

Thoughts on Marriott project in Falmouth

Two quick points – about mixed use development and then about this project

First about mixed use development

What does the public expect? We visualize multiple businesses somewhat like West Main St. May not get exactly that but what we expect is somewhere that we can shop, browse, stroll, eat, drink, talk. We want pleasant store fronts. We don't expect one large business that we cannot use. And nobody visualizes a store front that is a parking lot, especially when its only reason for existence is the large hotel across the road that is too big for the lot it is on.

Second about this project

So far it seems that it has met all the requirements of the law, now we need to determine if it meets the other requirement – is it in keeping with character of the town. The project cannot go forward unless it meets both requirements – the code and the character. This is subjective and not easily codified in the law. This must be answered by the public hearings we are having here. If you are listening you should conclude that the majority of the public feels that the project is not in keeping with the character of the town. And it is the public from all over town, not just the abutters. You have heard a lot of Falmouth residents speaking about what their head and heart says about the town. Taken together this defines the character of the town for the purposes of this project and it should be clear that the answer is that it fails - we believe you should deny the project.

So what are the possible outcomes?

First, the committee and the commission reject the proposal.

Second, the developer withdraws the proposal. Perhaps the basic design could find a home elsewhere although I guess nowhere on Cape Cod.

Third, and this may be the best – the developer goes back to the drawing board and designs an actual mixed use development for the site which is what is desired. It would involve several businesses, have some green space and be self-sufficient for parking. Then maybe we would get more mixed use development across the road (south side of Main St) instead of just a parking lot.

The bottom line is that the project as it exists should be rejected. Falmouth needs to do better.

SUBMITTED BY

KEN PEAL

765 WEST FALMOUTH HIGHWAY
508 540-7851

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