



Town of Falmouth Town Council

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Memorandum

Date: January 9, 2014
To: Town Council
From: Teresa Pierce, Chair
Cc: Nathan Poore, Town Manager
Amanda Stearns, Community Development Director
Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long Range Planning
Re: 2013 Comprehensive Plan Implementation

The Council approved the 2013 Comprehensive Plan in October 2013. In November 2013 the Council reviewed the first year implementation schedule. At that time the Council agreed to study existing lot sizes in selected growth areas, such as The Flats, Foreside, Pleasant Hill, and Brookside, and compare the results to the existing zoning requirements in these areas. Other land use strategies were deferred to year 2 or after the administrative rewrite was complete so that we could continue to use in-house resources.

Since that meeting, I have learned that this past year has seen some of the highest levels of development in Falmouth in the last seven years. This growth has followed the same patterns as reported in the Comprehensive Plan, most of it occurring outside the growth areas in contradiction to our vision for the town. I believe that the Council, in addition to the work described above, should act quickly on other components of the Comprehensive Plan related to land use to assure that the strategies regarding land development and consumption are reviewed and implemented before the burden to our town services becomes an issue. The land use policies laid out in our adopted Comprehensive Plan will lose their relevancy if the town permits the market to drive development.

To that end, I suggest that the Council assign the prioritization of land use related strategies in the Comprehensive Plan to the Community Development Committee and request a report for our February 10 Council meeting.

Raising the expectations for work from the Community Development Department will require additional resources. I have learned from Nathan that demands on staff for development review are already extremely high, with three major subdivisions having filed applications with the Planning Board. Given the current trends regarding the residential real estate market, it is likely that we will see additional applications for

residential development at levels that we have not experienced in a decade or more. If the Council decides to move ahead with expediting the land use strategies originally slated for year 2, additional resources will be required. Therefore, I also recommend we request staff to develop a strategy to add resources and present a funding plan to support the additional resources that will be necessary to successfully complete the important work before us.