



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee + (LPAC+)

Thursday, March 23, 2017 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Paul Bergkamp	√	Kurt Klebe	√	Breana Gersen	√
Sam Rudman	√	Sandra Lipsey	-	Becca Casey	√
Tom McKeon, PB representative	-	Ned Kitchel, Council Liaison to LPAC	√	Sarah Boudreau, Conservation Commission representative	√
Caleb Hemphill, Council Liaison to LMAC	-	Ted Asherman, LMAC representative	√	Jenny Grimm, Falmouth Land Trust	√
Lucky D'Ascanio, Town staff	-	Bob Shafto, Open Space Ombudsman	Via phone	Dave Gagnon, LMAC representative	√
Theo Holtwijk, Town Staff	√				

The meeting was started around 6:00 PM.

1. Review of Minutes

The draft minutes of the February 23, 2017 were approved as written.

2. Continued Discussion of Approach to 2017 Falmouth Open Space Plan

Theo distributed the reorganized topics, a draft plan outline, and the open space questions that had been asked on prior opinion surveys. He walked the committee through the outline. The committee thought the outline was well done. Theo suggested that the next steps could be: production of the open space data and maps and initial development of survey questions.

The committee discussed the survey aspect of the project.

Bob asked if Theo had looked into a 1990's open space survey that Mark Eyerman had worked on. Theo will see if he can find any other surveys.

Becca suggested looking at some additional sections of the 2011 survey as they may have questions that relate to open space. Theo will do that.

Sam was wondering how important it was to do a statistically-relevant survey versus a Survey Monkey survey. The statistical survey comes at an expense.

Ned said that that would be a budget question. He wondered if the inventory that Tom Armstrong had done should also be looked at.

Ted explained the difference between the two types of survey.

Becca said that for the Comprehensive Plan the committee wanted specific, defensible input.

Ted noted that there had not been much community push back on open space issues.

Ned concurred and stated that the bond questions had always turned out favorably.

Paul stated that the type of survey depended on what the committee wanted to accomplish. If it included a high conflict issue, then a statistical survey may be more appropriate.

Sam felt that the survey also served an educational objective.

Ned wondered if there could be money saved on a statistical survey if the same questions were asked.

Theo suggested that a statistical survey would take more time to seek funding for, create, and execute, which may affect the committee's work schedule, since getting some public feedback early may help to set a direction for the plan.

Ned stated that he would be happy to advocate for a statistical survey with the Council as long as he had help to explain the need for it.

Breana was wondering if a preliminary survey could be done.

Sam was wondering if the public would be exhausted responding to surveys.

Jenny stated that people seem to like open space, but at what cost. At what point, if it comes at the expense of other budget items, might support for open space go down? What is the "safe zone" for open space?

Sam wondered if that was the biggest issue the committee had to consider.

Ted felt that the committee was getting ahead of itself.

Kurt agreed and stated that it was important to ask what information the committee needed and have the survey questions flow from that.

Jenny was wondering what inventories had already been completed. Ted added: and if those inventories are accessible.

Bob stated that the open space tax program parcels were always changing, but could be readily obtained.

Kurt said that it was also important to know where there were conservation easements that had no public access, and what easements were held by entities other than the Town or land trust.

Becca agreed that that would allow a more complete picture to be compiled.

Bob suggested that US Fish and Wildlife might be able to assist as well.

Jenny said that it was important to know the quantity of protected open space if goals are to be set. The group agreed that quality of open space was important as well and that can be difficult to assess.

Kurt was wondering how many unfragmented habitat blocks there were left.

Breana asked if there were key acquisition properties that had been identified. She cautioned the group to be careful with any mapping and not identify any target properties.

For now only existing open spaces will be mapped.

Sam said that an overlay with the growth area would be useful. He suggested that mapping will require some Town funding.

Ned felt that it was important to get a handle on desirable acquisition targets. He wondered if such targets had been scored by the Town's criteria yet.

Bob responded that properties that had not yet been acquired had not been scored, but that they typically bordered existing open spaces or were large tracts with high natural resource values.

Dave added that properties that provided connectivity were important too.

Sarah wondered what the public understands of the ecological value of open space. She and Ted had recently attended an invasive plants conference.

Ted said that the conference discussed the impact of invasives and that he was not aware how extensive it was. He noted that the last survey was activity-based and did not address open space values.

Jenny agreed with that and said that resiliency was an aspect that should be explored in a survey, as well as healthy ecosystems, and that open space should be examined from all aspects.

Ted was wondering if the public needed to be educated first before asking people to respond to a survey.

Kurt mentioned a community conservation movie that he had recently seen in Brunswick and that he thought would be very worthwhile for a Falmouth audience.

Becca made note of the various terms that had been mentioned that the committee found important: ecological health, resiliency, health and wellness.

Dave added: quality of life.

Sarah said that all of these were important and that we needed to be concerned with ecological health 500 years from now.

Jenny felt that the Town's tercentennial was a good opportunity to reflect on what has changed in Falmouth.

Paul felt that it was a good opportunity to see through a survey where people in Falmouth were regarding the beliefs that the committee had just mentioned. That way it might be known how much education the committee needed to do.

Jenny added some more words that she felt should be in a vision statement: sustainability, economic impact, intact systems. She felt that that would provide the rationale for the priorities of the plan.

Kurt stated that other elements should not be ignored as well, such as access, recreation, scenic and esthetic aspects, as people value those as well.

Becca mentioned and explained the term biophilia.

Jenny noted the importance of diversity of the landscape.

Kurt mentioned the interest in community gardens as another aspect of open space and meeting community needs. He noted the routes that immigrants take and how tending a plot of land can make them feel connected to their home country.

Paul said that these are evolving concepts as these projects are happening as we speak.

Theo mentioned the request by the Town Council for LPAC to review the West Falmouth Neighborhood work in April and how that affects the Open Space work by LPAC. Staff could work on the inventory, and perhaps the committee could weigh in on survey question suggestions.

Bob asked if subcommittees were still being planned to start work on some outcome pieces.

Breana thought that it was too early to do that and that the group needed to come together first before splitting up.

Sam suggested that maybe the next tasks were not that complicated. He suggested that each person submit five sample survey questions to Theo, so a list could be prepared.

Jenny offered to do some editing on the plan outline document and provide a proposed definition for “open space.” All committee members were requested to offer outline and definition suggestions or links to other open space plans to Jenny.

The committee thought that a baseline survey could be done through Survey Monkey and that if there were more complicated issues that arose that needed to be tested, such could be done through a statistical survey.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 13. It will be a joint meeting with the Route 100 Committee to review the West Falmouth neighborhood work. That project is also expected to be reviewed on April 27. LPAC will get back to the open space work on May 11.

LPAC+ were encouraged to attend on 4/13 and 4/27 as it is a public meeting. In addition, all members are reminded to send their five -survey questions to Theo.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, March 28, 2017