

Town Council Meeting Minutes October 14, 2020

Chair Kuhn began the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call

All councilors were present and answering roll call.

Chair Kuhn said the fourth item on the agenda related to the OceanView easement would not be taken up at that meeting due to the late posting of the agenda attachments.

Item 1 Public Hearing and order for a Special Amusement Permit for Bueno Loco Restaurante to allow acoustic live music.

Councilor motioned; Councilor seconded.

Chair Kuhn opened the public comment period; there was no public comment.

The motion carried unanimously.

Item 2 Introduction of an ordinance to amend the maximum levels of income and expenses for the General Assistance program, Chapter 6, Article 6, Section 6.68, Appendices A-H of the Falmouth Town Ordinance.

Nathan Poore, Town Manager, said that the State establishes the cost of living indexes for General Assistance. He described the appendices. He said that the State establishes these numbers. He said the statute allows municipalities to publish their own numbers but they would have to go through a similar process that the State goes through and he was not aware of any community that had tried to do that. He said that the Council must go through this process every year.

The public hearing was scheduled for November 9.

Item 3 Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee (PACPAC) update.

Karen Jones, Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee Chair, delivered the presentation. She said PACPAC is working on developing a comprehensive parks and recreation areas strategic plan. She said that PACPAC hopes to pull together some fun facts to promote in the Falmouth Focus or on the town website. She said the Committee is prepared to spend time on site in each parks facility and do a review of each space. She PACPAC has conducted park tours around the town for the last ten years. She said the Committee reviews the Community Programs brochure. She said that the Committee planned to identifying veterans' tomb stones. Lucky D'Ascanio, Parks & Community Programs Director added that the project is to map in GIS all the veteran tomb stones in town to assist staff in placing flags on Memorial Day. Ms. Jones said that the Committee also participates in Very Merry Falmouth.

Chair Kuhn asked Ms. D'Ascanio to describe how the department had to pivot during the pandemic. Ms. D'Ascanio said that staff shopped for senior citizens who were uncomfortable leaving their homes, and did weekly check-in calls with individuals who were regular community center visitors and became isolated. She said that the Department became a calling center for assisting with community needs. The Department also

worked with Erin Cadigan, Education and Outreach Coordinator to create the My Favorite Falmouth campaign.

Chair Kuhn thanked the Department.

Councilor De Lima thanked the Parks & Community Programs Department for everything they had done during the pandemic. She appreciated the PACPAC update. She said the open spaces tour opened her eyes to the Town's open space resources. She asked if the tour was happening this year. Ms. D'Ascanio said that the Committee would be taking a tour the following week. She said that the tours had been offered as part of the Tercentennial and that the Department was planning to offer them again before the pandemic. Ms. Jones added the Committee has been trying to think of creative ways to promote the parks including social media and the Falmouth Focus.

Councilor Johnson thanked Ms. Jones and Ms. D'Ascanio He is the PACPAC Council liaison and was astonished by the Committee members' knowledge and experience.

Councilor Asherman thanked Ms. Jones and Ms. D'Ascanio.

Item 4 Request for the Town of Falmouth to accept a pedestrian easement over land owned by OceanView at Lunt School LLC (U27-013-E) and to grant rights to the same over property owned by the Town at Middle Road and Lunt Road (U27-003 and U27-003-H).

This item will be taken up at the next Council meeting as the attachments were not posted in time for review.

Item 5 Introduction of an amendment to establish a new Chapter II-22 of the Code of Ordinances relative to creating a procedure for considering requests for ordinance amendments.

Chair Kuhn said this work was put on the Council work plan two years ago following a proposed development that would require a zoning change. She said that some residents wanted more transparency around how zoning amendment requests are made and evaluated. She said the Council decided to try to establish unified practices that could be applied across the board and give people an idea of what to expect.

Councilor Cahan that CDC tried to create something that would be predictable for everyone. She said that there is not a straight line for every project, so the Committee created options. She said the Committee created a flow chart to show the different steps that a project might end up going through.

Chair Kuhn asked under what circumstances would something get sent back to the CDC for consideration after Council review. Councilor Cahan said it depends on the impact. The Council could desire more analysis before moving a request forward. She did not think a request would bypass the Council.

Councilor Asherman asked for clarification on whether the check list that is submitted needs to be approved by the Council.

The public hearing was scheduled for November 9.

Item 6 Update on the Community Vision and Values project.

Chair Kuhn provided background information on the Community Vision and Values Project. She said that residents had requested the opportunity to offer input on the process and to offer feedback on proposed

survey questions. She said that the initial phase of the project is to create a community survey that can be sent to everyone in town to develop the vision statement. Chair Kuhn outlined the project timeline.

Councilor Trickett said this survey is only the first portion of the overall project. He said a second survey is planned for this spring. He said this is not driving the vision statement and is a relatively small piece of the project.

Chair Kuhn opened the public comment period.

Paul Bergkamp of 22 Edgewater Road felt that these types of studies are more helpful when you know what problems you are trying to solve. He felt it would be good for Future iQ to know which areas the town is looking to tackle through the study. He felt that Falmouth is a collection of unique neighborhoods. He suggested identifying neighborhood champions to help encourage participation. He felt that Future iQ needs to be cautious about the how the questions are asked and how normalized for a normal, non-pandemic based, answer to the survey.

Amanda Henson of 4 Meadow Creek Lane agreed with the idea of community champions. She felt it was important to keep the pandemic filter on when answering the survey questions. She suggested a longer time period to respond to the survey than four weeks. She hoped that people would accept the end result if there was complete transparency about who is providing the information and how it is being used.

Rebecca Hatfield of 20 Alpine Drive agreed with the idea of neighborhood champions and hoped that this is an opportunity to hear from all residents. She thanked the Council for its openness and willingness to hear creative ideas on how to engage the community. She said that the comprehensive plan is an important process because it paints a picture of the community for the next decade. She said that the vision and values process is equally important for that reason. She provided the reminder that the project not only applied to current residents but also future residents. She said that ideas are not mutually exclusive. She supported bringing in a consultant.

Lee Hanchett of 21 Stone Ridge Road urged the Council to make sure that residents understand that the future of Falmouth hangs on this survey and participation by as many residents as possible. It felt it was not something to be taken lightly. He said this is an opportunity to find out what Falmouth residents really think. He suggested asking the community groups in Falmouth to get the word out to their members.

Lisa Joy of 142 Middle Road agreed with the neighborhood champion idea and Mr. Hanchett's point about neighborhoods. She asked if the town had considered reaching out to the community organizations and how to connect directly with the heads of the organizations. She said she was willing to go door to door and encourage people to take the survey. She was excited and hoped that residents will continue to have opportunities to provide input. She felt that four weeks was too short of a period of time to complete the survey with the holidays and the pandemic.

Kristen Farnham of 11 Madockawando Road appreciated the work that the Council and staff have put into this process. She said she reviewed Future iQ's qualifications and felt that the firm was a good choice for Falmouth. She suggested thinking about the fact that Falmouth is not an island and is part of a county and neighboring to a diverse city and how can Falmouth enhance its connections to its neighbors and be open to all of the benefits of having a closer connection to its neighbors.

Lise Kirk of 20 Nicholas Way said she was very interested and applauded the Council for choosing a consulting firm that seems to have good credibility and a lot of experience. She said she spoke with David and Celine Beurle of Future iQ and felt that they were incredibly open to working with the community. She thought they have worked with towns with similar issues and dynamics as Falmouth. She felt the Council

should press them to help come up with ideas and push them more for their insight beyond just the Town's plan.

Bonny Rodden of 10 Shoreline Drive thanked the Council for listening to residents and having a comprehensive approach to comprehensive planning. She agreed with a lot of the prior comments. She felt it was important to remember that the Council was elected by the residents of Falmouth. She wanted the Council to know that they represented her thoughts. She said the Town has a great staff who are being paid to do this background work and felt it was important not to micromanage them. She felt that reaching out to the community groups would be helpful. She expressed concern about neighborhood captains speaking on behalf of their neighborhoods.

Chair Kuhn closed the public comment period.

Chair Kuhn said that the planning team had initially talked about a four-week phase for the survey to run. She said that a sense of momentum and a deadline could encourage participation. She said the time period was not set in stone. She said the survey results will be tabulated in such a way so that respondents can be filtered out by demographic. She said the project portal will be open for the entire length of the project. She said information on the launch of the portal and how to access it will be in the upcoming Falmouth Focus. She said reaching out to community organizations was important. She encouraged people to provide feedback on the survey questions through the portal.

Councilor Trickett felt that the neighborhood champion idea could be effective in getting the word out. He said that the Council would appreciate anyone who is willing to help get the word out.

Councilor Johnson thought of it as community captains. He encouraged the people who provided public comment to spread the word.

Councilor De Lima said there was a point made about what are the problems that we are trying to solve and designing the process to give us the answers to those questions. She felt that the process should be driven by community feedback instead of the Council leading. Councilor Asherman said he heard it as if there are certain challenges that the Council is well aware of then the Council should be sure that input is being received that will help guide the conversation.

Chair Kuhn said another update will be provided at the next meeting.

Adjourn

Councilor Cahan motioned; Councilor De Lima seconded.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marguerite Fleming
Recording Secretary