



Ad Hoc Route 1 North Committee

Meeting Minutes Tuesday, June 28, 2016

Arthur Batson	✓	Chris Wasileski	✓	Laurie Leonard	✓
Paul Burlin	✓	Steve Woods	✓	Nathan Poore	✓
Nicole Favreau	✓	Charlie McBrady, Council Liaison	✓	Theo Holtwijk	✓
Tim Marr	-				

1. Welcome and Committee Member Introduction

Theo welcomed everyone and each person introduced themselves.

2. Review Route 1 North Assignment

Theo reviewed the charge for the committee. It was asked if the Turnpike Spur parcels were part of the study area. Theo said that those parcels were subject of a separate effort by the Town Council and that staff would keep the committee informed as much as possible of that, so its efforts could fit with those parcels. Nathan explained that the Turnpike project was being discussed by the Council in Executive Session (i.e. behind closed doors) as it concerns a matter of economic development.

3. Other Falmouth projects

Theo reviewed the Town's recent planning and infrastructure efforts, such as the Route 1 South project, the Route 100 project, the Turnpike Spur – Route 1 project, this year's Route 1 North paving, the upcoming Route 1 Complete Street Project with Cumberland and Yarmouth and funded in large part by PACTS, the interest by the East Coast Greenway Alliance in Route 1 North, and a possible stormwater project. The study area is part of the Mill Creek Watershed and staff has started a recent discussion with the Soil and Water Conservation District about possible stormwater management planning in the Route 1 area.

4. Discuss Ideas for Approach

Committee members discussed their hopes and expectations for the project and issues they felt the project should address.

Steve felt that the Route 1 North area was fertile ground for appropriate business development. He said that the Cumberland, Yarmouth, and Falmouth communities all have excellent school systems and a presence of technology and professional businesses, all of whom desire close proximity to such an environment. He noted that the Chase site was intended as a business park, but that a storage unit complex was built instead. He felt that that the site owned by Peter Kennedy could be developed in a thoughtful manner. The area has natural gas and fiber optic infrastructure and is close to the Route 1 South retail area.

Steve saw three key issues. First was the safety of the area. He mentioned traffic speeds, the new school zone in Cumberland, and felt that thoughtful traffic controls needed to be part of the plan. Second, he mentioned land use. He felt that the plan needed to include policies to promote appropriate and uses. Third was road use. Steve mentioned bicycle and pedestrian access to the retail area and signage along the road. He felt the area's best use was as a tech or digital zone.

Laurie agreed that businesses should be encouraged to locate in the area. He noted the vacancy at the Falmouth Shopping Center and was looking for proper development of Route 1 North.

Art felt the area was perfect for a business district with excellent north-south access for commuters. He noted that residential use, such as small residential or multi family, could co-exist with businesses. He did not want to see too many curb cuts along Route 1 North. He felt there was an opportunity for a hotel near the interstate, and that there were good opportunities for mixed use, but that ultimately business needed to be the dominant use.

Nicole said she worked at the Friend's School in Cumberland on Route 1 and that most of her colleagues commute to the school from the south, one third on bicycle. She felt that more bicycle and pedestrian facilities would encourage more use like that. She was surprised how many people she already sees walking along Route 1.

There was discussion about the right-of-way width. Steve mentioned that due to the location of the highway exits there was a finite land development opportunity. He felt that a forecast of traffic for the area for 20 years from now should be part of the project.

Nathan mentioned that barriers to development include the presence of wetlands in the area. Steve said that on the west side of Route 1 there is a challenge with rock, but that he expected in the economics on dealing with that will change in the future. He felt that more development will move to the suburbs and gave Route 128 in the Boston area as an example of how development has dealt with granite in that area.

Chris stated that it was important to understand what the characteristics of the area are now, such as traffic volume. The next question is what the area should become. He was looking for some high value properties that will add to the tax base and that will support residential areas. He was interested in healthy commuting and was wondering if this meant that residential use should be mixed in with business use. He understood that there was a tension between business and wetlands/residential uses and that the plan needed to be sensitive to that. Infrastructure needs must be part of the plan, he felt.

Theo and Nathan explained the Route 1 North Tax Increment Financing District that currently exists and how TIF districts have helped to Town with funding of major infrastructure projects. The fiscal benefit of using TIF funds for infrastructure over the General Fund is 3 to 1.

5. Committee Logistics

Theo distributed a chart with committee contact information. Tuesdays seemed a good day for the committee to meet. 6:30 PM was the preferred time. Typically committees meet twice per month. A regular schedule should be established so people know ahead of time when meetings will be held. Theo requested that if a member cannot attend a specific meeting, they let him know.

Theo said that he will prepare draft meeting minutes and draft agendas for review by the, to be selected, committee chair. He said that e-mail will be the primary method of communication, but that its use was solely for distribution of materials and logistics. He said that “reply all” should be used sparingly, so as to avoid having a meeting that the public is not privy to. Nathan explained that the committee is subject to the State’s rules on Freedom of Access to Information and that all e-mails should be kept, in case they get requested through these rules.

Theo explained the role of the Committee Chair and Vice Chair and urged members to consider if they were interested in that. This topic will be revisited at the next meeting.

6. Next Steps/Information Needed

Paul said there was development sensitivity of the east side of Route 1 and requested that any information on vernal pools in that area be made available. The group discussed the background of the vacancy at Falmouth Shopping Center. Nathan mentioned the return of a movie theater to Falmouth. There was a question if the Town has any tax incentives. Nathan explained the past use of TIF for that purpose. Nicole felt that an important question was how this area could best serve Falmouth or if its function was just to add to the tax base.

Nathan said that staff will distribute the scope of consultant services for the Route 1 South and Route 100 projects, so members could get an idea what that involved. The group was interested in seeing any information on wetlands, traffic, and to get a better idea how property could be developed.

Charlie suggested scheduling bus tour of the area similar to what was done on Route 100.

Theo noted that the branding of the area was an interesting idea, and that the Town recently got some drone video of Route 1 South which helped a lot to understand that area better. Perhaps in future drone video of Route 1 North could be obtained.

Steve requested that the right-of-way width of Route 1 be obtained.

7. Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet again on July 19 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned by 7:44 PM.

Draft minutes by Theo Holtwijk, July 14, 2016