



Community Facilities Planning Committee

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

Community Facilities Planning Committee

Meeting Notes Wednesday, November 18, 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, Marsha Clark, Phil Kaplan

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

Consultants present: Mark Gianniny, Allison Towne, Rob Tillotson

Others present: Susan Tartre, John Wasileski, Matt, Teare, David Haynes, Councilor Rodden

Cathy opened the meeting around 7:00 PM. As there were some guests the group and audience introduced themselves. Cathy welcomed Sue Tartre and said she would be sitting in on committee meetings from now on as she chairs the Library's Space Exploration Committee.

1. Minutes

The meeting notes of the October 21st meeting were approved by consensus.

2. Discussion with OceanView Representatives

Cathy gave a brief overview of OceanView's interest in the Plummer-Motz-Lunt site as an abutter from the start of the project. Matt Teare, Director of Development of Sea Coast Management Company, stated that as that property is quite a bit of land, OceanView felt that it would be possible to include all the Town Center elements envisioned by the committee and also have some of the property available for development by OceanView as well. He said it was important for OceanView to have connections to a proposed Town Center. The presentation would show some ideas that they had.

John Wasileski, OceanView owner, stated that he and landscape architect David Haynes had been involved with OceanView since 1980. He stated he wanted to be part of the community with all his development projects. He stated that he locates his projects near the center of communities on public utilities, and has contributed to land conservation efforts.

John recounted his career which involved multiple joint ventures with the public sector, initially involving affordable housing. He stated his willingness to work with communities to find out what their needs were. He also mentioned the importance for him to work with Maine architects and contractors.

John stated that OceanView proved to be a dynamic community and that with all his projects he listened to the residents and neighbors. He gave as an example of the sidewalk along Blueberry Lane that a resident had requested. He said that OceanView had its own process of obtaining resident input not unlike the Town, and that his NIMBY's were his own residents. He felt that OceanView has become established in the community. Units are offered in a price range from the low \$100K to \$600K. He stated that research showed OceanView appeals to 40% of the market place. OceanView residents are very interested in having the Falmouth Memorial Library potentially next door. He stated that any joint venture would have to work for OceanView residents as well as for the Town. He suggested that some interesting partnerships may be possible such as with Maine Medical Center regarding wellness. He also mentioned that affordable housing may be possible in the existing buildings. In sum, he said that OceanView was a "likely suitor." He ended by stating that OceanView residents had been very supportive of the local schools, even though that meant a higher payment for them, as they want good schools too.

Matt continued the presentation by distributing two handouts. One contained an illustrated description of OceanView. The other handout contained three possible joint venture vision diagrams. Matt prefaced his comments that any purchase price by OceanView was related to the number of new homes that would be possible. He also stated that site conditions, such as wetlands, needed to be taken into account, that such had not yet been done. Typically that reduces the number of units that ultimately may be possible. He then reviewed the three diagrams.

Vision A corresponds with the Committee's Vision A in that it showed the majority of the site devoted to civic/town center uses and a small portion allocated for OceanView. This parcel would allow OceanView to add a wing to the main lodge containing 20 new apartments.

Vision B follows the Committee's Vision B and has the property split about 50-50 between civic and private uses. This vision contained the 20-apartment wing as well as 25 or so new single family cottages, much like the cottages of Whipple Farm. About 15 acres would be available for Town use. The Committee asked what the designation "LGF" meant. It is "lawn, grass, field." The existing trail network was shown as well so one can see which trails would be removed.

Vision C shows the Lunt building, if this building were not to be used by the library, for affordable or workforce housing. Besides the 20 apartments in the lodge wing, it also showed 42 new cottages. By way of comparison, Whipple Farm also has about 42 cottage buildings, Matt said. The Committee asked what the size of the proposed cottages would be. John stated that they would like to do more research before determining that. He stated that OceanView currently offers about 50 different designs and that The Highlands in Topsham offered about 100 different designs. He felt that this variety in design is what distinguishes his developments from other developments. Matt added that, for instance, some of the units could be "townhomes" and be in size between the cottages and the lodge apartments.

It was stated by OceanView that they were open to hear the committee's ideas on partnering and that that was blank slate. By way of example, that OceanView could take the lead on renovating one of the

buildings for a community center. Or OceanView could take the lead on creating workforce housing. Or the shared program offerings with the Town could be expanded.

It was noted that Vision C also contained a proposed swimming pool. That was included by OceanView in case the committee wanted the community center to move into the direction of health, wellness, and fitness. John mentioned the partnering they had done with the Topsham Library in creating a genealogical research room. Phil asked what specific ideas OceanView had regarding workforce housing. There were no specific suggestions as of yet. Matt stated that he had been in favor of the Town creating more workforce housing when the Woods Road project was proposed. Committee members asked if Oak Point representatives had any reactions to the three visions. Allison stated that the diagrams contained interesting ideas and that she was interested to first hear the Committee's reaction to them. Rob concurred.

Teresa stated that she appreciated the patience by OceanView in letting the committee go through its own process and that she saw opportunities for mutual benefit. Cathy asked what OceanView would do if they could it all over again. John said that they currently bus residents to The Highlands to swim in the pool there, which was a \$500,000 investment. He stated that the pool at OceanView was open 9 months each year and that that was built at a quarter of the cost of The Highlands pool and that it was one tenth of that in operational cost. He stated that in the previous Falmouth community pool proposal some years ago OceanView was to be a contributor in return for some dedicated pool time for OceanView residents as well as opportunities to do occupational therapy there. He felt that a community pool should be part of a TIF so Town funding could help pay for it. He felt that, though a pool is an attractive amenity (as Cathy put it for John), it was also a "money pit." It was asked what OceanView thought of an indoor walking trail. John stated that OV residents would like that as well. He noted that a portion of the OV resident fee goes to pay property taxes and that OV residents did not want to be taxed twice. He also stated that he felt sidewalk extensions along Middle and Falmouth roads could make a good walking loop and could be connected to the Lunt sidewalk that lead to Route One.

Bonny stated that she felt the proposals were intriguing and that she had an interest in affordable housing. She asked if the affordable housing would be age-restricted or not. The response was that it could be either. Bonny stated that she felt that the affordability needed to meet the low to moderate income (LMI) criteria and that it had to be legitimately affordable. She felt that OceanView had an image problem regarding affordability as its facility was so nice. Cathy suggested that as the next step committee members needed to do some "chewing" on the ideas presented. She thanked John, Matt, and David for coming to the meeting and sharing their ideas.

3. Plummer-Motz and Lunt Updates

Mark presented the two bubble diagram options for the Plummer building and said they had worked up a schematic floor plan for option 2. He walked the committee through the floor plan. Albert gave Mark a floor plan alternative that he had prepared and summarized it by stating that he felt the Assessor's office needed to be on the second floor adjacent to the Code Enforcement Office so a joint counter could be created. He felt that the staff break room proposed for the Motz wing was not private enough and should be moved to the third floor in Plummer. Teresa stated her interest in items of historical significance and that having the council chambers in the old stage area seemed a good solution. Cathy asked if the councilors would sit on stage or not. Teresa felt that that was not important to her, but that she felt that the space there seemed designed and appropriate for that kind of function. Steve asked if

there was an issue with having the council chambers on the second floor. Cathy responded she felt it was OK as long as after-hour access to other areas could be limited and there was an elevator nearby. Steve also asked if the gym could be pushed further out instead of taking up three existing classrooms. He felt that more programming space was needed in the community center than was shown. Rob stated that a connector to a free-standing building would be possible and be preferred. Lucky stated that there was a lack of daytime programming space. It was asked if the teen center would have its own entry. Lucky stated her vision for a teen center compared to that of Steve. She felt that Steve's vision was more like what Westbrook is offering separate from the municipality. She envisioned a room in the Town-operated community center which could be used by teens after school. This is more like what exists in South Portland, although there the community center is in walking distance of the high school. She could also see the teen center as separate entity. There was suggestion that middle school students may be a more appropriate target audience than high school students as they are so busy. Nathan stated that he felt a full size gymnasium may be 10 years out. Some disagreed with him on that. Nathan said he agreed with Albert's comment on the assessing department, but disagreed with him on the proposed relocation of the staff break room. Nathan felt that the third floor space could be used for IT or for some planning staff, such as Tony and Theo's functions, which operate relatively independently. Phil stated that he felt the second floor council room was good space for that. He wondered how people would get there, and suggested that that was perhaps a wayfinding issue. Theo stated that he had heard from Amanda and that she wanted to make sure that after hours access to public spaces was taken into consideration like it had been in current Town Hall. Susan stated that she had worked on the 3rd floor at Plummer and that she suggested it not be used for anything. As a former appraiser she also stated that the assessing department was too far away if it was located on the third floor.

The discussion shifted to Lunt and the library. Sue stated that Marsha and Lyn had done a very good job keeping library trustees informed, but that not all trustees were able to come to all Board meetings. She also felt the trustees were a bit gun-shy as they had gone through an expansion planning effort before and had spent considerable time and money on it. The trustees are very interested to hear what the Town could bring to the Library's expansion in terms of financing. Teresa commented that she thought that those questions were a joint discussion. Susan stated that the trustees were comfortable having Lyn and Marsha work through the space planning issues, but that to some trustees the Lunt option looked like an expensive building. They also felt the current library had great parking and did not want to lose that. Susan stated that people love the current library and that they felt they had to preserve that feeling. It was asked what her reactions were to the OceanView proposals. She felt it would be great for the library to locate next to OceanView, and that may volunteers come from OceanView. Lyn stated as an example that a current OceanView volunteer had to give up her car and therefore could not volunteer at the library any more. Perhaps if the library was located at Lunt she could perhaps rejoin as volunteer. Susan stated that if OceanView was interested in Lunt for affordable housing that perhaps a new library building could be built at the Plummer-Motz-Lunt site (for example between Plummer and Lunt). She suggested that the Library Board still may want to own half of a new or renovated library. The terms and conditions for a joint Library-Town project would have to work for both parties. Lyn was asked if she felt that the library's space program fit in the Lunt building. Lyn stated that she and Mark were still moving certain functions around to create a best fit. Mark stated that the overall library space program did fit into Lunt. Regarding a proposed new library building, Rob wondered if the committee would prefer town green versus a library building and parking lot there. The essential question is, he said, can the library be made into a great, vibrant space. Cathy stated that she understood the library board's concerns and that it needed to decided what was best for the community.

4. Future Meeting Dates

Cathy took this item out of order. Upon discussion it was decided to change the January 7th meeting date to January 28th and to not meet with the Library Board on January 13th so more work could be completed. The other meeting dates are December 17, February 25, March 18, April 8, and May 13.

5. Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Update

Theo reported that he had met with Mick Rogers of the Maine Department of Conservation. Mick has inspected all six Falmouth sites which have received funding over time and has not found any violations. The Plummer site received funding in 1981 for play equipment, a play area, and basketball court (but not the Esther O'Brien trails). Reuse of any of the buildings would be OK, but any exterior changes on the site (with possible exception of a full size gym expansion) would require "conversion," even if none of the existing recreational improvements were impacted. Conversion requirements are based upon the appraised value of the land involved, not the value of the recreational improvements. As exterior changes now or in the future undoubtedly will occur, Theo recommended that a 100% conversion be pursued and that such be started right now as a conversion process would take one year to complete. He stated that the conversion options could include transferring restrictions to recreational improvements already in the works, such as the new athletic field at the school complex. He also said that the appraised value of sites receiving restrictions had to equal the appraised value of the existing site, and that he anticipated that if a trail network were to be created or protected somewhere else it might have to include a multiple of 20 acres of land (20 acres is the Plummer site area) to make up for assumed differential appraised value per acre. The committee agreed with the suggested conversion approach and determined it should be pursued without delay.

6. Appraisal Update

Theo stated that he was slated to meet with the appraiser two weeks ago, but that she had the flu and was out last week. He will now meet with her tomorrow.

7. Next Steps

Cathy suggested that the scheduling of Community Forum #2 and Community Strategy discussion be deferred to the next meeting as the group was running out of time. She also suggested that a good chunk of time at the next meeting should be reserved to discuss the committee's reaction to the ideas presented by OceanView. Allison stated that there were two aspects to evaluating a possible joint venture with OceanView. One is that the committee should first determine what mix of uses it finds important to its Town Center vision. Second, the committee should evaluate the financial support that could be leveraged to help realize that vision.

There was agreement that Oak Point should continue with its work to do cost estimating. As sustainability ideas that the committee may have will have a cost impact, it was agreed that Oak Point put together list of possibilities that would be discussed at the December meeting. To underscore that point Cathy stated that the level of finish of renovated space was less important to her than having good mechanical systems in the renovated buildings. It was agreed that all financial information should first go to Nathan so it can be put into a comprehensive financial/funding analysis format.

Teresa suggested that at the next meeting the committee needed to look at the project from a higher perspective and not get into too much of the “weeds” (i.e. details). Rob commented that cost at this stage was, in his opinion, less important than the committee determining what it wanted to see happen at the site.

In summary, the agenda for the next meeting will include (not necessarily in this order):

- review of OceanView ideas and Town Center Site Vision
- review of sustainability strategies (LEED)/level of finish requirements
- discussion on community strategies/forum #2
- reports on individual councilor discussions (Cathy/Teresa)

The meeting was adjourned around 9:10 PM.

Draft meeting notes by Theo Holtwijk, November 20, 2009