

Agenda  
Farmington Village Center Committee  
September 4, 2018  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
7:00 PM

- A. Call to Order.
  - B. Reading of the Minutes.
    - 1) To approve the attached August 1, 2018 minutes.
  - C. Presentations.
    - 1) William Warner, Town Planner.
  - D. Public Comment.
  - E. New Business.
    - 1) To discuss the committee's next steps.
    - 2) To review and approve the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.
    - 3) To authorize the Town Manager to sign an agreement with Tighe & Bond Associates for no more than \$5,000.00 for various environmental services.
    - 4) Update from the Quality of Life Committee.
    - 5) To schedule a meeting for September \_\_, 2018 or October \_\_, 2018 to prepare for the October 23, 2018 Town Council Workshop Meeting.
  - F. Public Comment.
  - G. Executive Session.
    - 1) Land Acquisition.
  - H. Adjournment.
- cc: Committee Members  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON, CT  
Farmington Village Center Committee  
August 1, 2018**

**Present**

Bruce Charette  
Nancy Nickerson  
Portia Corbett  
John Renehan  
Michael Gurski  
Brian Connolly  
Kevin Ray  
Betty Coykendall

**Staff:**

Kathy Eagen  
William Warner  
Rose Ponte

**A. Call to Order.**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

**B. Introductions/Organizational Process.**

Chairman Charette gave opening remarks and members of the committee introduced themselves.

**C. New Business.**

**1) To review and adopt the Rules of Procedure.**

Motion was made and seconded (Nickerson/Connolly) to approve the attached charge of the committee. Adopted unanimously.

**2) To review the charge of the committee.**

Chairman Charette reviewed the charge of the committee with the members. Chairman Charette explained that notes and minutes will be posted on the Town's website and a FAQ fact sheet will be developed and posted on the website to keep the community informed of the committee's work. Bill Warner presented the attached PowerPoint presentation, explaining the 3 phase approach to planning for Farmington Center. He gave an overview of the Farmington Center's planning and vision activities that have been completed to date and explained the work that will take place during the third phase. Most of the discussion focused on the pros and cons of acquiring the Parson's parcel from the State.

Questions from various committee members involved:

- The waivers that are granted to municipalities that own parcels of land that are subject to the Transfer Act.
- The possible purchase price of the property
- The need to better understand the easements on this property

- Next steps in the process

Overall most discussions centered on the benefits of controlling and acquiring Parsons.

**3) To create a sub-committee of the Farmington Village Center Committee to review the charge regarding quality of life enhancements.**

Chairman Charette explained the study area boundaries. He explained that this subcommittee will work towards developing standards to connect the entire study area with a unified theme, and improve the area with sidewalk beautification, gateway features, public art, and universal design components. Committee members expressed the importance of developing standards that enhance our brand and sense of place.

Motion was made and seconded (Nickerson/Corbett) to create a subcommittee with the following members: Portia Corbett, Betty Coykendall, Brian Connolly and John Renehan. Adopted unanimously.

**4) To discuss the committee's next steps.**

It was decided that the committee would schedule two meetings in September in the hopes of making a recommendation to the Council by the end of October.

**D. To establish the committee meeting schedule.**

The committee scheduled a meeting for September 4, 2018 at 7:00 PM to solicit comments from the community. Following the community meeting the committee will then meet on September 17, 2018 at 7:00 PM to develop a recommendation to the Town Council.

**E. Public Comment. - No Comments.**

**F. Adjournment.**

A motion was made and seconded (Renehan/ Gurski) to adjourn the meeting. Adopted unanimously meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Rose Ponte  
Economic Development Director

cc: Committee Members  
Bill Warner, Town Planner  
Kathleen A. Eagen, Town Manager  
Paula Ray, Town Clerk  
Anna Savastano, Management Assistant

MOTION:

Agenda Item C

Presentation by William Warner, Town Planner.

NOTE: This will be a similar presentation to the presentation given at the August 1st meeting. As requested, we have reached out to the community to promote engagement and are using today's presentation to encourage questions and feedback from the public.

Charge 1:

"The Committee will develop recommendations to the Town Council regarding the future use of the Parson's property including ownership, control, and use"

This presentation will include the following:

- 1) Background summary of what has been done to date;
- 2) How the property has been zoned, what uses are allowed, height, density, etc.;
- 3) Review of Gateway Committee work and the conceptual plans that have been created;
- 4) Traffic and public parking;
- 5) Summary of Department of Transportation Process- Sale of Land; and
- 6) Pros and cons of ownership of property.

MOTION:

Agenda Item E-1

To discuss the committee's next steps.

NOTE: Charge 1:

"The Committee will develop recommendations to the Town Council regarding the future use of the Parson's property including ownership, control, and use"

It is anticipated that at the September 17, 2018 meeting the committee will begin to develop its recommendations to the Town Council regarding the future use of the Parson's property including ownership, control, and use.

If possible, the goal would be to present these recommendations at the October 23, 2018 Town Council Workshop Meeting.

In preparation of the September 17, 2018 meeting, Town staff has been working with the Town attorney on completing the title search which will address the easement issues. The staff is also reviewing existing environmental issues of the property.

Based on public input and the committee direction tonight, Town staff will begin to put together recommendations as a starting point for the Committee to consider at its September 17, 2018 meeting.

MOTION:

Agenda Item E-2

To review and approve the attached Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

/Attachment

**Farmington Center / Parsons Property  
Frequently Asked Questions – FAQ's**

**1. Is the state done working in the area?**

The state DOT and its contractor Tilcon, are finishing up the final punch list items, including replacing top soil and dead, dying, and inappropriate landscape materials.

**2. Will there be better landscaping and flowers planted?**

Yes, the Town is committed to the beautification of this gateway and the Committee has established a Quality of Life sub –committee to determine the most appropriate landscape and gateway features. It is anticipated that the sub-committee will be retaining a landscape architecture firm to advise the Town.

**3. Will the new signs the State installed that obstruct people walking on the sidewalk be removed?**

All signs placed within the travel way of the sidewalk will be reviewed. Unnecessary signs will be removed and required signs will be modified to clear the travel way.

**4. How did the State become the owner of the Parsons property?**

The state acquired the Parsons property, the building and the Parsons Chevrolet /Oldsmobile dealership using its power of eminent domain for public transportation improvements.

**5. How much did the State pay for the property?**

Available public records indicate the State paid \$925,000 for the property and the business in 2009.

**6. What is the process for Farmington to acquire the property from the State?**

Special Legislative Act No. 15-1, which was approved in the June 2015 special session of the CT Legislature and signed by the Governor, gives the Town right of first refusal to purchase property.

Once the DOT Commissioner declares the property surplus and not needed for highway purposes the DOT will perform two independent appraisals of the property and offer it to the Town.

**7. How much will it cost the Town to buy the property?**

Per the Special Act the initial offer from the State will be the average of the two independent appraisals.

**8. What is the environmental condition of the property?**

The Town conducted a phase one environmental site assessment which documented the existing conditions and evaluated the work performed by the State. The report identifies Areas of Concern (AOC) which have been evaluated. The remediation is not complete.

The DOT only investigated and remediated what they "touched" along the proposed roadway. They did not "chase" the contamination for full cleanup. There is other missing documentation regarding soil disposal.

Because of the former auto body operation the site it is currently a property subject to the CT Transfer Act.

**9. Can the Town use the needed environmental clean-up costs to reduce the purchase price?**

Yes, it is anticipated that the Town will retain a Licensed Environmental Professional (LEP) to secure an official LEP summary and opinion of what needs to be done on the site. It is likely the Town can secure an exemption from the Property Transfer Program pursuant to recent statutory amendments that seek to encourage the redevelopment of impaired properties.



The Town will be asking for a reduction in purchase price and liability protections from the State which can be passed on to a future developer.

**10. Are there grants available to help clean up the property?**

Yes, there are grants available for assessment and remediation of “brownfield” properties. Farmington has never pursued this funding but staff members do have extensive experience applying for and administering State brownfield grants.

**11. Are there any wetlands or floodplain on the property?**

There are no inland wetlands or watercourses on the property. There are no areas of 100-year flood plain on the property as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**12. Are there any easements on the property that prevent the Town from fully using the site?**

YES. There is an easement designed to protect the property at 1 Mountain Spring and various utility and access easements and restrictions. The Town is in the process of conducting a title search which will identify all encumbrances.

**13. What does the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) say regarding the property?**

The POCD, adopted in 2018 by the Plan and Zoning Commission, strongly encourages the redevelopment of the parcel in accordance with the current zoning, the conceptual plans and the award winning public outreach process.

**14. What is the zoning for the property?**

The property is zoned Farmington Center with a Farmington Village District overlay zone.

**15. What about the neighboring properties? Who owns them?  
Are they available?**

The adjoining properties are owned by the Farmington Historical Society and Norton Lane Properties Inc.

**16. Has there been any thought as to how the entire area should be developed?**

Yes three (3) different conceptual plans have been prepared as part of the Town's public outreach process.

**17. Are these reports available online?**

Yes, the concept plans can be found on the Town web site at the following link: \_\_\_\_\_.

**18. Has there been any input from Farmington residents into the process?**

Yes, the Town conducted public workshops and meetings over the past 3 years. Over 500 residents have participated in one way or another. All workshops and meetings included extensive public notice and participation. The design workshops were on

- March 26th, 2015- over 200 participants
- March 27th 2015 – over 60 participants
- March 28th 2015 - over 100 participants
- September 11, 2015 - over 100 participants

The public participation process won a state-wide award from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association.

**19. Has there been a professional market study performed?**

Yes, Realty Concepts performed an extensive market analysis.

**20. Can I see the market study?**

Yes, the market study can be found on the Town web site at the following link: \_\_\_\_\_

**21. Has the Town considered the traffic impact?**

Yes, the Town conducted a traffic study which evaluated the development of the site in accordance with the most detailed concept plan. The study can be found on the Town web site at the following link: \_\_\_\_\_

**22. What happens if the Town declines to purchase the property?**

The State will continue to own the property. With no pressure to act the State will likely let the property sit for an extended period of time. The Town will most likely have to mow the grass to keep it presentable.

In the worst case, the State could choose to utilize the parcel for some purpose. (Commuter parking, salt storage building, DOT maintenance facility, etc.) That use would be exempt from zoning and design regulations and tax exempt.

The State could auction the property to the highest bidder and the Town would have no control over who the developer is or what is proposed. Some experienced developers have suggested it is a good pharmacy site. The development would be subject to the zoning regulations, but if it complies with the regulations the Commission must approve.

MOTION:

Agenda Item E-3

To authorize the Town Manager to sign an agreement with Tighe & Bond Associates for no more than \$5,000.00 for various environmental services.

NOTE: As you know, the environmental issues associated with the Parson's property need to be determined and evaluated before the Town can consider price or ownership of the property. I am recommending that the Town hire an independent License Environmental Professional (LEP) to assist the Town in the following:

- 1.) Review the existing environmental conditions on the property, and reports from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Town's Phase 1 Environmental report.
- 2.) Assist the Town of Farmington in negotiations with the State of Connecticut to acquire the property, including quantifying the cost of the clean-up of the property.
- 3.) Review the potential grant opportunities within the State of Connecticut for the clean-up of the property.

Town staff is in the process of working with Tighe & Bond on the proposed Agreement. The proposed Agreement is being prepared and I am hopeful that I will have it by this meeting. If not, the proposed Agreement will be completed by the September 17, 2018 meeting.

MOTION

Agenda Item E-4

Update from the Quality of Life Committee.

NOTE: The Quality of Life sub-committee met on August 13, 2018 and will meet on September 4, 2018 at 5:30 pm. An update will be provided at the meeting.

/Attachment



August 22, 2018

John S. Dunham, P.E.  
District IV Engineer  
ConnDOT District IV  
359 South Main Street  
Thomaston, CT 06787

RE: State Project #51-260  
Landscaping Issues

Dear Mr. Dunham,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Town of Farmington representatives on August 14, 2018 to walk the project area and discuss various landscape concerns related to State Project #51-260.

As discussed, the Town of Farmington has been inundated with general complaints about the quality of the landscaping and the prevalence of weeds. Not to mention, jimson weed plants were abundantly growing through-out the project area. On August 7, 2018, we sent an email to Jennifer Mortensen, Resident Engineer, expressing our displeasure about the deplorable conditions of landscaping through-out the project area.

On August 8, 2018 the contractor had a large crew dispatched to the area for general maintenance and to remove the weeds that have grown over the past few months. While this is an improvement, the quality of the landscaping through-out the project remains unacceptable to the Town of Farmington.

I am extremely concerned about condition of the soil, the toxicity of the invasive jimson weed, and the future challenges the Town will face with the soil if these weeds continue to grow and spread. Attached is a picture of the pervasive nature of these dangerous weeds around Parson's corner.

I've outlined a summary of our meeting/walk thru below, which includes the Town of Farmington's expectations moving forward.

**Meeting Summary**

At the meeting, I expressed that I should not have to function as the project manager on this project. Route 4 is the Gateway to our community and is lined with small businesses that have been more than tolerant during this difficult, multi-year road project. This is a highly visible road project that is constantly critiqued by the +/-30,000 cars that travel on it every day. Neglecting the landscaping to allow 5 foot toxic jimson weed to grow throughout is especially foolish and completely unacceptable.





Due to the overabundance of weeds, I believe that the soil is of low quality. For that reason, the soil needs to be tested and treated appropriately. The Town, the businesses, and residents will eventually be maintaining the landscaping and it is crucial that the soil be of high quality so these issues do not continue to occur. We also discussed that the State will remove all of the weeds that are growing instead of grass. You stated that the contractor will reseed those areas, including the entire Parson's property in the fall, to enable grass to grow. I believe that the businesses/residents would greatly appreciate it if someone reached out to inform them that the contractor would be back in the fall to replant the grass areas.

The Town also requested that all wood chips, including those around the new trees, be replaced with high quality mulch.

In summary the landscaping issues are as follows:

- 1) All areas need to be replaced with high quality soil.
- 2) All existing wood chips including around new trees will be replaced with high quality mulch.
- 3) All dead plants and trees will be removed.
- 4) All grass areas will be reseeded after the weeds are removed.
- 5) New trees will be properly landscaped.
- 6) The entire area will be maintained by the State or contractor until the project is complete.

### **Traffic Westbound**

We also discussed that traffic on Route 4 Westbound is a significant problem. I acknowledge that this congestion will not be resolved completely due to the design of the project, but it is my opinion that changing the timing of the lights during peak periods may help with some of that congestion. A meeting has been scheduled on August 24, 2018 to review my request. I ask that the personnel in attendance have the authority to change the timing on the traffic lights. I also ask that all the traffic intersection(s) ratings be available to review. It is anticipated that traffic volumes will increase in September and changes to the light timing needs to occur immediately.



**Signs**

At the August 24, 2018 meeting I would also like to discuss the various signs that are located on the new sidewalks through- out the project. As we discussed, there are signs that have been placed incorrectly, some are not handicap accessible, and others should be removed completely.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to our meeting on August 24, 2018.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Eagen  
Town Manager

/Attachment

Cc: Town Council members  
Russell M. Arnold, Jr., P.E., Director/Town Engineer  
Paul Melanson, Chief of Police  
Rose Ponte, Economic Development Director  
Mark Rolfe, P.E. Bureau Chief, Bureau of Engineering & Construction  
Ravi Chandran, P.E., Transportation Construction Administrator  
Scott Hill, P.E., Transportation Engineering Administrator  
Michael N. Calabrese, Transportation Supervising Engineer  
Craig Albert, Transportation Engineer  
Jennifer Mortensen, Milone & MacBroom, Inc., Resident Engineer  
File







MOTION

Agenda Item E-5

To schedule a meeting for September \_\_, 2018 or October \_\_, 2018 to prepare for the October 23, 2018 Town Council Workshop Meeting.

NOTE: Below is the list of the upcoming meetings:

September 17, 2018 – Regular Meeting

**September/October \_\_\_\_\_, 2018 – TBD**

October 23, 2018 – Town Council Workshop Meeting

MOTION:

Agenda Item G-1

Executive Session—To discuss matters concerning the sale or acquisition of real property.

To adjourn the meeting to executive session as permitted by Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-225 (a) for the following purposes as allowed by Section 1-200(6), that is

Discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned;

That attendance in the Executive Session shall be limited to:

Members of the Farmington Village Center Committee  
Kathleen Eagen, Town Manager  
William Warner, Town Planner  
Rose Ponte, Economic Development Director  
Betty Coykendall, Town Historian

NOTE: Approval of this motion shall be by 2/3 vote.