



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

Tuesday, November 30, 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: Bonny Rodden

Staff present: Theo Holtwijk

Sandra started the meeting around 7:05 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes of November 18, 2010

As there was no quorum yet, the review of the minutes was deferred.

2. Review of Draft Memo for Council

Sandra took the Draft Memo agenda item out of order to make sure it had sufficient discussion. Theo explained how the draft memo came about. It is an attempt to make sure LPAC+ and the Council are on the same page with regard to the topics that the Council in its 2010 Work Plan had expressed specific interest in.

Sandra wondered if LPAC's work was limited to these items, as there were other important topics, such as collaboration with Cumberland County, land use, and economic development. Bonny and Theo responded that the committee was free to take on additional topics, and that the topics in the memo only listed the Council's specific interest areas.

Becca wondered if the direction language in the memo should say recommend "strategy" instead of recommend "zoning," as that was broader. Becca also felt that it went too far for LPAC+ to determine where zoning should change in the Route 100 area and that focus groups should be conducted, for example, before making any recommendations. The group could instead recommend "next steps," she suggested.

Hugh Coxe agreed that the Route 100 zoning topic needed public participation and noted that some part of that area was already zoned for mixed use. Regarding the TDR topic, Hugh felt that the “where” question was too much for LPAC+ to take on. He suggested instead that criteria could be recommended that the Council could consider in determining where to apply TDR. He acknowledged that the rural residential zones may be the most likely “sending areas.”

In response, Sandra suggested that the group have a point of view of the material it had been reviewing and that it take a stand and push the envelope. Hugh offered that after the Comprehensive Plan was done he expected LPAC would be charged to do some of the follow-up work that LPAC+ could not get to.

Becca stated that the survey could be used to test some of these issues, such as Route 100 zoning. Bonny mentioned that she wanted to make sure that the sometimes low responses from West Falmouth would not prevent such a survey test. Sandra replied that the survey vendor would be able to address that.

Bonny stated she hoped the committee would push the envelope as far as it can. She observed that there have been issues in the past that have been studied, but have not been resolved. She cautioned against tabling issues. Sandra stated she felt that there was not a huge interest on the part of the committee in postponing its recommendations, but that there was lot of material to digest and that the committee had thus far worked hard. Bonny stated she recognized the analytical and comprehensive approach that the committee had taken. She hoped that that would result in the committee feeling compelled to make recommendations.

Sandra stated she wanted to make sure there was enough dialogue by the committee on the draft memo and asked for additional comments.

The bullets under “Compact Development” were discussed and revised. The same took place for the “TDR” topic. There was a brief discussion if the committee was to make recommendations for a Long Range Plan or for a Comprehensive Plan. The sense was that both applied. Rachel commented that she felt the committee was not making any final decisions, but would point in a certain direction and that it was up to other groups to implement that direction.

A discussion on the “Transportation Planning” topic followed. Theo explained the current work by Gorrill-Palmer (GPI), overseen by Town staff, that is on parallel track with the committee’s comprehensive plan work. Part of the GPI scope of work is to produce a chapter that could serve as the Transportation chapter in the Comp Plan. In addition, such a chapter could meet a sign-off requirement by the Maine Department of Transportation. This type of sign-off is a proposed State amendment of the review criteria for comprehensive plans by the State. This could be adopted in 2011 and Theo felt it was good to keep an eye on that. Theo has been asked to develop a roadmap to make sure this effort was coordinated and integrated. LPAC+ and the public will be given an opportunity to review GPI’s work and LPAC+ can take from it what it wants for its own recommendations.

Rachel commented that it was important that LPAC make sure its work on transportation was not in conflict with the draft transportation plan when it gets dropped in the committee's lap. Claudia commented that it sounded that the transportation plan was much like the recent sewer plan. The sewer plan contained many recommendations from the consultant, but did not oblige the Town to implement every line item. Steve W. wondered if the word "incorporate" went too far. The group felt that that word did not mean that the Transportation report would be incorporated verbatim.

The group continued to review the "workforce housing," "Turnpike Spur," and "Turnpike Spur-Route One" topics and made some text adjustments. Bonny asked what the town could do with the "economic development" topic. Responses by Becca and Sandra included: making recommendations for neighborhood store zoning, home businesses, a Town Center along Route One, other improvements along Route One, branding and signage. Rachel noted that the survey compilation included a question if people foresee the town attracting a large employer to the community. She mentioned that Paul had suggested that other similar communities had more well-rooted, large employers in their midst. How did such an idea relate to workforce housing, Rachel wondered. She asked: what is the concept the town has of itself?

Sandra asked if there was any other direction from the committee for the memo. Bud asked if the Council checked off "not agree" on a specific item, whether that meant that the committee would not address that item at all. Theo stated he thought that that might the case, but that it may be more a matter of the Council wanting LPAC+ to go further on an item and take on more. Bonny suggested that a "Notes" section be added at the bottom of the each worksheet page, so Councilors could write in specific thoughts they may have on a topic.

Rachel shared with the group another observation from Paul. He had stated: You [the community] can be anything, but you cannot be everything. Rachel felt that the committee's recommendations have to come together in a vision for the community. She observed that LPAC+ may well have to determine that some things, although they may sound great, just do not fit with that vision. She wondered when the committee will make such determinations.

Sandra stated that the committee will have to make choices. If it only has \$1 to spend on 17 different areas, where should its money be spent? She said that that discussion will be had after the survey is completed.

3. Review of draft minutes

Several other committee members had arrived by this time and there was now a quorum. The draft minutes of November 18th were approved with the correction of one typo ("its" - item 2, line 2).

4. Complete Reports from Research Subcommittees

Becca presented the Natural Resources report. Claudia explained a new land conservation oriented initiative by the Presumpscot River group. She had attended a recent meeting of that group. Becca noted the accomplishments at Highland Lake and stated that there had

important improvements to the surface waters in Falmouth since 2000. Much of this success was due to community groups and regional coordination, which should be referenced in the Comp Plan.

The section on groundwater led to some thoughts on water and sewer service. Claudia wondered which topic should include wildlife habitat. It was stated that this made sense in the Natural Resources section, but should be cross-referenced in the Open Space section.

Bonny suggested that the group consider including a question on vernal pools, such as: should the Town be more restrictive than the State of Maine in regulating vernal pools?

Becca presented the Public Facilities report. She noted that the library had not been included in the 2000 plan, but that that property was owned 50% by the Town. Sandra wondered if that meant that the Town had 50% of the board appointments. The answer is no.

Becca also noted the changes had happened relative to the schools and Town Landing and that the Comp Plan needed to be updated on those.

Becca also commented on the “umbrella” of sustainability. She suggested a survey question, such as: do people feel the Town should do more with sustainability? Or: How do people feel about the current sustainability efforts? Sandra noted that that was hard question for people to answer without the research knowledge that the committee had. Steve H. noted that the group was also interested in asking if people felt they had sufficient access to police and fire, for example. Becca felt the Town could be more pro-active on sustainability. Bonny suggested that the survey question could say “should the Town continue the (sustainability) effort?” Sandra suggested that perhaps no question was needed in this area. Becca disagreed and felt that such a question was important.

Steve W. wondered if the group was staying clear of the whole Plummer-Motz and Lunt school discussion as there are so many opinions on that in the community. Bonny said she expected that that issue would be resolved by the time the committee finished its recommendations.

Hugh Coxe discussed the Local Economy report. He mentioned that Paul had done most of the work on that and had read the regional economic study. A central question had emerged: where does Falmouth fit in the regional picture? Hugh also reviewed the proposed survey questions. Sandra noted that the professional skills question typically was addressed in the demographics section. She also commented that the preferred location of commercial activity should be a separate question from the preferred type of commercial activity. Hugh thought that the survey could also test the interest in creating another new commercial area, versus expanding an existing commercial area, vs. not expanding any commercial area. He observed that the West Falmouth Crossing area had very little commercial activity before that development was created there.

5. Review of Draft Survey Questions

Theo handed out the most current compilation of the draft survey questions that had been received. Market Decisions has been hired and will start its work soon. Sandra suggested that now was the time for the group to discuss the survey questions. Becca felt that the land use questions needed to be discussed by the group as a whole.

Sandra stated that all survey questions should be in before 12/9, so they could be discussed at that time. Hugh suggested that it may be more useful if the group spent that time discussing the Green Ribbon Commission report and see how that may inform the survey questions. Sandra wondered what the design of that conversation would be. She urged the group to really wrestle with the survey questions.

Hugh observed that previous Falmouth surveys had a theme. In 2000 that was a land preservation-property rights-suburban development theme, he said. Perhaps the 2011 survey could be framed as the sustainability-climate protection theme. The plans would still focus on land use issue, but tied in more with sustainability, Hugh stated. Claudia noted that she did not expect rampant development in the next ten years. Perhaps the focus should be on efficiency and sustainability, she thought.

In response, Sandra stated she felt that there had not been enough conversation in Falmouth, and that the community did not know who it is, what it wanted to be, and did not know what its values are. Becca stated that she felt such a position was unsustainable for Falmouth and that that did fit with a “sustainability” theme. Hugh noted the disconnect that emerged with recent issues and that those issues were not resolved. He suggested that a level of trust and bridges be built.

Bonny suggested to the committee that it consider with its recommendations “cost” and “mandates” as there have been concerns expressed on those fronts. She also heard an emphasis on “regionalism.”

Sandra wondered how the meeting time on Thursday December 9th could best be used. She suggested that the group articulate its influence in an actionable manner. The suggestion was for each committee member to review the land use chapter of the GRC report and submit survey questions that responded to that. Hugh thought that writing survey questions was daunting for some, and that perhaps identifying survey topics and bullet points could be helpful too. Sandra stated that the group look at past surveys for already well-phrased survey questions. Claudia was interested to have large sheets posted on the walls at the next meeting that had headings of new themes on them that could inspire survey questions.

Sandra felt it was important to stay on schedule with a survey to be ready by January and that any delay would not make it any easier for committee members to come up with questions. Bonny asked about the process with the survey vendor. Three work meetings are planned. Bonny thought that that may be too much work to be done in December. She was OK if the committee’s work took some more time.

6. Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Thursday December 9th at 7 PM. That meeting will be devoted to a survey discussion, informed by a review of the land use chapter of the Green Ribbon Commission report and submission (before that meeting) of additional survey questions to address the sustainability theme by all committee members.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM.

Draft Meeting Notes by Theo Holtwijk, December 2, 2010
Revised December 9, 2010