

**Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 8, 2020**

**Present:**

Chris Wasileski, <i>Chair</i>	✓	Mindy Schwartz	✓	Marguerite Fleming, <i>Staff</i>	✓
William Lunt, III, <i>Vice Chair</i>	✓	Ozan Tüzmen	✓	Theo Holtwijk, <i>Staff</i>	✓
Paul Bergkamp	-	Nicholas Weightman	-	Nathan Poore, <i>Staff</i>	-
Kevin Moss	✓	Janice De Lima, <i>Council Liaison</i>	-		

**Others Attending:** Dennis Bach

Chris started the meeting at 4:35 pm.

**1. Establish Quorum.**

- Quorum was established.

**2. Elect a Chair.**

- Ozan motioned to elect Chris as chair; Mindy seconded. Motion carried 4-0, Chris abstained.
- Kevin Moss motioned to elect Bill as Vice Chair; Ozan seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**3. Review and Approve the Draft Minutes of the December 18, 2019 meeting.**

- Ozan motioned to approve the minutes; Bill seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**4. Overview by Staff of Meeting Materials Provided for This Meeting.**

- Theo said that he provided the three draft versions of the Falmouth Business League concept.

**5. Opportunity for Members of the Public to Address the Committee on Any Item Not on the Agenda.**

- Chris opened the public comment period.
- Dennis said that he learned to listen before providing comments. Bill asked if there was a particular reason why Dennis chose to attend. Dennis said mainly observational. He just retired. He and his wife owned a restaurant for several years.
- Chris closed the public comment period.

**6. Update on Community Outreach by Committee Members Regarding the Falmouth Business League Concept.**

- Chris is still working on his interviews due to business leaders having to reschedule over the holidays. He plans to share a transcription of his interview with Steve Woods with the

committee. The main comment he has been hearing is how will the League be different than the Chamber.

- Mindy is also still working on her interviews. She plans to submit transcripts.
- Bill still has two interviews to complete. He will provide the transcripts.
- The Committee reviewed the latest draft of the concept document.
  - Bill said felt that it would be important not to connect the Town too directly with the Business League
  - Chris felt that the point of the Business League would be to act as a liaison between the business community and Town but in an adjunct role as FEIC members are not on Town staff
  - Mindy said that the issue with keeping the League separate from the Town is who would be responsible for governance
    - Chris felt that FEIC members would need to step up to help with governance
  - Chris asked if the League would host events?
  - Mindy asked if there was a way that the Business League could be an ad-hoc entity of the FEIC?
    - Bill said that is where the line gets blurry. He felt that FEIC needed to emphasize that the expectation would be that the League would eventually run itself. He said that the people he interviewed agreed with that idea.
    - Mindy pointed out that the concept document states that FEIC would only serve as a conduit. FEIC still needs to figure out whether this is something that the business community needs.
  - Kevin asked if this was something that the business community needs or something that the Town needs?
    - Chris said that the Town is already trying to nurture local businesses so this could be an extension of Theo's role but there is the conundrum of association with the Town.
- Theo said that Nathan plans to meet with the Regional Chamber of Commerce Board on January 9. He asked Theo to provide an update on the FEIC's activities surrounding the Business League concept. Theo said that he included a request for a member of the Chamber board to attend the FEIC and vice-versa.
  - Chris said the he thought it would be a great idea for a member of the Chamber board to attend FEIC meetings and for the FEIC chair to attend Chamber meetings.
- Kevin said that since the Town is interested in more business exposure, it should start the League effort and deliver the vehicle for it. Later it can be passed on to the businesses. He felt that the intent of a handover could be made clear in the bylaws of a future organization.
- Bill felt that that kind of an approach could work but cautioned that it will take time. He said that there was another approach to getting business involvement and recounted the bad publicity that led to the forming of the FEDC some years ago. The conflict that was present then has gone away and the FEDC has too. He said his observations were based on the history collected in his 76 years.
- Chris said that he tried to synthesize Paul's December 13<sup>th</sup> draft. He saw three themes: communication, collaboration, and tax revenue enhancement. Chris recounted a Topsham article he read about outgoing Town manager Rich Roedner stating that he was proud that

during his tenure the commercial tax base had increase to 21-22% from 5%. This led to the tax base being more stable and sustainable. He said that taxes are always an issue with people. He noted that he felt comfortable contacting Town officials with idea and wanted others to be able to feel so to. He felt that maybe the League could help with that. He commented on the range of businesses that exist in the community and their varying needs.

- Chris commented on his discussion with Steve Woods, who commented that time is money. He meant that if businesses get involved in the League initiative, they expect a return or feel fulfilled in some manner. Chris said that the Chamber has networking events, but also educational events focused on issues. He felt the League could hold forums, but that some remote data collection was also useful since some businesses just cannot come to meetings.
- Kevin said that, in that case, forums could be held at the businesses who are unable to come.
- Chris thought that was a good idea, and that such could also provide indirect support for those businesses.
- Kevin suggested that attendees could pay for their own refreshments at small businesses.
- Chris wondered if it was time to host the first forum.
- Mindy and Bill said yes, and that it could help to brainstorm ideas for the League.
- The discussion went to where it could be held, how big the space needed to be, that the west and east side of town should be equally catered to, and when it could be held.
- Mr. Bach, who was a guest, offered his perspective as a former restaurant owner. He felt that it could be hard for an owner to attend to their own business and to forum proceedings at the same time.
- Places to hold a forum that were suggested included Foreside Tavern, Madden's, and Millie's Skillet.
- Mindy urged the group that the Chamber should be talked to before the first forum is held. The group agreed with that.

#### **7. Other Businesses: Updates by Committee Members and Staff.**

- Other business: Theo reminded the committee that the West Falmouth Crossing Feasibility Study Forum will be held on January 21 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall. As this study will explore development opportunities, it is a good topic for FEIC members to participate in.

#### **8. Set Date and Agenda for Next Meeting.**

- The next meeting will be January 22. At that time completed League interviews and transcriptions of discussions will be reviewed as well as the Business League's kick-off event.

#### **9. Adjourn**

- The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Draft meeting minutes prepared by Marguerite Fleming and Theo Holtwijk on January 16, 2020,