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August 18, 2015

Dear Cape Cod Commission,

It has come to our attention that there are a number of unanswered questions regarding the Spring Hill Suites by Marriott Hotel project. The major question is whether or not the proposed plan in front of you is actually a much larger plan that has not been divulged to you or our Falmouth Selectmen or the planning board of Falmouth. In the Friday, August 14, 2015 Falmouth Enterprise there is definitely enough information to more than speculate that the Marriott, that is presently planning to develop at 556 Main Street in Falmouth, may have plans to expand across the street, at 555 Main Street, using the recently purchased Mariner Motel. (For further details please refer to attached article by Troy Clarkson, a former Falmouth Selectman.)
Furthermore, Mr. Clarkson's article states:

> "When members of the Falmouth Planning Board courageously and correctly raised concerns about the size and scope of the project, town planner Brian Currie incorrectly admonished them to simply, 'Review what is in front of you,' hinting to them that they did not have the ability to look at the broader plan and the bigger picture. As elected officials they do – and now is the time that they should."

This piecemeal approach that has enabled the Spring Hill Suites by Marriott Hotel project to proceed to this stage, can also be confirmed by a number of Falmouth residents who were at these meetings. Without full disclosure of the Marriott's entire plans for their project that may very likely encompass a much larger area of Main Street and entirely change the Cape Cod atmosphere of Falmouth's Main Street into a *large Marriott resort area*, no informed decision can be made.

You ,the Cape Cod Commission and staff, have witnessed a major outflow of citizen opposition to this project. It should be noted that at the meetings, the developers were among the very few proponents for this project.

Because the Falmouth Selectmen, August 17, 2015, voted against this project, we strongly urge you to follow their lead as they represent the Falmouth citizens who are very concerned with keeping the Cape Cod Village character in our town.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Please see attachment: Troy Clarkson's Falmouth Enterprise article, "Innocent Confluence of Events or Arrogance of Untruth?", August 14, 2015
Most Sincerely,

Gilbert R. Lavoie, M.D.
Bonnie B. Lavoie, Ph.D.

with Lavoie letter

p1 of 2

p4

Friday, August 14, 2015 The Falmouth Enterprise

Troy's Take

Innocent Confluence Of Events Or Arrogance Of Untruth?

By TROY CLARKSON

How big is big enough?

How honest is honest enough?

Both are simple questions with difficult and complicated answers. Here in Falmouth, right in the heart of our downtown, both are being tested, formulated, and perhaps even conjured nearly every day.

When the issue of building a hotel at the east end of Main Street first surfaced, it seemed like a natural progression of revitalization in an area that had recently been rezoned to encourage reuse and redevelopment. I'll be honest—the prospect of both economic development and infrastructure improvement in that part of our downtown intrigued and perhaps even excited me. I casually followed the issue as it developed, and nothing occurred —at least at the beginning—to dissuade my optimism.

Then, last summer, when neighbors raised concerns that the developer was providing a piecemeal unveiling of its plans, resisting requests to provide a comprehensive plan for the site, I started to get an uneasy feeling. While the concept of "a hotel" seemed like a good idea, the developer's resistance to present a comprehensive picture of "the hotel" portended for some an adversarial process rather than a collaborative one. With the benefit of hindsight a year later, it is clear that they were right. As neighbors and other interested citizens raised concerns about the size, scope, and appropriateness of a 108-room hotel that sprawled within a few feet of some neighbors' properties, the developer's design team made minor aesthetic changes to the plan, but has acted in response to regulatory concerns, not in cooperation with concerned neighbors. The answer to the question of how big is big enough has not moved toward consensus.

Around the same time as that development of a large, imposing Marriott in Falmouth Village was unfolding, a seemingly unrelated and far more innocuous development directly across the street from the proposed hotel garnered much less interest. The announcement last May that the Mariner Motel, owned and operated by the same family for nearly 30 years, had been sold to another family, was met by many with both praise and a sigh of relief. The family who purchased the Main Street landmark for $1.7 million announced that the Mariner Motel would continue be run as a family business and no building permits would be sought, according to a published report at the time. With the kerfuffle across the street, there were sighs of relief with the news that this 30-room facility was not part of the overall Marriott plan.

Or was it?

I called the Mariner Motel this weekend, looking for a room for an upcoming visit from a family member. After chatting with a very helpful reservation agent, I asked if I could use my Marriott points at that facility, wondering if perhaps the old and new were, in fact, somehow affiliated. I was told no, but that the owner was a "bigwig" with Marriott and wished to keep that information discreet. My heart sank, and I started digging—and did not like what I saw. The information I gathered is all publicly available and is provided here for consideration by both the public and public regulators.

The corporate entity that is developing the Marriott at 556 Main Street is called Falmouth Hospitality, LLC. It was created in October of 2013. The corporate entity that purchased the Mariner Motel at 555 Main Street is called Blum 7 Hospitality Management, Inc. That company was formed in March of 2014. Those geographically close but seemingly otherwise unrelated corporate transactions do not raise any concerns until you dig a little further. The president of Blum 7 Hospitality Management, Inc. is Jan Blum. A simple review of Jan Blum's LinkedIn page reveals that his full-time job, when not managing the Mariner Motel, is as area director for the Marriott International, overseeing hotel operations for "25 Marriott managed hotels in MA, MD, VA, NC and SC." Before his promotion to area director, Jan worked as the director of franchise operations for Marriott International, where he "facilitated new hotel openings and conversions for Marriott branded hotels."

So to review the facts as we know them, the new owner of a facility at 555 Main Street is moonlighting with managing a small motel while he manages 25 Marriott facilities and, before that, he supervised the opening of new Marriott facilities. He purchased that motel within a couple of months of the announce-

Continued on Page 5

Troy's Take: Innocence Or Arrogance?

P2 of 2

■ Continued from Page Four

ment that a new Marriott would be proposed right across the street at 556 Main Street.

While it is entirely possible that this is simply an amazing coincidence, it is also possible that something more clandestine—and sinister—is going on here.

Further research revealed that Robert Walker, the principal of Falmouth Hospitality, LLC, has had a spirited history with local regulatory boards. A story from June of 2013 in the Westford version of wickedlocal.com, just months before he formed the holding company for the Falmouth project, notes that Walker told the Westford Planning Board that, "You don't got a god damn clue," in response to its negative vote on a site plan review. While that behavior is unrelated to the Falmouth project, it certainly and publicly speaks to the willingness of the developer of a project that would significantly and forever change our downtown to work with local boards. Walker has sued several communities over regulatory decisions. That fact is easily obtainable with a simple Google search.

The arrival of Blum and Walker in downtown Falmouth at the same time may be a case of an innocent and unintended confluence of events. Conversely, it may be a case of corporate narcissism and the arrogance of untruth. The only way to find out is to ask.

So, what now?

The development rests in the hands of our regional planning agency, the Cape Cod Commission, whose mission is clearly stated on its website. They exist, simply and profoundly, to "keep a special place special...to protect the unique values and quality of life on Cape Cod by coordinating a balanced relationship between environmental protection and economic progress." Furthermore, in the enabling act that created the commission, its founders noted that, "The region commonly known as Cape Cod...possesses unique natural, coastal, scientific, historical, cultural, architectural, archaeological, recreational, and other values; there is a regional, state and national interest in protecting, preserving and enhancing these values; and these values are being threatened and may be irreparably damaged by uncoordinated or inappropriate uses of the region's land and other resources."

That interest and those values are at stake. Right here. Right now.

When members of the Falmouth Planning Board courageously and correctly raised concerns about the size and scope of the project, town planner Brian Currie incorrectly admonished them to simply, "Review what is in front of you," hinting to them that they did not have the ability to look at the broader plan and the bigger picture. As elected officials they do—and now is the time that they should.

This project, simply as a result of the unanswered questions raised in my research, begs further review and due diligence. The full commission is soon making its decision based in part on the project's impact on community character. Until the questions about the scope of the entire project—on both sides of the street—and the real entity or entities behind it are answered, the impact on community character simply cannot be determined. As a result, in the interest of our community, of our community character, and in the interest of the good government they were created to be, the Cape Cod Commission must deny this request, and preserve the integrity of the process and the people it serves.

(Mr. Clarkson may be contacted at votetroy99@aol.com and followed on Twitter @TroyClarkson59.)