



## Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

### Thursday, December 9, 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:

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#### Staff present:

Theo Holtwijk

Sam started the meeting around 7:12 PM.

#### 1. Review of Draft Minutes of November 30, 2010

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

#### 2. Review of Draft Survey Questions

The assignment for the committee was to review the land use and transportation chapter of the Green Ribbon Commission (GRC) report. A question was if “sustainability” was possibly an overarching theme for this decade’s comprehensive plan. Sandra stated that the upcoming survey could help to confirm that.

The GRC chapter refers to “Smart Code.” Sam asked what that meant and Hugh explained what that entailed. Sam wondered if application of Smart Code looked like Route 100. Bud thought it applied to a landscape with multiple food markets that one could get to on foot. Theo offered a cautionary note on overhauling the entire zoning system to conform to Smart Code. Hugh agreed that it seemed a “tool-du-jour” and felt that the current land use code in Falmouth was quite progressive with lots of design aspects to it. Becca also agreed with that and thought that perhaps some concepts could be taken from it and applied in Falmouth.

Other aspects of the GRC chapter were promoting infill development and avoiding dead end roads. Becca commented on that. She felt there was no enforcement of avoiding dead end roads. She cited a recent project that should have connected to the adjacent neighborhood, instead of having a cul-de-sac. She cited page 42 of the GRC report which stated the benefits

of connectivity. Sandra mentioned the plans she had seen in other places where she had lived which showed dotted plans indicating anticipated road connections and efficiencies. These connections might need some adjustment when actual developments were proposed, but the issue of connectivity was not left wide open. Developers were expected to respond to what was shown on the maps. This is a more pro-active approach. In Maine there is a more reactive approach. Becca commented that the town is only directive in its design guidelines.

Sandra felt that, by example, if the Town Center concept was one the town was committed to, future investments could be directed towards it. Becca commented how contentious the Town Center idea has been.

Note was made of the survey questions that Pete Clark had submitted that, similarly, speak to the efficiency question: should the town be more pro-active in planning its sewer system? How should it pay for required improvements?

Sam noted that the Town Center concept would promote economic development as well as conservation as people would have to drive less. Becca added that it also provided identity. Sandra commented that it tied to branding and aspirations that people may have for wanting to live in Falmouth. It could also change the nature of living here and provide people with a different experience.

Becca commented on the multiple natures of Falmouth and Sandra reminded the group of Bonny's comment from an earlier meeting to get geographic segmentation of the survey results. Sandra felt it was important to communicate the need for that to the survey vendor. Sam noted that the group has a lot of education to do in the community.

In reviewing the draft of the survey questions, Sandra noted that the shortcoming she saw was that there was no context provided for many of the questions. With that she meant a sense of the history, or recent decision, investment, or vote, on a particular issue. She felt that if an introduction was provided with a description of an issue, it could then be followed by a series of questions.

Hugh commented on some recent decisions and unresolved issues, such as Plummer-Motz and Lunt site, workforce housing, natural resource zoning, and felt that descriptions for those could be done.

Sandra stated that lots of improvements had been made on athletic fields that people needed to know about before answering questions on that. The same applied to open space Steve W added. Becca noted the GRC report made mention of specific emission levels and that those levels could be used as well. Sandra reiterated the importance of having a quality survey with actionable information in it.

The group proceeded to articulate and brainstorm some "unresolved issues" around which the survey could be structured. Helping the town to resolve those issues may be one of the potentially biggest accomplishments of the comprehensive plan.

Hugh mentioned compact development.

Becca mentioned agricultural and farming land use.

Sandra mentioned regional coordination.

Steve W. mentioned the town center or community center. Becca suggested “identity” as an overarching topic. Steve W. added that people know the context of the town center idea as lots of discussion had been had on it. Questions could be centered around: where should it be located, how should town money be spent, how could it be funded.

Sam mentioned facilities planning, and specifically, what to do with the Lunt School and Plummer-Motz buildings.

Hugh mentioned the Metro bus. Steve H. broadened that and mentioned public transportation. Becca added the potential for a Falmouth train stop.

Becca mentioned Route 100. Should it be another Route 1? Or should the town strive for something different?

Steve H. mentioned big box development. Do people support that? Becca added: how much commercial development do people want to see in town?

Theo mentioned workforce housing. Steve W. said that that issue needed context.

Sandra mentioned business and business development and noted that that offsets the residential tax base. Theo added that the role of the town could be explored relative to business development. Sandra noted the benefits of being pro-active in this area. Sam felt that the context for the town’s involvement in business development was really important.

Bud suggested that the survey explore how taxes should be used, if people would like to see if a different split between residential and business property tax income, and what type of businesses people may like to see.

Sandra commented how a company such as Target, invests in local communities, particularly schools, which could help to reduce school expense. She cautioned against a promise to reduce taxes. Becca suggested that a question on partnership might be useful. Sandra suggested that a company such as Tyler Technologies could be a supporter of an annual Back-to-School festival. This speaks to the notion of attracting good corporate citizens, Sam noted. Sandra felt that this could tie in with the Economic Improvement Committee, once it is up and running. What could that committee do in this area?

Sam wondered if the CDC memo offered any other suggestions, such as the Turnpike-Route One intersection issue. Is that feasible, he wondered.

Steve W. mentioned taxes and the cost of living in Falmouth and the fear that some people have that they cannot afford to live in Falmouth any more. Over time he has seen Falmouth become a more affluent community.

Hugh noted that spending issues had been raised. The survey could test certain ideas: are people willing to spend \$X to get Y improvement?

This raised the issue if the town should strive for socio-economic diversity.

Hugh mentioned natural resources as an example of an unresolved issue. For example, should the town have more restrictive rules than the State in regulating vernal pools? Bud felt that that was too specific and issue.

Becca mentioned how people feel about roundabouts. Bud noted that the transportation report had recommendations in that regard. Sam wondered if traffic safety was a theme. Sandra noted traffic congestion, mainly due to road repairs and one-lane traffic. Theo said that there seemed to be several transportation related issues: congestion, speeding, roundabouts, trails, etc. Becca added connectivity, having sidewalk improvements coordinated with trail improvements. Sandra wondered how high that issue was in the hierarchy of issues.

Steve W. thought that it might also be good to look at what improvements or services are people willing to give up on, by way of contrast to adding services or improvements. He mentioned street lights and a regional library as examples. Theo noted that the town had done a budget survey earlier in the year that tested various ideas and that many people responded to. He would distribute that survey to the committee so it could look at that as an example.

Regional coordination was brought up as another topic to explore cost savings.

Sandra felt that this discussion on “hot topics” could be a more useful way to organize the survey around and she proceeded to review the schedule for the survey instrument development.

A key task for that will be to flesh out the stories around various unresolved issues.

The schedule that the committee settled on is to meet again on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Sandra promised to make that meeting very worthwhile to come to!

The survey subcommittee will have met twice by that time, once on 12/16 and again in morning of 12/23. Input on the survey from CDC and Council be sought on 1/18 and 1/24 respectively. This schedule points to the committee signing off on a final survey on 1/27.

### **3. Review of draft minutes**

Since there was now a quorum, the draft minutes of November 30<sup>th</sup> were approved with two revisions:

- Page 4, paragraph 7, line 2:  
“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.”
- Page 5, paragraph 4, line 6:  
“He suggested that a level of trust and bridges be built.”

**4. Next Meeting**

The next committee meeting will be on **Thursday December 23rd at 7 PM.**

**5. Other Business**

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM.

Draft Meeting Notes by Theo Holtwijk, December 15, 2010