

Falmouth Planning Board
Hermann Room, Falmouth Public Library Hall – March 3, 2020
Special Meeting - 6:30 pm
Minutes

Present: Patricia Kerfoot, *Chairman*, Charlotte Harris, *Vice Chairman*, Paul Dreyer, *Clerk/Secretary*, Robert Leary, John Druley, Jim Fox, Pamela Harting-Barrat

Patricia Kerfoot called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

P.Kerfoot gave brief history of what has been called a Cape Cod version of a Master Plan.

T.Bott talked about the current zoning is broken and introduced form-based code for the Davis Straits area of 76 acres. Town Meeting approved the funding for the studies to create form-based zoning. These studies pointed out the difficulties in zoning.

J.Fox – Played a video presentation explaining Form Based Code. We are trying to create a walkable neighborhood instead of the current giant parking lot. This is an attempt to find a way to have a predictable outcome. We have to convince the owners of the Plaza to tear down their buildings. Our downtown is so successful. We'd like to create that on the other end of Main Street.

P.Kerfoot – We have hired consultants Union Studios to assist in this process.

T.Bott introduced the consultants from Union Studios.

Jeremy Lake, Union Studios – We've been two years in Falmouth thinking and talking about these issues so we are really excited we were chosen for this.

P.Kerfoot – We are looking for any ideas that you might have that you would like to see at that end of town to revitalize it.

Gina Torielli, Alma Road, Town Meeting Member from Precinct 2 – Are there plans to involve the neighborhoods along the perimeter? We will need their contribution in the process. The renderings are very small; if we could have a place in town where we could see those to get a feel for it.

J.Fox – The buffers to Alma road are smaller houses so that that we can merge the different neighborhoods and blend them in. You can find the presentation by googling 'Density Done Right' and it is on the Planning Board website.

Walt Cap, Town Meeting, Precinct 3 – My biggest concern is we will be cloning Mashpee Commons. Who will own the housing? How much will be affordable? The whole thing is concerning.

Rosemary Carey – Suggested bringing a petition to Town Meeting acknowledging global warming and include the goal of greenhouse reduction in every decision made.

Eric Turkington, Precinct 1 – I want to commend Jim for chasing this. The housing Production Plan says that we are supposed to be adding rentals. We know that many are very unhappy with 40B projects. The challenge is to get the private market to build affordable rental housing. There is a 40R option that is similar to this in a lot of ways. How do you guarantee that these units will be rentals and will be affordable? These pictures are not telling the story you need to tell.

Karen Bissonette, Precinct 2, Executive Director of Falmouth Housing Trust – I don't want affordable rentals to be lost in this.

C.Harris – 40B allows developers to override local zoning. They want to do this because of the density limits. With our land as expensive as it is, putting six units per acre doesn't pay you to build anything. You need many more units before you can make any money. If the town allows higher density, then a developer doesn't necessarily have to resort to 40B.

R.Leary – What we have for zoning right now isn't working.

Mark Finneran – We are putting the cart before the horse. We need to rewrite our zoning first. This is like a spot-zoning thing.

Leanne Carbone – I love the idea of doing this. We already have a thriving neighborhood and this does not compare to Mashpee Commons.

Bob Ament – I am pleased to see the reset area is more than the plaza. I think the denser zoning ought to be allowed in that area. If the walkable area made its way down to Robbins Road it would be very appropriate.

C.Harris – We do not want to repeat Mashpee Commons. We are picturing something mostly residential.

P.Harting-Barrat – This is something new and very different. Mashpee Commons started as a response to smart growth. They've done it in South Weymouth. I want to believe that we have a heart for affordable housing. This is a new concept that won't be done over night.

Judy Fenwick – Character, in my mind, is built over time. How do you develop character with cookie-cutter modules? I would be careful using the word character. I think of the historic district restrictions. I don't think you will get people to buy into all these restrictions.

P.Dreyer – AS noted by others, this is a difficult concept. Jeremy, can you give specific examples of where this approach has been successful? I think it would be helpful to show the implementation.

E.Turkington – Only two places, one is Lowell and the other one is Southfield (the old Naval Air Station).

C.Harris – The Town is already changing similar to the vacant spaces in the mall. Malls are dying all over America. We want to plan in advance for a change that the Town wants. The more people that can get comfortable with the idea, the more we can work together. There is a big section on landscaping in the bylaw; it's already there. Picture the edge of Gus Canty all the way to Stop and Shop.

P.Kerfoot – The plaza is ripe for redevelopment. If we don't plan for what we want; we deserve what we get.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul Dreyer, Clerk/Secretary
Sheri Theroux, Recording Secretary