



## Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

### Thursday, October 14, 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	-				

\* Paul called in via telephone for a portion of the meeting.

**Council Liaison:** Bonny Rodden

**Staff present:** Theo Holtwijk

Sandra started the meeting around 7:00 PM.

#### 1. Minutes

No action was taken on the draft minutes of September 9, as there was no quorum.

#### 2. Research Subcommittee Reports

##### Public water and sewer

Julie reported that group 2 had an interesting meeting with Wastewater Superintendent Pete Clark. The big topic that emerged from that (and from discussions on other topics) was master planning. Currently new sewers are directed by developers and not by an overall master plan. Julie referenced the fact that not all prior land use master plans were a success. Sandra asked if group 2 felt that there was a need for a more conscientious approach to master planning. Julie was not sure about that, but Steve H. said that that could be a possible conclusion.

Sandra encouraged the group to articulate any draft ideas or conclusions, as that would help to begin to write the plan. Having some initial statements by the subcommittee would benefit the rest of the committee. Paul (via phone) agreed with that.

Steve H said that group 2 was still getting its head around the land use topic. Sandra asked what the issues were that needed immediate attention.

The discussion went back to public sewer. Steve H. said that the group felt that appropriate capital investments are being made by the Town for public sewer. A future issue may be if the Portland Water District were to take over the management of the sewer system, or if Falmouth will continue to run its own facility.

Steve W. said that this spoke to the issue of regional coordination that his group had reviewed, where efficiencies are being look for. Sandra mentioned that the City of Portland is insisting on having regional conversations and that over the next ten years there will be increased pressure to participate at the regional level. Paul (via phone) mentioned that there was a clear regional view and that the question was: how does Falmouth fit into the regional plan. Bonny thought that Paul referred to the current effort to create a Greater Portland Economic Development Corporation. Paul mentioned a 325 page report that spoke to this issue.

Julie mentioned that Pete Clark had prepared a fact summary which she would scan and get to Theo for distribution. The two themes that emerged for her were regionalization and sustainability.

Julie also stated that the regional theme also speaks to cultural issues. How is Falmouth linked, as a bedroom community, via transportation, to the various communities?

Steve H and Julie said that the topics still needed to be addressed were public facilities and natural resources.

Bonny stated that the public facilities issue was progressing, and that the Council had embarked on a different process. First, it will address the space needs of the library, then it will tackle site possibilities. It will also address the community center concept.

Hugh asked what the master planning for land use might look like. Steve H said that the group looked at the Pleasant Hill Study and tried to glean lessons learned from that. He said that land use was tough topic.

Sandra asked what the issues and challenges were regarding land use. The group has been thinking: how much regulation is appropriate? How does land use tie into the public sewer issue? Does it still make sense to divide the town into seven or so areas, or is there a more basic east-west distinction? What can the Town do to impact land use? Steve W agreed that it was not an easily quantified topic.

Julie said that her group asked why certain land use studies were successful. Some resulted in actual zoning changes. Was it the process of these studies? The visions behind them? The concepts? She thought that there might be opportunities to work in tandem with the Community Development Committee to do some research on those questions. She felt that the land use topic needed to react to the sustainability and energy use theme.

Sandra asked what the group was imagining on land use. Julie said that she felt her group was gathering the background information and that the imagining was to be done by the entire committee. Sandra said that, if the small group had a point of view, it would provide focus for the discussion by the larger group and be start of a discussion.

Steve W mentioned that the housing topic seemed to focus mostly on affordable housing. However, his group found that Council actions on that had been halted and that there did not appear a consensus. Sandra stated that this issue meant that teachers and policemen could not live in Falmouth, which she found untenable, especially if it were to continue ten years from now. Steve W stated that it seemed there was available affordable housing and that it was located in Portland.

Bonny stated that the affordable housing issue has been before the Council for the last 10 years. The most recent proposal focused on one specific site, which she felt was not a good site. That site also required a large number of units. She felt that the town was right now in a period of pulling back on the affordable housing issue. She felt it needed more community support. She requested that LPAC+ recommend to the Council the best way to pursue it. Cape Elizabeth has a zoning requirement for a number of affordable units to be built within each subdivision. Should Falmouth pursue a similar approach?

Sandra reiterated that she found the current situation untenable, especially if gas prices were to rise again as they did in 1977. Julie suggested that workers may live elsewhere and not mind traveling back and forth. Sandra replied that in that case one did not have a town, but a region.

Hugh stated that he felt it was unrealistic to expect LPAC+ to come up with detailed fixes to the affordable housing issue. Perhaps another task force could be suggested. But he felt that previous task forces had already dug much deeper into this issue than LPAC+ could. Sandra stated she was a little pessimistic as Falmouth has had great past reports on this. Bonny felt that the community does not support affordable housing, and that it is a political issue that takes leadership.

Hugh asked if it was helpful to the Council if LPAC+ identified affordable housing as a priority issue. Bonny said that that may help as long as LPAC+ said something different than the 2000 Comp Plan, and included some alternatives.

Sandra stated that many communities have adopted as a minimum standard that 10% of all new housing be affordable. She said that we all lose if teachers are not able to live here. She stated that her group did have not good data on renting, and that it focused on home ownership. Bonny wondered if looking at a certain percentage of multiple housing units might help. Sandra stated that that would probably have a better chance to get developers to set units aside.

Steve W reflected that his neighborhood has become less diverse since he has lived there. Sandra stated that Town employees who live in the community make a different, more valuable contribution to the town.

Hugh discussed the farming and forestry topic, which was not part of the 2000 Plan. He said that Falmouth has two active farms and some remnants of farmland, and that people seemed to have an affinity for those landscapes. His group put the farming issue into a “micro-farming” light, meaning it looked at community gardens, chickens at homes, and smaller scale farming of a few acres or so.

On the economy topic Hugh stated that it focused on home occupations. His group saw home consulting services growing, and wondered what the actual trends and issues were. Then there is a group of entrepreneurs who make and sell products from their home. These businesses have a need for a support structure, such as a coffee shop. The group also recognized that Falmouth is part of a regional economy. It seems that Falmouth imports service jobs, and exports professional jobs.

The fiscal topic was also discussed. Hugh stated that Falmouth has taken a very fiscally-conservative approach as evidenced by its low mill rate and debt ratio compared to neighboring towns. Falmouth has available fiscal capacity, i.e. it has the ability to make investments. The question is: should that capacity be used, and, if so, how? He felt that that was a political question. Sandra stated that she thought the fiscal summary was well written.

Hugh stated that the open space should be held over. Steve W mentioned the inquiry of Councilor Payne who had stated some time ago: Where is the finish line regarding acquisition of open space? Have we reached it? Hugh said that his group was looking at what the right amount of open space was that Falmouth should have and what kind of utilization of that open space makes the most sense.

Sandra stated that regionalization and publicity of available open spaces plays into that. If people from other communities come to Falmouth and use local open spaces, how much open space is enough in that case? Steve W mentioned the example of Mackworth Island. Hugh mentioned that groups such as Portland Trails and the Falmouth Land Trust are looking at this from a regional perspective. The publication by the Town of trail maps on the web was also mentioned.

Sandra mentioned the Eastern Trail (which is part of the [East Coast Greenway](#)). Some portions of this have been completed and they may need more support facilities (such as food, shelter, and water). She saw this as a commercial opportunity: where to place signage? Which roads to direct riders to get to Route 1? Her group looked at bike paths as part of transportation.

Steve H asked if off-road trails would be part of open space. Sandra stated that Portland makes inter-municipal trail connectivity a requirement, but that Falmouth does not

Sandra asked if there was any more feedback for Hugh. Theo suggested that the economy topic also consider the notion of virtual or shared offices for solo practitioners, i.e. people who may need a desk, place to get mail, access to conference room, photocopier, etc. The Council recently received a well-researched citizen suggestion in that regard as it related to the facilities project. Several of those facilities existed in Portland, but none in Falmouth. That may be an opportunity. Bonny suggested sharing that e-mail with the economy group. Theo will do that. Sandra stated that she uses those types of facilities when working in other cities,

and that this also may appeal to visitors to Falmouth who want to conduct business in a more formal setting when visiting relatives here.

Steve W reported that he had a discussion with Sam on regional coordination. Falmouth is doing various things with Cumberland and there is regional coordination around Highland Lake. It makes sense to consider doing so because of the efficiencies involved, but it is also a very sensitive issue (take for instance school consolidation). There seems to be hesitancy with some who feel it means giving up part of one's identity. Plus there is a question: will we really save money? With certain topics, such as schools or snow plowing, the fear may also be that the services provided may be diminished.

Sandra stated that Portland is serious about regional coordination. She said Portland is aware of the impact of the region on the life experience of its residents in a way that Falmouth is not yet.

Steve W saw regional coordination opportunities for libraries and public transportation. Sandra added roads to that. She predicted that the federal government would give out bonuses to those communities who work together regionally. Steve W saw potential for a regional community center. Sandra felt that education was needed in this area, that regional coordination did not mean that people are giving up their town. She asked: what is it that people identify with in Falmouth? Theo suggested that the mini survey the committee provided insight into that.

### **3. Other business**

Sandra suggested that LPAC+ meet again on October 28<sup>th</sup>. No one had objections to that, although Julie said that her work for the next several months may prevent her from attending meetings.

Sandra also reminded all that, in order to do a survey this January, 75% of all draft questions from each of the subcommittees needed to be in by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Articulation of five draft questions is requested for each topic.

Bonny reported that she, Sam, and Theo met to discuss the Council direction for LPAC+. There is some summary direction in the Council's work plan and the Green Ribbon report also contains direction for LPAC+. However, additional clarification is desired to determine what the Council is really asking of LPAC+. Sandra felt that there was enough time to incorporate that. Bonny explained that she was tired of seeing committees work hard and see their work not followed through on. She and Theo will continue work this Monday on a draft that would provided the Council clear feedback choices. The sooner the Council could give feedback, the sooner LPAC+ can incorporate that in its work, in survey questions, etc. This approach sounded good to the group.

Bonny stated she had two questions. One pertained to the survey. She wanted to make sure that the committee would do a scientific, statistically-valid survey, as there has been recently so much criticism of the other surveys the town has been doing as being self selected. Theo explained that an addendum to the survey RFP had been sent out in response to that request that contains a specific addition of a statistically-valid sample survey, in addition to mailing to

all household and business addresses, an approach that the committee wanted as part of its broad outreach. Sandra stated that the survey company the committee talked with said that demographic corrections could be made of the answers received. With the addendum the Town will be able to have the cost of all options and can then decide which path is best.

Theo also stated that it was important that the CDC and the Council had input on the survey questions so all parties would feel that the survey was worth its cost. His suggestion was that the LPAC Survey Subcommittee prepare a draft which could then be reviewed by CDC and the Council. This approach sounded OK.

Bonny's second question pertained to the Resource Conservation Zoning (RCZO) language in the ordinance. A councilor has proposed reducing the 50% open space requirement to 30%. Bonny asked: Would LPAC like to be involved in an in-depth, big picture review of that issue? Does it have the time for that? Steve W wondered if LPAC had the ability to drill down on this issue. Bonny stated that there were two roles for LPAC. There was "LPAC+" which is working on Comp Plan and that "LPAC" traditionally involved itself with detailed zoning issues such as this one. It was asked if there is Conservation Commission representation on LPAC. This is not the case. The chair of the Conservation Commission has requested that the Commission be involved in the RCZO issue. It was also asked if the Planning Board had a public hearing on this issue. Yes, it did, but it is only an administrative review.

Sandra stated that subcommittees have not yet finished their research work, and would be working hard to meet their deadlines. The soonest LPAC+ could get to this topic would be November-December. Julie suggested that her group in its land use discussion did touch on resource conservation zoning and could perhaps work with CDC. Julie also thought that she might have some historical documents on this topic. Bonny said that one of the questions was if RCZO should be applied only to certain parts of the town.

Theo gave the committee a quick update on the survey RFP. Proposals are due by October 25<sup>th</sup> and he was hopeful to get three proposals. The Survey Subcommittee (Sam, Sandra, Hugh, Kurt, and Paul) may be able to give a recommendation to LPAC by 28<sup>th</sup>. He will confer with the Town Manager what the proper protocol is as to who determines consultant selection and authorization of work – LPAC+, Town manager, or the Town Council.

Theo also stated that he felt that LPAC+ should decide soon to close the mini survey, which has been open since June. More than 500 responses have been received. Draft results have been posted on the committee's website. Half of the respondents have provided their e-mail address to receive a regular update from the committee. He suggested that the committee prepare and send out a first update. He offered to prepare an initial draft of that for the committee's review. The look and feel of this communication may be important to the committee. There was a sense with LPAC+ that focusing on the survey results would be the most important thing to communicate to the citizens.

Bonny suggested that another Council update by Sam may be in order. Theo will contact Sam about that.

#### **4. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on October 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Draft Meeting Notes by Theo Holtwijk, October 15, 2010  
Rev. October 22, 2010

DRAFT