



# Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 18, 2017

William Lunt III <i>Chair</i>	-	Sandra Lipsey	-	Andrea Ferrante <i>Council Liaison</i>	✓
Dimitri Balatsos	-	Mindy Schwartz	-	Nathan Poore <i>Staff</i>	-
Pam DiPietro-Hale	-	Chris Wasileski	-	Theo Holtwijk <i>Staff</i>	✓
Ethan Gamage	✓			Andrew Clark <i>Staff</i>	✓

Others in attendance: Brian Bakke, Seth Blanchard.

The meeting was called to order at 4:31 pm.

### 1. Review of Draft Minutes from the September 20, 2017 Meeting

The draft minutes of the September 20 meeting were tabled as there was no quorum.

### 2. Revisions to the Committee Charge

In the previous meeting, the group discussed changes to the committee charge, agreeing to combine some goals, and remove others. Mindy provided a suggested revision, breaking out some of the goals and tightening the language. The group agreed that Mindy's revision was more clear and easier to read. Andrea noted a lack of reference to "business," especially regarding attraction and retention. Brian liked the original reference to workforce development. Seth wondered whether sustaining and growing the economy were competing interests. The group agreed to blend the two versions in a new draft.

### 3. Falmouth Business Forum

Theo provided an update on the Falmouth Business Forum. Steve Woods is confirmed as a keynote speaker and a number of potential dates in January 2018 were identified. Theo will check on availability and final costs for the venue before the date is finalized. The group leaned towards using the Portland Country Club. The group agreed to offer a cash bar and not pursue a private sponsor for that. Andrea will find a club member to sponsor the event.

### 4. Temporary Signs

The Community Development Committee requested input from the FEIC regarding the rules regulating temporary signs. As a result of a recent Supreme Court ruling, the content of signs can no longer be regulated, though the Town may regulate the physical aspects of signage (size, location, duration, etc.) At the last meeting, the group seemed in favor of prohibiting temporary signs in the public right-of-way.

The group noted that this would eliminate a large portion of, for example, political campaign signs. Ethan had reached out to a contact at Norway Savings Bank who had expressed disinterest in temporary signs due to their expense and varying regulations among municipalities. They preferred permanent LED signs, but those are currently not permitted in Falmouth.

Given the Supreme Court's decision was anchored in protecting free speech, Seth asked whether no signs at all would be legally sound. Andrea noted that the decision does allow municipalities to take an "all or nothing" approach. Seth suggested that an expiration on a sign permit and specifying the party responsible for removal might give the ordinance some teeth. The group recognized that enforcement would be a challenge.

Ethan mentioned that Norway Savings Bank, his employer, had no interest in temporary signs, but liked digital signs. Brian said it might be reasonable to limit the number of temporary signs on private property to two or three. Ethan noted it can be difficult to know where the right-of-way line is. Seth cautioned against limiting what can be said on public property. The topic will be continued at the next meeting.

#### **5. Council Workplan Assignment**

The current Council Workplan directs the committee to develop and prioritize its own Workplan. Theo requested earlier that the committee members evaluate and prioritize items from the 2015 economic development strategy action item matrix as a foundation of the work the committee would be doing over the next year. The group noted that the Falmouth Business Forum was already accomplishing some of the items. Andrea suggested focusing on items related to zoning and site plan review. Brian suggested items related to promoting Falmouth as a place for younger people and an alternative to the Portland market. Theo made note of the reference numbers and will pass that on to the other committee members.

#### **6. Project updates**

Theo said that he had no new updates. Ocean State Job Lot, Planet Fitness, and Verizon will soon be moving in to their spaces. The group briefly discussed the proposed Route 100 development, noting that more houses and people moving to the neighborhood would create more opportunities for businesses in that area.

#### **7. Other business**

Theo mentioned that he is exploring the idea of a developers forum, bringing together area developers, Town staff, elected officials, key landowners, and representatives of the banking industry to discuss opportunities for development in Falmouth. The group thought that was a great idea. Theo will discuss it with the Town Manager.

#### **8. Next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15 at 4:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark on October 19, 2017.