

CAMDEN RIVERWALK and PUBLIC LANDING DESIGN WORKING GROUP
Minutes of Meeting – March 18, 2013
Washington St Conference Room, Camden Town Office

1. Welcome and Introductions of those Present:

Project Team:

Brian Hodges, Camden Development Director

Darin Bryant, TYLin International, Consultants' Project Manager specializes in roadway design, and pedestrian and bicycle projects.

Sarah Witte, Landscape Architect with Terrence J. Dewan & Associates with expertise in designing outdoor spaces for public use. She relies heavily on public participation in guiding the design of these projects, and will work to facilitate the upcoming public meetings to gather the information the Consulting Team needs to respond specifically to the needs and wants of the Town

Mike Thompson is an Environmental Consultant with a focus on wildlife, wetlands and rare plants; and experience with the Army Corps of Engineers permitting process

Barney Baker, owner of Baker Design Consultants, specializes in waterfront project design and permitting

Dan Bannon, Baker Design Consultants

Camden Working Group:

Ray Andreason: Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee

Anita Brosius Scott: Camden Pathways Committee

Staci Coomer: Chamber-of-Commerce who will serve as an interface with local businesses

Ken Gross: Library employee in charge of grounds (Amphitheater and Harbor Park) and events

Doug Johnson: Chair of the Conservation Commission

Gene McKeever: Chair of the Harbor

Barrie Pribyl: Downtown Business Group

Meg Quijano: CEDAC (Camden Economic Development Advisory Committee); Downtown Business Group; Main Street Business Owner; and member of former working group developing a proposal to re-design the Public Landing

Cathy Snyder: Representing the owners of the Knox Mill condominiums

Pat Finnigan: Camden Town Manager

Rick Seibel: Camden Public Works Director

Steve Wilson: Camden CEO and Planner

Alternates:

Kathleen Bachus: Pathway Committee

Robert Davis: Pathways Committee

Ed Libby: Parks and Recreation Committee and Dam Committee

ABSENT: Members: Stuart Smith, Martin Cates, Steve Pixley and Beth Ward;

Alternates: Roger Rittmaster, Flint Decker, Ben Ellison, and Nikki Maounis

Visitor: Ray Williams: Owner, Maine Windjammer Cruises (Camden) and member of the Harbor Committee

2. Project Coordination:

Mr. Hodges explained that he would serve as the conduit for information to and from the Consulting Group and the Camden Team; Darin Bryant will do the same for the Consulting Group.

The project already has a link from the Town Website which will be updated on a regular basis to provide for easy community access to information. He intends to funnel citizens' comments and questions through his office to the Consulting Group.

3. Meeting Schedule:

a. Working Group Meetings:

There will be a series of Working Group Meetings, but the focus of this project will be the Community Meetings.

b. Community Meetings: Sarah Witte:

The Consulting Group proposed two open forums as part of this project where they hope to gather information from anyone who wants to attend. The proposed dates are:

- i. Monday April 1, 6:30 – 8:30 pm: primarily about the Riverwalk
- ii. Monday April 22, 6:30 – 8:30 pm: primarily about the Public Landing
- iii. Monday June 24: Presentation of Concept Plans
- iv. Monday September 9: Presentation of Schematic Plans
- v. Monday September 23: Submission of Final Schematic Plans

The Consulting Group will be in Camden all day on April 1, and will be available to meet with people who can't make the meetings, or to meet informally with small groups of interested citizens - like committees, for example, who may have a role to play in this project.

The format for the meetings will be one they have successfully used in other projects:

1. Introduction: A brief over-view of the proposal including an explanation of the two-stage proposal – one for the Riverwalk, and a separate process for the Public Landing.

2. Slide show of a “fly-down” the river corridor to show the general route of the Riverwalk: The intention is to start the conversation with a common ground of understanding and knowledge, and to set aside misinformation and rumors about the project that will have already circulated. The specific issues involved in this project will be presented, as well as the opportunities for resolving them. At the request of the Camden Group, the Consulting Team will also include photos of similar pathway projects.

The Consulting Team will make it clear that want to hear concerns from everyone. They will let people know that the project is in its conceptual stage only, and that everyone has the opportunity to be heard before the design work begins. The Team has built sufficient time into the development of the proposal to accommodate additional public meetings if that is what the Townspeople want.

In helping to develop the Town's vision for the pathway, Ms. Witte will employ Frederick Law Olmstead's concept of "The Emerald Necklace". The natural resources "gems" of this corridor will be identified, and the locations plotted along the proposed corridor. The concept for the pathway resulting from this vision will include all the "gems" as places which may, *someday*, be connected down the entire length of the pathway. The Concept Plan that the Consulting Group will prepare for June, however, will be designed to connect these places with the access that the Town has to property along the river *at this point in time*. Adopting a vision for the future of the pathway does not in any way commit the Town to securing more direct access to the river at all points; but the Town can be prepared over time and as opportunities arise, to seek to connect more and more sections of the pathway.

This access to the river raises the biggest issue of the entire proposal – the fact that the corridor is made up of a mix of private and public properties; the Team will address the concerns related to private property issues, and explain their plans to address these concerns.

3. Small group break outs: Participants will be given some questions to think about in these groups so there is some common thread to comments.

4. Review

Barrie Pribyl asked the Group what is was that they wanted to walk away with from the meeting on April 1. In addition to assuring the public that their concerns had been heard, Ed Libby believes it is very important that the citizens actually see a proposal so they have a real idea of the concept. Right now all they know is that *something* is being proposed, but they have no idea what that is; he hopes the people of the Town will have a clear picture when they leave the meeting.

The Camden Team approved of the presentation proposal, and selected the Camden-Rockport Middle School, which is located along the river corridor, as the site of the April 1 public meeting in order to stress the educational component of the project. The drop-in space for meeting with the Consulting Team will be the Town Office Washington Street Conference Room.

Ray Andreason asked that the press releases announcing the meeting include specific information on what will be discussed so people won't come thinking they can learn about the Public Landing project when that won't be on the agenda. People also need some real information about the potential pathway itself. Mr. Hodges will get the word out in a variety of ways, but he needs the Camden Team to be "ambassadors" for the project out in the community to counter misinformation and misperceptions. Mr. Andreason noted that the pathways concepts have been discussed in the past and included a walk around the harbor as well – will that be part of this discussion? Mr. Hodges explained that the funders (the State) gave money based on a specific application, and the Town did not include the Harbor Walk in this particular grant proposal.

4. Mapping, reports, data – review:

Darin Bryant and Sarah Witte have met with the Town Assessor and the CEO to review the maps that will be available to assist them in understanding where they will need to make site visits to do actual field work. They have already walked the Town properties along the river and are planning the process of contacting other riverfront property owners to gain access to view sites and do the work required to assess natural areas and wildlife habitat. The Pathways Committee has several maps illustrating possible future pathways that the Team may find helpful. Mr. Bryant said that they would like to be informed of any future projects proposed for the corridor – or the Public Landing area – so they can keep future access or interconnection to those areas in mind as they develop their concepts.

Doug Johnson noted that the Conservation Commission also worked with riverfront property owners in their work to the Tannery Riverwalk project, and he is pleased to share what they have with the Team as well. The group discussed the former Public Landing proposal and the “Bridge”. Mr. Hodges asked everyone in the Group to review the list of studies that were referenced in the Request for Proposals that this Consulting Team answered. They should let him know if there are other sources of information that can be shared with the Team.

5. Work Group Recommendations/Feedback:

- a. Important issues for the Team to keep in mind: and**
- b. Initial Feedback From the Community:**

Public Landing:

Gene McKeever: As the Team works on the Public Landing they should keep in mind Title 38 as it regards access to the harbor for fishing, and the Harbor Ordinance as it regards designated parking and work space for fishermen. He suggests they work with the Harbor Committee – the Team is welcome to attend a Committee meeting if they want. Mr. McKeever also suggested that the Harbor Committee be added to the list of “Stakeholders” for the Public Landing project.

Ray Andreason: He noted that Camden is one of the few harbors with no public facilities for boaters – no showers, no clothes washing facilities close by; although Wayfarer has those facilities for their customers, there is nothing for other boaters. Mr. Hodges added that the discussions about including more amenities on the public landing have been on-going, but he understands that there have been concern expressed by Wayfarer that this would put the Town in competition with them for this business. Mr. McKeever believes it is vital that the Town doesn't put themselves in a position to be taking money away from any businesses on the harbor.

Meg Quijano wonders if the Town really would be competing with Wayfarer – she doesn't think they would be serving the same customers, and would encourage the Team to look including more amenities. Barrie Pribyl wonders if this isn't the time to look at whether or not the Public Landing is the best place for the Chamber building. If not, then the Team can make use of that space for another purpose.

Mr. Andreason informed the Team that they could consider the Town Pit as an alternative winter storage site for Town floats, so they don't need to accommodate that use in their proposal. He asked the Team to make themselves familiar with all the uses of the Public Landing – like the Windjammer Festival in September that encompasses the entire landing. If they do this they may find a way to create more opportunities for more uses like this of the property. Mr. Hodges agreed that the Town can take advantage of marketing the landing and leveraging their current uses by letting event planners know that it is possible to hold these kinds of events in Town. Mr. McKeever is concerned that in duplicating events like the Windjammer Festival in the future, that ambulance and fire fighting access is maintained and provided for in any redesign. The Team should keep in mind the fact that the Planning Board could need to become involved at some point.

Mr. McKeever added that one of the reasons he supported the selection of this particular design team is their concern about how any redesign of the public landing will appear from the water as well as from the land.

Ray Williams was asked if he had any concerns about losing parking spaces in a redesign of the landing. Mr. Williams replied that the schooner operators are different because their clientele does not need to park at the landing; they only need room for 20 – 30 cars to make short-term drop off of luggage when they are loading the passengers. Other than this, he makes provisions for long-term parking off-site or refers early arrivals to public parking elsewhere. Day boat owners would have different needs, but he can't speak for them. It was suggested that the Team work with the Harbor Committee who represents all users of the harbor, to come up with a plan.

Doug Johnson suggested that the Team look at the history of uses at the Public Landing, and at the soils and the composition of the fill. They will probably want to take all this into account when they determine how the soils will need to be amended for any plantings that are proposed in the redesign.

Riverwalk:

Mr. Andreason suggested there are two issues to keep in mind: Explaining the sidewalk extension to Shirrtail in detail, and the fact that the Tannery pathway, which has been funded, has not yet begun – people will want more information. He also believes people will be interested in learning about the different sources of funding for the project.

c. Expectation for Level of Detail in Final Submission:

The RFP outlines what is expected in this regard: In brief, the Town expects schematic designs; an assessment of the environmental impacts; and a discussion of costs and possible funding sources. Although the plans will not be bid-ready, the Team will provide aerial mapping showing the proposed path of the Riverwalk, and they will discuss recommendations for possible next steps including funding. Ms. Brosius-Scott would like to see photos of projects similar in design to the proposals, and Ms. Pribyl asked if the Team could provide photo-shopped images of their actual proposals; they will do so.

Ms. Brosius-Scott asked if they would represent on the proposal the path the Riverwalk would take now as well as how it might look in the future; Ms. Witte said the proposal will show the long-term desired alignment with alternative workarounds for access. Mr. Andreason believes that it will be important, with regard to the pathway, that there be some idea of anticipated use, and suggested that the Pathways Committee can help provide information on prospective users. It should also be determined whether or not bikes will be allowed, and what kind, if any, lighting will be installed and where – the kinds of issues that will be important to property owners along the pathway.

Ms. Pribyl suggested a watercolor rendering of the concept drawing for the Public Landing would be well-received - if there is money for it.

d. Stakeholders:

Mr. Hodges asked the group to review his listing of Stakeholders and Interested Parties to see if there are any obvious additions that should be made: Recreational boaters and fishermen were added as Interested Parties. Mr. Hodges had prepared a list of Stakeholders and Interested Parties and Groups. It was suggested that recreational boaters and fishermen be added to the Interested Parties List, and Ms. Pribyl asked the Design Team to keep in mind that there are also residents and visitors who come simply to look at and enjoy the harbor –that category of users might be called pleasure seekers.

Access to property: Sarah Witte asked that in the mailing to property owners announcing the pathway public forum, if the Town would let them know that members of the Consulting Group are inquiring about access across properties along the river so they can assess the sites and gather data. Ms. Brosius-Scott informed the Consulting Team that the Pathways Committee has already done significant work in contacting property owners along the corridor as it applied to Pathways planning in general, and have received permission for access from some already; they will share these letters with the Team. Mr. Hodges asked if it was better that the letter requesting access come from the Town or from the Pathways Committee; Ms. Brosius-Scott believes the Town should make the request. Ms. Witte suggested that the parties involved in the project might want to sign onto the letter so those who receive it understand that it has broad support. Ms. Brosius-Scott suggested that the letter be used to provide details about the history of the project, the process, who is involved and the opportunities to comment.

Mr. Hodges asked if the Team would be looking for access before April 1, and they replied that the letter can inform property owners that the Team will be available on April 1 when they are in Town for the forum, and could visit properties at that time. Because the Team must gather data at various times during the season, Mr. Thompson wondered if they can ask for blanket approval for access – letting people know that from April 1 on they might see him walking through their yard. It will be very difficult if they have to contact every landowner every time they need to visit. He asked what would work best for the landowners – a set time to visit or a request to visit through-out the season. Ms. Brosius-Scott believes they can expect every kind of reaction to their request. It had been the experience of the Pathways Committee that there are

some property owners who simply may never give permission. Mr. Johnson suggested two things: There is a short window in the spring when visibility along the riverbank is good, after the leaves on shrubs are out in May, it is hard to see much at all; and, he added that in many cases the terrain and the river bank can be viewed from the river itself without permission.

Regarding additional stakeholders at the Public Landing, Ms. Pribyl noted that there are small businesses – like Harbor Dogs and day-sailers - which might be leasing space from the Town, and the Consulting Team should look into that issue and understand the terms of the lease. Ms. Finnegan added that leases are generally three to five years and can be revoked at any time.

Barney Baker asked if it makes sense to notify mooring holders before the Public Landing meeting. Mr. McKeever thought that those who lease finger floats, inner harbor floats, and the day sailers and schooners, as well as those who rent dinghy space should be included as well; it is a lot of people but Mr. Baker agreed it was good to let them know what is happening.

Ms. Brosius-Scott asked if Stakeholders and Interested Parties would be treated differently with regard to notice. Mr. Hodges replied that his intent in compiling tow lists was that the Working Group had a responsibility to notify Stakeholders directly by mail. He would encourage members to contact the Interested Parties personally. He is concerned that the public, as consumers, come to rely too much on mailings for notification instead of being pro-active in trying to find information. MS. Brosius-Scott believes that people respond when they are acknowledged in a mailing, and asked if these parties couldn't receive a very informative mailing laying out the schedule, etc. Mr. Hodges wonders if direct contact – email or conversations, maybe a direct mailing in some cases – to inform people about what is happening and letting them know that the website is a tool to keep informed would achieve the same level of involvement Ms. Brosius-Scott argues would result from a direct mailing. Ms. Finnegan suggested that each of the members agreed to serve on the Town Team and to reach out to their various constituencies to support the proposal; this method of out-reach worked very well with the Downtown Plan, and she believes this effort is similar in that personal contact is the way to go.

e. Possible Bridge on the Harbor:

Ms. Quijano had served on a previous committee that worked on a proposal to revamp the Public Landing to make it more pedestrian friendly. They had received funding to do a concept drawing, and she remembers Lowrie Sargent from the Planning Board gathering information and working with UMO on the actual possibilities for the construction of a bridge. She also said that Main Street businesses were no longer concerned about the loss of parking spaces on the Public Landing; since the Town has found more off-street parking that is no longer an issue. She believes that there is great support for drawing pedestrians to businesses by way of the Public Landing – no business owner feels that a walk along the harbor would negatively impact their Main Street storefront; instead, they see it as an addition to the Town, not detracting from business. People come to see the falls, and having a link from the Public Landing to Harbor Park – something else for people to do would be a great attraction.

Ms. Quijano does not remember exactly what was “the kiss of death” for the proposal, because it initially had considerable support, but does remember that it became referred to by some as “the bridge to nowhere” – a name that didn’t bode well for the project. The group seemed to have lost interest when it appeared there was not sufficient support to continue, and nothing has happened since. But, now it seems to have come back as part of the discussion of the re-work of the Public Landing and harbor area.

Mr. Wilson said he understands that there were three reasons the project lost favor:

- 1) The Main Street merchants opposed the project because they were afraid that they would lose business if the harbor became a drawing card;
- 2) People were wary that their taxes would go up to pay for the project. Because there are no plans to pay for this project with tax dollars, that shouldn’t be a concern this time around; and
- 3) The project was put forward as one conceptual design with the idea that this was what would be built – there was no input and people felt like this was being forced upon them - that was the “kiss of death”.

Gene McKeever informed the Team of the fact that the Harbor Committee is responsible for overseeing maintenance to the components of the harbor – the floats and ramps, etc., and that is a very expensive proposition. They pay for all this work by collecting fees from the users of the harbor. His objection to this project comes from this point of view – if they build it, it will have to be maintained, and that will be a huge added expense to harbor maintenance. There are also problems with liability issues and the requirement to maintain it so it is safe in the winter.

He would rather see improved pedestrian passage both to and from the harbor with an emphasis on channeling people *to* business areas in order to give businesses every advantage. He believes that the bridge would take people away from Main Street.

Ms. Quijano responded, saying merchants didn’t – and still don’t - fear competition from the project; there is nothing that will keep shoppers off Main Street, period, it is one of the reasons they come to Town. People on the bridge will be looking at the backs of buildings and be intrigued and want to visit Main Street to see more. She added that the bridge had been designed to be easily dismantled in the winter to avoid the problems Mr. McKeever mentioned. Ms. Witte asked if that plan for the bridge had been accessible, and Ms. Quijano replied that it had to have been.

Ms. Brosius-Scott agrees with the bridge concept, and adds that the bridge alone would be something people would come to see; if they have come to see the shops they will still see the shops. It is the aesthetics that are most important to her – a cohesive design. It needs to be an aesthetic plus, and she is convinced that this design team has the skill to come up with a concept that will accomplish that goal.

Mr. Johnson cautions that they should consider whether a bridge would detract from scene and the impact of the observing the natural and free nature of the river as it comes over the falls.

Bob Davis noted that in the 1980's, he had developed a proposal for a boardwalk along the harbor side of Main Street businesses that would have provided another point of access to these businesses. The proposal received mixed reaction when it was introduced, as did the one introduced most recently; both for the same reason – the cost. Mr. Davis has a copy of his original proposal he will share with the Consulting Team. The Team will also be provided with minutes of the Planning Board's discussions regarding the most recent proposal.

Mr. Hodges added that the purpose of adding the bridge to the discussion is not to decide whether or not there should be a bridge at this time. The purpose of this entire discussion is to provide an opportunity to give the Team as much information as possible about local concerns so they will not be blindsided at the community meetings by issues that are raised.

Community Outreach

It was agreed that members of the Working Group should have conversations with all of the listed Stakeholders and Interested Parties. Mr. Hodges asked members to select from the lists those groups that they were willing to talk to about the upcoming meetings. He will provide some talking points for those who would find them useful, and let members know their assignments.

f. Status of Community-wide Branding and Wayfinding (Not discussed)

6. Closing Thoughts:

Meg Quijano: She believes that promoting the desirability of joining neighborhoods of the Town together to make walking to other neighborhoods, and to the downtown, easy and enjoyable -- and to create a sense of community -- will receive the most support.

Barrie Pribyl: She believes that it is better to make errors of commission instead of errors of omission – let people know all that is going on. It is also very important to let people know from the start that this is not a “fiat” - a decree of what will be done.

Gene McKeever: He is very pleased to see the degree to which the Consulting Team is listening to concerns – they are paying attention to what is being said.

Cathy Snyder: She is pleased to learn from Ms. Quijano the extent of the business support for the Public Landing project. She had been sensitive to concerns that it could be harmful to business, but learned otherwise.

Ken Gross: He believes the Team should stress the desirability and the non-threatening aspects of the process – there is nothing being forced on people here. He also reminded the Team that people get wedded to the first concept they see, and encouraged them to make sure that they remind people that these are just ideas.

Staci Coomer: She believes it will be very helpful for the Camden Team to talk to people to hear what their reactions are -- to hear the word on the street. She represents a lot of different businesses and talks to many people. Their goal is to support the Town in whatever they want to do and she will spread the word and report on what she learns.

Ric Seibel: He appreciates the organization of information - and the degree of control over a meeting with so many attending – because it is make the meeting more productive. His role is to make sure everything is going well for the Town with regard to maintenance issues -- as long as there is enough money to take of everything they want to do, he can do his job.

Anita Brosius-Scott: She understands that members will be receiving information that is to be forwarded on to various constituencies, and she hopes that Mr. Hodges will give them some of idea of who might contact whom so they can help.

Mike Thompson: He is impressed with the turn-out from the Camden Team, and appreciates the level of engagement and the many points of view members represent; he looks forward to the level of feedback they will be able to get from this group.

Sarah Witte: She is pleased with the progress made this meeting. She will work on a more detailed agenda for the upcoming meeting and send it to the Camden Team for feedback.

Darin Bryant: He is pleased with how much they learned at this meeting, and looks forward to seeing what kind of communications can be set up to facilitate comments back and forth.

Brian Hodges: He is pleased to have this particular design Team working with them on this project. The Camden group has brought forward several issues that could be controversial like parking, a bridge, private property – but the Team appears to be taking it all in stride, and that is a good sign.

Dan Bannon: He appreciates how thorough and organized Mr. Hodges was in putting together the information and the agenda; it made for a very productive meeting. He is also impressed with the number of people who came and the wide range of interests represented; it is nice to have so many people interested.

Barney Baker: The projects will be challenging, but he is encouraged by the vibrancy and the enthusiasm of this group for the proposals.

Pat Finnegan: Part of the goal of this meeting was to have the Consultants learn the issues that could arise in the design process, and she is glad that the Camden Team has brought them forward.

Ray Andreason: He realizes that there is agreement that the Riverwalk will be good for the Townspeople, but he also thinks it needs to be stressed that it will be something that visitors will enjoy as well – another great feature for the Town to have.

Doug Johnson: He offered that it might just be possible property owners may like the proposal for a Riverwalk, and that the group may be happily surprised. The whole concept of pathways is much more main stream now than it was. He suggested that the Consulting Team may want to tap into Green Camden to learn how they prevailed with an idea that was initially hard for some Camden citizens and businesses to accept.

Steve Wilson: He firmly believes that you get a better end result when citizens are not afraid that something is being kept from them; these open public meetings asking for comment are a great start.

Brian Hodges offered to pass along any additional comments that members might think of before April 1 – and after - to the Consulting Team.

Mr. Hodges apologized that he had not included an opportunity for Public Comment on the agenda; he will do so in the future. He offered the alternates and guest that opportunity now: Bob Davis and Ed Libby both agreed that much had been accomplished at this meeting. Mr. Davis, though reluctant to become involved in another effort on the Public Landing, is optimistic that this Team has a good public involvement process and that citizens will respond to in a more positive manner this time.

Ray Williams: This is a good step forward to bring the community together in a positive way by creating more green space to the harbor and more public access to the river.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Hollingsworth
Recording Secretary

NOTE: These minutes and accompanying documents are available on the Town's website (<http://www.camdenmaine.gov>) under the Riverwalk and Public Landing tab.