

Town Council Special Meeting Minutes January 9, 2012

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call

Councilors Chase, Varney, Pierce, Orestis and Armitage were present and answering roll call.

Councilor Payne was absent.

Councilor Rodden arrived late.

Item 1 Order to enact a new ordinance regarding residency restrictions for sexual offenders.

Councilor Armitage moved the order; Councilor Varney seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Item 2 Order on amendments to the Code of Ordinances in regard to mooring assignments and waiting lists.

Councilor Armitage moved the order; Councilor Varney seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Councilor Rodden arrived at the meeting.

Item 3 Request from the Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee (FEIC) for Council authorization to develop, with Town staff assistance, temporary signage options for the Council's consideration.

Mike Skillin of the FEIC explained that the committee was charged early in 2011 with examining ways to encourage economic development in Town. They would like as a committee to develop a temporary sign ordinance. Last fall the committee members interviewed 14 different local businesses and there was an overwhelming level of support for such an ordinance. He gave examples of how such an ordinance would benefit his own business. They anticipate spending a couple months on this issue, with some staff assistance, and then reporting back to the Council. The committee felt that anything they put together should have a 1 year sunset to evaluate how it is working, and how it intersects with the work of the CDC on the Route 1 project.

Councilor Armitage raised the issue of allocation of staff time, in recognition of the ongoing Route 1 project. He thought the intention here was for the committee to do most of the leg work and then ask for staff assistance to help craft it.

Councilor Rodden asked which staff person would be reviewing it, and how it would fit in with that person's other priorities.

Town Manager Nathan Poore said he didn't know yet, but it would probably be a combination of Community Development Director Amanda Stearns, Director of Long-range Planning Theo Holtwijk and himself, depending on how it is implemented.

Mr. Skillin said the committee would like it to be in the ordinance. Mr. Poore agreed that that would likely be the best place.

Councilor Rodden asked if it would be a permit or license. Mr. Poore said that would be likely. It would probably be administered under the Code Office.

Councilor Rodden asked about the different kinds of temporary signs.

Mr. Skillin said they haven't spent a lot of time talking about different types of signs, but are probably looking at small, sandwich type signs.

Councilor Rodden wondered about the opportunity for public input. Mr. Poore said they would rely on the Council's public hearing process.

Councilor Varney observed that the comments in the survey the committee did revealed that those surveyed felt that Town Hall was not supporting them. She thought that was too bad.

Mr. Skillin agreed, but he said that progress is being made at Town Hall.

Councilor Chase said there are a lot of signs around, but they may be approved under different ordinance provisions. This would be in addition to what they already have in the sign ordinance.

Councilor Rodden pointed out that there are illegal signs up too. She appreciated what the committee is trying to do, but didn't think it was a priority right now for the Town staff, as they have to get Route 1 done along with other issues. She would like to see those businesses that have illegal signs up take them down as a good-faith measure until this issue is resolved.

Mr. Skillin said that he would be willing, as a committee member, to go to businesses and ask them to do just that. He said that, while there is a lot going on, there is always a lot going on, and 14 businesses is a large number. 11 out of those 14 said that this would very much help their business; that is significant.

Chair Pierce said there needs to be a balance between supporting the businesses and the consumers who come to Route 1 and the residents who live there. She was concerned with temporary signs becoming permanent signs in the right of way. She was also concerned that signs might become a distraction; there is a lot of traffic on Route 1. She wondered if there should be differences in how Route 1 and Route 100 are treated.

Mr. Skillin said the issue regarding Route 1/Route 100 has come up.

The Council indicated agreement with the committee moving forward.

Councilor Rodden asked about the results of the survey regarding businesses' opinion of working with Town Hall.

Mr. Skillin said the relationship the business community has with Town Hall is much better than it was a few years ago.

Item 4 Request from a citizen to memorialize a portion of Community Park in the name of a recently deceased citizen.

Nancy Dorsky of Gray Road discussed the letter she recently sent the Council. She and a few others were here to see if the Council would consider renaming a portion of Community Park after Peter Zacharias, who died in October. He was a strong supporter of Falmouth's youth teams and influenced the many youth who worked for him on his farm. She suggested a sign to honor Mr. Zacharias on one of the athletic fields.

Mark Power grew up on the Gray Road and graduated from Falmouth High School. He worked on the Zacharias Farm as a young man. He described Mr. Zacharias and his contributions to the lives of the many young people who worked for him. He was a great mentor and friend to many and made the community a better place. He asked about the process that might have to be followed to rename the fields.

Cooper Higgins is the Athletic Director for Falmouth Schools. He spoke about his experiences with Mr. Zacharias. He described him as a man of great generosity, speaking of a time when Mr. Zacharias purchased new uniforms for two different sports teams. It would be wonderful to name the land after the man who worked it.

Jim Dorsky grew up working on the farm, through his high school and college years, and spoke of Mr. Zacharias as a caring man.

Chair Pierce felt it was a good time to discuss an overall policy for when these types of requests come in.

Councilor Chase worked for Mr. Zacharias's father as a young man. He supported the request and thanked the citizens for bringing it forward.

Councilor Rodden would support the request and was interested in an overall policy. Councilor Orestis agreed; this hasn't happened often in Town and he was interested in a policy.

Councilor Varney was interested in naming one field after Mr. Zacharias and was interested in drafting a policy.

Chair Pierce and Mr. Poore will draft a policy and will work on the naming request.

Item 5 Presentation from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Learning Center.

Joe Capobianco is President of the Cumberland County Extension Association and spoke about the Extension and their work. He wanted to recognize the outpouring of support for the Regional Learning Center.

Kathi Savoie of the Cooperative Extension spoke about the history of the cooperative extension and its mission.

Mitch Mason of the Cooperative Extension introduced the staff of the extension and spoke about their programs. He showed a video about the 4-H program, which encourages kids to be part of their community. Both he and Ms. Savoie made presentations about other extension programs.

Ms. Savoie spoke about the number of volunteers and the amount of hours of donated time they gave to the residents of Cumberland County.

Mr. Mason and Ms. Savoie answered questions from the Council.

Item 6 Introduction by the Community Development Committee of a zoning amendment to address the allowance of Roadside Stands in residential districts.

Community Development Director Amanda Stearns presented the zoning amendment. The CDC began reviewing this issue last year. This amendment addresses the use of residential property for limited retail for products grown in Falmouth or Maine and would allow this as an accessory use. The three categories that will be allowed to be sold are locally homemade food products, local farm and food products, and any product that has received the Maine Made certification. This use would require approval by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Chair Pierce asked about parking. Ms. Stearns said that any stand would be required to have three off-street parking spaces.

Councilor Chase asked about the allowed lot width.

Ms. Stearns said the intention was to require strict side setbacks. She spoke about the limits on allowable square footage for the stand. Signage would be limited to a wall sign or a projecting sign that is attached to the building, with the intention to notify people that a stand is there, but not to provide any advertising. Outdoor display of products would also be allowed.

A public hearing was scheduled for February 13.

Item 7 Discussion about 2012 Fuel Assistance Program and Order to authorize a supplemental appropriation of \$10,000 from the undesignated fund balance for the Fuel Assistance Program.

Chair Pierce explained that since the amount of LIHEAP funding is being cut dramatically at the Federal level, it raises concerns about the availability of funds for local residents. A concerned citizen has offered to raise money.

Councilor Varney moved to approve the order; Councilor Armitage seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Chair Pierce said if anyone would like to donate funds to the program they can send a check, made out to "Town of Falmouth" and mailed to Town Hall, care of Ellen Planer, Town Clerk.

Councilor Rodden spoke about three upcoming workshops hosted by the REAC committee relative to teaching attendees about energy savings in their homes. Sign ups are being handled by the Community Programs department.

Item 8 Discussion about future Council agendas.

Mr. Poore discussed items scheduled for upcoming Council agendas.

Councilor Chase will work with Mr. Poore regarding the extended bow hunting season; he feels it needs to end.

Item 9 Order to go into Executive Session pursuant to the Laws of Maine to discuss the possible disposition of publicly held property, pursuant 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (C).

Councilor Armitage moved to enter executive session; Councilor Rodden seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

The Council entered executive session at 8:10 pm.

Adjourn

Councilor Armitage moved to adjourn; Councilor Chase seconded. Motion carried 6-0.

Meeting adjourned 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Tryon
Recording Secretary