

LONG RANGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE - STREET STANDARDS REVIEW

August 29, 2016

LPAC conducted a review of the street standards for Falmouth as authorized by the Town Council. The committee met five times to discuss this topic. In addition, it obtained comments from staff and conducted a public forum with representatives from the real estate sector.

Two themes –both of which stem from the 2013 Comprehensive Plan - guided the committee's discussion on street standards:

1. The extent to which streets encourage growth in the growth area and preservation of the rural area, and
2. The strong desire for interconnectivity of roads and pedestrian and bicycle connections.

FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The committee finds that the current street standards, combined with the waiver options that the Town, through the work of the Planning Board, can apply to proposed development projects provides an excellent balance in making sure that developments best fit their surroundings, but not compromise public safety. The waiver flexibility pertains, but is not limited, to street width, length of dead end street, number of lots on a dead end street, street curvature, street grade, clearing and drainage.
2. The committee finds that the street standards are generally reasonable and does not recommend any dimensional street standard changes.
3. The committee recommends that the Town continue to actively encourage flexibility in street design to fit the requirements of each property.
4. The committee recommends that the ordinance consolidate and more clearly articulate the waiver flexibility as it is currently found in separate ordinance sections. This includes the required criteria for waivers. The committee recommends that the waiver criteria be supplemented with the following statement: the extent to which streets encourage growth in the growth area and preserve the rural area.
5. The committee recommends that the ordinance provision prohibiting the use of private ways in major subdivisions as a means to create additional rear lots be clarified to allow private way construction standards to be used for roads in major subdivisions that serve fewer than four lots.
6. The committee finds that, in some respects, the Town's technical street standards are out of date or not complete. This has in the past resulted in some substandard construction of infrastructure. It has also led to confusion as to what infrastructure is required or may be permitted on the Town's streets. As much of this infrastructure is subsequently transferred to the Town, the maintenance and replacement expense falls to the Town.
7. The committee recommends that staff be charged with developing the necessary technical amendments to the street standards to minimize such infrastructure problems. Amendments may pertain, but are not limited, to:

- General street construction requirements,
 - Sidewalk construction details,
 - Street light standards,
 - Mailbox design,
 - Reference, where appropriate, to Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD),
 - Stormwater management design standards,
 - Street completion requirements,
 - Street name signs.
8. The committee recognizes that staff deals with enforcement issues, such as encroachments in the public right-of-way, driveway design and parking at hammerhead turnarounds, and house number posting, but believes that such issues cannot be addressed through ordinance amendments.