



Route One North Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 19, 2017

Attendance

MEMBERS

Chris Wasileski, Chair ✓
Nicole Favreau
Arthur Batson ✓
Paul Burlin ✓
Dava Davin
Laurie Leonard ✓
Jay Trickett
Steve Woods

COUNCIL LIAISON

Charlie McBrady

OTHERS

Tommy Johnson, FLT ✓
Dave Woodward, VHB ✓

STAFF

Nathan Poore ✓
Theo Holtwijk ✓
Andrew Clark ✓

Chair Wasileski called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

1. Review of draft minutes from the March 6 and April 6 meetings

Both sets of draft minutes were approved as written.

2. Review of draft recommendation

Theo directed the committee to a packet of materials and recommendations from VHB. He stated that the goal of this meeting was to get comfortable with the recommendations and to make changes to them, so VHB can move forward preparing for the upcoming public forum.

Laurie expressed objection to land use restrictions. He believed that if a developer saw either a commercial or residential project appropriate, they should be permitted to go ahead barring a zoning problem. He recommended to permit residential development on the west side of Rt 1.

Arthur noted that portions of both sides of Rt 1 are mixed use. The Kennedy piece (aka Site 5) could also be both. He noted that Shady Ln (residential) and Northbrook Dr (commercial) coexist nicely. The same could theoretically be said of Quaker Ln and some future abutting commercial development.

Paul expressed concern for a missing level of detail in the plan, particularly with regard to tree preservation and natural character, which had been a priority in previous work. He wondered how the work of the committee would translate into enforceable ordinance in such a way that the vision of the committee would not be lost.

Nathan said that the committee's vision is relayed to the Council, which is responsible for implementing it by incorporating it into ordinance. There are various ways to do this, including limits to impervious surfaces, tree inventories, etc. Theo added that there are existing ordinances to maintain trees and other natural resources to the extent possible, but they can always be further articulated. Nathan also cautioned that it is the right of the Council to disagree with the committee, though he felt that was unlikely. He reemphasized that this was an opportunity for the committee to express their priorities. Chris

wondered whether it was better to go into the public forum with a set of recommendations or with the intention of soliciting public comment. Nathan felt it would be more effective if the committee goes into the forum excited and with consensus ready to share a set of specific recommendations and to get feedback.

Chris refocused the conversation on the west side of Rt 1. Arthur wondered if existing language applying to the east side of Rt 1 could be pulled over and applied to the west side. Laurie again commented that market forces should decide what use is best for a particular site.

Paul cautioned that without good planning the corridor could become scattered and unattractive. (Chris: "A hodgepodge.") Dave mentioned there is only so much commercial development space left in Falmouth, space which can be high-value and contribute to the tax base. Further, the parcel is currently zoned for business only. Nathan added that residential use is not permitted in a contract zone. Chris said that it may be wise to preserve remaining commercial development space in town. He wondered if allowing residential development, in a market that may be over-saturated, would be the best plan for Falmouth overall.

Nathan summarized progress. The committee is generally in agreement on Sites 2, 4, and 6 (all east of Rt 1): They would be mixed use with residential towards the back of the sites. Site 1 would be higher density, multi-family, mixed use, by virtue of its location next to the Falmouth Spur ramp (which is itself in discussions to be redesigned and redeveloped). Site 3 would likely see some sort of technology use. The committee was unsure only of Site 5. Theo suggested bringing this to the public forum as an open-ended question.

Paul asked Tommy whether the Falmouth Land Trust was satisfied with the natural resource element of the plan. He said they were excited about the incorporation of trails and open space on the east side of Rt 1. Though the wetlands could be challenges to development, they do present an opportunity for recreation.

Laurie asked whether it was necessary that the committee reach consensus. Chris said that the committee's recommendations would be stronger with consensus. Nathan agreed, but assured there was time for the committee to compromise and reach consensus. That said, consensus is not required to move forward.

There was some further discussion on growing the tax base through stable, high-value commercial development. Nathan saw an opportunity for more job centers. Theo pointed out the Falmouth is a net job importer. Dave commented that with downtown Portland beginning to fill up, larger companies would look for space in Falmouth. Chris underscored the need to capitalize on the hot market.

Nathan summarized the evening's progress. The committee will go into the forum split on Site 5. He asked that VHB strengthen the language regarding open space and recreation. With the committee scheduled to present to the Council on May 22, there is a need for each member to state their positions on various aspects of the plan. He stressed the need to get all members of the committee to the next meeting.

3. Discussion regarding upcoming public forum

The public forum is scheduled for April 25, 7 pm at Lunt Auditorium. It will consist of a short presentation from VHB, followed by a question and comment section. Specific feedback will be sought with regards to Site 5.

4. Other business

None.

5. Next meeting

If the public forum finishes early, the committee members will stay back for a meeting. Otherwise, the next meeting of the committee is scheduled for May 15. Should that present conflicts for any members, it will be rescheduled according to an online poll. Nathan, Theo, and Chris expressed a strong desire to see all members present to best move forward.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark on April 20, 2017.