



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

Thursday, May 13, 2010
Minutes

Attendance

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Rebecca Casey	√	Bud French	-	Hugh Coxe	√
Paul Bergkamp	√	Kurt Klebe	√	Jim Thibodeau	-
Steve Hendry	√	Sandra Lipsey	√	Julie Motherwell	-
Rachel Reed	-	Sam Rudman	√	Steve Walker	√
Claudia King	-				

Council Liaison:

-

Staff present:

Ellen Planer, Theo Holtwijk

1. Oath of Office

Town Clerk Ellen Planer took the oath of office of all present, with exception of Kurt Klebe. She obtained signed papers after the oath.

2. Minutes

The draft minutes of April 22, 2010 were approved with two amendments:

- page 3, 6th paragraph, 2nd line: Revise the first sentence to read: "Sam admitted that (...) not many changes may be needed to the current plan's format or categories as those still seemed to be relevant and the Council felt that it was not necessary to reinvent the wheel."
- page 3, 6th paragraph, 2nd line: Insert the word "like" so it reads: "Sandra commented that she would like the group to have..."

3. Sticky Notes

Committee members proceeded to place sticky notes on the sheets that had been hung on the wall indicating the various chapters of the reading materials.

4. Review of sticky notes

The committee then reviewed the notes chapter by chapter. Kurt volunteered to read each note aloud. Brief discussions followed each chapter:

Purpose of the Comp Plan:

Paul wondered what the 2000 plan was trying to build and what other communities in the area wanted to accomplish. He also wondered what the right metric was for measuring the plan's outcome. Was it number of houses, overall tax base, or what?

Becca suggested that format refinements were in order to make the plane easier to read.

Population:

Sandra and others suggested updating the statistics and trend data. Kurt wondered how accurate the population forecasts of the 2000 plan had been. Sandra made the suggestion when the sticky notes would be transcribed not to duplicate items. Sam mentioned that he had looked at the Cumberland Comprehensive Plan and that he felt the population chapter would give information who we are as a town. Hugh had worked on that plan. He said that a lot of that data came from the 2000 Census and census estimates. Theo recommended that the committee not wait on results of the 2010 Census as that could be a while.

Economy:

There was note on the vacant space at the Falmouth Shopping Center. There was a comment that the expectation in the 2000 Plan that one could live and work in Falmouth was not realistic. There was a question what percent the commercial tax base was in the community. Sandra felt that it was important to educate people what Falmouth's reality is. Becca felt that the plan overall does not have a clear vision. Sam noted that fewer people worked in Falmouth in 2000 than before that date.

Housing:

Paul asked if the Town should put limits on how developed the Town should be. There was a question where the less expensive housing in Falmouth was located. The group wondered what the real reason was that affordable housing efforts have trouble being realized. Steve mentioned his concern for Falmouth losing some of its diversity. Sandra mentioned an example from Minneapolis-St. Paul area regarding affordable housing and emphasized how important it was for the community to decide on it and how it needed to be prepared to receive it. Becca felt that this was an important regional issue.

Transportation:

It was asked what the traffic congestion trends were, what the Turnpike and MDOT's plans were for highway and ramp improvements. A comment was made relative to the Town's trail system and the plans of Portland Trails and the proposed Sebago to the Sea trail. Another comment mentioned the need to improve the walkability of the commercial area of Route 1.

Facilities:

There was a comment made relative to the Town's volunteer fire department, energy use at Town buildings, and the recommendations of the community facilities study.

Water and Sewer:

There was a question how close the Town was to maximizing its demand for water and sewer and if there was a master plan. Another question focused on evaluating the costs and benefits of extending sewer lines.

Open Space:

There was a question how much open space there was and how accessible it was. There was a suggestion to connect more trails and minimize the need for people to drive to them.

Marine Resources:

A comment was made that Portland is maxed out and that boaters from other towns are coming to Portland. About half of the mooring holders are from outside Falmouth.

Natural Resources:

There was a question where water quality stood in Falmouth. There was a comment made relative to scenic resources and the pending natural resource amendments.

Historic Resources:

There was a suggestion made to combine this section with Cultural Resources.

Cultural Resources:

The question was asked what local groups existed that dealt with cultural issues. Paul felt that they were tucked away and not necessarily well known. There was discussion on whether combining this section with Historic Resources made sense. It was felt that the historic piece dealt with the artifacts and the cultural piece more with people. Planning for each of them required two audiences and two conversations, Sandra felt. This was not unlike the difference between “Natural Resources” and “Open Space,” subjects that may seem very similar, but upon examination are actually quite different. There was some discussion about the Falmouth Historical Society.

Current Land Use:

There was a suggestion to maintain current traffic capacity.

Proposed Land Use:

There was a question what the current master plan for growth was or should be.

Fiscal:

There was a question what the key sources of revenue for the Town were.

Implementation:

There was a question what the current implementation strategy was.

Regional Coordination:

There was a comment regarding energy use and efficiencies to be obtained.

A general discussion followed. Sandra felt that the plan was overwhelming but contained no tactics and did not direct the Council. No one was committed to make the plan happen. She felt the update should clearly spell out expectations, e.g. here are the five things that should be tackled over the next five years. She felt that the 2000 plan did not take a stand and did not have priorities.

Kurt commented on the series of unadopted plans that committees had prepared, but the Council had not acted on.

There was a concurrence that the plan lacked clear priorities and all parts seemed equal.

The committee then looked at the “second” comp plan document. There was a question what the survey questions of that plan were.

Hugh reflected back on the 2000 plan and stated that growth management was the priority at that time, resulting in a proposal for a neighborhood planning process. Only one neighborhood master plan was prepared and that politically the Town did not go that way.

Sandra felt that the current meandering approach was not optimal.

Theo wondered what the underlying cause was for the series of unadopted plans and if the committee should examine that. He noted the changes in town hall in recent years and Consensus Building Institute report that was prepared containing community feedback.

Paul commented that the actions of the 2000 plan could not be bounced off the plan’s vision.

Kurt commented that the comprehensive plan process works well with public input and that he felt a lack of connection to the survey results of that time. It may point to the fact that 10 years is too long a period before doing an update.

Sandra said that since 2000 new tools have become available, such as Survey Monkey.

Hugh noted the effort by the Community Facilities Committee to meet with some 30 community groups by going to their meetings. He also felt that it was helpful that councilors were represented on that committee.

Sandra felt that the notion that the comprehensive plan update was also an opportunity to heal the community was interesting.

Sam stated that he was interested what the various town committees had been and are working on. He also felt that it would be useful to hear directly from the people that worked on the 2000 plan what their learning experiences and advice might be.

Sandra felt that it was important for the committee to articulate what it should itself accountable for. She suggested a set of guiding principles, a decision whether or not to stick to the current subject categories or if new ones should be introduced, and if a summary document should be prepared. Then the committee would know when it had completed the assignment.

5. Next Steps

The discussion moved to what should happen before the next meeting.

Theo stated that he would transcribe the sticky notes, and would continue to work on the data updates (development profile and population data). The group stated that, instead of making a long series of data update requests, it should first focus on building growth data. Theo will focus on that as well.

Sam suggested asking all committee members how long they felt the update timeframe should be and what they would like to see happen in that time period.

Hugh listed four things to ask: What committee members saw as a suggested work plan, what committee members thought the final product should look like, what they saw as the big issues, and how they felt the public should engaged.

Sam suggested that the committee may want to break up to do the investigations with the various committees as he saw LPAC+ as an umbrella committee. Or these other committee could be invited to LPAC+ meetings. No decision was made in that regard.

Theo will craft an e-mail message organizing these suggestions and focus it on a “work plan” meeting. There was a question if all should work on all requests. That was not necessary, but the more people could respond to all requests the quicker the group could get on the same page.

There was a question if there should be another reading assignment. The suggestion was that the committee members should take a look at the Cumberland Comprehensive Plan. Theo also noted the recent Yarmouth plan. Theo will also make the annual planning department reports available. They may contain useful information on key developments and projects.

6. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Sam was petitioned by several people to become LPAC+ Chair. He accepted.

Sandra was nominated to be Vice Chair and she accepted.

7. Next Meeting

The committee agreed to meet again on Thursday May 27th at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 PM.

Draft Meeting Notes by Theo Holtwijk, May 14, 2010