

**Town Council Special Meeting
DRAFT Minutes
November 13, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call

Councilors Anderson, King, Councilor Orestis, Goldberg and Farber were present and answering roll call.

Councilors Mahoney and Pierce were absent.

Item 1 Discussion and presentation from Falmouth Memorial Library Board of Trustees regarding the Library's need for expansion and renovation.

Councilor Goldberg moved to allow for public comment after the Library Board's presentation; Councilor King seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Mark Porada, President of the Board of Trustees, gave a presentation on the need for an expansion of the library. From 1995-2011 the population of Falmouth has remained steady, but there has been a 238% increase in circulation. He pointed out that circulation has continued to rise even after the advent of e-books. Falmouth is tied for first place in circulation per capita with Yarmouth, whose Merrill Library is 2.5 times the size of Falmouth's library and is currently undergoing an expansion. He said the oldest portion of Falmouth's library, the Iverson house, is in poor shape. There is standing water in the basement, the roof is not up to code, the insulation is deficient, and there is concern with the sprinkler system. The building is 100 years old and was not designed or built to serve as a public space. The Russell Room, the library's function room, is not large enough to accommodate the number of people who come to library functions. Technology at the library is outdated; there are not enough computers to go around and no place to put more. There is a lack of storage space, and not enough space for staff and volunteers to do their jobs. He discussed the benefits of an expanded library, including flexible space, access to technology, more programming space, increased collections, a safe area for children, more room for people to work and read, and space for confidential meetings. He assured the Council that the current proposal and design will maintain, or even lower, energy costs for the Library, and they do not anticipate any additional staffing needs. He discussed the history of the project to date. The Library is just starting a fundraising feasibility study; they sent out an RFP and selected a fundraising consultant. He said it is clear that the library can no longer use the Iverson house portion of the building. It is too old and it doesn't make fiscal sense to invest money into it. Three consultants have all agreed that expansion is not possible on this site without acquiring additional property. The architects reviewed removing Depot Road; public feedback led them to discard that option. He said the Library Board unanimously supports this project. If there is a gap between the project cost and what the library can reasonably expect to raise, the Board would come back to the Council. He hoped the Town would support the project.

Scott Simons, of Scott Simons Architects, argued that a library is about more than books; it is about community. Libraries are growing; they are ideally suited to provide resources to their communities. The proposed design removes the Iverson house and replaces it with an expanded building. The entrance to the parking would be moved further down Lunt Road away from the building. There would be a plaza in front of the entrance to provide a drop off area. They propose changing the angle of the intersection of Depot Road and Lunt to a 90 degree angle to improve safety. The proposed square footage of the library after the expansion would be 18,600 sf. With this expansion the library would have 1.7sf/person, which is the low end of the scale for size. The rule of thumb is to have 2sf/person. He showed the proposed layout of the library. He discussed the energy use of the current library and said their goal is to increase the size of the library by 73%, while keeping energy costs the same. This would be accomplished with the use of super-insulation, good quality windows, and high-efficiency HVAC systems. All the proposed additions wrap around the exterior walls of the current building, thereby increasing overall insulation values. The total project cost is estimated at just over \$5 million.

Councilor Farber opened public comment.

Alison Bishop of Allen Ave Extension served as a library trustee for two years. This is a reasonably sized addition that would bring them up to the standards of the towns around them. She urged the Council to support the plan.

Lisa Anderson of Falmouth Road supported the on-site expansion. She was very impressed with what the architects have come up with. She was very excited about the improved children's area.

Lexis Anderson of Falmouth Road is a student at the high school. It is difficult to find a place to meet with a study group outside the high school. She thought the teen area would be greatly used by the students from the high school.

Becky Carrier, a trustee on the Library Board, has four children and typically visits the Portland library instead of Falmouth because she is concerned about her children disturbing other patrons. She was excited about the proposed children's area.

John Winslow of Gray Road opposed the library expansion and the cost of it. He felt this would be a resource for the greater Portland area, not for Falmouth residents. He was concerned about how the expanded library would be funded. He argued that other town services are fee-based, and wondered about instituting a fee for library use. He wondered about the residency of library users.

Ann Schutz of 9 Stormy Brook, a member of the Board of Trustees, said the library has grown out of its meeting space. The book sale has to be held at another location due to the lack of space. She gave examples of events that overflow the meeting space.

Fred Leighton of Bayside Lane said Falmouth is a great town, with much to be proud of. The library is not up to date. Falmouth is third in the state for SAT scores; the two towns ahead of Falmouth, Yarmouth and Cape Elizabeth, are both expanding their libraries. He supported the expansion of the library.

Alex Agnew of Avon Road spoke in favor of LEED certification. They are putting a significant investment into this building; to put a super-high quality building in the center of town reflects how they feel about their town, even if it is smaller than originally planned.

Amy Kuhn of Foreside Road, a member of the Trustees and chair of the Expansion Committee, spoke about the timeline on the project from here. They will report the results of the fundraising feasibility study in March. She felt this was an opportunity to build a landmark for the town and would be a smart investment.

Bonny Rodden of Shoreline Drive said the design meets the needs and wants of the public. She supported the project, both its scope and price tag. She urged the Council to support it. Libraries are critical assets to a town and increase property values. She suggested the Council commit to purchasing the adjacent property soon. She thought this should go to the voters in a bond referendum if the library couldn't raise the needed funds.

Marsha Clark of Lincoln Farms Road, a member of the library trustees, clarified that the per capita numbers mentioned reflect 16 items per year per person, not per month as has been stated. She has served as a trustee as well as a volunteer. She often has to do some of her volunteer tasks off-site as there is not enough space. She argued that a better library is a reason for people like her to stay in Falmouth after their kids have grown.

Peter Goffin of Lincoln Farms Road is a former trustee. He pointed out that there are 5375 active users of the library, while there are 2135 students in the school system. He supported the expansion.

Pam Peeler of Foreside Common Drive is a new resident and a member of the trustees. She has been blown away by the programming this library offers compared to larger libraries. She urged them to support it.

Kevin Brown of Breezy Hill was part of the 2009 study on whether to move the library or remain on-site. At that time they determined that, unless they purchased additional property, they couldn't expand on-site. He is now a trustee member, mainly to be involved in the expansion project. He supported the library staying on-site and the expansion.

Amy Winton of McKinley Road is a trustee. This project gives the Town an opportunity to invest in something they already own. They cannot do this expansion without the adjacent property. This proposal allows them to increase in size without increasing operating costs. This will add an important component to the Route 1 project the Council has already supported.

Public comment period closed.

Councilor Goldberg said a town needs a fully functional library. It is an asset they need to take care of. He felt they needed an expanded, better functioning library. He looked forward to the fundraising report in March.

Councilor King was impressed with the support shown for the project. She heard that this is special time, with the adjacent property available for purchase.

Councilor Orestis said the proposed library is the type of environment that would be welcoming to all ages. They have made investments in other assets of the town – schools, Route 1, and open space – and it is time to invest in the library. He felt this library would be a draw to people who might want to move to Falmouth. He was impressed with the use statistics for the library. He was pleased with the process to-date, and felt the questions he has asked in the past have been addressed.

Councilor Anderson felt there was no question that an expansion was needed, and that it should be on this site. He felt his responsibility as a Councilor was to make sure they are using Town funds wisely. He asked whether they have looked at a smaller footprint with a second floor and if that would be more cost-effective.

Mr. Simons said they discussed a two-story scheme with a smaller footprint; that would be preferred from an environmental standpoint but they moved away from that because of the increased cost for an elevator/fire stairs, and the necessary expansion of staff. They wanted to keep it so that three staff could oversee the entire building. They don't typically consider a two-story scheme until they get over 20,000 sf. A two-story scheme would be more expensive than what is proposed.

Councilor Anderson understood that they don't need the adjacent property for the expansion, but for parking. Mr. Simons said that was correct; it also improves safety with the flow-through.

Councilor Anderson said he hadn't seen any statistics on the need for parking. He asked how many additional parking spaces they get on the Kowalski property, and if there were any cheaper options to expand the parking.

Mr. Simons said the proposed design would increase the parking by 20-25 spaces, but it also increases safety by stopping the thru traffic and providing a drop-off area. There is no drop-off area currently. They need more parking to meet code. It also provides for further expansion in the future. Even if they just expanded on the second floor, it would require more parking.

Councilor Anderson asked if they could address the safety issue of people driving through the parking lot by closing the entrance on Depot Road. He wondered how many spaces could be created in that drive aisle. He said the circulation since 2006-2007 has leveled off. He didn't think that changes what they need today, but argued that they won't see the significant rate of growth that they have seen.

Councilor Orestis asked about the code requirement for the number of spaces for the size of the building proposed. Mr. Simons said the Falmouth code is vague but the standards he uses call for 2.3 spaces/1000sf.

Councilor Farber said the ordinance doesn't specifically list the spaces necessary for a library.

Mr. Simons said they used some standards to develop a reasonable understanding of how many spaces would be required.

Councilor Orestis said it would be a shame to do this project only to have people complain about a lack of parking. He also said that a safe drop off area is critical for seniors and children. He asked about the cost of the ADA required improvements for a two-story building.

Mr. Simons said the elevator would be \$100,000; fire stairs would be \$50,000 each and they would need two. He said staffing was another consideration of the two-story expansion. A previous consultant had looked at replacing the trusses with attic trusses to create usable space. That would be retrofitting and it would be expensive.

Councilor Anderson asked why Falmouth's circulation is so much higher than neighboring communities.

Marsha Clark said there is a correlation between library use and education of the residents. Falmouth is a highly educated community.

Councilor Anderson would like to see more work done on the parking. The expense of purchasing the adjacent property feels like it is only for parking and he wanted to see more evidence that it is necessary to buy that lot. He was concerned that the project timeline required the Town to commit funds before the fundraising takes off.

Councilor Farber asked about the changes to the intersection of Depot Road; she wondered about the extent of that part of the project.

Mr. Simons said it is pretty modest. He didn't know the cost, but the effect would be to change that intersection from a triangle to a 90 degree turn. The only other improvement would be to install a designated, raised walkway across Depot Road.

Councilor Farber pointed out that the option on the Kowalski property expires in April but the construction isn't slated to start until 2015. She urged the Board to think about the maintenance of that building for the interim time.

Councilor Farber announced that the Council will take a tour of the library on December 9 at 5:15pm.

Item 2 Public hearing and order relative to a new victualer license for Liz's Personal Chef Service, 12 Grist Mill Drive, Falmouth.

Councilor Farber opened a public comment period; no public comment.

Councilor King moved the order; Councilor Anderson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Item 3 Public Hearing on an amendment to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 17 Traffic and Motor Vehicles, to regulate wreckers and vehicle towing.

Councilor Farber opened a public comment period; no public comment.

An order was scheduled for December 9.

Item 4 Public Hearing on an amendment to the Zoning and Site Plan Review Ordinance to add certain service uses to the Business Professional District.

Councilor Farber opened a public comment period; no public comment.

An order was scheduled for December 9.

Item 5 Public Hearing on an amendment to the Zoning and Site Plan Review Ordinance to amend the definition of farming in the Farm and Forest District to include commercial greenhouses.

Councilor Farber opened a public comment period

Max Boudreau of Gray Road is a farmer. He said Maine has a short growing season; allowing commercial greenhouses would allow for the growing season to be extended significantly. This would increase community food security and availability.

Cassandra Sears of Gray Road said the greenhouse is not a commercial greenhouse; it is a tool for season extension to allow farmers to grow crops all year. This allows them to extend their business.

Councilor Goldberg pointed out that a small-scale greenhouse is different from the 42 acre indoor growing operation in Madison, Maine. He wondered if they wanted to add language to this ordinance to make it clear that this is for local operations. He asked if they wanted to limit the size of this.

Councilor Farber asked if there was a limit in the ordinance on the size of greenhouses.

Amanda Stearns, Community Development Director, said there is not; there is no limit on any agricultural use in the district, including raising animals, the size of a barn, etc. They could look at that, but it would take some research.

Councilor King wondered about passing the amendment as is, and then conducting further research on size limits. They could revisit the ordinance after that research is done. Ms. Stearns said they could do that.

An order was scheduled for December 9.

Item 6 Public Hearing on amendments to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 6 General Assistance.

Councilor Farber opened a public comment period; no public comment.

An order was scheduled for December 9.

Item 7 Discussion about the Greater Portland Transit District (Metro Bus) preliminary FY 2014 budget.

Nathan Poore, Town Manager, explained the process for the Transit district budget, which is governed by state statute. The proposed budget is very responsible; it has an overall 2% expenditure increase over the whole \$6.8 million budget. It has a 3% local share subsidy increase; Falmouth's is closer to 4% due to JARC funding. This budget begins a multi-year effort to bring up the fund balance to an acceptable level. The formula the budget is based on is calculated on the number of bus routes.

Item 8 Discussion about future Council agendas

Mr. Poore discussed items that are scheduled for upcoming council agendas.

Item 9 Order to go into executive session to discuss a hardship abatement of taxes pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A. § 841 (2) (E).

Councilor Goldberg moved to enter executive session; Councilor King seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

The Council left executive session at 10:15 pm.

Councilor Farber moved to deny a hardship abatement of taxes; Councilor Anderson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Tryon
Recording Secretary