



Route 1 North Committee

Meeting Minutes Monday, February 6, 2017

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	✓		

Others attending the meeting: Peter Kennedy, Tommy Johnson

Chris opened the meeting at 6:33 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of January 11, 2017 Meeting

The minutes of the January 11, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as written.

2. Review Feedback from On-Line Survey and January 25 Forums and Provide Direction on Draft Vision Plan

Theo handed out the clicker forum results and summary of on-line survey results. He said that VHB will provide the transcription and compilation of the large newspaper sheets with the dots. He said that the purpose of today's meeting to discuss what committee members had taken from the feedback and VHB work to date, so direction could be provided to VHB for what should be in the draft plan.

Paul stated that he heard some common themes: people liked green space in the area; they felt that traffic speed was a concern; they felt that bicycling and walking along Route 1 was dangerous; and they wanted to see clustered development, and not a strip.

Charlie said that he was surprised that there was not more suggested for sidewalk, lighting, and sight line improvements along Johnson Road, west of Route 1. Chris noted that people did speak to making improvements at the Johnson Road intersection.

Dava stated that people did not want to leave the area all the same and that they seemed to want green space along with development.

Paul stated that people wanted to see the Route 1 South improvements extended.

Dava added that people wanted to have all traffic modes accommodated, but in a balanced manner.

Nicole said that there was also a need for the area's identity expressed. Paul concurred and felt that the area was an architectural disaster.

Nicole said that in the break out session she had a mixed group some of whom wondered what type of development could currently happen. She noted the interest in trail linkages.

The group started to discuss zoning and land use issues.

Chris said that the representative of Adams and Fogg, which was a light industrial use, had requested not to be a non-conforming use.

Charlie wondered about residential uses, tech center, or wellness/medical uses.

Chris stated that he heard from residents who live on the dead end roads off Route 88 that they did not want to see road connectivity to Route 1.

Paul wondered what the pressure on the schools would be with more residential use.

Dava felt that residential use with design guidelines would be OK. Nicole wondered what the committee's role was in making recommendations like that. Theo stated that the committee is free to make any recommendation it wishes to make. Chris added that it was all part of the process and that he would like to see some workforce housing.

Chris stated that allowing more uses and seeing more development could help pay for the infrastructure improvements that the committee may want to recommend.

Nicole said that it was exciting to imagine how trail and bicycle-pedestrian improvements could help nudge the vision forward.

Chris stated that the current BP district was not working as there was so little new development there. He suggested going around the table to see how everyone else felt about that.

Peter Kennedy was offered an opportunity to speak. He said that he was interested to have senior, age-restricted housing on his property along with congregate care and health institutions. He felt that school impact would be minimal with such uses.

Paul felt he could not yet make any land use judgements, and that Peter's suggested use might be good.

Dava stated that people will continue to relocate to Falmouth because of its high quality schools, regardless if residential use would or would not be allowed along Route 1 North.

Charlie was in favor of allowing market-rate workforce housing for people who work in Falmouth.

Chris wondered if a 100% residential project was OK, or only if it was a certain percentage and part of a mix. He suggested that perhaps qualifiers should be added to make sure there was balance.

Charlie suggested leaving that to the developer.

Tommy Johnson said he lived off Route 88 and saw Falmouth as a place where seniors like to live, but also as a place where kids who left town might want to come back to. He said that the study area contained various properties that were of interest to the Falmouth Land Trust, an organization of which

he is the current president. Trail access especially was of interest to him. He saw an opportunity for housing for people 55+.

Chris commented on federal law regulating age-restricted housing, and how the active adults are now typically 65+. He said the age seems to older and that at OceanView people's average move in age is in the mid 80's.

Dava said that she a looser sense of what residential use may be appropriate, but felt that green space was important. She saw a bigger demographic need for affordable residential use, one that included rental options.

Theo said that what he heard the committee express so far was that residential use was OK as long as that came with density so that green space could also be preserved.

Nicole asked what the market for senior housing was. Chris said that the market demand for moderate to affordable, new-construction Senior Housing units continues to skyrocket according to the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. He also noted the interest in a care continuum that included memory care facilities. He mentioned that he knew of assisted living conversions to Alzheimer's facilities as a way to respond to the demand for that. He said it was hard to speculate for Falmouth. Could it be 200 to 400 units, he did not know that. He also wondered if that is what Falmouth wants. He said the advantages of senior housing are no children in the school system and real estate tax benefits. The negatives that he hears about are drivers who are elderly and pressure on fire and EMS services. He agreed with the need for more workforce housing.

Charlie stated that felt that some bicycle, pedestrian, lighting, and sidewalk improvements needed to be made along with zoning amendments. He said he was open to allowing housing use along Route 1 North. He could also see retail along Route 1 with sidewalks in front. He liked elderly housing, market rate housing, and assisted living and Alzheimer's facilities. He felt the most important thing was create an environment that was safe for walking.

Nicole said that she agreed with that. She liked to see the various developments connected. Now they all felt incongruent to her. She was also looking for a sustainable way to grow, one that included affordable housing. She noted the lack of diversity at the Falmouth schools and said that the private school she worked at had more diversity. She felt an upgrade was needed at the location where one leaves Falmouth. On the south end of Route 1 the entry into Falmouth was very obvious, but much less so on the north end. She felt a vortex could be created at that location, perhaps connected to Route 88.

Chris felt that might create a problem with cut through traffic. He wondered how the neighborhood could be become more integrated with the Route 1 area.

Tommy said that there were many informal trails that could be used to connect people from the Route 88 area to Route 1, and that there was an opportunity to do more with that, so that the people in this growth area had a nearby place to go to and did not necessarily need to go to West Falmouth to hike.

Theo asked how the committee felt about the retail use that Charlie had suggested.

Paul felt that retail might come with traffic issues. Chris felt that retail could be made walkable. Charlie said that it could come with a footprint cap size. He was envisioning uses such as a store, restaurant, and personal service establishment.

David felt that Route 1 needed to be a 24-hour area. He said that Cumberland had or was considering a 3,500 sq.ft. footprint limit for retail uses along Route 1.

Charlie felt that such uses were OK on east side of Route 1.

Nicole said that she envisioned shared access across Norton Brook for those uses.

Charlie reiterated his desire to loosen the list of permitted uses for the BP zone.

Theo asked the committee about the light industrial uses that Chris had mentioned at the start of the meeting. The group felt that that was OK as long as such buildings could look better. There was a thought if exceptions could be made for the existing light industrial buildings, but maybe not allow more.

It was asked how the self storage facility was classified as. That was considered warehousing.

Theo asked the committee to give feedback on the 3-lane versus the 2-lane idea. To aid in that discussion he handed out the two proposed road cross section options and Tom Errico's memo comparing the two options.

Charlie said that people at the forum felt that proposal was confusing. Chris said that he heard from people who did not like the islands that had been built on Route 1 South. Paul stated that it was the islands that made the area there attractive. Chris said it was key to add vegetation to the islands.

Nicole said she favored a bicycle-pedestrian trail over having three vehicular lanes.

Charlie wondered if Route 1 North needed to look like Route 1 South.

Paul asked which option would allow for higher traffic speeds and wondered how traffic calming could be accomplished. Theo stated that dedicated turn lanes would allow through traffic to maintain higher speeds.

Tommy commented on the need for continuity of the improvements with landscaped islands and lighting improvements.

Chris said that he could see the following menu of improvements: limiting curb cuts, making improvements at Johnson Road intersection, building a sidewalk, keeping overhead power, and having pragmatic stormwater solutions.

Nicole asked which of the road cross sections accomplished the Complete Street objectives and do more to create identity for the area. Theo stated that either section would meet Complete Street objectives.

Chris said that he liked to see businesses behind a wooded buffer along Route 1.

Paul was wondering about the cost of the improvements.

Charlie suggested focusing on the permitted uses first, as the infrastructure needs and improvements will flow from that.

Paul felt that the town could be surprised with what type of developments might be built. Chris said that it would be good to focus on targeted opportunities as otherwise the Town might build a sidewalk to nowhere.

Nicole thought that a system where links could be added over time would be good.

Chris thought that a pocket park in the area might also be worthwhile.

Theo suggested that perhaps the direction on the road could be to plan for dedicated turn lanes in some key locations, but to keep the road a 2-lane road in between. That way the road alignment might bulge out here and there, but that might help with the traffic calming that was desired. The committee liked that direction.

Chris felt it was important to design for a budget, and to be judicious with making improvement suggestions so as not to overbuild the system.

Peter Kennedy passed around a handout that showed possible improvements for the Johnson Road intersection and along Route 1 for the project that he was envisioning at his site.

3. Other Business

There was no other business.

4. Next Meeting

The committee's next meeting will be on March 6 at 6:30 PM.

Chris suggested inviting the other two property owners of the major vacant parcels to come to a meeting so they could converse with the committee. The committee thought that was a great idea. Theo will follow up on that.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Draft minutes by Theo Holtwijk, February 9, 2017