



# Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

## Wednesday, July 2, 2014

**Attendance:**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Present</i>
Sandra Lipsey	√	Phil Bixby	√	Janice DeLima	√
William Lunt III	-	Anne Theriault	√	Dimitri Balatsos	√
Pam Dipietro-Hale	√				

**Council Liaison:** Charlie McBrady

**Staff present:** Theo Holtwijk

**Others present:** -

The meeting was started at 3:57 PM.

### 1. New FEIC Appointees

Phil welcomed the two new FEIC appointees, Pam and Dimitri, as well as Charlie as new Council Liaison. He said it was a good time to jump in on the work of the FEIC as it was just about to begin work on the Economic Development Plan. Everyone introduced themselves.

Theo shared the contact list for the group and asked for anyone to send him any edits to that list. Upon Anne's request Theo explained the typical e-mail protocol.

### 2. Review of Draft Minutes of June 9, 2014

The draft minutes of June 9, 2014 were unanimously approved as written, with correction of "Theo" in first line of item 4 on page 1.

### 3. Economic Development Plan RFP Update

Theo reported the status of the RFP. A Q&A document was prepared and distributed to consultants. Deadline for proposals is July 9. One proposal has already been received. Proposals will be received digitally. If any member wants paper copies, they can request that from Theo. The FEIC will be asked to determine on July 16, which firm(s) to interview. Interviews are tentatively scheduled for July 30. The Council is expected to appoint four additional FEIC members to help with the preparation of the plan. These four may or may not be appointed in time to assist with consultant selection. The selection of the consultant is up to the FEIC.

It was asked what the budget for this project is. The budget is \$40K. The committee agreed that it should at a minimum interview one consultant to make sure it is a good fit with the Town. In case multiple proposals are received, it was also suggested that committee members rank

proposals according to the four evaluation criteria to help determine which proposals are near the top. It was also suggested that reference letters be provided to the Town as a possible time saver. Theo noted that reference contact information is a required submission element in the proposals. The committee agreed to set aside the time slot of 2:00 to 5:00 PM on July 30, which would give time for up to three interviews. It was clarified that on August 6 the committee will discuss the findings of the interviews (and possibly reference checks) and make a selection of the consultant to be hired for this project.

#### **4. Wayfinding Signage**

Theo reported that the second workshop on replacing the blue wayfinding signs is scheduled for July 21. All are invited to attend. Proposed new designs, destinations, and sign locations will be reviewed. One of the questions is whether or not to include business names on the signs. As wayfinding helps people to direct them efficiently to destinations, this project may be of interest to the FEIC.

#### **5. Ad Hoc Route 100 Committee**

Theo reported that the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Route 100 Committee is July 8 at 6:00 PM. Charlie McBrady will be Council Liaison to that committee as well. There is an opportunity to designate an FEIC liaison to this committee. Anne Theriault expressed interest to serve in that capacity. All agreed with that and thanked Anne. Theo will get Anne the appropriate meeting materials.

#### **6. Route 1 Construction Update**

Theo included in the handouts the most recent construction update that was prepared by the Public Works Director. These are updated on a weekly basis. He stated that there were two other communication pieces being worked on: a poster to be distributed to Route 1 businesses to help alert their customers what the project is all about and how they can subscribe to the construction updates and a flyer that can be handed out by businesses to their customers that describes the project in more detail.

#### **7. Business Resource Packet + Business Contact Database Update + Falmouth Business Association Feasibility**

Theo reviewed the latest version of the digital resource list that the committee has been working on. He asked if there were any other suggestions. Phil felt that, besides community organizations, it would be worthwhile to list groupings of local businesses, such as restaurants and other businesses that people may be looking for. This would make it more of a local business directory. Theo said that was possible, but cautioned that this was a lot of work, but could be another phase of the business contact database: adding website information for each business and then grouping the businesses by similar ones. He showed the stack of contact sheets that had been obtained by Sandra and Kimberley from local businesses and spreadsheet database. The Route 1 South collection pilot effort has been essentially completed. The effort

has now been expanded to Route 1 North and Route 100, and will be concluded by all other streets with businesses on them.

There was a concern that this information would take quite an effort to keep up to date. Charlie wondered if this should be a Town responsibility and how much time and expense this might take. He felt the need to promote itself should be the responsibility of the business. Sandra explained that she found that many businesses do not have e-mail information, do not necessarily communicate with each other, even if they are located next door to each other, and that the Town had a difficult time contacting businesses for the Shop Falmouth event as no good contact information was available.

It was stated that there was an effort underway to see if a Falmouth Business Association could be formed that would take the initiative on some of these promotional efforts. Theo mentioned that a September event at the Foreside Tavern was being planned to invite local businesses to investigate the feasibility of that idea. He noted that the business contact database idea came out of the concern to communicate with Route 1 businesses about the Route 1 construction project. It was recognized that it could have other advantages as well. He pointed out the letter from the Town Manager and data form that have been used. Anne asked if this information would be requested with all permit applications. Theo mentioned that the Town Manager recently requested form each department to report what information they are collecting from commercial enterprises in Falmouth, with what frequency, for what purpose, and using what type of software. This is an initial step to see if the ongoing update effort can be simplified and more efficient.

It was noted that all these efforts were all interrelated, moving parts to the whole. Sandra suggested that the Business Resource page could welcome a new business to Falmouth with some balloons and contact information. Pam stated that the Yarmouth Chamber delivers a basket with local gifts to any new business as a welcome. Sandra also suggested that businesses may be interested to connect with Falmouth High School students who need to complete their community service requirements. It was mentioned that the High School also tries to locate internship opportunities for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students with area businesses.

Janice felt it was important to learn more as to who would use the resource information, how it was used, and what the most effective communication methods for that were. She thought that these questions could be answered through the Economic Development Plan effort and surveys. Phil suggested that at the next meeting the committee could discuss what priorities it wanted to have for the next year or how best to handle the details of some of these other efforts. Dimitri cautioned the group that business promotion and development was not the same as economic development, which was the core mission of the committee.

Anne complimented Sandra on her outreach efforts with local businesses. She said that Sandra had been tenacious as well as gracious with businesses.

**8. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**9. Next Meeting**

The FEIC will meet next on July 16, 2014 at 3:45 PM. Theo stated that he will not be able to be there that day and will inquire if the Town Manager is able to come.

The committee adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, July 3, 2014