



# Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

## Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 15, 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>	✓

Attendance: Steve Caminiti

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

### 1. Handouts

Theo handed out a June PPH article regarding the passing of Sterling Kozlowski. Sterling was an original member of the FEIC. He attended five meetings in the first year before resigning due to his busy work schedule.

Theo also distributed the draft direction from the Council for the FEIC following the July 2018 retreat. The Council does not want the committee to work in the coming year on a review of site plan and zoning processes.

### 2. Project Updates

The committee discussed the proposed Falmouth Center development. Nathan stated that staff and Council leadership had contact with the developer and that four studies addressing the entire site were expected to be received at some point. The Committee discussed if, and when, it should provide input to the Council on the project. The sense was to do that when some, or all, of the studies were complete. Nathan also gave an update on the steps that are needed for the developer to acquire the adjacent MaineDOT land.

Mindy wanted to discuss the project more. Sandra felt that it was important that the stormwater requirements be met. Mindy stated that she agreed that Falmouth needed a center, but that the design of the project could be better and have more of a Town center feel. She also thought that there could be engagement of the project with the adjacent waterways, through trails. Dimitri thought that the concept plan made sense but would like to see more information be made available. Right now, he felt on the fence regarding the project. Chris felt that the review of the project details was more appropriate for the Planning Board, and not the Council as he felt it had little expertise in that area. He said that it was

important for the Council to allow the project to move forward. It seemed to him that some in the communicate just wanted to elongate the process in an effort to kill it.

Sandra stated that the project gave the FEIC an opportunity to comment on the anti-business profile of Falmouth and state a desire to bring development to Falmouth. She agreed that the committee should not be specifically reviewing the site design. Chris stated that the Council should let the project go through the process. He commented that some people who call for a “robust process” are intent on stopping a development. Sandra stated that the FEIC should be a group of broadcasters who work to wake up the commercial area of Falmouth and stimulate different kinds of comments to what the Council has heard so far. Chris agreed that choice of language is important and commented that not everyone is comfortable with speaking in public. He also cautioned the committee not to be perceived as being in bed with the developer.

Dimitri stated that the committee’s discussion reflected a positive sentiment towards the project. Pam said that based on the discussion she would begin to draft a committee statement. Nathan said that a high-level statement may be useful. He added that the committee may also want to address how the project meets the Economic Development Strategy and the Comprehensive Plan. Chris wondered how former and current councilors were perceiving the plan.

The committee discussed the Route 100 project. Theo and Nathan gave an overview of the project delays and current schedule. Pam wondered if the project was still under budget. Theo and Nathan said they were cautiously optimistic that this was the case and discussed the Town’s options if this was not the case. Nathan also stated that a public meeting was being scheduled for late August. He acknowledged that staff should have checked in sooner with the public and the Council to report project delays.

Nathan commented on a variety of other projects. He mentioned that discussions had been had with the owners of West Falmouth Crossing as the master plan for that area is now 20 years old. Staff is also in continued dialogue with Southworth to have its expansion happen in Falmouth. The current site is not served by public sanitary sewer. Nathan mentioned that a revised plan had been submitted for Homestead Acres with fewer amenities than the original plan. He noted that the revised plan only needs Planning Board approval. A revised plan has also been submitted for the Ferrante property.

Nathan mentioned the interest by Bateman in its Clearwater Drive property as well as the current idea for Tidewater to sell some of its remaining holdings to the Town. A portion of this land could be used for future expansion of the Wastewater Treatment facility. The Town could have an option agreement for the remaining land with the Falmouth Land Trust. The Trust could build a future headquarters and meeting facility there. Nathan stated that a stronger land trust would be in a better position to manage the community’s open space in the future, including that owned by the Town. Chris noted the support from local vendors for The Highlands for the conservation efforts in Topsham. Nathan gave a review how the financing could work out and aid that there was also potential for future wetland mitigation funds. He explained the Town’s approach regarding conservation easements on wetland areas. felt that there was no Town risk in doing this project. Mindy stated that supporting a land trust building was good for the Town.

Nathan also mentioned that the library was working on its expansion plans and that OceanView continues to be very busy on its campus. Chris felt that the library project needed to happen.

### **3. Review of Minutes**

The draft minutes of June 6 and 20, 2018 meetings were approved as written. Pam mentioned that she had reached out to each committee regarding their interest and attendance, and that Ethan Gamage had resigned from the committee.

### **4. Business Forum Planning**

Theo recounted the two forums that the committee had organized and asked what ideas the committee had for future forums.

Sandra felt that Eric Anton from Anton-Lemieux might be an excellent speaker to address how their success was linked to being in Falmouth. Nathan mentioned that someone from Southworth may be a good option. Mindy said that she was interested to hear business stories on how they were successful being in Falmouth and pearls of wisdom that could be shared. She also thought that a local business directory may be useful. Chris remembered the interest in creating a local business association. Theo mentioned that that effort did not come off the ground and that the people behind it were no longer in Falmouth. He suggested that OceanView was a great example of a successful business and that John Wasileski was an engaging speaker.

Sandra was wondering when the next business forum could be held. Dimitri suggested that a roundtable with multiple speakers be held. Sandra felt that a business story could take 20 to 30 minutes. She envisioned a ½ hour for a business story followed by a ½ hour of discussing FEIC issues, such as how do you go to a public hearing, how do you find out Town info on the web, etc. Dimitri felt that topics should have universal appeal.

Mindy agreed with both Sandra and Dimitri. If regular programming is envisioned, she said, then both could happen. She suggested that a roundtable with experts may be very instructive for young entrepreneurs who have questions on accounting, insurance or other matters. Dimitri said that he wanted to hear from a developer, a person who looks to the future. He envisioned a variety of programs. Chris commented that for any developer there may be a concern with oversharing and revealing future plans in the public eye. Dimitri clarified that the common denominators may be: what brought the company to Falmouth? Chris agreed with that and said that could speak to market share mix and business incubation conditions.

Pam suggested that the next forum could be in October. The committee agreed to ask Brian McNamara to be the guest speaker. Theo will pursue that. There is a possibility that the event could be held at Southworth with a possible tour afterwards. The committee liked the idea to have a West Falmouth event.

### **5. Next meeting**

No date was set for the next meeting. Theo will check on the availability of the committee members.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:44 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, August 16, 2018