



News & Updates from the Town of Falmouth

April 2020

Volume 2, Issue 9

The Falmouth Focus

SPECIAL PRINT EDITION

With information on Town services, business, meetings, and projects during the COVID-19 pandemic.

FROM TOWN COUNCIL CHAIR, AMY KUHN*



Dear Neighbors,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Town Council in late-March, unsure of what the world will be like when it reaches your mailbox. I hope that you and your families are well.

We planned to use this letter to update you on a number of exciting projects the Town is working on, such as building a solar array on the Woods Road landfill, kicking off a community-wide vision and values process to help inform

an update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, and exploring conservation of valuable open space, among others.

However, due to the COVID-19 virus, the Council is suspending current work plan projects for the time being. This will allow staff to focus on providing essential services to the community and keep residents from having to attend public meetings unnecessarily. In addition, the Council recognizes that it should be cautious about committing Town funds to new projects during this period.

All decisions by Town officials and staff are being driven by three key priorities:

- the safety of our residents, especially our seniors
- implementing social distancing policies and procedures
- safeguarding the health of our first responders and critical staff

These are certainly challenging times, but please know that here in Falmouth we are in excellent hands. Our Town staff, Emergency Management Team, and first responders are among the very best and they are doing everything they can to keep us healthy and informed. Plus, we have each other. We are fortunate to live in a community where we can count on friends and neighbors to lend a hand. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Council (council@falmouthme.org) or me personally (akuhn@falmouthme.org) if we can be of service.

On behalf of the Council, I wish you all the best.

*A similar version of this letter appeared in the March 20 digital edition of *The Falmouth Focus*.

Find the latest Town-related COVID-19 updates at:
www.falmouthme.org

RESOURCE HOT LINE

The Town of Falmouth has opened its **Senior Resource Hotline** to all residents. Residents may contact the hotline, managed by the Falmouth Parks and Community Programs Office, at **207-699-5302** M-Th 8am-5pm and Fri 8am-noon for assistance with non-medical needs, including food and critical supplies, general assistance, help with Town services, "check-in" programs, and to sign up for news and updates.

TOWN SERVICES

Most Town services can be completed online or remotely. Staff are available to assist with electronic transactions and can process transactions by mail.

ONLINE SERVICES

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

QUESTIONS

If you are uncertain if you can conduct your business online or through the mail, contact us via the "Contact Us" page on our website or see below.

Clerk's Office (Tax Payments, Vehicle Registrations): 207-699-5308

Code Enforcement

Office (Permits, Inspections, BZA Applications, Zoning): 207-699-5310;
ppeerreault@falmouthme.org

Assessing: 207-699-2475,
assessor@cumberlandcounty.org

Public Works (Road Work, Other Inquiries): 207-781-3919

Planning Office (Planning Board & Minor Site Review Applications): 207-699-5303;
lsangillo@falmouthme.org

Contact information for all other departments can be found on our website at: www.falmouthme.org

FALMOUTH TRAILS

Each spring, the Town of Falmouth closes its trail system for a period of weeks to ensure that the integrity of the trails is not compromised during rain and mud season. This year, trails were closed on March 13. Given the current situation, some residents have requested that the Town reconsider this closure. We understand the desire to be outside and stay active. However, this time of year the trails are particularly fragile. The ground is going through a cycle of freezing and thawing, resulting in moisture in the soil, making the trails extremely muddy and subject to severe damage. Additionally, the small parking areas at our trailheads make social distancing difficult. Therefore, trailhead parking lots are also closed. Staff will continue to assess trail integrity and open trails as conditions improve in the coming weeks. Visit www.falmouthme.org for updates.

There are several areas in Falmouth available for open air recreation on multi-use paths (Route 1) and bike lanes. Pine Grove Preserve, Falmouth Nature Preserve, and Presumpscot Falls Park (Portland Trails) are open. Maine Audubon trails are currently open. We encourage residents to consult the Falmouth Land Trust website (www.falmouthlandtrust.org) for updated lists of their open trails. Following the Governor's "Stay Safe at Home" mandate, we encourage residents to ride bikes, walk, and seek exercise in their own yards and neighborhoods, rather than drive somewhere for exercise. Use discretion and practice social distancing should areas become crowded.

BUILDING & FACILITY CLOSURES

- **Mason-Motz Activity Center** is closed to the public until further notice.
 - Before/After School Care and the Falmouth Co-Op Preschool is closed until May 4.
 - Falmouth Memorial Library is closed. The book drop is locked and unavailable. Overdue fines are waived.
- The **Falmouth Food Pantry** is closed until further notice (see page 3).
- The **Wastewater Treatment Facility** on Clearwater Drive is closed to the public.
- **Central Station on Bucknam Road** will offer restricted public access only.
- **Falmouth Police Department** on Marshall Drive will offer restricted public access only. The "drug take back" and fingerprinting programs are temporarily suspended.
- **Town Landing** buildings will offer restricted public access. Dinghy Day is postponed.
- The **Transfer Station** on Woods Road is closed until further notice. Governor Mills' recent Executive Order entreating residents to stay home, and maintain social distancing led to this decision. Although the Governor's Order does classify Transfer Stations as essential, we believe we are meeting essential services by providing curbside pick-up of trash and recycling. Please note, bins must be placed curbside by 7:00am to ensure pick-up. Overflow bags and cardboard packaging that do not fit in bins may be placed to the side of the bin. At this time the Town is still requiring the use of yellow Town of Falmouth trash bags. If you have difficulty acquiring Town trash bags or for more information on alternative disposal options, contact Public Works at 781-3919.
- **Town Hall** on Falmouth Road and the **Public Works** building on Woods Road will be closed to the public until further notice (see page 1 for details on services).
- **Falmouth Parks, Trails, Playgrounds, & Trailhead Parking** are closed, including tennis courts, basketball courts, athletic fields, playgrounds, etc. The Town of Falmouth does not recommend using playgrounds at this time due to the fact that they are not manually or chemically sterilized. Visit www.falmouthme.org for updates on these closures and see article at left specifically regarding Falmouth trails.



Note: Do not enter Town buildings if you are feeling sick, or have known contact with someone who may have the COVID-19 virus.

This information was accurate as of April 6. Find current updates at: www.falmouthme.org. Subscribe to Town News & Announcements E-Alerts for regular e-mail updates at: www.falmouthme.org/subscribe

MEETING, EVENT & PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS

- All **Town meetings** (including board and committee meetings), forums, and events have been cancelled until further notice. All **Community Programs programming and events** are cancelled until further notice.
- **Town Council meetings** may take place using Zoom, a video-conference platform.

SCHOOLS UPDATE

Falmouth Public Schools, Fields & Facilities are closed until May 4. Publicly accessible WiFi is available on the campus (outside). No password is required. The parking lot behind the high school gym is the best access point. Find school updates at: www.falmouthschools.org

A NOTE ON PROPERTY TAXES

The deadline for property tax payments is May 7. Town officials explored several avenues for extending payment deadlines. At the time of this mailing, there is no statutory authority to move the date taxes are due or the date when interest accrues, even for emergency circumstances. Despite actions taken by other municipalities, neither the emergency bill recently enacted by the Legislature nor the Governor's emergency declaration or orders have made any changes to the laws governing property taxes, due dates, interest accrual, or tax lien procedures. The Town of Falmouth and other communities, through the Maine Municipal Association, have petitioned the Governor for a legal remedy. If this occurs, the Town Council will likely take local action to extend the payment deadline. Updates will be posted to our website and via E-Alerts.

FALMOUTH FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

The Falmouth Food Pantry building is currently closed but volunteers are still meeting the Pantry's mission of getting food to those in need. Food Pantry volunteers are delivering pre-packed, non-perishable boxes to homes that need food assistance. If you have a food emergency, please call the Falmouth Food Pantry emergency line 632-2687 (primary) or 781-2996 (secondary). Leave your name and phone number.



The Food Pantry is not accepting donations of food until further notice and has no need for volunteers at this time. Currently, the best way to support the Falmouth Food Pantry is through monetary donations. Donations should be made payable to the Falmouth Food Pantry and mailed to: 279 Middle Road, Falmouth, ME 04105. Donations can also be made online via PayPal at: www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1807575.

Additionally, Rivalries restaurant in Falmouth is collecting donations of grocery store gift cards on behalf of the Food Pantry. Safe drop off is available between 11:30am and 8:00pm at 2 Hat Trick Drive. Call 747-4020 upon arrival for instructions.

IN OTHER NEWS

As Councilor Kuhn noted in her letter (see page 1), the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus drastically changed the information we intended to include in this issue of The Falmouth Focus. What follows is a brief update on some ongoing initiatives.



ROUTE 100 CONSTRUCTION

Construction work on Route 100 (Gray Road) has resumed. You can receive weekly e-mail updates about this project and its impact on traffic by subscribing to the Route 100 Project E-Alert at: www.falmouthme.org/subscribe

PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER ORDINANCE

At its March 9 meeting, the Town Council adopted a pesticide and fertilizer ordinance which requires any sole proprietor, or business entity whose use of pesticides and/or fertilizer is provided as a service for which compensation is received, to register before any applications are made. The Ordinance also requires annual summary reports to be submitted by January 31 of each year. The Town has created documents for the Annual Summary Reports, which can be utilized to track applications throughout the season. Lastly, the Ordinance prohibits the applications of fertilizers between December 1 and March 31. For more information on the ordinance, registration, and reporting visit: www.falmouthme.org/business2

As part of this effort, an education campaign, *Living Lawns*, is being launched to educate residents on healthy lawn care. If you have not already done so, please take our quick survey at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/G3KNXDT.

The results will help us better understand how Falmouth residents maintain their properties.



REVALUATION

As noted in previous issues, the Town of Falmouth has been planning to conduct a town-wide property revaluation. Because property values fluctuate with market conditions, it is

necessary to regularly conduct revaluations to ensure an equitable distribution of the tax burden. During a revaluation, all real property in the Town is reviewed and assessments are adjusted to their fair market value. Falmouth's last revaluation occurred in 2009. In January 2020, the Town of Falmouth hired Vision Government Solutions to assist in conducting this revaluation under the supervision of Cumberland County Regional Assessing, which provides real and personal property assessing services to the Town. Data collection and inspections were set to begin in April. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council will consider whether to cancel, suspend or continue the revaluation at its April 13 meeting. Updates on this issue will be provided in upcoming digital issues of *The Falmouth Focus* and via our website at: www.falmouthme.org



BROWNTAIL MOTH

This spring, the Town of Falmouth will conduct a spraying program of infested trees and tree canopies within the public right-of-way to combat the infestation of browntail moths. Spraying will take place in the early morning hours and will commence some time in late May or early June. The timing will depend upon when foliage begins to fill in. In January, the Town contracted Lucas Tree Experts to perform an assessment of high risk areas in Falmouth that should be treated again for

GET CONNECTED



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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

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 to subscribe to the digital edition.

IN OTHER NEWS (CONTINUED)

control of browntail moth. The areas identified as high risk have decreased significantly since last year. The Town again hired Whitney Tree Service who will spray an insecticide called ENTRUST™ SC from the roadway with a truck-mounted mist blower onto infested trees along some public roads in Falmouth. Residents on those roads have already received notification by mail from the Town of Falmouth and have been given an option to opt out of the spraying program. Only those trees located in the public right-of-way that have nests and have been assessed as high risk will be treated as part of this project. Additional information can be found on our website including: a list of roads that will be sprayed, the material safety data sheet for the insecticide, information on the spray program, and reports regarding the impact of infestation. Visit www.falmouthme.org. Click “Browntail Moth” in the menu on the left side.



EARTH DAY 2020

EARTH MONTH 2020

The Recycling and Energy Advisory Committee (REAC) and the Falmouth Conservation Commission (FCC), along with community partners, formed an Earth Day Planning Group to develop a slate of activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on April 22, 2020. A full month of programs and events were to be launched beginning April 22 and continue into May. Given the current situation the national Earth Day Network is shifting to commemorate a digital Earth Day. Likewise, the Earth Day Planning Group is exploring ways to mark Earth Month both virtually and in ways that get people outside while practicing safe social distancing. Stay tuned for updates via our website and E-Alerts as we move forward in our efforts.

VISIONING & VALUES

As Councilor Kuhn noted in her letter on page 1, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town Council is suspending the current workplan for the near future, including the community-wide vision and values process to help inform an update of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan. Additional updates on this issue will be forthcoming.



THE TOWN OF FALMOUTH

271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Phone: 207-781-5253
www.falmouthme.org

How Can We Help You?

As Town operations have stabilized, we want to know what our residents need during this time. What should we be doing to assist you and your neighbors? Send us your thoughts. Mail comments to address at left, e-mail mfleming@falmouthme.org, or call 207-699-5329.
