



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Wednesday, June 21, 2017 Minutes

William Lunt III, <i>chair</i>	✓	Dimitri Balatsos	✓	Pam DiPietro-Hale	-
Ethan Gamage	✓	Sandra Lipsey	-	Mindy Schwartz	✓
Chris Wasileski	✓	Karen Farber, <i>Council co-liaison</i>	-	Charlie McBrady, <i>Council co-liaison</i>	-
Nathan Poore, <i>staff</i>	✓	Theo Holtwijk, <i>staff</i>	✓	Andrew Clark, <i>staff</i>	✓

Bill started the meeting at 5:34 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of April 19 and May 17, 2017 Meetings

The draft minutes of the April 19 and May 17, 2017 meetings were approved as written.

2. Review Project Updates

Theo led the committee through a handout outlining the status of various economic improvement and development projects.

The Route One North Committee has finalized the *Route 1 North Vision Plan*, and will present to the Council on July 10. Chris, chair of that committee, noted a strong consensus given varying viewpoints. Bill asked about infrastructure changes in the plan. Theo noted planned improvements at the Johnson Rd intersection, including a turning lane, and bike/ped infrastructure along Route 1.

Mr. Kennedy, owner of a sizeable parcel within the Route One North study area, does not agree with that committee's recommendations, and has informed the Town that he will independently pursue a change of use for his property to allow for healthcare, assisted living facilities, and other uses. Theo noted that the committee was split on the issue, and Nathan added that the minority opinion was included in the committee's report.

Staff and the Council are still exploring development opportunities in Executive Session for the Turnpike Spur ramp area. Nathan is hoping for a decision by July or August. Theo said there is an opportunity to remove three of the four ramps, also freeing up land on the west side of Route 1.

The Town has submitted a grant application to the State to assist in funding, studying, and implementing a plan for stormwater management in the Route 1 corridor. The Town hopes to be proactive and avoid any scenario of impaired waterways.

The Council has adopted a zoning amendment to increase the potential for expansion of smaller commercial buildings, including the Pratt-Abbott building on Route 1, which is for lease.

Also for lease is the Five County Credit Union building, which is moving to Yarmouth. A request had been made for a car wash on the site. The Council had intended for such a use to be prohibited in the VC-1 zone, and an oversight in the current ordinance is being corrected.

A development proposal for 72 new housing units at Foreside Estates has been shelved. Nathan noted that the Town is working on property rights for an additional connection between Route 1 and Clearwater Dr. Dimitri asked about the new Rivalries restaurant in that area. Nathan said that he has received no complaints.

The owners of the former Wendy's building are reviewing options for redevelopment of that site, and a building they own on Depot Rd. Nathan said there have been conversations discussing redevelopment of the entire block. He believed there was opportunity to create a high-value public space on the corner lot, and that in the long-term this may be a cornerstone of a future mixed-use village center.

A multi-municipality "Complete Street" study of the Route 1 corridor from Falmouth to Freeport is examining, among other things, the feasibility of a roundabout at the Route 1 and Route 88 intersection. The Town has recently completed temporary improvements at that location.

Irving intends to rebuild a gas station at the Route 1 and Bucknam Rd intersection. The site is zoned as VC-1, which promotes higher-density, with allowance for building heights up to 65 feet and front setbacks of zero to 20 feet. A team from Irving has met informally with staff to discuss layout options.

The University of Southern Maine and the Portland Society of Architects are studying growth opportunities in the greater Portland region as part of their "Growing Portland" effort. One such opportunity may be the Falmouth Shopping Center. Mindy said that a large building in Westbrook has recently been remade into a bowling alley with a bar and restaurant, which has been very well received.

Work is scheduled for Route 100 from Leighton Rd to Libby's Bridge, beginning in spring of 2018. The Leighton Rd and Falmouth/Mountain Rd intersections will be redesigned, and a sidewalk will be installed along Route 100 and along Leighton and Falmouth Roads. Nathan said that the full-depth reconstruction of the road will be a tough project, and that traffic management will be a challenge.

The West Falmouth Neighborhood Sketch Plan was commissioned as a concept plan for the development of a mixed-use neighborhood near Route 100. The plan was reviewed by LPAC and the Route 100 Committee, and presented to the Council. This was followed by a development proposal by David Chase.

Developer David Chase is pursuing a contract zone in that area for 152 housing units with some commercial development. The CDC is currently reviewing the application. Nathan said that while the amount of housing has raised concern, the mixed-use and village center feel is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mindy expressed support of the plan, and hoped that any development by Mr. Chase would be aligned with the neighborhood sketch plan. Nathan said the two plans were quite similar, and The Chase plan can be developed in phases.

Zoning amendments to the VMU and MUC zones have not been assigned by the Council yet. Nathan noted that the Chase proposal may provide direction how the zoning in this area should be changed.

The West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan, focusing on most of Falmouth west of I-295, will go to the Council in August. The plan identifies key bottlenecks and capacity issues with the current infrastructure, and Nathan, the Finance Director, and the Wastewater Superintendent are prioritizing long-term investments in an effort to keep rates as stable as possible.

A large business planning a major expansion is considering investing in their current site, moving to a different site in Falmouth, or moving to a different town altogether. Staff has met with the owner and conversations are ongoing.

3. Other Business

Theo and Nathan proposed a Falmouth business owners' forum to be hosted by the committee. The forum would provide an opportunity for dialogue between the Town and local business owners. The committee was receptive and directed staff to further explore the idea.

Staff plans to meet with local commercial realtors to learn more about the current market, with an eye towards vacancies on Route 1. Mindy asked whether those realtors could share their thoughts with the committee at a future meeting. Staff will pursue that suggestion.

Dimitri suggested moving the meeting time earlier in the day. Most were receptive to the idea, but agreed to discuss it with the members not in attendance.

4. Next meeting

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for July 19.

The committee adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark on June 22, 2017.