



Community Facilities Planning Committee

c/o Falmouth Town Hall, 271 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, ME 04105, 781-5253

Community Facilities Planning Committee

Councilor Breen
Committee Chair

Councilor Pierce

Marsha Clark

Judith Currier

Phil Kaplan

Analiese Larson

Tim O'Donovan

Mark Soule

Steve Tenney

Staff

Lucky D'Ascanio

Albert Farris

Theo Holtwijk

Nathan Poore

Lyn Sudlow

Consultant

Oak Point
Associates

Draft Meeting Notes Wednesday, October 15, 2008

Committee members present: Councilor Breen, Councilor Pierce, Judith Currier, Tim O'Donovan, Mark Soule, Analiese Larson, Steve Tenney

Advisors/Town staff present: Lyn Sudlow, Matt Gilbert, Al Farris, Nathan Poore, Theo Holtwijk

The meeting began around 7:05 PM. Councilor Breen reviewed the agenda.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Notes of June 23, 2008

The June 23rd notes were unanimously approved as written.

2. Recap of Process to Date

Cathy recapped the committee process to date. There have been space needs that have come to attention of Council which led to the creation of the committee. The Committee conducted various site visits, such as at Town Hall, the Library, and the Plummer-Motz and Lunt schools and it heard from various officials about the needs of these facilities. The committee also visited the Gorham municipal center. Last week, the new elementary school was approved, and the existing school facilities will be vacant at some point. It is not known when this will occur. Oak Point quantified existing space and proposed needs. Various concepts were brainstormed by the committee and basic preferences were expressed. The Committee also made a list of questions that it felt were relevant. Graphics of the various options were prepared by staff.

3. Review of Revised Draft Charge

The draft charge was reviewed. Nathan commented on the Pleasant Hill Fire Station. He has asked for a 0% increase in the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan and he heard from the Fire Chief about the needs of that station. He felt that the Fire Dept. could use help of the committee by incorporating that site in its public outreach. The key question is whether to close the station, and, if so, what to do with it. This needs to be resolved.

The proposed Rotary Club facility was discussed as well. Al Farris reported that a new 2- 2 ½ story building is being proposed at the American Legion site by the Legion, the Lions, and Rotary Club. This would be funded by the Legion and leased to the Lions and Rotary. The group wondered if this need

could now be taken off the list of sites in the committee's charge. Al was asked to contact the Legion to get a conformation.

Mark was wondering if the Legion plan affected the library's plans. Lyn responded that if the library were to move to Lunt school, then the current building would be available other uses. Mark clarified that he meant if the *current* on-site expansion plan of the library would be affected. Lyn mentioned that there still would be a need for shared parking at the Legion site, unless two residential properties that abut the library could be acquired. Cathy mentioned that negotiations with the Legion had been difficult. She said it hard to proceed with the library expansion if the parking needs are not resolved. Part of the difficulty has been that the residential property owners want more money than the appraised values of their properties.

The existing Legion building will be preserved, as it cannot be added on to or expanded. The group was interested to know where the proposed new footprint would be located.

The Rotary building history with the Town was also recapped. When Rotary approached the Town more than a year ago and proposed that the Town and Rotary Club work together on a new recreation building, the Town was not ready. One issue was who would have control of the property. Another issue was timing because the Town Council saw a need for a comprehensive review of facilities before the town partnered with a community group on a new building. Consumption of alcohol was a required need by the proponents. Smoking was not an issue. This proposal focused on the site known as "the warming hut" and/or the Community Programs Multi-Use Building.

The status of the workforce housing project off Woods Road was also reviewed. The Council recently chose a developer/builder to work with. That project is on track.

The park and ride facility need was in the second tier of concerns. It has been tied to the Metro service. The Council recently agreed to continue with the Metro bus service. A P+R facility could add users to the bus. A site near Village Park has daytime parking available. The Falmouth shopping center charrette may reveal another possible site in the future.

The food pantry was also discussed. The group has many volunteers and demand is up. Additional space has been taken over in Town Hall as the current space is outgrown. The PROP office is being shared with Pantry staff. The expectation is that the pantry needs could require doubling in size. The facility needs to be part of any facility plan, though its location could be decentralized from Town Hall. A location near the PROP facility seems worthwhile as short term needs of some clients could be satisfied by the Pantry who may not qualify for PROP assistance. PROP has a general assistance service contract with the Town as well as oversees the fuel assistance program.

Cathy clarified that the workforce need is listed on the charge with reference to Plummer-Motz only. There is no need to search for potential workforce housing sites elsewhere in town as part of this project.

The charge includes preparing a set of recommendations for the Town Council.

4. Reflect on Questions, Preferences and Scenarios

Cathy stated she felt somewhat overwhelmed by the project as it complicated and has a lot of moving parts.

Teresa gave an update on the new elementary school project. Falmouth is "in the queue" with the State. Twenty projects are currently being worked on and run the gamut as to where they are in the process. Falmouth is higher up on the list as so much work has already been done here. People are continuing with

making preparations so the Town is ready to roll when the funding comes through. Teresa acknowledged that the State has a lot of problems and that no promises can be made. But she reiterated that Falmouth is in a great position with the State: its design concept was approved, many people voted in the referendum and many of those voted in favor of the project. She figured that there may be a 6-12 month funding delay. This means that the schools may be vacated as soon as September 2011, or that it may be shifted to January 2012 or even Fall 2012. It seems to be four years out

Cathy said that this pointed to needing long term as well as short term goals. Some felt there was a risk in figuring things out, and, because of changing circumstances, possibly needing to tear plans up. Cathy stated that the “how” and “when” of the facility plans are certainly influenced by the timeline of the school project. It pointed to doing a staged plan.

Mark suggested that the Committee during its planning not spend a lot of money, and that it go slowly. Perhaps the most pressing needs should be attended to. The suggestion was made to do an initial charrette to get ideas flowing. Nathan said that one short term decision may be to minimize expenses at Town Hall by just putting in some inexpensive carpeting, instead of spending more money and then have Town Hall relocate. Lyn reported that the library has been trying to manage its needs by taking over a meeting space for staff work space. The energy needs of various facilities also need to be factored in. Public sentiment may also change over time. It was recognized that four years of planning time is, in fact, not a lot of time.

The Falmouth Shopping Center charrette was discussed. Should this be viewed as a separate event? The suggestion was made to treat them as one. That site and the Plummer-Motz/Lunt site are separate but related in proximity and sense of “destination.” Some stated that “town center” concept that the group began to discuss at an earlier meeting is a good one but that linking these two projects may be risky. The Falmouth Shopping Center project has come into play as the developer approached the Town Council the night before this committee meeting. The idea there is to create a mixed use destination that may also cater to after hours use. Perhaps the linkage is in the scheduling of, and invitations for, the public events of these two projects.

The group considered various public processes that could be organized and be effective. One idea was to organize a contest, where civic groups and school groups could come together in their own way with possible solutions. The pump could be primed with them by offering three possibilities. The question that could be posed is give us your ideas, but be mindful of the needs of the community and its resources. Such an effort needed to be done on all levels. The sense was that expertise needed to be hired for that, that a presentation/road show needed to be developed.

There was a discussion to bring these audiences any options or not, and whether to do a kick-off event and then go on the road with subsequent presentations. A suggestion was made that the roster of audiences should be visited twice as a return visit in 6 months may yield useful information. It was suggested that two listeners from the Ad Hoc Community Facilities Planning Committee should be present at each event, and that some format should be brought to the conversations. Various Falmouth community groups/clubs/organizations were mentioned. It was stated how important the outreach was as some people already think that the schools have been sold to a private party.

It was then suggested that this kind of outreach should perhaps be done in advance of a larger charrette event on a weekend in the Spring of 2009. That way it could serve to help advertise the big event. Presentations could be made, but also left behind for people to take home and think about. The presentations may also be an opportunity to get people’s e-mail addresses to use in follow-up communications. It was stated that the community groups were not expected to take formal positions on the issues but rather serve as links to residents who might take interest in the project and get involved. There was excitement for that pre-charrette outreach idea.

The group said that the right vision was worth waiting for. It still wrestled with whether or not to make some of the committee's ideas part of the presentation, to show what could be done, to give a glimpse of a Town center vision at the Plummer-Motz/Lunt site. Other considerations are important as well. For example, the Town could sell that entire property and give the funds back to taxpayers. It could also sell a portion of that property, realize some revenue and put that to use in a municipal project on the remainder of the site. Different things are being heard in the community. Some wonder why the Town would want to give up an historic property. And whatever happens to the Plummer-Motz/Lunt site, there are a list of space needs that the committee must address. The group agreed that this project is a huge opportunity to address the future needs of the town. In a nutshell, citizens will be asked what they value. It was agreed that visiting with community groups in advance of a larger community meeting was the direction to go. It was felt that the list of groups was finite. A presentation needs to be developed and questions to be posed need to be articulated.. The public should have ample time and information to consider this committee's work and ample opportunity to participate in developing solutions.

Regarding Ocean View, it was stated that their proposal regarding the Plummer-Motz/Lunt site was parked for the time being. It was stated that a Town Center vision could have a large price tag.. A public-private proposal could help to bring that cost down. Cathy noted that the emotions attached to specific sites and entities seems high, even to a site such as Town Hall. It was agreed not to label "Ocean View" specifically, but to call it "public-private development" that could bring in revenue through a potential sale, lease, or TIF.

5. Develop criteria and process for hiring Public Process Consultant

It was agreed not to pursue a public process consultant at this stage in the project.

6. Discuss Next Steps, Tasks and Timeline

As a next step, Nathan, Cathy, and Theo will prepare a draft presentation outline and schedule. This will be available to the committee before the next meeting.

The committee prepared on the spot some lists of possible groups to talk to. Theo will collate those and send it out for further input and revision.

At the next meeting these three items would be reviewed:

- draft presentation
- draft schedule of activities
- draft community group list for committee members to visit

The large community event was tentatively pegged for March 2009.

Nathan mentioned that if the November school consolidation was not approved that he anticipated strong interest to consolidate certain school and Town functions, which may have space implications.

Cathy thanked everyone for their participation and said she now felt less overwhelmed.

7. Establish Meeting Schedule

Two meeting dates were established by the Committee:

- Thursday, November 6, 2008, 7:00 PM, large conference room
- Thursday, December 4, 2008, 7:00 PM, large conference room

8. Next Meeting

Next meeting will be Thursday, November 6, 2008, 7:00 PM, large conference room at Town Hall

Meeting notes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, October 20, 2008