



# Long Range Planning Advisory Committee + (LPAC+)

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**  
**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, Town staff	-	Bob Shafto, Open Space Ombudsman	-	Dave Gagnon, LMAC representative	√
Theo Holtwijk, Town Staff	√				

Others present: Dave Chase, Linda and Steve Dyer

The meeting was started at 6:08 PM.

**1. Review of Minutes**

As the draft minutes of the April 13, 2017 had not yet been prepared, the review was tabled.

**2. Consistency consideration of West Falmouth Neighborhood Sketch Plan with 2013 Comprehensive Plan**

Sandra asked the public present to offer comments.

Steve Dyer stated that in his opinion the Concept Plan did not fit the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the 80-acre study area was not part of the Town's residential growth area which represented 31% of the town. He had a list of concerns, but felt it was irrelevant to go through that list.

Becca asked Steve if he felt that commercial use was more in line for the 80- acre area.

Steve stated that the area has always been mixed use. The Town had made an effort to rezone the RA and RB areas, but he did not see that for this commercial area.

Ned stated that Stantec never made a proposal and that lot lines had been drawn in by Stantec. He felt it was the Council's job to facilitate a nice project, and that the Council never discussed the number of many housing units, which had created angst with some members of the public. He felt that any proposal was a private transaction between the developer and the property owner.

Sandra pointed out that a Concept Plan had been prepared by Stantec for the Town.

Linda Dyer commented that Dave Chase had a development plan already for that area.

Theo clarified that while the Town was working on a Concept Plan, Dave Chase had been working on a parallel path on an actual development plan for a portion of the study area. He said that the Council asked LPAC to comment on the Concept Plan, not on any actual development plans by others.

Sandra asked the committee members to weigh in if the Concept Plan was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan or not.

Paul felt that the Concept Plan was not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. He thought the concept plan was extreme and too dense. The goal of the Comprehensive Plan was for the community to come together, he said.

Sandra said that there was a lot on the Concept Plan that reflected ideas in the Comp Plan, such as walkability and how to move through the area.

Paul acknowledged that there were interesting elements, but wondered why the plan was so dense.

Becca stated that in her view the Concept Plan did reflect the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. She felt that in the study location on a commuter route, the Town wanted to see greater growth, availability of utilities, and walkability to services. She felt there were lots of details still to be considered, but that at the last meeting David Chase stated he had already learned from the Concept Plan the importance of trails, road connectivity, open space, and community feel. She felt the Town was going through this process in the right way and that \$8K for consulting expenses was not a lot of money. If more money and time had been available, Becca said, perhaps three options could have been developed, one of which might have fit more into the neighborhood. She understood that with only one option that the consultants wanted to show what might be possible from a maximum point of view, from which one always could back off. Perhaps the Concept Plan was too dense, but she had not looked at density specifics. She especially liked the walkability and the mixed use, which was important. She said the Concept Plan was a starting point and that public input into that was important. She felt that the Concept Plan was generally consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Kurt stated that he was not at the last meeting and wondered if growth caps had been discussed.

Sandra stated that growth caps had been discussed and that 75% of the growth permits had been allocated for the growth area.

Kurt noted that this project might take 4 years to be able to use available growth permits, unless dispensation for that was provided. He said that he was much familiar with full blown build out analyses from an open space perspective and that they can look scary. The Concept Plan feels like a build out plan. He said that rate of growth, market demand, and growth caps were issues to look at. He anticipated that any sizable project in this location would have a long build out and that there would be an organic element to that. He said that it was good for the Town to a gut check on this. He said that Concept Plan is probably consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that it steers development to an area that is allocated for growth. He felt that public feedback should be considered. He reflected that people value neighborhoods.

Breana said she leaned to Becca's comments. She noted the effort to concentrate development in order to preserve open space elsewhere. This area has available infrastructure and will be further enhanced, such as with natural gas expansion. Concentrated development will make that infrastructure that much more viable. The proximity to services is important as well. She noted that there may be an impact on schools, and that 300 units may not be realistic. However, she saw the study area as an area that will see expanded development. Having adjacent parcels work together was a great idea. She felt the Concept Plan was broadly consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and on track.

Sandra said that the next task was how to articulate these comments for the Council and to wrestle with the language for the memo.

Kurt said that the Council asked LPAC a very narrow question, and that the Comprehensive Plan was a blunt, amorphous instrument. He noted Ned's concern from school impact, but said that the Comprehensive Plan did not address the school system.

Sandra stated that growth permits are distributed on an annual basis, and that a different approach may need to be considered for a project such as this one.

Kurt restated the charge for LPAC. It was asked to do three things: provide input on the Concept Plan, make a finding of consistency, and offer public input suggestions.

Becca said that the conclusion seemed to be that the plan is substantially consistent.

Kurt said that it was important to convey Paul's concern. He understood that Paul felt that the spirit of the plan was missing and that a slower pace of development was more desirable.

Paul said that he did not understand why the plan needed to be so dense. He felt the plan was self-contained and he did not like that. He was worried about the traffic impact on Gray Road. He could give a positive check mark on various other aspects of the plan. He said the Concept Plan was a good exercise to see the extreme, but that this development would absorb the available growth permits and that any other area in Falmouth may not be able to grow. He worried that the density of development would also pose problems for crossing Gray Road and limit pedestrian access to the commercial area.

Sandra stated that the Route 100 Plan included sidewalks that would allow people to walk to, for instance, TD Bank.

Paul said he worried about the functioning of the Leighton Road intersection at 6:00 PM.

Kurt said that winter snow was a reality and that walking would be weather dependent. In winter people would, despite good walkability, likely still drive to TD Bank. He added that this was an exercise to master plan the community and that the effects on all infrastructure need to be well understood, such as on the school system, sewer, and road. He suggested that further studies would be needed.

Sandra asked the committee to identify any cautions that should be communicated to the Council.

Kurt said that impact studies should be commissioned for sewer, school, and road/traffic. He stated he had no concerns with the internal road system, but was focused on the effect on the external roads.

Ned stated that Dave Chase had a development plan and wanted to ask Dave how far along he was with that plan.

Breana stated that LPAC's charge was to look at the Stantec Plan, not any specific development plan.

The committee agreed to look at the chapter outline of the Comprehensive Plan to make sure it had not overlooked anything.

Breana stated that population growth was intended to be focused in this area and that it was like fitting puzzle pieces, maybe not perfect, but they seemed to fit. She noted the mixed use aspect and concentrated development that seemed to fit.

Sandra summarized the consensus of the group that population density, school impact, utility impact, traffic impact, and growth permits should be looked at more closely.

Paul reiterated his concern that the permit bank would be absorbed by this development.

Becca wondered if an exception could be made if there is the market demand for it and could be supported by the required infrastructure.

Sandra said that considerations of market demand are not part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Kurt said that, in reviewing the land use section of the Comprehensive Plan, the project is in the designated growth district as well as the Route 100 district. He said that natural constraints should be considered.

Steve Dyer commented that there would be net decrease of commercial real estate in the area as the Truck Center was proposed to be redeveloped.

Kurt cited page 24 of the Comprehensive Plan. It stated that “(t)wo centers have been identified for commercial and mixed use growth: Route 1 and Route 100/26. (...) Besides retail activity and services, Route 100 provides for back-office employment. Well-planned residential development is envisioned to be integrated in these commercial areas. Whereas the Town is well on its way to adopt a plan for Route 1 South, similar efforts are proposed in this Plan for Route 1 North and the Route 100/26 commercial area.”

Steve stated that currently there are 11 acres of commercial use and that the Concept Plan showed only 3 acres of commercial use.

Breana stated that proportionally that amount may be fine as smaller commercial uses were being envisioned.

Kurt added that it was not LPAC’s place to determine how much commercial use there should be.

The committee agreed 4-1 (Paul against) that the Concept Plan was substantially consistent with the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Kurt added that the Comprehensive Plan did not cover the school system.

Sandra asked if the committee had any suggestions regarding the gathering of additional public input.

Kurt asked if this was meant like a workshop or charrette.

Becca felt that such activities would not be needed, but that a larger conversation was useful.

Breana said that it would have been helpful to have had another version of the plan.

Sandra felt that thus far it had been an engaging, consensus-driven conversation.

Paul suggested that perhaps others who did not have any interest in the outcome of this plan should be asked for their opinion if this plan fits, or if this is an area suitable for growth.

Kurt wondered how those people could be engaged.

Paul suggested to use a focus group. He said there seemed to be two different groups in Falmouth – young families and the elders.

Kurt mentioned the proposed duplex development on Middle Road which has neighbors concerned. He acknowledged that the growth-rural area direction of the Comprehensive Plan was a major shift for Falmouth and that the Council should be sensitive to the reactions of the public.

Becca said she trusted the established process to gather public input.

Dave Gagnon stated that the Concept Plan was exactly what LPSC had asked for and that the required zoning and growth permit limits could be taken care of.

Caleb stated that the 4/13 meeting to review the Concept Pan was very good and that LPAC tonight came to a good conclusion. He acknowledged that a contract zone could change things.

David Chase asked some clarifications on the contract zone and stated that he got a lot from the Stantec plan. He said that he had been in touch with several property owners and was working with some of them.

Theo gave an overview of what he would do next: prepare a draft memo, circulate it with the committee, get comments back, get sign off from Sandra on the final draft, send final memo to Town Council for May 22 meeting. The committee agreed with that approach.

Theo also commented what he suggested the Town might do different if it were to do this process again.

### **3. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 11.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, May 4, 2017