



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

Institute for Civic
Leadership

Oak Point Associates

Meeting Notes Thursday, April 9, 2009

Committee members present: Councilor Breen, Councilor Pierce, Mark Soule, Analiese Larson, Steve Tenney, Marsha Clark, Judy Currier

Advisors/Town staff present: Lyn Sudlow, Lucky D'Ascanio, Al Farris, Theo Holtwijk

1. Minutes

The minutes of the March 5th meeting were approved upon a motion by Teresa and second by Mark.

2. March 12th Meeting Review

First, Cathy asked the group to go around and say how they felt the March 12th meeting went. Some of the comments were:

Mark was surprised with the consistency in the responses. He felt that the reporting out generated a lot of material to read. He would consider doing next time more with multiple choice questions.

Judy had a good diverse small discussion group. The discussion went well. She felt that keypad portion was long, but overall the meeting went well.

Lyn felt the meeting went very smoothly and was well organized. Marsha said ditto.

Steve said that it felt good to facilitate a small group. The audience was perhaps a bit self selected. He felt that the questions that had specific uses, such as day care and body shop, were too suggestive and some people may have felt that those uses were the ultimate solution. He asked his small group at the end: how is the current economy affecting your opinion? He wonders how others might respond to that. He felt the March 12th participants may have been a bit more "dreamy," but that the on-line respondents added reality.

Marsha was surprised with the anger that some people expressed in the open-ended on-line survey responses.

Teresa loved the fact that so much Town staff was present. She felt that the number of questions was OK, but felt that it went too slow. She felt that there was a certain rhythm that needed to be maintained. She felt that with this a high bar was set for community conversations in Falmouth. She was happy that the up-front outreach effort of the committee worked. Group response: Some felt that the response of meeting and on-line participants must have been a good percentage of Falmouth households or registered voters.

Analiese concurred and had nothing to add to the above.

Al felt it was a great turnout. He had one tough participant in his small group who wanted to dominate the conversation. Group response: Some felt it was a good thing we had keypad voting to balance the more outspoken people.

Cathy felt that the outreach work paid off and that Peggy Roberts had done a good job reporting on the project all along. She talked about a letter that appeared in newspaper, but that was received third hand by her. She wished that people would communicate more directly with the committee. Group response: Such type of input will be discounted by others. Response 2: Someone asked how representative the feeling expressed in that letter was. Some said that it seems that it is more an isolated position.

Analiese said that the meeting really creating a feeling of being part of the community

There was another comment that people seem fearful of the potential cost and want us to come back with good numbers.

Keypad and On-Line Survey Results

The group then reviewed the keypad and on-line survey results. Judy and Theo put together a comparison between the two survey for several key questions. The following discussion ensued:

There appears to be a big difference between keypad and on-line response for Q28 (a question on the need for the library to expand). The keypad people support an expansion, but the on-line response was more split. People felt that this may be due to the group that showed up on March 12th and watched the video. People at home may not have watched the video.

Two questions that some felt should have been asked:

- Did you watch the introductory video?
- How often do you go the Library?

Mark wondered what the effect of the digital age is on the need/design for future facilities. This is often referred to as e-government. Al reported that more and more transactions are done on-line and more documents are put in a digital form. Theo commented that the digital age not only points to what Town transactions the public may wish to conduct that way in the future, but also to how we can and should use technology to seek/increase public participation. Regardless of that trend, face to face interaction will remain an essential tool. Cathy said that Falmouth is always pushing the envelope in this respect.

The discussion moved to what the library might look like in 25 years. There has been a growth in on-line use at the library as well as a continued growth in lending. It is expected that the library will still be a gathering place, perhaps with a coffee shop as income generator.

There was a question if the value of Town Hall is indeed \$2.5M as was reported in the Forecaster recently. This is not known.

There was a question as what the group wanted to accomplish today. Cathy said that it was to talk about what the data is telling the group and what it wanted to do next.

Cathy's take is that it seemed that a "Town Center" at the Plummer-Motz and Lunt complex should be further investigated, with the library at Lunt, a community center, potential pool, Town Hall, with a reuse of the existing buildings.

The question came up what the Town what money the Town could get if it sold the Town Hall and library. This is not known.

The suggestion was made that a Town Center plan could be phased in.

It was asked why the pool did not pass in the past. The sense was that location and land cost was an issue for many people. It was noted that there is currently a new private afoot for a pool in Falmouth.

Some suggested that the group focus on what we currently have.

The notion of phasing was further discussed. Funding approval could be sought in stages, or all at once – both have pros and cons.

There was suggestion that a revenue-generating component could be part of the Plummer-Motz and Lunt complex and that the most important aspect of this site was a "sense of gathering."

A potential partnership with OceanView was discussed. Some stated that they saw no reason for a partnership as they did not envision more people living at the school site. Others countered that selling a portion of the land would help to defray costs and that that was a good idea.

Some suggested that the pool could be a revenue generator and that there could also be private fundraising, but others said that there are significant maintenance costs with a pool.

The currently proposed North Yarmouth Academy-style ice rink was brought up, so people were aware of it. This is proposed where the open air rink is now.

Theo suggested that the options for the each existing facility to investigate could be:

- Expand/invest in current location

- Expand/invest in new location

- "Do nothing," i.e. don't invest/expand at current location

Each will have its own costs and benefits.

He also felt that the survey response was quite substantial in exploring a public-private partnership. Respondents may have been clear in not wanting to sell all of the school site, but are potentially interested in selling some of it. Exploring a possible partnership seems imperative.

Mark made the suggestion that perhaps the Town should pursue a pool, and not do the library expansion, as the Town already has a library, but does not have a pool.

Lucky was stated that a lot of work had been done on a community center.

It was noted that a pool comes with many questions.

There needs to be sense of use program for a community center. Lucky said that at the low end it may be a retrofit of an existing space. At the other end it might be a state of the art facility. South Portland has a full-size gym, pool, and walking track above the gym. It was asked what a full size gym is. It would be similar to the Middle School front gym.

3. Next Steps

Survey findings:

How to report out the survey findings was the next topic. Some of the direction seems very strong, other response are more unsure. It was felt that the committee is now in a position to develop a list of questions that need to answered next. The reporting out was considered important as it is a PR issue and would also help to prevent any surprises with the public. There could be a letter and/or ad in The Forecaster with the conclusions and next steps to be taken. Mark volunteered to draft the conclusions for committee review at the next meeting. Theo will assist.

Intergenerational community center:

There was a discussion on the intergenerational community center program. The Parks and Community Programs Advisory Committee (PACPAC) could work on that. Instead Lucky, Steve and Teresa were recruited as they are all PACPAC members. They will keep PACPAC informed and will present a draft program at the next meeting.

OceanView Discussion:

The group agreed to hold of further discussion with OceanView until it reviewed its nest steps. Cathy mentioned that she referred a current (separate) on-site expansion proposal at OceanView to Councilor Armitage as she wanted to be solely involved with the Community Facilities project and not mix interests.

Lions, Rotary and American Legion:

It was reported that the discussions between the Lions, Rotary and American Legion was put on hold as some people in those organizations felt that the library might become available.

Outreach:

The group agreed to do a round 2 of outreach to the same groups that it spoke to before. This time it would be to report what the two surveys had been telling the committee and what next steps the committee planned to take. The survey summary would be a handout for that. This outreach would take place in May and June. Each person was asked to get in contact with the groups they had spoken

to before. It was noted that some groups may have just one more meeting before they adjourn for the summer.

4. Next Meeting

The group agreed to meet again on April 30th at 7:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:00 PM.

Draft meeting notes by Theo Holtwijk, April 13, 2009