

News & Updates from the Town of Falmouth

October 2020

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# The Falmouth Focus

SPECIAL PRINT EDITION

FROM TOWN COUNCIL CHAIR, AMY KUHN



Dear Neighbors,

Happy October! On behalf of the Town Council, I am writing to update you on a number of current initiatives. The Town Council continues to hold public meetings via Zoom, and boards and committees have resumed their work virtually.

**Schools:** We are so pleased that the schools have re-opened safely under a hybrid model. The Council is committed to working with the school department throughout the year to provide any assistance needed to keep our students healthy and engaged, no matter how the

year plays out. Thank you to all the teachers, administrators, staff, coaches, and families for your dedication to our kids.

**The Future of Falmouth:** The Town is excited to launch a new initiative this fall to develop a community vision for the future of Falmouth. This vision project will help inform the next update to Falmouth's Comprehensive Plan. In recent years, residents on both sides of town have expressed concerns about the rate of growth and density in their areas. To help ensure that future changes meet the community's expectations, we would like your input on what Falmouth should look like in 20 years. Please, join in this important conversation. The project will begin remotely with online surveys this fall and then move to in-person meetings as soon as it is safe to do so. For more information, see the article on page 2.

**Election:** The November election is coming up quickly, likely with record turn out and an all time high in absentee voting. Town staff is committed to running an efficient and effective election that is consistent with public health recommendations. Absentee ballots will be available on approximately October 5. If you would like to skip postage and drop off your absentee ballot in person, the Town has installed a secure absentee ballot drop box in front of Town Hall that is available 24/7. Learn more about the election on page 3.

**Communications:** The Town has worked hard over the past year to enhance the quality of Town communications and public engagement. Enclosed with this mailing is a survey for you to let us know how we are doing. Please take a moment to complete the survey and go online to subscribe to this bi-monthly newsletter as well as E-alerts on topics of interest at: [www.falmouthme.org/subscribe](http://www.falmouthme.org/subscribe).

The Council wishes all residents a healthy and safe fall. I hope you can get out to enjoy Falmouth's beautiful woods and waters and/or dine at one of our new outdoor restaurant spaces (a welcome silver lining of the past few months). In these uncertain times, we can all be grateful to live here in Falmouth and be a part of this community.

Kind regards,



Find the latest Town-related COVID-19 updates at:  
[www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org)

Subscribe to E-Alerts for e-mail updates at:  
[www.falmouthme.org/subscribe](http://www.falmouthme.org/subscribe)

## TOWN OFFICES

### **Town Hall**

The Clerk's Office is open Mon.-Thurs., 8am-4pm. All other departments are available by appointment.

### **Mason-Motz Activity Center**

Mason-Motz is open for program registrations, Mon.-Thurs. 8am-5pm and Fri. 8am-noon. Limited programming has resumed. Residents are encouraged to register by phone, mail, or online.

### **Public Works**

The Public Works office is open Mon.-Thurs. 7am-4:30pm.

### **Transfer Station**

The Transfer Station has resumed normal hours of operation (Tue. & Thu. 12-4pm; Fri. 7am-5pm; Sat. 9am-5pm). The facility will collect all disposal items, with the exception of Bargain Barn and bottle donations.

*All other offices are open to the public by appointment.*

## ONLINE/REMOTE SERVICES

Most Town services can be completed online or remotely via our website at [www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org).

### **Registration Renewals**

ATV & Snowmobile, Boat, Vehicle

### **Licenses**

Driver, Hunting, Fishing

### **Payments and Purchases**

Burning Permits, Crash Reports, Portland Water District Bill Payments, Tax Payments

### **Other Services**

Public Works Permits & Requests

Find contact information for all departments at: [www.falmouthme.org](http://www.falmouthme.org)



## A NOTE ON VERY MERRY FALMOUTH

After careful consideration in consultation with our partners, Falmouth Memorial Library and Falmouth-Cumberland Chamber of Commerce, and in keeping the health and safety of our residents and volunteers in mind, the Town has determined that we cannot hold Very Merry Falmouth in its usual format this year. The fireworks, Merry Mix & Mingle, Ugly Sweater 5K, and Hot-in-a-Pot Cook Off simply cannot take place within the parameters of healthy and safe social distancing guidelines. However, we are determined to maintain the community spirit so prevalent in this annual event. Stay tuned for details as our planning moves forward and we create different, though no less jolly, opportunities to celebrate the season, shop locally, support our community, and share in good cheer. If you would like to be involved in reimagining this great event, contact Erin Cadigan at: [ecadigan@falmouthme.org](mailto:ecadigan@falmouthme.org).

## COMMUNITY VISION & VALUES PROJECT

Last year the Town Council expressed strong interest in updating the 2013 Comprehensive Plan to lay a solid basis for any future land use decisions. Prior to commencing this work, the Council decided to first undertake a robust public process to identify the Town’s “vision and values” to help inform the comprehensive plan update process.

What is a “Town Vision,” you may wonder. According to the 2003 Community Visioning Handbook by the former Maine State Planning Office, a community vision is a “mental picture of what residents want their community to look and feel like in 20 years.” It describes the desired future community character. The purpose of a vision statement is “to capture a picture of the community’s future that any resident quickly can grasp and appreciate. This vision does not represent one individual’s or just one group’s point of view. It must represent the consensus of a group of people.... A vision that works helps a community to reach for



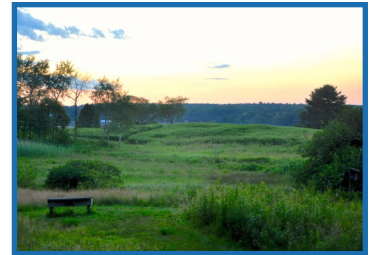
goals above and beyond what normally might be expected, to discover possibilities that were not apparent before. A good vision is a stretch, but still in the realm of the achievable. A good vision motivates people to take action together. A good vision makes people feel hopeful, optimistic, and focused. A good vision is presented in words and images that are concrete and easily understandable. A vision provides a test for determining appropriate policies in a community’s Comprehensive Plan. It provides an explanation to the public of why the plan is the way it is. And it is a yardstick for determining the effectiveness of the plan and its policies over time.”

The Council approved two resolutions last year which addressed the need to seek the assistance of a professional consultant to work with the public to develop a vision and values statement. In December, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for this work resulted in thirteen submissions. An Ad Hoc Review Team consisting of councilors and staff reviewed all submissions and interviewed six firms before recommending to the Council that Future iQ from Minneapolis, Minnesota be hired.

In February, upon request by the Town Council, Future iQ developed a proposed Scope of Services and cost proposal that (a) best seeks community input in the

development of the Town Vision and Values, and (b) obtains broad and meaningful public input before developing new policies for the Comprehensive Plan update. Review of this proposal and accompanying financial appropriation request by the Council was postponed due to COVID-19.

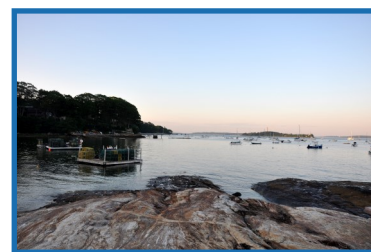
At its Annual Work Plan Retreat in July, the Council decided to move forward with the Vision and Values



project deeming it a high priority. In light of potential impact that COVID-19 may have on upcoming public outreach, Future iQ developed a revised proposal. On September 14, 2020, the Council approved a supplemental appropriation of \$63,000 for Future iQ’s work.

Future iQ is proposing four phases of work: (1) background research and preparation of a benchmark report, (2) on-line community survey, virtual task force work by focus groups, and development of various scenarios of the future, (3) community vision engagement sessions (in-person or virtual as conditions allow), and (4) development of a Falmouth Community Vision and Values Statement.

The Vision and Values project is expected to start this fall and will be completed sometime next year. Two review or “pause” points are included in the process to allow for adjustment of methodology and/or timeline depending on prevailing conditions. When complete, the Vision and Values Statement will lay the basis for, and be followed by, the development of an updated Comprehensive Plan.



residents as possible to join in this effort to envision Falmouth’s future and their hope to see robust participation from community members. For additional details of this project, please consult the Council’s September 14, 2020 meeting agenda or contact Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long Range Planning and Economic Development, at 699-5340 or [tholtwijk@falmouthme.org](mailto:tholtwijk@falmouthme.org).

At their September 14, meeting, the Town Council reiterated the need for as many



*The Town of Falmouth has compiled these questions and answers to help you understand your options when it comes to exercising your right to vote in November.*

## General Information

### What election is this?

This election is the State of Maine General Election and Potential State Referendum Election. This election includes voting for:

- President/Vice President
- United States Senators
- Maine's Representatives to Congress
- Members of the Maine Legislature
- Certain County Officers
- Potential State Referendum

### Who can vote in this election?

To be eligible to vote in Maine, you must be:

- 18 years old
- A United States citizen
- A resident of the municipality in which you want to vote

## Absentee Voting

### What is absentee voting?

Absentee voting allows you to cast a ballot without going to a voting place on Election Day. Maine law makes it easy to cast an absentee ballot. You don't have to be out-of-town or have any other reason to take advantage of this easy way to vote at a time that is most convenient for you.

### Who can vote absentee?

Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person at a voting place on Election Day.

### How do I get an absentee ballot?

Absentee ballots will be available **30 days prior to the election**. There are four ways to request an absentee ballot:

- By Phone: Call and request your own ballot, which will be mailed to the address you provide. Call the Voter Registrar at: 699-5320 or 699-5308.
- Electronically: Request your own ballot electronically using the Secretary of State's online absentee ballot request service at: <http://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl>
- By Mail: Print the Absentee Ballot Request Form at: <https://www.falmouthme.org/town-clerk/news/absentee-ballot-request-form-1132020>. Mail the completed form to Falmouth Town Hall, 271 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, Maine 04105.
- In Person: Request a ballot at Falmouth Town Hall.

### When can I request a ballot?

Absentee ballots may be *requested* beginning 90 days before Election Day. Ballots will be *available* 30 days prior to the election. The deadline to request an absentee ballot for the November 3 election is October 29.

### Can I request a ballot for someone else?

You can request a ballot for an immediate family member by filling out a request form at Town Hall. You cannot request a ballot for someone else online or by phone.

### How do I submit a completed absentee ballot?

Fill out and return the ballot to Town Hall by mail, in person, or via the drop box located in front of Town Hall, next to the staircase. **To be counted, voted absentee ballots must be received by the municipal clerk by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.** On Election Day, ballots may be submitted at the polling place or via the drop box at Town Hall.

### Can I vote by absentee ballot in person somewhere?

Yes. You may vote absentee at the Clerk's Office at Town Hall as soon as absentee ballots are available which is 30 days before the election.

## Election Day

### Where do I go to vote in person on Election Day?

Falmouth's polling place is at the high school. Voting will take place on November 3 at the Falmouth High School Gym, 74 Woodville Road. The polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m.

## More Information

### I have more questions. Who should I call?

If you have questions about voting, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at 781-5253. Or contact the State of Maine Elections Division, phone: 624-7650, email: [cec.elections@maine.gov](mailto:cec.elections@maine.gov).

## Voter Registration

### How do I register to vote?

You may obtain a Maine Voter Registration Application at Town Hall or by calling the Clerk's Office at 781-5253 and requesting one be mailed to you. A valid identification and proof of residency are required. Completed voter registration cards may be delivered by hand or by mail to Town Hall. Voter registrations completed by mail must be received by close of business on October 19, 2020.

### Can I register on Election Day?

Yes. On Election Day you can register to vote at the polls. When registering, you must provide a valid identification and proof of residency.

### Can I change my registration?

Yes. All changes, including name and address changes, require completing a new registration application. If you are unenrolled in a political party you may enroll at any time. If you are enrolled and want to change parties you may, **but there is a 15 day waiting period between changing parties and voting.** Once enrolled, you must remain in the party for 90 days.

## GET CONNECTED



E-Alerts are sent directly to your e-mail about the issues that interest you. To enroll, click "E-Alerts" on our homepage to select the bulletins you want to receive (including upcoming digital issues of this newsletter).



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Follow us on Twitter: [@MaineFalmouth](https://twitter.com/MaineFalmouth)

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Let us know what kind of information you want to see in your town newsletter. E-mail feedback to: [ecadigan@falmouthme.org](mailto:ecadigan@falmouthme.org)

*The Falmouth Focus* is a bi-weekly digital newsletter of the Town of Falmouth. Special print editions are sent via mail to residents twice annually. Visit [www.falmouthme.org/subscribe](https://www.falmouthme.org/subscribe) to subscribe to the digital edition.

## THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH

271 Falmouth Road  
Falmouth, ME 04105

Phone: 207-781-5253  
[www.falmouthme.org](https://www.falmouthme.org)

## SENIOR PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

The Town of Falmouth's Senior Property Tax Assistance Program is now accepting applications from qualified residents for property tax assistance. The program, now in its third year, is open to current Falmouth residents age 62 or older with annual income under \$40,000. Both property owners and renters are eligible to apply. Refunds will be determined based on the number of valid applications received. Recipients will be refunded a proportional share of the available program funds based on income level. The total amount budgeted for this program in fiscal year 2021 is \$50,000. Refunds for eligible applicants will be paid on or before November 17, 2020.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents can mail in the application and backup documents to Town of Falmouth, Finance Department, 271 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, Maine 04105. You may also call Pete McHugh at 699-5311 to make an appointment to submit your application. Appointments may be held by phone or via a socially distanced, in-person meeting at Town Hall. Residents are encouraged to apply early. In order to ensure social distancing, appointment times are limited, so call early to secure a meeting date. The deadline for applications is October 8, 2020. Please contact Pete McHugh, Finance Director, at [pmchugh@falmouthme.org](mailto:pmchugh@falmouthme.org) or 699-5311 for more information.

Application materials, additional information, and an eligibility worksheet, can be found at: <https://www.falmouthme.org/finance/pages/senior-property-tax-assistance>.



*Falmouth's wastewater treatment facility on Clearwater Drive.*

## FOCUS ON FALMOUTH'S WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Most residents rarely consider sewage or wastewater collection and treatment systems. Why should they? As long as your toilet flushes, everything is working...right?!? There are, of course, a few instances when thinking about wastewater is unavoidable, for example: paying your sewer bill or having your septic tank pumped, sewer construction in front of your house or on your route to work, and when your toilet gets clogged. The good news is that, most of the time, wastewater systems work very well. However, like other public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and schools, these systems need maintenance to continue to function properly and serve the public.

*Like other public infrastructure wastewater systems need maintenance to continue to function properly and serve the public.*

The collective work of Town staff, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and consulting engineers protects public health and the environment from...us. Civilization, a high standard of living, population density, industry, and many other things all produce plenty of waste. Our job is to plan, design, construct, regulate, operate, and maintain the infrastructure that collects, conveys, and treats wastewater. If we do our job, most people don't need to think too much about sewage.

In order to keep things working as they should, the Town of Falmouth is implementing a phased upgrade of the Town's existing wastewater system to ensure that sewage is adequately conveyed and treated now and in the future. In upcoming digital issues of *The Falmouth Focus*, Bryanna Denis, Professional Engineer and Project Manager for Wright-Pierce (an environmental engineering firm providing consulting services to the Town of Falmouth), will examine the history of Falmouth's wastewater collection and treatment systems, the issues surrounding West Falmouth's connectivity to the current system, and the plans to upgrade and improve the system for current and future needs. Subscribe to *The Falmouth Focus* at [www.falmouthme.org/subscribe](https://www.falmouthme.org/subscribe).

