



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee + (LPAC+)

Thursday, July 13, 2017
Minutes

Attendance

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Sam Rudman <i>Chair</i>	-	Ted Asherman <i>LMAC</i>	-	Michael Vance <i>Falmouth Land Trust</i>	✓
Sandra Lipsey <i>Vice Chair</i>	-	Paul Bergkamp	-	Jenny Grimm <i>Falmouth Land Trust</i>	✓
Caleb Hemphill <i>Council Chair</i>	-	Sarah Boudreau <i>Conserv. Commission</i>	-	Bob Shafto <i>Open Sp. Ombudsman</i>	✓
Claudia King <i>Council Liaison to LPAC</i>	✓	Becca Casey	-	Theo Holtwijk <i>Staff</i>	✓
Aaron Svedlow <i>Council Liaison to LMAC</i>	-	Dave Gagnon <i>LMAC</i>	✓	Lucky D'Ascanio <i>Staff</i>	-
Tom McKeon <i>Planning Board</i>	✓	Breana Gersen	✓	Andrew Clark <i>Staff</i>	✓
		Kurt Klebe	-		

Andrew started the meeting at 6:05 PM.

1. Review of draft minutes from the May 25 and June 22, 2017 meetings

The draft minutes of the May 25 and June 22 meetings were tabled as there was no quorum.

2. Open Space Plan discussion

Andrew led the committee through a draft copy of an open space database and a series of maps visualizing some of the data. The database is intended to assist the committee in identifying what and where the open space resources are in town.

Bob said that some of the acreage figures were not correct. Andrew stressed that the data comes from a number of sources which were often contradictory, and that the accuracy of the database will continue to be refined. Tom asked whether there were additional subdivision set-aside parcels (shown in blue on the "Protected open space" map) not shown. Andrew estimated the database to be perhaps 90 percent complete, but that other sources may uncover additional data that should be included.

The first map, "Protected open space", showed three broad categories:

- Land owned by the Town, the Falmouth Land Trust, and other organizations like the State of Maine, Portland Trails, the Maine Audubon Society, etc.

- Subdivision set-aside parcels, which are privately-owned.
- Easements held by the Town, the Land Trust, and other organizations.

Andrew noted that many parcels belong to more than one category (e.g. an easement held by FLT on a parcel owned by the Town, or a subdivision set-aside owned by the Town), and so may not be displayed as expected.

The second map, "Working lands", showed parcels held in the tree growth and farmland tax programs. The map shows parcels as solid if they are completely held in the program, and hatched if they are only partially held. (For those parcels which are only partially held, it is difficult to know precisely where on the property the portion held in the program is without consulting individual paper maps.)

Andrew said the map could be useful in regards to the "production bucket" discussed at earlier meetings, and that identifying marine resources (shellfish harvesting areas, fishing and lobstering areas, etc.) would be a nice addition. Breana asked whether there were additional working lands in town that are not part of the tax programs. Andrew said that that was hard to answer definitively, but one notable example is Maine Coast Vineyards, which seems to fit with the definition of working land, but is not held in the farmland tax program. That parcel is shown on the map in a different pattern to reflect its status. Bob added that he could think of several properties with forestry-related land uses that would not show up in the tree growth tax program.

The third map, "Natural resource protection", showed how the protected open space overlapped with the natural resources identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The resources of concern are derived from the Beginning with Habitat maps and include wetlands, shoreland zone, stream buffers, areas of endangered species sightings, high-value habitat, and undeveloped lands. The resources are visually merged and overlaid with the protected open spaces from the first map, yielding:

- Protected resources, where protected open space overlaps a natural resource.
- Non-protected resources, where natural resources remain unprotected.
- Protected non-resources, where protected open space exists in an area lacking an identified natural resource.

Breana cautioned against the use of the term "non-resource" on the map. Theo agreed, adding that it was only a shorthand for the draft maps and was not intended to signal that an area has no value. Jenny pointed out large developed areas outside of the Growth Area, particularly around residential subdivisions. Tom said that the market was trending towards two-family homes, which are not subject to the four-step subdivision review process. In this way, builders are getting around the intent of greater densities of the ordinance.

Theo led the committee through a revised draft of plan fundamentals, including the definition, scope, vision, and goals of the plan. Several committee members provided comments in advance to Theo on the definition, scope, and vision of the plan. Breana added that she would favor a broader definition, especially one that considered outdoor recreation potential of a space.

Theo provided a reference to work done in Seattle, noting the obvious difference in scale between Seattle and Falmouth, but asking whether there was anything from Seattle that the committee could see applying in Falmouth's plan. Mike said that he appreciated the reference to equity and accessibility, and that Falmouth's plan should acknowledge differing abilities of users and the distribution of open space around town.

Dave interpreted the goal of the plan as updating the original Greening of Falmouth plan with a sense of permanence and reconfirming support from the Council and general public for the plan.

Theo said that he saw the plan doing three things: Painting a picture of the potential future inventory and condition of open space in Falmouth, providing the tools to realize that future, and providing a history of open space conservation and education on the importance of open space conservation.

Claudia asked whether the plan should address funding. Tom pointed to goal #18, to "review and update, where needed, the Town's funding strategy for land acquisition." Jenny stressed the importance of funding for management work as well, noting that the financial sustainability of FLT was a challenge. Bob said that the Town has a tight system for acquisition and management of open space. He also noted that there was a financial plan that was not included in the original GOF plan.

Breana asked whether goal #2 was specifically tailored to the Growth Area as opposed to the Rural Area. Theo said that goal came out of an earlier exercise. Dave noted that as the town grows, the ability to walk or bike to spaces like pocket parks would be important, and that the plan should prevent losing any existing public recreation space.

Jenny asked whether the plan should address climate change. Bob said that in response to sea level rise, land acquisition strategies may change. Breana hoped that bigger tracts would provide healthier, more diverse, and more resilient open spaces in the face of climate change. Mike also thought it should be addressed, noting legal challenges especially with coastal parcels. Tom thought addressing climate change would be hard, and that its ramifications were speculative. Claudia felt that focusing on resilience would make the plan more powerful, and Breana pointed to goal #4. Dave said that the plan should not try to solve all the world's problems.

Theo said the next steps would be to tighten up the list of goals. He asked whether FLT would care to share the results of its recent survey of members, as it might provide guidance to the Town for seeking similar input from the general public. Jenny and Mike agreed. Andrew will continue to verify and clean up the database. He said that once the data is in place, it will be easier for the committee to request new maps.

Claudia asked whether it would be useful to have a specific number to express a successful outcome of the plan, either in number of acres of land protected, or a percentage of the town's area, etc. The committee was receptive to the idea, although a specific target is unknown right now. Theo concluded by saying that his general sense of the committee was that it felt that there is more land in Falmouth that should be protected.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 27.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Andrew Clark, July 17, 2017.