



Route 1 North Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 21, 2016

Arthur Batson	-	Chris Wasileski, Chair	✓	Laurie Leonard	✓
Paul Burlin	✓	Steve Woods	✓	Nathan Poore, Town Manager	✓
Nicole Favreau, Vice Chair	✓	Charlie McBrady, Council Liaison	-	Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long Range Planning	✓
Dava Davin	✓	David Woodward, VHB	✓	Geoffrey Morrison-Logan	✓

Others attending the meeting: Steve Thomas, VHB; Craig Seymour, RKG

Chris opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

1. Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

2. Review of Draft Minutes of October 17, 2016 Meeting

Laurie commented that he received a copy of a Route 1 Complete Street survey and that he had issues with it. He also noted that he did not see the comment that he made at the October 17 meeting regarding seeing the final survey before it went out. Theo explained the relationship between the Route 1 Complete Street project and the Route 1 North project. Both are on a parallel track and will be completed in May. Theo will make sure that the committee stays informed of the Route 1 Complete Street project. He added that he was pretty sure Laurie's comment from the last meeting was included, and will do so, in case it was not. The committee approved the draft minutes of the October 17, 2016 meeting with the amendment to include Laurie's comment on seeing the final survey before it went out.

3. Scope and Schedule

David and Geoffrey explained that they saw the project as a collaborative process between the committee and the consultant.

4. Status of Current Work

David reviewed various maps that had been prepared for the study area. The committee asked if storm drainage was included. Theo explained that storm water was an important issue due to the area's proximity to Casco Bay and that the Town was seeking specific stormwater help from the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District. The Friend's School will be identified and the study boundary adjusted. Some land use corrections will be made. As next step, VHB will come back to report what this data means.

5. Public Process and Outreach

Geoffrey asked what the Town has done in the past for public outreach. He said that any event also will have an educational element. There was a discussion as to who the stakeholders for the project were and what methods could be used. Theo will draft a letter to send to all property owners in the study area. The committee discussed holding an on-site event at TideSmart. Steve W. was agreeable to being the host for that. He said he had a space that could hold 200 people. He suggested holding two events on same day, one from 12 to 1 PM, the other from 5 to 6 PM. He noted that parcels 5, 16 and 23 in the study area were large and its owners may be driven by self interest. He felt the context for those parcels was important especially regarding consideration of high density and public safety.

Steve T. asked the committee to consider how the Route 1 North area competes in Falmouth. He felt it was important to strengthen the core and not diminish it and support the redevelopment of the Falmouth Shopping Center. He wondered how much community awareness there was regarding Route 1 North, and if there was momentum for the project. Theo noted the three-legged stool of Falmouth's commercial-mixed use areas: Route 1 South, Route 100, and Route 1 North. He explained how the focus with each effort was different, and that for many Route 1 North but not yet be on the radar.

Nathan stated that among the stakeholders would be the employees of the various businesses on Route 1 North. He could see some uses to support that area. He felt that currently there was no real option to walk to lunch. He agreed that scheduling public meetings at different times was a good idea.

Paul felt that it was important to do an on-line survey as well. Nathan thought it would be good to know if any businesses have expansion plans. Steve wondered what technology will look like in the future and role of buildings in that, and what office parks would look like. He felt that enabling small solar installations may help to inspire a technology-base to locate here.

Craig commented on the fact that many people commute to Boston 2 or 3 days a week, but essentially work from home. Steve W. said that the committee would need advice on how innovation and mobility plays into the project. Steve T. added to the needs of millennials and the "coolness" factor of Falmouth. He wondered where the co-working space was in Falmouth. Is it the small Starbucks on Route 1?

Geoffrey stated that he saw the survey addressing the following: issues, broadly lay out opportunities, vision ideas, key elements (such as technology or housing) and economic development. Nathan felt there should be an order of magnitude question as well and checks with reality. Craig stated that he can translate the survey results in what it means for real estate development. Nathan said that the current market that is going strong is housing. Laurie mentioned he would like to see a through street to connect with Route 88, but wondered if residents would accept that.

Nicole wanted the plan to be intentional and to also listen to the voices that do not necessarily fit the vision. Geoffrey stated that the survey questions would be targeted and informed. Paul mentioned that area employees may want to live in town, but have affordability issues. He was looking for an element of sustainability and wellness in the plan. Steve W. made an observation on the link between crime and higher density housing complexes in Yarmouth. There was a discussion on the necessity to have diverse groups in a community for it to be successful. Craig wondered if millennials can be drawn back.

6. Defining Success

The group went around the table to offer input as to what a successful plan would look like.

Chris stated that the east and west side of Route 1 North are quite different and needed different solutions. He would look for more connectivity and a sense what retail uses may be appropriate. He saw the plan as a guide for the property owners.

Nicole also felt that connectivity was important and that nature could be used as an asset. She would like to see some cutting edge architecture.

Dava was interested to see the live-work-play aspect become more connected. She has newcomers to Falmouth ask her “where is the town?” She would like to see charm incorporated in the plan. Currently she felt Route 1 North was a stretch of weirdness.

Steve W. said he saw the Yarmouth-Cumberland-Falmouth area as a vital epicenter of future growth. He would like to motivate smart businesses. His company’s revenues come from outside the region. He was not looking to shift revenue inside the region. He saw fertile opportunities for technology, energy, and health care.

Paul was looking to make Route 1 North special and different, but did not know how that could or should be done. His emphasis was on esthetics.

Laurie commented on the blight of downtown Falmouth with all the vacancies. He wanted the Route 1 North area not draw anything away from that area. Chris said that would mean not adding restaurants and retail to Route 1 North.

Nathan commented that the discussion showed him that we are looking at a different type of plan, less focused perhaps on infrastructure and more on economic opportunity.

Chris suggested that checking with area brokers may be worthwhile. Craig said that he was planning to do that as it would be good to know what the demand side is looking for. He noted that Falmouth is a small market place. Steve W. noted that there is a lot of local wealth that may look for an outlet for their investments.

7. Next Steps

At the next meeting VHB will report on its analysis of the existing data and what that means for opportunities for the area as well review draft survey questions.

Steve W. wanted to make sure we ask employees as well. It was felt that a public meeting on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday would make most sense.

8. Next Meeting

The committee agreed to schedule an extra meeting in early December. Theo will do Doodle poll the group to see what date works best.

The December 19 meeting will be used in part to discuss the public event structure and agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Draft minutes by Theo Holtwijk, November 28, 2016