



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Sandra Lipsey	-			Janice DeLima	√
William Lunt III	√	Anne Theriault	-	Dimitri Balatsos	√
Pam DiPietro-Hale	-	Chris Wasileski	√	Luc Walker	√

Council Liaison: -
Staff present: Nathan Poore, Theo Holtwijk
Others present: -

The meeting was started around 3:30 PM.

1. FEIC Status

Theo mentioned that a resignation note had been received from Phil Bixby due to his work load and schedule. He also said that for 2015-16, Councilor Farber had been appointed liaison to the FEIC.

The Council has requested the FEIC to come up with a proposed work plan for 2015-16. This proposal could also address the charge of the committee, status of the “+” members (Chris and Luc), frequency of meetings, etc.

2. Review of draft minutes of May 13, 2015 meeting

The draft minutes of the May 13, 2015 meeting were approved as written.

3. Develop 2015-16 Work Plan Recommendations for Implementation of the Economic Development Strategy

Theo handed out the Action Plan Matrix with the feedback from six committee members. There appeared to be consensus on actions 5, 7, 24, and 25 – all pertaining to zoning. He asked what other items the committee wished to add to the work plan.

Nathan stated that the permitting culture in Falmouth had been a topic of recent Council discussion with him. He suggested that actions 2, 4, 8, and 10 should be added to the list as staff is expected to work on them.

Janice wondered if there was going to be overlap with the committee overseeing existing initiatives that are being handled by staff. Nathan said that he envisioned staff to report out to the committee on an as-needed basis. One example of that is the business visitation.

Luc suggested sending a copy of the Economic Development Strategy to the businesses that will be visited, so their reaction to the plan could be noted during the interview.

Dimitri said he did not see the committee as an oversight committee, but as a working committee. He was interested in coordinating with other committees and better understanding where they were at. He mentioned as an example the Ad Hoc Zoning committee. If that committee made significant progress on zoning issues, why would the FEIC also work on that, he wondered. Bill stated that the zoning issues had been a priority for the committee from the beginning.

Nathan said he looked to the committee for leadership, coordination, and outreach. He said that a few zoning issues were already known. One was the square foot renovation threshold that required owners to upgrade their entire site. Another was signage.

Dimitri suggested adding task 5, 7, and 8 to the list.

Janice asked what the role of the committee could be. Dimitri said that the committee should engage the business community and act as go-between to help elevate the profile of the town to the business community. He saw actions 8 and 9 speaking to that.

Nathan said he was worried by possible fatigue of the business community. He felt that doing one on one business visitation may be more effective. Luc agreed that business visitation was important, as well as business assistance.

Nathan stated that the Falmouth Business Association effort seemed to be geared to a Buy Local type organization, which excludes certain businesses. That would make it hard for the Town to be active supporter of that effort. He suggested that the leaders of that effort and give the FEIC an update. Bill felt that every business should be able to take in a Falmouth Business Association if they wanted to.

Nathan suggested holding off on action 9 for a year. The committee agreed with that.

On goal 2, Bill suggested adding action 16. Nathan mentioned actions 13, 20, 21, and 22, as the Town was already doing these. Dimitri felt that these actions would help to enhance the Town's profile.

Janice felt that the performance metrics that were in the matrix were too ambiguous and that the work plan should include work to come up with better performance metrics for all work plan actions.

Nathan suggested adding action 35 and 34.

Dimitri was wondering about action 37.

Janice mentioned recent efforts in Bridgton to have visitors slow down and spend the night there. New events were being created, in addition to promoting what the community has, in an effort to increase foot traffic. She felt this could be a model for Falmouth.

Dimitri felt that that action needed a lot of homework. He was wondering if an entrepreneurship fair could be organized in Falmouth. The committee agreed to explore the opportunities in action 37, but not yet commit to organizing new events.

Bill felt that action 43 had potential, and could be grouped with 37. He suggested that some of the other actions could be grouped as well. He wondered if the committee should meet again to go over the action plan matrix.

Theo noted that action 47 also mentions zoning and that all zoning items could be grouped.

Nathan added actions 51 and 54 to the list.

Janice mentioned that there could be a Healthy Falmouth Facebook presence.

Nathan mentioned that action 55 is being worked on as Town-oschool collaboration on STEM.

Janice suggested adding a new item that addressed the Fine Arts Accreditation effort at the school. This would help student s put their skills to entrepreneurial use.

Nathan added actions 63 and 64.

The committee agreed that the performance metrics for each of these should be revisited.

As the committee structure, the FEIC agreed to meet once a month starting in August on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 3:30 PM. The FEIC agreed to request a permanent 9 members to the committee, which would allow Luc and Chris to remain on the committee.

4. Next Steps

Next step is for staff to prepare a draft 2015-16 work plan and send that out to the FEIC for individual comment. It is expected to be reviewed by the Town Council at its retreat on July 17, 2015.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Next Meeting

Next meeting will be August 19 at 3:30 PM.

The committee adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, June 22, 2015