



Community Facilities Planning Committee

Falmouth Town Hall, 271 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, ME 04105, 781-5253

Community Facilities Planning Committee

Meeting Notes Wednesday, October 21, 2009

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

Consultants

Institute for Civic
Leadership

Oak Point Associates

Spatial Alternatives

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

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

Consultants present: Mark Gianniny, Allison Towne, Rob Tillotson

Cathy opened the meeting around 7:00 PM.

1. Minutes

The meeting notes of the September 23rd meeting were unanimously approved.

2. Review Revised Bubble Diagrams

Allison Towne discussed the site plan. She mentioned that additional parking was proposed for the Lunt building to meet the ordinance, that that would involve some wetland filling, but that those wetlands (as well as the vernal pools present on the site) were not deemed significant. She also said that restoration of the landscape was proposed in the rear of Lunt where the portables currently are located. She discussed the federal grant that was used for recreation improvements in 1981 and said its conditions applied to the entire site, not just where the areas where the grant-funded improvements were made. She also said that an appraisal was needed of the improved areas. There is a "conversion" that can be made to deal with these issues, but that will take some time. The committee concurred that this issue should be explored without delay.

Mark Gianniny presented the Plummer-Motz/Town Hall-Community Center diagram. Theo made some suggested relocations of departments (Finance to third floor, Town Manager to second floor, IT/cable TV adjacent to council chambers) that had been discussed with some Town staff. Al wanted to make sure that the Council Chambers space was maximized. There was agreed that the public should not have a need to go to 3rd floor. Teresa asked if Town Manager did not want to be close to

Finance dept. Nathan replied that his office has a shared administrative assistant with Community Development Dept., so proximity with that dept. makes sense. It was clarified that Plummer currently has no A/C, but does have some ventilation equipment. Theo suggested moving the after care room closer to the core of the Community Programs operation. Nathan mentioned that a break room had to be incorporated near the kitchen and exercise room in Motz Wing. Lucky wanted to make sure there was enough Community Programs office space allocated. Theo mentioned that a new at-grade entrance may not be needed at Plummer as there were four entrances to Plummer building already, and that it may affect the look of the historic façade. Rob responded that an at-grade entrance there made a lot of sense. Teresa asked if any interesting discoveries were made under the drop ceilings. Rob responded that he was surprised that the committee in an earlier meeting had opted not to use the old stage area on the second floor for council chambers as that had a lot of character. Cathy said she still liked that area for council chambers. Teresa agreed with that. (After the meeting it was decided to look at that option again as a second option.)

Mark then reviewed the Lunt/Library diagram. He said that the children's area was placed where it was as that area allowed for more room to expand in the future. Lyn, when asked for her reaction to the diagram, said it had good possibilities.

3. Meeting with Library Board

Cathy, Teresa, Steve, Lyn, Nathan, Theo, and Rob, Mark and Allison from Oak Point, met with the library board two days earlier. Cathy said she was surprised with the uneven familiarity of the board with what the community facilities committee was doing. She said that the board raised interesting organizational questions dealing with land/building ownership and Town operational funding. She said that cost was a big question for Board members. She expressed the interest to get the Board more involved and that it was suggested to the Board that it tour the Lunt building.

Lyn commented that there was long discussion by board members after the joint meeting and that not all members were of the same mind. She said that there was agreement by the Board that the library needed more space and that the Board voted to participate in the Town's community facilities study. She said one member felt that renovating Lunt would exceed the Town's tax payers ability to pay for that and that the survey that the Town had done in March was insignificant. Board members also wondered about their future role: would they be involved in day to day decision making or would they be advisory committee members to the Town. Some board members also felt that the committee was asking them to commit to moving to Lunt on the spot. There was agreement with the committee that this was not the case and that that misunderstanding needed to be clarified. Steve felt that the library board should be given the benefit of the doubt as the progress of the project is more familiar to the planning committee which has been meeting more frequently to discuss it. He felt that there were two issues expressed by the library board: money and control. He proceeded by brainstorming how some of these could be dealt with. Cathy acknowledged that there were a variety of scenarios that could be developed to address these concerns. Lyn stated the board reinstated its Expansion Committee, but that its membership was unknown at this time. This committee will write down all questions it has about the facilities project.

The planning committee mentioned that board members seemed to like the Town Center idea and desired close proximity to a relocated Town office, but that some also expressed that the move of Town offices was not their concern. Teresa wondered if there should be a liaison-type subcommittee of

the planning committee to begin working closely with the Library Expansion Committee. Cathy felt that the Town Center vision has not yet been articulated well.

It was asked if the Russell Room had come up in the joint meeting. The response was yes. Mrs. Russell was present at the meeting. Lyn stated that the inclusion of a community center in the Town Center vision was very close to Mrs. Russell's late husband's vision, and that that notion held good promise. Nathan stated that any memorials at the library needed to be and would be respected. Cathy stated that there were legal implications as well. Nathan stated that he felt that communication between the planning committee and the library board needed to be coordinated. He felt that was best done through the library's representatives, rather than through a potential multitude of channels.

4. OceanView Meeting.

Matt Teare's recent e-mail was distributed to the committee. He requested a meeting with the committee. Cathy asked what the committee felt about that. Analiese felt it was time to meet. Teresa agreed, and felt that a right of first refusal might be desirable. Tim stated that, if the Town is seeking to retain the buildings and that potentially only the rear land would be available for private development, there may not be any other developers for that other than OceanView. Steve said it seemed from the e-mail that OceanView was interested in the wooded portion of the site and that it wanted to expand its housing there. Lucky recounted some feelings relative to OceanView she heard in her small discussion group back in March. Judy recounted from that same meeting the praise she heard from OceanView residents for John Wasileski. Analiese commented that OceanView has an active neighborhood organization. Theo stated that the committee as part of its "next steps" announced it would have "informal conversations with interested parties." He felt that that should be done with OceanView, with an eye to see how that might enhance the Town Center vision, that the committee should be careful to make any promises to OceanView, but that it after that it should get feedback from the full Council how it sees potential OceanView involvement and what process should be followed to do so. Cathy stated that any property acquisition by the Town or sale of Town property gets automatically handled in executive session by the Council as they constitute negotiations. Steve commented that the project timeline was tight and that getting OceanView involved now was important if it was to play a meaningful role, programmatically and financially. Teresa agreed, particularly as OceanView could be involved in the Community Programs component of the project. Lucky stated that her department already works together with OceanView on a number of fronts. Allison said that the federal grant impact would be affected if the woods get developed versus restored and protected. And that the appraisals would be affected as well. Analiese asked about the recent Council approvals that had been granted for OceanView. They are to add 12 or so units, and allow an increase in building height. There was agreement to invite OceanView to the next meeting and to ask Matt to update his earlier memo containing use ideas, as needed, and to bring any other illustrative materials that might be helpful.

5. Service Learning Update

Steve and Theo have had recent e-mail contact with Dede Bennell, who has taken the lead on this service learning project with the Falmouth School Department. Earlier there was a report by Holly McEwan of an interested Social Studies teacher, but no meeting has happened yet to explore what could be done, when, by who, etc. Both Steve and Theo expressed a concern that the service learning opportunity may slip away. There was a suggestion by the committee to make one "last knock."

6. Appraisal Procurement Update

Nathan reviewed the proposal from Cushman and Wakefield. This firm has an office in Portland. The firm is large and qualified, offered a competitive price, and the Town had an impressive interview with lead appraiser Christine Hume. The committee concurred with hiring Cushman and Wakefield and the Town Manager will proceed accordingly. Work is to be completed by December 31st.

7. Project Schedule

Allison handed out an updated schedule of the work to come in the next few months along with the feedback that will be needed from the committee and the library. Rob discussed that one key element to do cost estimates was the level of finish that would be expected by the committee and library for both buildings. Upon discussion it seemed that good baseline may be the level of finish that currently exists in the library and town hall. A discussion also ensued on LEED certification for the renovated structures. That was a desire by the Town, but Rob said that “good design” could accomplish the same without the added cost. He suggested that gold and platinum certification would add cost to the project. The committee wanted to make sure that IT needs would be adequately reflected in the cost estimates. Rob said they would be and that Oak Point is one of the only architecture firms that has a communications designer on staff. The cost estimates may then be a base level of work to be accomplished. Albert stated that he felt the Town paid too much for LEED certification of the police station, but felt that attention needed to be paid to the energy component, particularly windows. He commented on what he saw missing at Gorham’s Town Hall. Teresa suggested that the renovations should not be gutting the buildings and that salvageable items should be reused or saved. Rob concurred with that. Nathan wondered if a subcommittee on space renovations was needed to address those type of details.

Theo summarized the overall project schedule that he drafted in August. That schedule looks at possible referendum dates under various scenarios. If the committee were to aim for a November 2010 referendum (which still seems reasonable), then there is a not a lot of time left for the committee to finish its work and for the Town Council to review it.

Al mentioned that the Town offices in the current location still needed to be looked at. How much does it cost to renovate it properly, or to build a “new box” in the current location? There is some data available for the library, but it does not exist yet for Town Hall. It was agreed that Oak Point and Town staff needed to get together to develop a cost estimate as part of Vision B and C.

The committee discussed the fact that any cost estimate will likely be taken as the “one” number to go with, whereas it depends still on a lot of undetermined factors. The Committee wanted to make sure that it did an adequate job of presenting that type of information to the public and prepare it for a referendum. A concern was expressed that additional people would be needed to help guide the project to a referendum. Staff, by its position, cannot be advocates for any referendum, and the present number of citizen members of the committee is small and has already done a lot of work. The committee concurred that additional people needed to become involved and that now was the time to think about a strategy for a November 2010 referendum and release of the cost estimate information. Nathan mentioned that one spokesperson would be needed (perhaps one councilor and one staff person) so there would be one voice. Theo stated that all this suggested to him that work on Vision B and C needed to happen now and not be delayed for too long. He also felt that the site needed some more thinking to make sure it fitted with the Town Center Vision.

8. Next meeting

The committee determined its upcoming meeting schedule:

- Wednesday November 18th at 7:00 PM
- Thursday December 17th at 7:00 PM
- Thursday January 7th at 7:00 PM

Cathy will get together with Nathan, Theo, and Teresa on 29th to prepare a proposed work program for the next 12 months.

The agenda for the November 18th meeting will include (not necessarily in this order):

- community strategy
- sustainability strategies
- meeting with Matt Teare/OceanView
- service learning update
- Department of Conservation update
- Renovation of Town hall update
- Selection of Community Forum #2 date

The meeting was adjourned around 9:20 PM.

Draft meeting notes by Theo Holtwijk, October 23, 2009