



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 4, 2018

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

Others in attendance: Steve Caminiti

The meeting was called to order at 4:38 pm.

1. Subcommittee Discussions

Due to light attendance, the members agreed to focus their discussion on the site plan process and zoning ordinances and their effect on businesses. Theo reminded the committee to draw from the Economic Development Plan as the source of work and discussion. He had out the action matrix of the plan. Pam noted that Actions 2 through 7 were closely related to the topic at hand.

Bill said that he had met with Ethan Croce, Director of Community Development. The committee agreed that inviting Ethan to a future meeting would be informative. Pam asked whether any ordinance changes would need to go before the Town Council. Theo confirmed that they would. He imagined the committee developing a limited number of changes, drafting a memo, and formally introducing them to the Council. The Council would then decide how to proceed, likely involving the Community Development Committee or the Ordinance Committee, and the Planning Board, with staff assistance along the way. The committee agreed that inviting Tom McKeon, chair of the Planning Board, to a future meeting would also be helpful.

Pam referred to Action 2, to survey businesses that have been through the site review process. The committee had performed some of this work in the past, with limited participation. Chris noted that it can be difficult for businesses to take the time to respond to a survey request. Theo added that there had been a limited pool of commercial applications to draw from.

Pam referred to Action 3, to assess neighboring municipalities' processes. Theo said that that recommendation addresses a perception that Falmouth is more difficult to work with than its neighbors, but that there is a tendency to only hear feedback when a party is frustrated with a particular policy or decision. Bill said that having flexibility and being able to compromise can go a long way in repairing that perception.

Theo summarized the committee's upcoming work in this area as addressing issues that fall into two buckets: First, addressing situations where the Town's policies may be perceived as unnecessarily restrictive, and the Town's responsiveness in addressing applicants' concerns. Second, addressing situations where the Town doesn't permit a certain use or form of development. He has received feedback that developers want the Town to be clear in its expectations and efficient in its responses. He recommended a "Zoning 101" overview from Ethan at a future meeting. Pam agreed, adding that she would like to be able to educate the business community on the Town's policies and direct interested parties in the right direction.

There was discussion about attracting new businesses to Falmouth. Steve asked about the process surrounding TD Bank. Theo said that that project had been driven largely by the developer. The Town's use of Tax Increment Financing provided an incentive. In the case of TD Bank, public sewer was installed in the area and considerable new taxable value was created as a result. Most of the additional revenue generated goes into paying for public infrastructure improvements in the area, as is also the case of the Route 1 South project and the upcoming Route 100 project.

There was discussion about the Route 1 growth area. Theo said that the general sentiment among the Council and Town staff is that properties along the corridor are generally underutilized. Recent zoning changes allowed for increased building height, reduced setbacks, flexibility with parking, and mixed-use development. The committee agreed that this would be important as markets change over time. Chris mentioned a rise in multi-generational housing. He noted that different demographic groups can both increase and reduce strain on municipal services. Theo added that a diversity of housing types has been a goal of the Town.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 18 at 4:30 pm. Theo will extend an invite to Ethan for a primer discussion on zoning and common issues applicants seem to have.

Theo stressed the importance of letting him know when anyone is unable to attend a meeting. This saves the time and money spent producing unnecessary packets.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark on April 5, 2018.