



Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Pamela DiPietro-Hale <i>Chair</i>	✓	William Lunt III	✓	Andrea Ferrante <i>Council Liaison</i>	✓
Chris Wasileski <i>Vice Chair</i>	✓	Edward Pierce	-	Nathan Poore <i>Staff</i>	-
Brian Bakke	-	Mindy Schwartz	-	Theo Holtwijk <i>Staff</i>	✓
Paul Bergkamp	✓				

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

1. Review Draft Minutes of April 3, 2019 Meeting

The draft minutes of the April 3, 2019 meeting were unanimously approved as written by those in attendance.

2. Discuss Economic Strategy Report with goal of selecting item(s) for FEIC to work on and

3. Continue to discuss Committee Direction

Items 2 and 3 were combined. Pam said that the goal of the meeting was to discuss the direction of the committee, what and who it should focus on. She mentioned that in 2018 the committee had come up with a list of items that the Council reviewed at its retreat. The honed down list was distributed by Pam to the committee. She suggested that the committee focus on this list. Andrea said that these items were also in Council Work Plan.

Pam said that the zoning item the committee had suggested got tabled by the Council. Chris noted that the Community Development Committee was working on zoning and had economic development tasks. Pam asked how the committee felt about the items. The business incubation program with the library was discussed. Theo recalled that Jeannie Madden of the library had met with the committee about that, but that no specific action had followed that. The library is currently in process of doing its renovation and is operating out of the Mason-Motz Activity Center.

Pam said that the committee had formed subcommittees around each of the items and had decided to meet twice a month, once as subcommittees, and once as the full committee, but that that had not come to pass as there were too few people present. The committee had talked about expanding membership. She suggested that at this time the committee should take up the items as a full committee.

The committee talked more about the library program idea and what spaces may be available and suitable for that. Andrea suggested that it would be good to keep the forum series going. She suggested

that one could be on starting a business. Several possible speakers were suggested. Andrea said that she envisioned a panel of small business owners, perhaps from a particular industry, such as wellness. She envisioned a group of local businesses to speak on the topic. Some other industries were suggested.

Paul suggested a different angle. He saw the task of the committee as two-pronged. If the aim was jobs for Falmouth residents, one prong could be how people could create their own business, and what that would take. The other prong could focus on businesses that are in Portland, but where owners are concerned with the disadvantages of that location, such as traffic or parking. For those businesses Falmouth may be a good location. Chris thought that was a great idea as he had heard of companies that had such concerns. Pam wondered if the available should be assessed. Paul said that another question may be what type of businesses should be targeted. He was not advocating for a large business, but rather small to mid-size businesses. He suggested that there should be a narrow focus to certain type of businesses. Bill discussed the history of Tyler Technologies, which he said started as a small tech business. It developed Munis. Other tenants located in the same building, a former motel, which helped pay costs for Tyler.

Paul wondered if real estate in Falmouth should be assessed first, or if interested businesses should be assessed. Chris said that there were two development models. One was where a class A office space is developed, such as at Lunt, which then gets filled with tenants. The other model is where a raw property is developed as build-to-suit for a very specific tenant. He said that both models would work. The committee discussed the Rosemont Market renovation and the Amato's which is planned for the new Irving gas station. Bill stated that Amato's could not have done that development on its own, as commercial land in Falmouth is so expensive. Chris suggested that anchor tenants are key. Bill added that some businesses depend on a Route 1 location. He stated that in the past the Town had not been friendly to Adams & Fogg. He said that the Town should have helped that company do better as it wanted to expand.

Chris recalled a MEREDA forum where visioning was done for specific sites. He suggested that such could be done for Route 1 or Route 100, and that brokers and developers should be involved in that. Andrea commented that the Route 100 committee did such work and that that work was not lost. The committee had suggested a hotel at exit 53 for example. She was wondering what the next steps for such an effort were. Bill felt that the infrastructure that was happening on Route 100 was key. He said that in most cases the developer is asked to pay the infrastructure costs. Andrea asked what the next steps were, and how residents could participate in them.

Paul said that for the people who already live here the issue is improving their quality of life. Andrea said that she did not see that so much for Route 100, but more for Route 1. She said that the residential-mixed use projects that David Chase had proposed aimed to increase the neighborhood feel. She wondered how the committee support that happening? Pam asked if there was any space available on Route 100. Andrea said that there was always space available. Paul said that the awareness needs to be raised for businesses, such as restaurants, of the opportunity on Route 100. He suggested a mailer that showed the ten attributes of the area. He wondered who interested parties should talk to. Andrea said that it was hard to interest brokers for such an effort. She recommended that the committee focus on a targeted area, rather than Falmouth as a whole.

Chris said that on Route 1 North there was a plan as well, but that there were competing property owners, where some want to keep things the same, while others make waves. Bill recounted the Tidewater charrette and felt that effort was a success, with 40 or so people participating. Andrea asked

who initiated that effort. Bill said that Bateman was a key player, who took the charrette results and came with his own plan. Some charrette ideas did not fit in that, and then the economy soured, but the end result was still a success. Bill felt that a charrette should be done with developers.

Chris mentioned that in Topsham there was an anti-Nimby task force to speak up regarding projects. He saw nimby as a problem in Falmouth. Andrea felt that it was important for the committee to show up when projects are being discussed. She acknowledged that this would take some organization. Pam stated that the position statement did get some critique.

The committee returned to the topic of the forum. Andrea suggested starting with a small business forum that has 3-4 people on a panel. The committee discussed where this forum should be held. The committee agreed to explore a site in West Falmouth. Andrea will check on TD Bank and the community room at the credit union. The committee settled on June as a good month for the forum and felt the forum should be targeted for businesses that had less than 20 employees. The committee discussed if it should focus on one industry or go across industries. When asked, Theo suggested that it may be helpful to go across industries and ask what type of advice would be most helpful for someone starting a business. Bill said that the focus for him was improving existing businesses. Paul wondered how many businesses the committee wanted to grow. Bill said that to him it did not make a difference if a business in Falmouth was for Falmouth residents or for workers from elsewhere. He felt that Falmouth was not business friendly.

Andrea commented that the Council did not look negatively on the Route 1 recommendations at all. She said that effort had been put on hold just like the Route 100 zoning effort by the CDC was put on hold. She felt there was an opportunity to get involved and get connected to whatever revisions the Comprehensive Plan may get. She also suggested that perhaps the committee should get a liaison position on LPAC, just like LPAC has liaison position on FEIC. She said that any committee suggestions could be passed on by her to the Council through regular committee updates.

Andrea wondered if the committee should invite the current five council candidates to come and speak. The committee liked that idea. There were two meetings between now and the election: May 1 and May 15. The committee wondered if it could endorse any candidates but decided not to do that. The committee settled on asking the candidates to come to its May 15 meeting at 4:30 PM. Pam will send out the invitation. The committee will think of some questions that each candidate should be asked. This will be discussed at the May 1 meeting, as well as firming up the date for the next business forum

4. Other Business

There was no other business.

5. Next meeting

The committee is scheduled to meet again on May 1, 2019.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, April 19, 2019