

**Route 100 Committee**

**Tuesday, July 8, 2014**

**Minutes**

**Committee Attendance:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Present* | *Name* | *Present* | *Name* | *Present* |
| Sarah Boudreau | √ | Chuck Gerry | √ | Dave Libby | √ |
| Joe Cooper | √ | Rebeccah Grover | √ | Joe McDonnell | √ |
| Andrea Ferrante | √ | Lori Legere | √ | Steve Melchiskey | √ |

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| **Council Liaison** | Charlie McBrady | √ |
| **FIEC Liaison** | Anne Theriault | √ |
| **LPAC Liaison** | Jim Thibodeau | √ |
| **Staff** | Theo Holtwijk | √ |

**Others present:** none

The meeting was called to order by Theo at 6:04 PM.

1. **Welcome**

Theo welcomed all and thanked the members for their willingness to contribute to the well-being of the town.

1. **Committee Member Introductions**

Each person introduced themselves, stated where they lived, how long they lived in Falmouth, and what their occupation was. A contact sheet was passed around.

1. **Review Route 100 Assignment**

Theo reviewed the packet of information he had prepared. He stressed that this was background information that could be reviewed in detail after the meeting. He noted that the draft schedule in the proposal document was already outdated and needed to be updated at some point. He shared a presentation he had recently given on Route 1. He said the Route 1 effort had two components that needed to work together: the public right of way and the adjacent private property. It took the Town 12 years to develop a consensus on these issues, but now zoning amendments had been unanimously approved and construction is under way. He felt that there may be lessons to be learned from that process and its outcomes that could be useful for the Route 100 effort. He pointed out the before and after graphics that had been helpful in explaining the concept, and the zoning summary. In the case of Route 1, a Request for Proposals (RFP) had been prepared to get assistance from a consulting engineer and landscape architect. He shared the RFP of that project and suggested that similar assistance may be useful for Route 100.

Theo then reviewed some other current planning efforts. The main one is the 2013 Comprehensive Plan. He handed out a 1-oage summary of the plan and reviewed the main conclusions of the plan regarding growth and rural areas. He stated that the Council had honed in on the top 5 implementation actions (out of 71 recommended actions). These were now being worked on by the Community Development Committee (CDC) and the Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC). LPAC is focusing on the Growth Area, of which Route 100 is a part. Theo passed around the current work efforts of LPAC in that regard. Jim Thibodeau, LPAC Liaison, and he will make sure there is coordination between LPAC and Route 100 Committee.

Another major effort is about to begin by the Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee (FEIC). That committee will prepare Falmouth’s first ever Economic Development Plan. That is a community-wide plan, but since Route 100 is one of the Town’s major commercial areas, it will be important to coordinate with that effort. Anne Theriault, FEIC Liaison, and he will make sure that that happens. A consultant is currently being sought for that work. He handed out the RFP for that, which summarized the scope of the effort.

A third effort is the Wayfinding Signage project. This pertains to the blue directional signs around town. They are old and in need of replacement. The Town is thinking the design and informational implications of that. A second workshop is coming up on July 21 and Theo invited all to participate as wayfinding plays a role in how people unfamiliar with Falmouth get around, including destinations such as Route 100.

The last handouts were three maps of the project area. The first one provided a general overview. The second provided the zoning districts for the area, which regulate what uses can be placed on the properties and in what manner. The third map highlighted the areas along the Presumpscot and Piscataqua Rivers, which are subject to special regulations.

He cautioned the group as to not get mired in the various details, but keep its eye on the big picture of Route 100, and what changes the Town should make or encourage in the time to come. If the committee’s concept ideas are accepted by the Council, then the details will be attended to.

1. **Committee Logistics**

Theo went through some of the logistics for the committee and requested a quick e-mail from members if they could not attend a specific meeting. He cautioned the group with the use of e-mail for the project as it was intended for distribution of information only, not an on-line discussion of issues through “reply all.” If people had specific issues, it was best to communicate that one on one with Theo. Theo also noted that the communications by the committee were subject to the Freedom of Access to Information Act, and that there always was chance, although rare, that people could request to see that.

1. **Discuss Ideas for Approach**

Committee members provided some initial reactions on the project. One suggestion was to expand the study area to go to the Cumberland line. The proposed new Turnpike exit in Cumberland was mentioned, but Rebeccah stated that this was just an idea and was 15 years away. The group generally stated that it should be aware of anything that may impact the Route 100 area and, vice versa, that any proposals for Route 100 may have impact on surrounding areas.

Dave Libby suggested getting an understanding of the current land uses in the corridor and ideally, those in the 1970’s of the same area. Rebeccah suggested that the group should know about any upcoming development projects. The group felt that it was important to maintain active relationships with the two neighboring municipalities, Cumberland and Portland, about this project. Theo mentioned that he had already reached out to various transportation and regional planning agencies about the project: MDOT, MTA, PACTS, and GPCOG.

The group felt that getting accident data and traffic counts for the corridor would be helpful. Joe stated that a lot of that had already been collected as part of development projects that he had been involved in. The group also mentioned the need for turning lanes, the difficulty turning left onto Falmouth Road when coming south on Route 100. Speeding was also mentioned as a concern.

Sarah mentioned the sense of community of the area, and its history. This is not just a commercial area. It is also an area where people live. It used to have a school, store, and post office.

Steve noted the burgeoning agriculture in the area and he saw a vibrant growth pattern there.

Charlie mentioned that for him there were three aspects that were important: addressing the traffic concerns that had been mentioned, building on the economic base that was present at the Hannaford area, and protecting the agricultural and residential areas in the northern portion of the corridor. He felt that due to this diversity, there was more going on Route 100 than on Route 1. He also felt that some of the commercial buildings looked somewhat tired and could use investment.

The group agreed with the assessment that there was mix in the area. Andrea liked the idea of “layers,” or sections, of Route 100 that each had their own character and density. She noted the general accessibility of the area. It was also noted that the commercial section could serve some of the needs of the Portland North area along Auburn Street.

Dave said that he also hoped the zoning inconsistencies would be addressed. The group stated what a wonderful place West Falmouth was and how much they enjoyed living there. Others recounted its history when they were young.

There was some discussion about the Portland North Business Park.

Theo suggested that the group do a tour of Route 100, so it could first-hand see and discuss site specific issues and build a collective knowledge of the area. Sarah suggested that the tour should also include the natural environment there. The recreational resources were mentioned as well. The comprehensive tour idea was well received. Theo will explore if the Town’s mini bus can be used for that. He will then do a Doodle poll to see when the group can do the tour.

It was suggested to have one meeting in first half of August and do the tour at that time. As of September the group will meet for 1 ½ hours twice a month. Theo will do a second Doodle poll for that to find out what regular schedule may work best. The group decided that meet at 6:00 PM was best.

There was some discussion that the group will need a Chair and Vice Chair. Theo explained the work of those two functions. Andrea expressed a willingness to serve as chair. At the next meeting a decision will be made on that.

Theo will discuss the project with the Town manager and explore the consultant idea.

It was mentioned that MDOT had prepared a preliminary plan for Route 100 and it was suggested that it would be good to see that. Theo will locate that plan.

1. **Next Meeting**

The dates for the next meetings will be determined through the Doodle poll.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, July 11, 2014