



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC)

Thursday, April 11, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Attendance

| Name | Present | Name | Present | Name | Present |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|--|---------|
| Breana Gersen <i>Chair</i> | - | Rich Jordan <i>Planning Board</i> | - | Claudia King <i>Council Liaison</i> | - |
| Becca Casey <i>Vice Chair</i> | ✓ | Sandra Lipsey <i>LPAC+</i> | ✓ | Theo Holtwijk <i>Staff</i> | ✓ |
| Dimitri Balatsos | ✓ | Sam Rudman <i>LPAC+</i> | ✓ | | |
| Paul Bergkamp | ✓ | John Winslow | ✓ | | |

Others attending: Keith Noyes, Karen Farber

The meeting was audio-recorded.

Becca started the meeting at 6:00 pm. There was a discussion if there was a quorum or not. John contended that Sam and Sandra did not count towards the committee's quorum.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of March 28 and April 2, 2019 Meetings

The committee agreed to defer the review of the draft minutes of the March 28 and April 2, 2019 meetings until the next meeting, so it has enough time to read them.

2. Other Business

Sandra suggested that under "other business" the committee discuss how it should conduct itself and what its rules of conduct were.

Theo said that the committee also agreed to revisit its regular meeting date and time at this meeting.

Sam suggested to take up other business first. The committee agreed.

John stated that he talked with Linda in the Clerk's office and that she had said that the LPAC+ members were ad hoc, non-voting members who were advisory to LPAC. He felt that they should not count to a committee quorum. Sam asked what the point of John's comment was.

The committee agreed that it would be good for Becca as Vice Chair to seek a written clarification on this issue.

Sam wondered what the goal of John's question was. Was it so LPAC+ members could not speak?

Sandra stated that historically LPAC+ members have voted.

John felt that LPAC had a vague agenda and that there should be goals set for every meeting.

Becca suggested that tonight's agenda could have said "begin discussion of..." to make it clearer where the committee was at.

John said that a more specific agenda might avoid the committee going down one path, and then changing directive. He felt that that was not an effective way to do business.

Theo explained where the main topic of tonight's agenda had come from. It was a suggestion from Councilor Kuhn at the last Council meeting. In response to Nathan's question if LPAC should put a temporary hold on its activities, the Council said no and concurred with Councilor Kuhn's suggestion. There was no more specific direction from the Council; on this, hence the wording of the agenda item.

Becca concurred that this is how the LPAC agenda came about.

Sandra said that she was sorry she was away. She had watched the video of the 4/2 committee meeting. She suggested that the committee's agenda includes "establish quorum" and "review of meeting packet," so it is clear that Theo was not in charge. She said that these matters went to the culture of the committee. She suggested also adding "set agenda for next meeting" and "public comment." She noted that at the 4/2 meeting there were members of the public who wanted to speak again, but did not know if they could do so or not.

Becca said she agreed 100% with Sandra. She noted that the committee rarely had any public present, and never had the lens to determine how it should handle that. She said she did not expect to set the committee's agenda.

John said that there should be a template for all committees, so agendas could follow a standard format. He stated that due to a conflict he needed to leave at 6:00 PM.

Sam stated that the committee rarely voted on anything in eight years.

Sandra said that Sam's style was a consensus style, and that that style was not working now. She felt that the committee needed to be clear how it conducted its business, so the public would know what to expect and how it can participate. She suggested adding a welcome statement on the committee's agendas and specifically state how long people can speak for, say 7 minutes. She said that it was time for a major change.

Dimitri said that he agreed with that but felt that participation should not be open-ended.

John said that it was fair to adjust the amount of public speaking time depending on how many people may be present, so it would open an opportunity for someone else to speak.

Sandra said that the committee should welcome and inform the public and that its comments should be limited based on the agenda. She said that managing the meeting was not the same as denying anyone to speak.

Becca stated that she was unprepared for the 4/2 meeting and was interested to find out if there was more guidance on how to run meetings in the Town's bylaws and charter.

Theo said there likely would be little guidance in the bylaws on these items.

Sam stated that other than at the forums there had only been significant participation at the last LPAC meeting, and that at all other committee meetings, everyone who was there spoke. He felt that the suggested formula was a good idea.

Dimitri reminded everyone that LPAC was an advisory committee and that its agenda was set by the Council.

Sandra said her recent absence was because she was in the hospital, but that she had read and followed everything. She noted that there was no provision for determining a proxy in such events, and that a proxy might help with a quorum. She said it made her feel disenfranchised as she had put a lot of time in the committee.

Theo noted that some members, such as Sam, had called in when they could not be there, but that there was no protocol for that either.

Dimitri said that a proxy needed to be specific and could not be for an entire agenda.

Sandra commented on the timing of materials as some materials were only available at the meeting.

Dimitri said that these were matters of etiquette and protocol.

John said that the Council should develop such a protocol and that this discussion should be communicated to the Council.

Theo brought up the issue of meeting time. He said that Breana had made it known in earlier meetings that she worked in Augusta and that 6:00 PM was the earliest she could typically come to a meeting.

John stated that he had conflicts on the 2nd and 4th Thursday due to his involvement with the Lions. He noted that the Lions did not meet in the summer.

The committee settled on meeting at 5:30 PM.

Sandra said that this should be for the time being only.

Sam added that 5:30 PM was not an optimal time for him.

3. Discussion of Suggestions for Communication, Education, and Outreach

John said he had three outreach suggestions. One was to do what Cumberland does in setting up placard signs in different locations around town to announce specific issues or events, such as that registrations are due. He felt this could be done for RA zoning, or to announce a road race, etc. He said that the key was to change the sign message frequently, so people take notice of the signs. His second suggestion was to seek out spokespersons from different neighborhoods, people who can help to get

the word out on an issue. His third suggestion was to hang posters at community meeting places, such as Town Landing Market, Waldo's, and Skillins. He said that people were overwhelmed with e-mails, and that posters might be more effective.

Becca said that the committee did do posters with the Comprehensive Plan surveys and had posted flyers around town. She said that the committee had not done this frequently.

John felt that posters were a cost-effective way compared to postage.

Becca said that if the committee could define neighborhoods, it could also perhaps identify spokespeople in each neighborhood. She felt that this was a good idea. She said that this was the silver lining of having so much public attention right now.

Dimitri said that this was a hot button issue and wondered if this would be done for every committee. He felt that such could present a logistical problem. He thought that it should vary depending on the topic. He noted that he was impressed with the participation that the committee had received.

John cited an example when the dinghy fee was changed and people got upset as they did not know about it. He said that the Town did not put up a sign at the Town Landing.

Dimitri commented on the Very Merry Falmouth event, and said that Sandra had put a lot of time in that. He suggested to be more selective in what the Town takes on. He agreed with having a well-publicized, itemized meeting agenda.

John stated that the proposed wayfinding signs were not as useful as the placard signs he proposed. He also felt that the banner over Route 1 was of limited value.

Sam said that it was important to be thoughtful about the various ways in which people get their information. He suggested bold e-mails and a need to be expansive. He jokingly remarked that the Liberty tax guy at the street corner in Portland was an idea that should be considered to get people's attention.

Becca said that a lot of people are online. She mentioned the "Next Door" app as one way in which she and others were getting neighborhood information. There was also Facebook and Twitter, she said.

Theo said that the Town now actively uses Facebook and Twitter to get the word out.

Dimitri said that as efforts were being made to communicate, it was also important to harness the feedback that the Town received.

Theo said that he had been collating all comments that had come in via e-mail, so that the committee and the Council could read them. Comments had also been posted on the Town's website.

John said that he found the Forum summary by Susan Gallant helpful. As it was 6:00 PM, John left the meeting.

4. Public Comment

Becca asked Keith and Karen if they had any comment on what had been discussed so far.

Keith Noyes said that Sam and Sandra were valuable assets to the committee. He was aware of the attorney's opinion on their membership. He suggested that the committee look for more input than what it was getting. He was disturbed at a recent committee meeting where there were only 4 or 5 members present and where decisions were being made with just two people voting for it. He felt there were not enough people present to do so. He felt that was frustrating to watch.

Theo asked if Keith felt that LPAC+ members should have a vote or not. Keith replied that Sam and Sandra were valuable members and that the rules should be changed.

Sam asked if Keith would bring that suggestion to the Council. Keith said he would do that, if the committee would like him to.

Sandra said that this was one of the reasons why every committee member was allowed to vote. She cited that this was done with the open space plan work as well. She felt that if the direction of the Council was that LPAC+ had no vote, that would limit things.

Becca said that voting by everyone would bring the LPAC+ members in.

Keith asked if there was a difference between ad hoc members and LPAC+ members.

Theo replied that they were the same. Both were temporary assignments for a specific purpose.

Keith thought that the appointment of LPAC+ was confusing.

Sandra said that prior LPAC+ members have made huge contributions to the work of the committee.

Dimitri emphasized that the key in this was that the ad hoc members were there for a specific purpose only.

Karen Farber said a detailed agenda would serve everyone as it would help focus a meeting. She suggested that when the public is present, it would be helpful to have a set statement ready that said: "we are an advisory committee and only provide advice. We are tasked by the Council, and only the Council can make decisions. All work done by the committee is at the pleasure of the Council."

Karen commented that if the committee felt that nine members was better than seven, it should find a councilor to sponsor that change. She said that the Appointments Committee had notebooks with all applications and other materials. She thought that this could be helpful for LPAC too. The notebook could have the committee's work plan tasks, its charge from the ordinance, and could contain an introductory packet for new committee members.

She also suggested that the committee could petition for a different quorum requirement or committee make-up, if it felt that that was important. She said that the FEIC had such a proposal, and she encouraged the committee to review these matters.

Sandra said the committee always had the voice of a planning board member on the committee.

Becca said that people might not realize the relationship the committee had to the Council and that the agenda statement might be good idea.

Dimitri said that the fact that the committee worked at the pleasure should be overemphasized and that this was lost on many people.

Sandra commented that historically the Council had not always followed the advice of the committee.

Sam felt that a statement should be written up and posted on the committee's webpage and on its agendas.

Theo asked if the committee should do this now or wait for the standard protocol from the Council.

Sandra felt that the committee should not wait for the Council and could shift its practices if another protocol went in a different direction.

Sam said that he agreed with that, and that if LPAC's protocol was liked, others could adopt it. He wondered about the education piece of the discussion. He said it had been talked about generally that there was a lack of education.

Becca stated that she was involved with GrowSmart Maine, which had worked to provide an introduction for new planning board members: a Planning 101 class. She thought that the committee could think of this kind of thing for Falmouth.

Dimitri said that he heard of a lack of communication. He noted that education could cover a lot of topics.

Sandra said that in watching the video of the 4/2 meeting she heard some people say, "I don't know...." She felt this might point to a need for education. She said that the idea of using the voting clickers at the Forum came from Nathan, but that it was important for the committee to come up with its own ideas and not lean into staff. She said that with prior projects, LPAC had decided to go on the road and talk to people, as it realized that face to face contact was important. She wondered what the impact of that was. Some outreach methods did not work well, depending on the topic. How does the committee communicate and best use its energy resources, she asked. She thought it might be worthwhile to invite people to hear what the outreach effort was worth. She added that she did not know that.

Sam said that he did not have communication experience, and he suggested reaching out to experts in the community or to other towns.

Sandra said that the process had been painful. She thought that the committee needed to coalesce the pain that was felt and then go to staff with it. She felt the communication on the RA zoning was hijacked from the committee through a citizen postcard that had been sent around.

Becca felt that Council tried to please everyone and in doing so compromised a lot of things. She said that she would like to see the committee learn from this sea change.

Sam stated that people were reacting, and that the Public Forum got hijacked by the Council, and that things careened out of control.

Sandra said that the pain allowed the committee to focus on the tools that were now needed and that it should ask for the necessary resources. She felt that if each person was allowed to express themselves that would be a success to her.

Sam said he disagreed with that. He pointed to comments in the summary from the forum facilitator. He said that he circulated at the forum and heard that people felt their comments were tamped down. He felt that the venting that people did at the 4/2 committee meeting was more successful.

Becca said that it was important at that meeting to let people talk.

Sandra said that if every person got to express themselves and got to speak the forum would have gone on until breakfast the following morning.

Sam said there was a segment of the public that wanted to be looked in the eye and that the committee did on 4/2. He said he hoped for a more reasoned approach in the future.

Becca said that she felt both events – the 3/28 forum and 4/2 meeting – were good.

Sam said that the problem was that there was no education. He wondered about the growth numbers and said there was no specific feedback on the growth numbers that had been circulating in the community. He said a meeting agenda could help focus that. He said that he was concerned about the education piece. Sam said that when he presented his “how did we get here” piece on 4/2, some people thought he was trying to justify the committee’s position. Instead, he said, he was trying to explain the committee’s thinking. He suggested that posting a 3-minute video to help explain might be helpful.

Sandra said that few people know what “RA” is. She said she felt sorry for the people from West Falmouth.

Sam suggested that a video on zoning might be helpful.

Sandra said that handouts on zoning might be helpful too.

Dimitri felt that the 3/28 forum was too much for people to chew on, and that the 4/2 meeting was more focused.

Sam said that if the Council wanted to continue with evaluating the 2016 zoning, he felt that effort should start with an education on zoning.

Sandra added that there should also be education on non-conforming properties.

Sam said that this education should be plain vanilla with some 3D diagrams.

Becca liked that idea and said that she had wanted more visual to the 3/28 presentation.

Dimitri agreed that visual can be effective.

Sandra commented that the school district's data review was not on letterhead and was unsigned. She said that undermined the validity of it. She thought that this should have been a piece that should have been posted on the school's website where the Town could then link to it. She said that she wondered who wrote it and what it was based on. She asked what the standard was for education.

Paul said that he had been reflecting and taking notes. He wondered if education was a Town issue or a committee issue. He suggested that the committee reach out and get feedback on its work. He said the committee's role was to design answers, but not make any decisions. He felt that education and communication were Town issues, and that the committee was not staffed for that role. He thought that the Town should deploy resources for that.

Paul thought that the committee needed to get outside help from a firm and ask for a perspective. He thought that a Falmouth specialist or advisory committee might be useful. He noted that residents had a different view than the committee. He felt that communications needed to come from the top, especially on topics such as traffic or schools. He thought that if this were viewed more centrally, it would be more cohesive.

Sandra said that the outreach the committee did informed the writing of the Comprehensive Plan.

Paul said that the committee must be engaged with residents on the topic it is working on.

Dimitri said that it would help if the next LPAC assignment was specific and more focused.

Becca said that it would be helpful to have a more organizational view from the Council.

Sam wondered what Karen as a former councilor thought of the discussion.

Karen stated that it was important for the committee not to beat itself up, as occasionally sensitive and emotional issues did come up. She said that the committee should look forward. It reminded her of the work that LPAC's predecessor CPAC did on natural resource protection, when there was a similar emotion. She said that people would hopefully move on.

Sandra said that it was important to create a great statement for people to react to. She said that the committee made a valid contribution to the town, and that now was the right time for a leadership change. She hoped it would bring clarity and predictability.

Paul said that he hoped it would come with a lot of communication, to help protect the committee from miscommunication. He said that this was mission critical.

Becca cited from Susan Gallant's statement that there was desire to collaborate, with appropriate two way communication, and that communication had been fragmented and entrenched.

Sandra said that there soon would be a new Town Council. She suggested that the committee could recommend to the Council that the pain that was felt could be useful if it was harnessed and leveraged and that the Council should take on the communication piece.

Theo asked what the committee's next steps were.

Becca said that the notes for tonight's meeting would be summarized, and that the Council would be asked for clarification.

Sam said that his and Sandra's presence on the committee should be clarified, as well as their voting status. Becca will pursue this.

Dimitri suggested increasing the size of the committee.

Sandra said that that had not been decided. She said the at the committee had talked a lot, but that it needed clarity. She said it was unclear what the next project was. Was it an extension of what the committee was working on, or was it something new? She said that the Council should not be wishy washy on this.

Karen suggested that the Council might be waiting on an RA vote before deciding this.

Sam said that there should be a report for the Council, as the work by the committee could be approached in a myriad of ways. There was the Zoning 101 approach with video or handout, for example. He said the committee should start at ground zero and reach out to firms to help it.

Sandra agreed that Zoning 101 will help everyone.

Sam said that there were experts in the community who might be able to help with this.

Paul said he was happy to take a first stab at a draft Council report.

The committee reviewed the agenda items for the next meeting.

Paul asked what the status of the vacancy on the committee was.

Theo said that there was currently one vacancy and the Appointments Committee had been interviewing people.

Karen confirmed that the committee had interviewed candidates but that it had chosen not to make an appointment at this time.

Paul said that having a vacancy affected the committee's ability to have a quorum.

Theo cited the FEIC which had a quorum issue some time ago with two vacancies. It wanted to address it by enlarging the committee, but then ended up with four vacancies. So it went back to its original size.

Sandra said that it was important to look for the right fit with the committee.

5. Next Meeting

The committee will meet next on April 25 at 5:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, April 12, 2019, rev 1: May 7, 2019