



# Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, December 20, 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>	✓

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 pm.

### 1. Review of Draft Minutes from the September 20 and October 18, 2017 Meetings

The draft minutes of the September 20 and October 18 meetings were tabled as there was no quorum.

### 2. Revisions to the Committee Charge

Dimitri had offered a rewording of the definition of economic development. The committee liked his definition, but agreed to the following change to allow for greater leeway in the committee's work:

"...consistent with the Town's ~~ordinances and policies, and long-term development plan.~~"

Sandra noted an inconsistency in the name of the committee, the Economic *Improvement* Committee, and the primary definition of economic *development*. The committee agreed to accept the rewritten definition as the definition of economic *improvement*, for consistency.

Andrea suggested adding policy and ordinance development to the committee's charge, so that the committee can work to address and change policies and ordinances that they feel may have an effect on business. The committee agreed.

### 3. Falmouth Business Forum

The group provided feedback on a draft letter of invitation to Falmouth business people for the upcoming Falmouth Business Forum. The group agreed that the language should be more succinct and direct. There was discussion about whether the invitation should be a letter on FEIC letterhead, a flyer, etc., but the committee left the final decision with staff.

The final invitation will be mailed to businesses in town. Staff will also post a notice on the Town's website and social media. *The Forecaster*, *MaineBiz*, and the Chamber will also be outlets.

#### **4. Temporary Signs**

The committee continued its discussion regarding temporary signs. Pam had reached out to a number of businesses in shopping plaza and heard from a few that they would prefer no signs in "common [building] areas." As this would be on private property, this is a matter between tenants and landlords. Sandra noted that the temporary signs used by Ocean State Job Lots and Planet Fitness were instrumental before their official openings, and limiting signs like those could significantly affect new businesses. The Town does allow such temporary signs for new businesses.

Andrea and Nathan said that the primary question was whether or not to allow temporary signs in the public right-of-way. The committee unanimously supported no temporary signs in the public right-of-way. The committee recognized that such an approach would reduce political signs, which would have to be placed on private property by permission only. The group also noted that it can be difficult to determine where the right-of-way line is.

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

Theo had received feedback on work plan items for the committee to consider. Overall, the members had identified numbers 2-7, 9, 13-15, 23-24, 28, 37, and 57 as items of interest.

Ethan suggested prioritizing the list. Theo agreed that the list may seem daunting, and that it will be very important to have the entire committee present so that discussion can occur. Nathan suggested the members consider the list and think about what items would be exciting and energizing to work on.

Andrea suggested simplifying and combining some tasks, and assigning them to small groups of committee members. She, Sandra, and Pam agreed to begin reaching out to businesses for feedback on the Town's site plan review and permitting processes.

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

Nathan reported that this year's Very Merry Falmouth had been a success. Fireworks and free events were big drivers in the attendance, estimated at 350-400 people on Friday night. He said next year could see double that number.

Ocean State Job Lot, Planet Fitness, and Verizon have opened in their new spaces. The committee agreed that people around town will be glad to see those spaces no longer vacant. The owner of the former Pratt-Abbott space wants to explore options for a contract zone on that parcel to allow for a drive-through. Nathan stated that the VC-1 district strongly dissuades drive-through uses.

#### **7. Next meeting**

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 17 at 4:30 pm. That meeting would need to be led by Nathan and Andrea as Theo and Andrew will be out of town.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark on December 21, 2017.