

# **Town Council Special Meeting**

## **Minutes**

### **February 11, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm

#### **Roll Call**

Councilors Svedlow, Kuhn, Asherman, Hemphill, Cahan and Ferrante were present and answering roll call.

Councilor King participated by phone.

#### **Item 1                      Presentation from Casco Bay CAN regarding Falmouth youth and the impact of substance misuse in Falmouth, including an outline of the programs currently in progress and future challenges.**

Police Chief John Kilbride spoke about the relationship between the Falmouth Police Department and Casco Bay CAN and the impact it has had on education of Falmouth youth on substance abuse and their enforcement efforts.

Beth Blakeman-Pohl of Casco Bay CAN gave a presentation on the many ways they use to spread awareness on substance abuse to both youth and parents in Falmouth and the surrounding communities. They have done presentations at senior groups, faith-based organizations, and youth panels.

Chief Kilbride discussed the importance of educating seniors about how to lock up and dispose of their prescription drugs. He said 80% of misuse starts with access. He also spoke about the “positive tickets” program, which they hand out to youth that are spotted doing good, healthy things, fishing, playing basketball, etc. The tickets can be redeemed for \$5 gift cards.

Chief Kilbride said Casco Bay CAN sponsors a tipline which runs through the regional dispatch office. It allows youth to anonymously send information about underage drinking and parties they know about to the police, so officers can respond before it gets out of control.

Ms. Blakeman-Pohl said they also offer a 12-hour intervention and reintegration program for at-risk youth.

Chief Kilbride said youth have said they want enforcement; they don’t want to go to school where others are using or vaping. He said they have a zero-tolerance policy; if a young person gets caught they will get a summons, but they want to educate those youth as well.

Ms. Blakeman-Pohl spoke about vaping, what the cartridges look like, how they are marketed to be appealing to youth and designed to be difficult to spot. She presented some data from the 2017 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey.

Chief Kilbride spoke about the challenges of detecting and enforcing modern substance use methods like vaping and dabbing. He said they focus on educating the youth, and not missing any opportunity to get the message out to kids and parents. He said they are willing to speak to any youth groups that would like them to come.

Councilor Kuhn asked if students are given amnesty if they call in to the tipline. Chief Kilbride said reporting is either by text message or email and goes through a third party, so it is completely anonymous.

**Item 2                    Resolution to support recently approved amendments to the Falmouth Memorial Library expansion site plan**

Town Manager Nathan Poore said this is a technicality in the MOU, that the Council needs to consent to any changes to the site plan that require Planning Board approval.

Chair Hemphill opened a public comment period; there was no public comment.

Chair Hemphill read the resolution into the record.

Councilor Asherman moved the resolution; Councilor Kuhn seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

**Item 3                    Ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 8, regarding temporary signs.**

Councilor Cahan moved the ordinance; Councilor Asherman seconded.

Councilor Svedlow asked about a provision (Section 8.363.3.a) that states that signs shall not be attached to vegetation. Posted signs (no trespassing, for example) are typically attached to trees. He wondered if this provision has always been included.

Chair Hemphill said “no trespassing” signs are not temporary signs; they are usually permanent. Councilor Asherman agreed.

Motion carried 6-0.

**Item 4                    Workshop discussion on the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and processes used to evaluate proposed private developments.**

Chair Hemphill said several councilors have expressed interest in discussing some of the contention and challenges that have come up in recent public discussions of proposed projects and how the comprehensive plan addresses growth.

Councilor Cahan would be interested in some outside facilitation and analysis of the recent public feedback, the existing processes, how the Council reviews and evaluates projects, creating more community engagement and buy-in, as well as making it more predicable for people who want to develop here. She would like it to be more predictable for everyone involved. She suggested a community audit done by professionals with both Council and community workshops.

Councilor Ferrante agreed that they need to evaluate their processes. The projects they have been through recently have been painful for everyone involved. She would like to have a couple things happening simultaneously. First, she would like a high-level evaluation of values and vision, who Falmouth is right now and what is happening in the community, perhaps with an external group. Second, she felt they need to resolve the issues with RA and LPAC and should continue their current process.

Councilor Svedlow agreed with Councilor Ferrante. Democracy is messy at times. The Council is here to represent the town, but not go wherever the wind blows. They are faced with a situation where they are perhaps disconnected with their policies from what the community wants to see. He didn't think there was anyone to blame; he felt things have changed faster than expected. Comprehensive plans are generally updated once every ten years; in cities that are growing quickly, they are updated every year. There have been a lot of changes, on the national, state and local levels. He didn't think they could dive into workshops with the community without a clearly drawn game plan. There are a few acute things they have been discussing and already started working on, including RA, and he felt they should address those before they start that process.

Councilor Kuhn agreed with evaluating the vision, but they need to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. They have made a huge investment into these visions already. She has heard that people feel that the growth areas allow too much density, and that people want more rural character throughout. She agreed with evaluating the process with some outside help and finding a way to get more public involvement earlier in the development review process.

Councilor Svedlow felt getting public involvement is not just on the Town; he said the developer needs to connect with abutters directly. He didn't think they could mandate that, but there could perhaps be a list of tips they provide to developers.

Councilor Kuhn wanted to hear what people wanted to see on Route 1.

Chair Hemphill said Falmouth is subject to a lot of regional growth. People and businesses want to move here. Cumberland, Windham, and Scarborough are feeling the same pressure.

Councilor Asherman asked whether they wanted to review the development review process, or the overall public communication process.

Councilor Cahan said she wanted a high-level analysis of what should happen when large developments are proposed. She said GPCOG has been discussing growth and transportation in the Greater Portland area. With the environmental changes happening in other parts of the country, since Maine is relatively stable environmentally, they feel that Maine will be an attractive place for people to come. They need to think about what they want Falmouth to be.

Councilor King said one of their jobs is comp plan implementation; this is where challenges show up. She felt the process has felt adversarial. Even though each of the recent projects has their own story, they each share the same two characteristics: transparency and public communication. She felt it would have helped if they could have engaged the public earlier. She wondered if they could have a better process for these big projects. She wondered if they could bring more public attention to the introduction of large land-use projects, perhaps jointly with the Planning Board. She asked if that would trigger abutter notification. That would be a place to acknowledge what everyone's rights and responsibilities are moving forward. She spoke about concerns with impact on the schools; she said they need to get the School Board involved and find out how they look at growth.

Chair Hemphill said the impacts they have seen raised as issues are schools, (that the schools are full, and more students impact the budget); increases in traffic; environmental, including public sewer, groundwater, watersheds; and the character of the town. People are concerned about change, impacts on them, how they live and get around town. These issues will continue to be central to their discussions about projects in town.

Councilor Ferrante said there have been a lot of significant changes in town in just the last 2.5 years. The timing has been an issue. She wondered if they would be getting negative feedback if these had been more spread out. She didn't know how much influence they can have on pacing things. In response to Councilor Asherman, she said she wanted to address high-level communication: how do they do business, and who they do it for. She wondered how they reach out and address all factions, to make sure they know what everyone is thinking.

Councilor Kuhn appreciated Chair Hemphill listing out the themes. She felt that was helpful to focus on those when evaluating projects.

Councilor Asherman agreed that the pace has accelerated in the last few years, but he didn't see that going away. Falmouth is a great place to live and people are finding that out. The Town doesn't have big problems to fix, a troubled school for example, which makes it even more valuable. He wondered how they address the communication piece; that was key for him.

Chair Hemphill asked the Council to discuss next steps.

Councilor Svedlow said they need to clearly define the problem. One category is how they address projects that are asking for something other than what is allowed, zoning wise.

Councilor King said understanding the problem is important. She suggested going back to review these recent projects and defining the problem.

Councilor Cahan spoke again in favor of having an outside agency to do that; they could interview current and past Councilors, staff and then dissect and identify the problems. In response to Chair Hemphill, she said that could include and engage the public with various methods.

Councilor Ferrante wasn't ready to discuss solutions yet. She said she definitely wanted to get professional help. Councilor Kuhn agreed.

Councilor Ferrante said she wanted the Council to discuss this more, to clearly identify what answers they are looking for. She didn't think they have to look too deeply to identify the problems; they know they had no early public engagement on the two large projects, for example. She wasn't ready to spend a bunch of money yet.

Councilor Svedlow agreed. He wanted to come up with a clear process for future developers.

Chair Hemphill said there are projects coming up; he wondered what they do about those projects. Councilor Ferrante pointed out that the Route 100 committee has completed its work and is ready to bring its proposals forward. People put a lot of time and energy into that. Route 1 North is coming up at CDC soon as well. She wondered if they should discuss those after they dive deeper into this.

Councilor Svedlow encouraged the public to engage with the process; the Council needs that feedback in order to move forward. Councilor Kuhn agreed.

Mr. Poore summarized the discussion; he said there is interest in discussing this in more detail at the Council's mid-year retreat on March 1. He will work with Council leadership on drafting that agenda. There is consensus that they need help, but not how much or what kind, and they need to discuss that a little more.

Councilor Ferrante said one of her questions is how to get the public more engaged, and what other communities are doing in that effort.

The Council asked for staff facilitation at the mid-year retreat, rather than professional facilitation.

## **Adjourn**

Councilor Svedlow moved to adjourn, Councilor Kuhn seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Tryon  
Recording Secretary