

To: Theo Holtwijk
From: Mark Eyerman
Subject: Falmouth Shopping Center Charrette
Date: March 27, 2009

I have taken my original proposal and revised it to reflect our discussions with Drew and Tom and your feedback on the recent community facilities forum. This version makes a number of significant changes from the earlier approach including reducing the overall length of session so that it can be done in the evening rather than on a Saturday, incorporating the use of key pad polling, and reducing the focus on design issues. The basic objective of charrette remains unchanged – it continues to be on answering the following question:

How can the Falmouth Shopping Center be redeveloped and expanded (including additional large-scale retail uses (>100,000 SF)) in a way that is acceptable to both the Town and the property owner?

This is the core issue that needs to be addressed. The property owner has been approached in the past by large-scale retail uses and would like to have the potential to accommodate them if that opportunity comes up again. However, the current zoning does not allow that possibility. The Town would like to see the property be revitalized and improved as long as it is done in a way that is appropriate for the community. So the issue becomes can we find the common ground that meets both the property owner's needs and the Town's needs that can serve as the basis for the rezoning of the property. While this is a limited perspective, it seems to me to be the key question that needs to be answered or at least, begun to be answered, through this process.

Framing the session in these terms is risky – there may be people who will want to debate whether allowing additional large scale retail uses under any circumstances is appropriate or sustainable. Some may challenge the validity of the process or refuse to participate in it on those terms. But I think this is the honest approach – the center is somewhat functionally obsolete and has vacancies, the property owner may be willing to re-invest in the property, there may be interest in large-scale retail use at this location, so is there a way to do that in a manner that the Town can support.

Based on that approach I have outlined a revised approach to the charrette that builds on our discussions:

A. Charrette Participants

While I recognize and appreciate the Town's desire to have "broad-based community participation" in the charrette, I do think it is important to assure that various interests participate in the process including the general public. Therefore I suggest that we set up a two part recruitment process, one for the general public and one for interests that need to be at the table.

1. General Public – In addition to a campaign to make the public aware of the charrette, it might be good to make an effort to inform Route One shoppers/users about the session. This could be done (with the owners permission) by leafleting and/or recruiting people who shop at the Falmouth Shopping Center. This might include flyers distributed by the various businesses in the shopping center or even "recruiters" outside of the businesses during the week prior to the charrette to distribute invitations and encourage people to participate.

2. Interests – I suggest that we go through an organized process to identify what interests need to participate in the charrette for it to be viewed as being "representative". Our typical approach is to brainstorm who is potentially impacted by the proposal and then to figure out how we can get representatives from each identified interest. Using a systematic approach for doing this usually results in a broadly representative group of participants.

B. Overall Charrette Format

I have revised the overall format of the session in a number of ways to get us to the approach outlined in C. below:

1. I have reduced the time for doing the charrette to around two and a half hours. That will enable us to do the session on a weekend day evening in mid-May rather than on a Saturday. Since we are getting into the heart of the spring season, a Saturday session becomes problematic in terms of getting good participation.

2. We are still thinking in terms of doing the session at the Falmouth Shopping Center in one of the vacant spaces but have revised the site orientation piece to rely on graphics and video rather than trying to get participants out on the site.

3. I have revised a number of the activities to have a more quantitative aspect through the use of key pad polling. I have retained a combination small group discussion/polling for the wrap-up exercise to give the participants an opportunity to synthesize the results from the previous exercises.

C. Outline of the Charrette

Here is the outline for the revised session:

Part 1 – Framing the Issue (15-20 minutes as one large group)

This would be an educational background presentation to set the stage for the discussions and would include:

- the history of the FSC
- the approved master development plan for the center
- the current zoning and the limitations this places on the expansion of the center onto the vacant part of the property
- the Town's desire to accommodate good quality development
- the property owner's interest in development/redevelopment including the possibility of large-scale retail uses
- information on the size of other uses in the center and development in the Route One corridor as well as large-scale retail uses in other areas

Part 2 – Orientation to the Site (15-20 minutes as one large group)

This presentation will look at the existing development at the shopping center and the undeveloped portion of the site using graphics and a video to tour the property. This will include:

- an overview of the developed part of the property (how much floor area, status of vacancies, amount of parking, issues with the current facilities from owner/user perspective)
- an overview of the undeveloped part of the property including known constraints such as wetlands with a simple analysis of what areas are best suited for development and where development is problematic
- a video site walk focusing on the undeveloped portion of the site

Part 3– Use Considerations (20-30 minutes as one large group)

This exercise will ask participants to evaluate the desirability of various types of uses being included in the expansion of the FSC. This would be set up to be a key pad polling exercise that asks people to rate the desirability a types of uses both individually and in combination with other uses.

Part 4 – Design Considerations (20-30 minutes as one large group)

This activity will ask participants to evaluate various design components especially those related to large scale retail development including the spatial orientation of the buildings and parking, inclusion of multistory buildings, and various mixed use scenarios. The general approach would be to present the participants with examples of various design concepts and then to get their feedback on the appropriateness of the various concepts for the FSC development using key pad polling. The responses would be structured on a continuum from not appropriate to required.

Part 5 – Core Community Values – Large-Scale Retail Considerations (45-60 minutes in small groups with key pad polling)

This exercise is a mix of small group discussion and key pad polling. Participants will work in groups of 6 to 8 for the first part of the exercise to identify the key things (3 to 5) that need to be part of a redevelopment/expansion proposal that includes large-scale retail uses for it to be acceptable to the community. Each group will be asked to prepare a list of those things. Participants will then be asked to individually respond to a series of pre-developed statements using key pad polling. The results of the two approaches will then be shared and compared and key items or themes identified.

D. Preparation for the Charrette

The preparation for the charrette will involve four pieces – the logistics, inviting/recruiting participants, preparing the materials/presentations for the actual charrette, and integrating the key pad polling into the session:

Logistics – I am assuming that the Town staff will be responsible for the logistics involved in conducting the charrette and that our involvement with this will be minimal. The logistics will include arranging for the use

of space at the shopping center, providing tables and chairs and other equipment, providing audio/visual equipment, providing easels/flip charts/markers, arranging for registration, etc.

Inviting/Recruiting Participants – We will work with the Town staff to develop a program to invite the general public to participate in the charrette with the expectation that the staff and/or volunteers will be responsible for actually developing any materials and for carrying out the notification program. We will also work with the staff to develop a systematic approach for identifying the interests that should participate in the charrette and identifying appropriate representatives from those interests to be invited to participate. Once the representatives have been identified, the Town will be responsible for contacting them.

Material and Presentations – The proposed format will require that a significant amount of information and working be developed in preparation for the session. Here is an overview of the material and the possible lead for the preparation of the material:

- Framing the issue presentation including appropriate graphics (Theo with support from Tom Churchill)
- Site orientation presentation including appropriate graphics (Tom Churchill)
- Site walk video (Town staff with Tom Churchill)
- Use consideration exercise (Mark Eyerman)
- Design consideration exercise (Mark Eyerman with support from Theo and Tom Churchill to identify appropriate examples)
- Core values exercise (Mark Eyerman)

Key Pad Polling – We will need to involve Judy Colby-George in integrating the key pad polling into the exercises, setting up the programming, providing the key pads, and providing the results. The arrangements for this will need to be worked out.

5. Post Charrette Summary and Analysis

Following the charrette, I will prepare a summary report that documents the discussions that occurred during the charrette, synthesizes the results including identifying areas where there appeared to be substantial agreement and areas where there were differences, and lays out a possible basis for moving forward

on further discussions between the Town and the property owner including identifying any unresolved issues or questions that need to be part of that process.