead aimed at a balance. He said that there was a shared vision in Falmouth that it should not look like New Jersey.

Ted mentioned that properties along Falmouth Road, for example, were not all protected. Jenny said that it meant being pro-active. Bob said that there was an enormous development pressure, especially over a long period of time. He had made a trip to Lincoln, Massachusetts and they have done a really good job in protecting land. He showed on the map some existing trails that were on private land and wondered how they could be protected. Ned asked about the Presumpscot River Trail and if licenses were involved for that.

The committee discussed doing a field trip in a van to see the open spaces, and which spaces may be good for that. Sam commented that there was an institutional memory that Bob and others had that the committee needed to become familiar with. Jenny asked what the objective of the field trip was, and the committee decided that the tour was a good idea.

The committee discussed needing maps, management plans, ecological maps, and vernal pool information. Bob said that there was a representative spectrum of habitats contained in the open spaces. He will also get the criteria list to the committee. Information how properties are used is available only in an anecdotal manner.

The committee felt that it was good for all to re-familiarize ourselves with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan that is posted on the Town's website.

Sam said a vision would be needed for the plan and he asked everyone to think about that. He said he was struck by the distinction between recreation and conservation areas.

There was a comment that the Greening 2.0 may not be the best name for this effort and a new name may be necessary, so people's expectations of the plan are properly directed.

#### **4. Next Meeting**

As the next date is Thanksgiving, the next committee meeting was scheduled for December 8, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, November 15, 2016