



## Good Group Decisions

### Evaluation Report for Town of Falmouth Growth-Density Evaluation Forum, November 15, 2018

#### Were the objectives of the session accomplished? Were your expectations met?

- After reading the written objectives for the meeting (which we had not done ahead of time) they seem to have been met. To be honest, our expectations were not completely formed, perhaps in part due to our lack of preparedness, but we feel that many of our concerns were echoed by the other residents who attended.
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- I had no expectations of this meeting as there wasn't an agenda before hand that I saw
- It seemed to be a very informative how the people of Falmouth feel about growth and density of the town, now will the Town Council and Town Manager listen to what was said.
- Yes, Craig, you were a good facilitator. Of course after the meeting was over, I did think of one more question/comment that should have been brought up. A lot of Falmouth residents did not seem to be informed about the zoning ordinance changes and the growth plans. When we became aware, it seemed like the Falmouth Town Council did not even want to listen. So many residents wrote letters, got up and spoke at the meetings and we even got a petition to put these issues on a ballot so the residents could have a voice. We did get a substantial number of signatures only to be told that the petition was invalid.
- I think the session was successful in meeting its objectives, but I think its objectives diverged from the objectives of many of the participants.
- yes and yes
- I'm not sure. If I were to answer the formal objective - "discuss ideas about the new density zoning" - then I would say no. There were no 'ideas' talked about, because that is not why people attended the meeting. People attended the meeting because they are very upset and angry with the planning board's unilateral and destructive zoning changes and wanted to express those feelings and thoughts.
- Yes.
- Yes, the citizens were given a chance to express their feelings. I liked that you didn't have to speak in order to participate.
- Not really. I did appreciate the woman from the town near the end of the meeting who started to explain how the zoning changes came about in 2016. I think that could have been broached much sooner in the discussion and would have led to much more progress and less complaining. Ironically, Craig almost rejected her attempt to speak because

he judged it as potentially taking us back in time. It was a great opportunity for the town to educate the very people who seem most offended - and who chose to express their frustration at this meeting - and to get direct feedback from them in a more appropriate discussion. Perhaps the town will make some other effort to explain how and why the zoning changes happened.

- I think it was good to hear from people and its all stuff that has already been said. I didn't hear anything really new other than the concern that things are done with town manager and staff and applicant long before the public hears of it. Of course this is true in all towns most likely but perhaps to a larger degree in Falmouth.

## What did you like most about the session?

- --The way it was conducted, with all the answers put on the "board" and categorizing the answers.--It felt like there was a high level of participation, and the mood set by the facilitator seemed inclusive of all attendees. --We were glad that the town is finally taking steps to listen to its constituents--It felt that there was a true cross-section of the Town, geographically and philosophically.

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- The speaker did an excellent job

- I liked how we were able to write our concerns on the board first and put them in the front of the room. That allowed us to see what others were thinking about. Secondly I did appreciate the fact that we were all given the chance to voice our concerns.

- The session was successful in eliciting comments and managing talking time among the participants.

- Civil, participatory, forward-looking, non-judgmental, well attended,

- The moderator Craig did a good job facilitating the meeting and soliciting the audience. His green sticky board was very useful and he did a good job of distilling the issues and breaking them down.

- That it made people comfortable in speaking their minds.

- That everyone had the opportunity to participate.

- out on time, good discussion, good moderator

- I liked that it wasn't as emotional or negative as it gets when people just get up to a mike at a town meeting.

## How could it be improved?

- --The set up of the tables and chairs was an odd choice, and it worked in the end, but I would have liked to be able to read all the answers myself, as I think it could have given me more ideas to comment on.--It could possibly have been longer, or perhaps we could have spent less time on some issues and been able to get to some important topics, such as the environmental concerns.

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- Let more people know about the meetings

- If I knew ahead that we were going to have this opportunity I would have thought out my concerns before the session and perhaps would have been better prepared.

- This session would have been much more helpful if it had been scheduled prior to the zoning changes being implemented. From my perspective, we now have a crisis caused by this implementation and talking about it in this manner did little to address the immediate needs that exist.

- If it were less of an echo chamber. The council members should have been there and available to answer direct questions from the audience. There was a lot of good discussion but I am skeptical as to whether the board members were or are going to listen.

- Can't think of any needed improvements.

- Not sure. I thought it worked pretty well.

- WAY TOO MANY topics introduced. We could have spent an hour on each one, but there were dozens.

- I didn't like that the facilitator was "provocative" or that he made statements and conclusions that were different than what I was hearing. There were times where he really got what people were saying and several times where I thought he went way off the mark as if he was embellishing from things he had heard elsewhere or just off the mark of what was being said. I also didn't like that he didn't focus on any of the positives that were on the board. There were several but they got overridden by what seemed like what he thought was more valuable. I thought it was interesting that if you analyze all the comments there was a balance of people just asking for more information and people that were "upset" It would be very good to actually discuss peoples inquiries and most importantly give them the information they want and why let misinformed people keep believing what is incorrect? Why not just help them out? Its a lot for a resident to know what happened. Why couldn't we look back and get the facts for a small portion of the 2 hours???

## Any additional comments?

- Thank you for hosting this forum, and we look forward to the next one. We also feel that there should be some 'big picture' forum time spent on not just 'what's bugging you?' but also, 'you don't know what you've got till it's gone.' Perhaps the idea that land has simply economic value should be reevaluated as a society and a community.

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- It seemed to be a very informative how the people of Falmouth feel about growth and density of the town, now will the Town Council and Town Manager listen to what was said. There are a lot of other reasons why growing Falmouth at the rate we have been headed is a bad way to continue our future. Casco Bay for one is being destroyed by what we are pumping into it, along with Highland Lake, the environmental impact alone should make someone wake up and smell the roses before we destroy them also. Thank you for putting this on I feel is a good start For Falmouth

- Will we get a copy of your report to LPAC?

- I am totally impressed with this session. It's democracy in action. I'm sure this process is challenging and I wanted to thank everyone involved for making it happen. I'm sure the outcome will be better off with all of this input. I also think it was nice that folks could hear other viewpoints than their own.

- The zoning change process is fundamentally flawed. The citizens of Falmouth should have the ultimate input - a referendum - on such a huge and fundamental town issue which affects taxes, schools, emergency services, property values, traffic, community feel. It is criminal that there wasn't a vote on it. There should also be notifications sent to every town resident when a change is even proposed etc. It is outrageous that these changes were allowed to be put in place with little to no input from town residents. And I didn't even get a notification once the zoning changes had occurred!!!! Completely Outrageous!!! The only people who seemed to be aware, and the only people to benefit from the zoning changes - developers - knew anything about it. The entire process needs to be transparent and in the best interests of all residents not just for developers.

- The compelling message of the session is that there were no practical grounds for the radical changes that were made to the Town's historical growth & density policies in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, and that indeed those changes are virulently against the best interests of the Town's residents as well as devoid of their consent. The question now is whether the Council and staff will dig in their heels or move quickly to return to pre-2013 growth and density policies.

- I agreed with a lot of what was said last night. I truly hope that LPAC and the council are really listening to our concerns. This is our town and we should have a say in the direction of the town.

- I found some of the comments rejecting the need for affordable housing to be a blatant rejection of people "not like us". Surprised me and saddened me. Not one person of color in the room, and no one advocating the benefits of a little bit of diversity in our white upper class town. This comment is obviously not a reflection on Craig or Town employees - more on the surprising and obvious bigotry of some of our residents.

- Please be cautious about what your notes and comments say. We all make our own interpretations and obviously it can really influence direction. Density discussion in particular was all over the board....Some comments about density were clearly only related to duplexes and apartments and low income , others were only about the RA district and one persons circumstance....others were general and were about not wanting growth at all, others were about what developers can do with a small parcel or a big one. It would of been good to ask people to clarify what they mean by density as a few people eluded to....statements without that clarity can be interpreted in many ways.