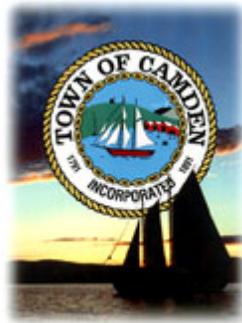


**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
TO THE
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF CAMDEN
MAINE**



**FROM THE
BLUE RIBBON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TASK FORCE**

DECEMBER 2005

SUMMARY

The Camden Select Board established a “Blue Ribbon Economic Development Task Force” in October of 2005 to develop, within a two-month timeframe, recommendations for future actions that would foster a sustainable Camden economy.

For the Task Force to meet the ambitious schedule, activities were assigned to three subcommittees:

- Vision – to define a “where we want to be” description of a desired future
- Our Town – to establish a common understanding of our “as we are” situation
- Benchmarking – to identify proven techniques used by other communities showing “how to” move from the “as is” situation to the desired “where we want to be” vision

A Moratorium subcommittee was established mid-way in the Task Team’s process to explore the need for a temporary restraint on residential development.

VISION – Where We Want to Be

The proposed “vision” for Camden is to protect that which currently exists that is valued, while leveraging these assets of the community to strengthen its year-round nature:

We believe the Town of Camden should be known for its quality of life, its lack of suburban and urban woes, its incredible beauty and natural features, its connection to the sea, its rich tapestry of community and cultural activities and institutions, its recreational components, and, most of all, a connected community. Such features cannot be compromised for development; rather, efforts to stimulate and promote development should seek to preserve and enhance the area and its special attributes.

OUR TOWN – As We Are

The profile of the “as is” Camden is that of a currently vibrant community with a solid but modest growth rate, whose character is increasingly influenced by the in-migration of older, well-educated, affluent residents. This in-migration has contributed to significant increases in residential property values, resulting in relatively fewer Camden homes available for working households of modest means. In addition, the continuing nation-wide trend towards a services economy has eliminated several large employers from the immediate area, contributing to concerns regarding the adverse impacts of the changing nature of Camden’s economy.

Benchmarking – How to Get to Where We Want to Be

For Camden to achieve the economic development goals reflected in this report, as well as the related objectives found in the Comprehensive Plan and the Housing Assessment Study, broad community support is required. These goals are well beyond the limited resources of the Town Government itself, but they are not beyond the creative capacity of our larger community of citizens. The Task Force looked at other communities for role models. We found some common characteristics in those that have been successful in achieving their economic development goals:

- **We are more than just a pretty face!** Go beyond the attractiveness of Camden's life style and make a compelling business case to attract desired business activity to our Town
- **Be Collaborative** while working economic development issues at the local, regional, state and national levels, and be prepared and willing to move quickly when opportunities become available to the Town.
- **Support a champion** who is making economic development happen.
- **Think holistically** and assist many efforts, each building upon another.
- **Celebrate little achievements**, as there is no endpoint in Camden's economic development process.

The Task Force believes that the economic development process must be guided by a strategic economic development plan, and an outline for such a plan is provided. But the plan is but a means to the end.

The most important common practice followed by all successful communities is to start taking action immediately.

Recommendations – Select Board and Community Actions

- The Task Force recommends that the Select Board endorse the formation of an independent, non-profit Camden Futures organization drawn from all parts of the town's population. Such an organization would serve as a forum for advocating policies and activities that are in the long-term interest of the town to achieve desired economic development.
- The Task Force recommends that the Select Board create a neighborhood-based development review process that would require future developers to meet with local residents in an open and collaborative manner before proposed plans are submitted to the Town for official evaluation and approval.
- The Task Force recommends support for the re-development of the Knox Mill/MBNA properties. The Task Force felt strongly that the Town's economic development needs would be best served if use of these facilities could remain largely commercial. Existing proposals to convert selected properties to

residential condominiums were not viewed with favor by the Task Force because of the possible permanent loss of a significant percentage of the commercially zoned space.

- A recommendation for a moratorium was considered but not recommended, in the belief that adequate time exists for the Town to review related ordinances and to promote commercial development as an alternative to the proposed residential uses.
- The Task Force strongly recommends support for the protection and enhancement of Camden's harbor as a thriving working waterfront, and encourages the Town's pursuit of assistance in this area from the proposed "Futures Group" as well as from the Island Institute. The Task recommends approval of the proposed Wayfarer Marine Dredging and Float System Expansion Plan.
- The Task Force publicly supported the fourteen amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that were placed on the ballot for the November 8th, 2005, Town Meeting. The voters approved the proposed changes.
- The Task Force reviewed and endorsed the findings and recommendations presented in the July 2005, "Multi-Community Housing Assessment Study," believing that increasing our affordable housing for the workforce is a prerequisite for future economic development in Camden.
- The Task Force briefly reviewed the economic potential of the Town-owned Tannery property, a subject being addressed from a wider perspective by a committee appointed by the Select Board. We do believe, however, that the property should remain open for economic development purposes.

CHAPTER I – MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

1.1 Mission

The Camden Select Board established a “Blue Ribbon Economic Development Task Force” in October of 2005, with the following mission”

Develop recommendations for Town policies and ordinances as well as Town, business and community actions that foster a sustainable Camden economy that is diverse, balanced, vibrant and year-round.

1.2 Organization

The Task Force used the Town of Camden’s recently approved (June 14, 2005) Comprehensive Plan as its foundation for factual information, supplemented by the July, 2005, Multi-Community Housing Assessment prepared by a joint-committee representing Camden, Lincolnville, Rockland, Rockport, Saint George and Thomaston.

The Task Force organized itself into three subcommittees to accomplish its mission:

- **Vision** – define what we want Camden to be and not to be in the foreseeable future and construct a “to be” description of that desired future.
- **Our Town** - review Camden’s current assets and our place in the region and develop a common understanding of our “as is” situation and recommendations for actions related to the immediate situation.
- **Benchmarking** – research proven techniques used by other communities showing “how to” effect the changes needed to move from the “as is” situation to the desired “to be” vision.



CHAPTER II – VISION

Define what we want Camden to be and not to be in the foreseeable future and construct a “to be” description of that desired future.

2.1 Proposed Vision

We believe the Town of Camden should be known for its quality of life, its lack of suburban and urban woes, its incredible beauty and natural features, its connection to the sea, its rich tapestry of community and cultural activities and institutions, its recreational components, and, most of all, a connected community. Such features cannot be compromised for development; rather, efforts to stimulate and promote development should seek to preserve and enhance the area and its special attributes.



Without doubt, the year-round viability of downtown Camden has been and will be challenged by events – some local, some regional and some national. Our vision for Camden assumes that efforts to promote community and economic development have been and will be controlled to retain the existing ambience, character and diversity of the existing community.

Our vision is of a vibrant year-round village community. It welcomes guests and part-time residents but views these as a valued but tangential part of the year-round nature of our future environment.

Certain changes, if taken to the extreme, would harm our ability to achieve this vision. The proposed conversion of the majority of the Knox Mill complex to costly (estimated at \$500K per unit) residences raises the specter of Camden increasingly becoming a retirement community where large portions of the inhabitants leave at certain times of the year. To be clear, increased residential development is fine; the problem facing the Town now and into the foreseeable future is the potential loss of in-town facilities and properties that are zoned for – and we contend – better suited for largely commercial purposes.

2.2 Approach

For the proposed vision to be achieved, the Town of Camden should seek individuals and businesses capable of providing economic resources and employment opportunities in the intellectual, creative and service economies.

We propose that Camden seek to market itself, and all it has to offer, to those involved in the intellectual, creative and service economies, and in that regard, offer the following recommendations.

- Support existing industrial and commercial businesses while protecting unused or underutilized commercial space from encroachment or change of use.
- Support regional and community “futures groups” that are attempting to improve economic development opportunities in the area.
- Actively recruit organizations and businesses to re-locate here and market the commercial portions of the Mill complex (perhaps re-configured with a variety of sized spaces for rent or purchase) to provide space for high-quality jobs
- Consider municipal incentives for responsible, non-polluting development
- Commit to preserving the character of our existing downtown with its complex and diverse mix of civic, institutional, retail, residential and public space
- Promote the presence of a small, quality educational institution which would enhance the community
- Ensure that community leaders and the Select Board commit the appropriate resources to assure that developmental efforts receive the widest possible financial and public support. Open dialogue and discussion is a critical component of this effort as the majority of the community must be supportive
- Advocate for the judicious deployment of our existing zoning and land-use ordinances in the service of the principles and goals outlined in the above recommendations

Chapter III - OUR TOWN

Review Camden's current assets and our place in the region and develop a common understanding of our "as is" situation and recommendations for actions related to the immediate situation.

3.1 Existing Situation

Camden's approved Comprehensive Plan provides a substantial source of data regarding the assets available to support economic development, as well as many important recommendations in areas such as:

- Population and household growth
- The local economy
- Downtown enhancement
- Natural resource protection
- Sewer and water utilities improvement
- Land use patterns
- Affordable Housing
- Transportation
- Harbor revitalization
- Recreation and open space enhancement
- Historic and archaeological resources
- Public facilities and fiscal capacity

Much of the statistical data needs to be updated to better understand the impact of recent local changes, such as the departure of MBNA from downtown Camden, as well as regional and national changes such as increased housing valuations and decreased tourism due to energy costs and airline disruptions.

Nonetheless, a tentative statistical portrait of Camden and our region offers a reasonable profile of our "as is" situation.

3.1.1 Population

- Current 5,254
- Projected 2015 = 5,715
 - Historic annual growth rate = 0.86%
 - Future growth will be attributable to in-migration
- Median age was 47 as of 2000 and is now reportedly close to 49
 - Maine is the "oldest demographic" state in the union and Knox County is now the "oldest demographic county in Maine"
 - 48% of Camden's population are 55 or older
 - 23.4% are 65 or older
- 44% are university graduates or higher

- 92% are high school graduates or higher
- Median income is 17% higher than the state average (\$39,877 vs. \$37,240)
- The exodus of 18-30 year olds is almost matched by the in-flow of 55+

3.1.2 Housing

- By 2013, 416 additional housing units are forecast to be built for a future total of 3,299
- 145 acres of land in 5 parcels are currently available for new residential building
- The current cost of housing is largely unaffordable to the vast majority of the working population in the area, with the median price of a house in Camden now at \$280,000 and \$206,750 in Knox County

3.1.3 School Population

- By 2015 school population is expected to decrease by 5%.

3.1.4 Work Force and Economic Development

- 82.5% of Camden's workforce are now in white-collar occupations
 - Total work force is 2,616
 - Unemployment rate is 2.4%
- 61% of families with children under 6 had both parents working
- Between 1990 and 2000 manufacturing labor force decreased by 5.5%
- There is now over 7 times the number of people in non manufacturing as manufacturing
- The largest percentage of the labor force is engaged in "education, health and social services" at 29%
- Retail trade is the second largest at 13.3%
- Large amounts of vacant commercial space are subject to residential conversion at the expense of commercial development
 - 10 Camden facilities are capable of holding 35 or more employees and the Knox Mill Complex has 5 of these and 74% of the capacity
 - 31 Camden facilities are capable of holding 15 or more employees and the Knox Mill Complex has 10 of these and 61% of the capacity
- 45% of all personal income is in the form of transfer payments, dividends and interest rather than wages and salaries
- Camden is a tourist-based economy in certain respects
 - 2005 is the culmination of a 3-year downward cycle in tourism.
 - Since 9/11 the State has been flat or has seen a net loss of tourists and tourism dollars

- The CRL Chamber estimates that this year's local tourist activity was probably 8-12% less than last year
- State forecast for the next 3 years is expected to remain flat

3.2 Immediate Actions for Consideration

The recently approved Comprehensive Plan includes a long list of recommended actions that will require the coordinated activities of a large number of local government elements as well as civic organization support if they are to be accomplished. Many of those recommended actions are based on data and facts that have changed enough in the near past to warrant concern; the departure of MBNA from Camden is an example of an obvious change, the impact of which is not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Such changes may require the community to set priorities regarding the plan's recommendations. Some of those suggested priorities are discussed in the following recommendations.

3.2.1 Support a Community-wide Camden "Futures" Organization

The Task Force recognizes that the Town of Camden has been and is a wonderful place to live and work. We are optimistic that an even better future for Camden is achievable, but the creative effort to accomplish this, for the most part, must come from those that reside in our community. Our future is for us to define and create.

Evidence abounds that the national and regional economies are changing. Rather than wait for those changes to determine the future of Camden, we believe our citizens, when organized and equipped with objective information, can greatly influence how our existing assets and evolving demographic and economic realities can be leveraged to best contribute to an even better Camden of the future.

Thus, we recommend that the community support the creation of a civic organization, the Camden Futures Group, that would serve as an economic and community development engine fueled by a self-reliant, citizen based organization that would not only assist the Town Government in defining goals and objectives related to economic and community development, but also actively pursue achievement of those goals and objectives that are consistent with and supportive of Camden's citizen-approved Comprehensive Plan.

The Camden Futures Group would be formed with the following purposes and guidelines in mind:

- Act as a voice for the "common good" of the town
- Educate the public about whether specific proposals before voters or decision making bodies are in the best long-term interests of the town.

- Serve as a communication bridge to insure consistency between the community vision as articulated in Camden's Comprehensive Plan and the town boards that are acting on specific significant development proposals and zoning ordinance language.
- Work as a coordinator, facilitator, and implementer, as appropriate, in support of achieving the goals and objectives articulated in Camden's Comprehensive Plan.
- Operate as an independent, non-profit, tax-deductible organization under sec. 501©3 of the IRS code. Therefore, the organization will be independent of town government.

The Camden Futures Group will recruit as broad a cross section as possible of different points of views or different experiences within the town. That is, we believe it is important that a Futures Group not be viewed as a proxy for or dominated by narrowly focused interests, for example, a group primarily of business people, or primarily of seasonal residents, or retirees/newcomers, the old guard, up and comers, etc. Such a voluntary economic and community development organization would be broadly based, attracting citizens of all ages and socio-economic status, with a membership drawn from every neighborhood within the town's jurisdiction.

The proposed Futures Group organization would be independent of the local town government and would be funded through membership dues, contributions, and grants. It would not endorse candidates for any public office.

The proposed organization would work to establish factual information related to development issues; provide such information to the Select Board and the citizens for consideration prior to key decisions and scheduled elections, and also organize and coordinate civic activities that are responsive to the goals and objectives of Camden's Comprehensive Plan.

3.2.2 Define a Responsive Community Review Process

The Task Force believes that Camden's existing Zoning Ordinance is well designed to encourage the most appropriate use of the land throughout the Town. However, proposed new development can create complex and highly emotional issues for existing residents and property owners; we believe these issues deserve to be addressed and, hopefully, often resolved prior to any final decisions by the Code Enforcement Officer, Zoning Board of Appeals, or the Planning Board.

The Task Force recommends that the Select Board appoint a small team of citizens to review the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Camden, with the expressed purpose of defining a process in which prospective developers meet with all interested parties, particularly adjacent and near-by property owners, to explain proposed projects, answer questions, and attempt to resolve any issues

prior to submission of proposed plans to the official review process. These neighborhood meetings would require “good-faith” actions by all parties, in which it is understood that official and/or final decisions are not in play. Rather, the process would be designed to identify issues, eliminate those that can be resolved, possibly produce compromise on those that require compromise, and result in the best possible proposal prior to submission to the official reviews required by the zoning ordinance.

The Task Force believes that the sharing of information between developers and our citizens, in a non-confrontational environment, could produce better developments that are suitable to the future needs of the Town of Camden.

3.2.3 Strengthen Economic Development Staff Support

The Task Force is not recommending at this time any additional economic development staff for the Town of Camden. However, the Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) has provided seed funds to “Bay Futures Alliance” for an economic development position to be located in Rockland. This individual might also serve as an economic development resource for Camden, and help achieve, in a proactive way, ongoing contact with prospective firms, and assist Camden in the achievement of an economic balance to maintain vitality and viability.

This economic development resource could also assist in the development and maintenance of economic statistics to keep the Town and region aware of progress towards achieving our economic and community development goals and objectives. Economic cycles and trends are not now tracked, and we often find ourselves in a reactive mode relative to economic balance. The Task Force believes that Camden needs to become proactive about economic development, just as our neighboring jurisdictions have become, and we should welcome whatever constructive assistance this EMDC initiative may provide. In addition, we should encourage the proposed Futures Group to establish working relationships with the EMDC, the Chamber of Commerce and other regional organizations, such as the Island Institute and Friends of Midcoast Maine, that could prove helpful in the economic and community development of Camden.

3.2.4 Promote the Development of the Knox Mill/MBNA Properties

A goal contained in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan is to promote a downtown that creates and retains year-round jobs and generates a stronger tax base. The Task Force expended a great deal of time and effort attempting to better understand the economic development impact of the current proposals being brought forward to the Planning Board for the re-development of two of the Knox Mill properties owned by MBNA. There are at least 14 properties in all, many with existing structures that provide approximately 240,000 sq. ft. of available mixed-use space. Thanks to the reconstruction work of MBNA, these buildings

are in first class condition with many amenities, and are ready for immediate occupancy within the limits set forth by the Zoning Ordinance. Most of the MBNA properties are in the process of being acquired by Maine Investment Properties LLC (MIP), a Baltimore Maryland based Real Estate Company.

The Task Force's current understanding is that MIP plans to redevelop all of the properties, with those on lower Mechanic Street being primarily commercial, the Knowlton Center at the corner of Mechanic Street and Knowlton Street being changed from offices to a combination of commercial space and residential condominium, and "Building 6", the largest of the buildings which fronts on Washington Street, being converted on upper floors to residential condominiums, with the street-access level areas remaining in commercial use.



The Transitional River Business Zone, which encompasses most of these properties, permits residential use but requires commercial use at the "street-access level". MIP principal Walter Skayhan attended a Task Force meeting in late October 2005, and spoke to MIP's plans for the former MBNA facilities. He indicated an initial presumption of continued commercial use at all levels, but concluded that the current market realities indicated that total commercial reuse of these facilities was not economically feasible. Commercial tenants could not be found to fill the larger spaces, such as the 80,000 sq. ft. available in "Building 6". Therefore, MIP has submitted a redevelopment plan to the Planning Board for conversion of about half the former commercial space to residential condominiums.

The Task Force felt strongly that the Town's economic development needs would be best served if use of these facilities could remain largely commercial, and initiated discussion concerning whether a 180 day moratorium should be sought, as permitted in State Statutes, to temporarily halt the conversion of the former

commercial space to residential. Some members believed that a six month moratorium period would allow sufficient time for the Planning Board and townspeople to analyze whether the existing Business River Transition Zone provisions allowing residential uses on floors above the street-access- level would cause the Town “serious public harm”. Optimistically, it would also provide time for a concerted effort to locate and recruit commercial tenants for all of the available commercial spaces.

The Task Force was fully aware of the seriousness of a moratorium action, and the exploration of this option has been a painful process for our group. Such a moratorium requires a Select Board vote of approval, and subsequent approval by the voters at a Town Meeting. We met with the proposed developer and obtained fair and reasonable responses to our many questions. In follow-up discussions, we also received assurances that increased commercial development would be acceptable if commercial tenants could be recruited over the next ninety days. After discussion during a meeting of the total Task Force, the Task Force voted to not recommend a moratorium at this time.

3.2.5 Enhance Camden’s Working Waterfront

The Task Force invited representatives of several of Camden’s larger business firms to meet with an “Our Town” subcommittee to discuss issues and opportunities. Wayfarer co-owner Jack Sanford briefed this subcommittee on his perception of the local economic environment. Wayfarer currently employs 80 highly skilled people. He stated that Wayfarer is seriously reconsidering its interest in expanding within Camden, because Rockland and Belfast offer very attractive options through aggressive approaches made by their municipal leaders. Mr. Sanford believes that those two jurisdictions have a welcoming attitude toward businesses.

Wayfarer co-owner Parker Laite also met with members of the “Our Town” Subcommittee and shared about 8 different concept plans and sketches for the Wayfarer harbor frontage and Bean Yard properties. He stated that the sketches represented the expenditure of approximately \$400,000 on Wayfarer’s part to develop concepts and ideas for the sustainability of Wayfarer as a business in Camden, and the effective development and utilization of the waterfront properties they own.

As part of this process, the Task Force reviewed the economic aspects of the proposed Wayfarer Marine Dredging and Float System Expansion Plan and voted to support this effort, subject to any revisions required by local, state, or Federal law.

a. Bean Yard Development - The Bean Yard project is to construct new boat repair and storage sheds and was initiated more than 2 years ago, but construction was delayed by a lawsuit filed by neighboring property owners. The

Courts recently sustained the project and the Town approvals, and it could now move ahead. One problem, however, is that the economics of the project have changed, with the Wayfarer's outer harbor waterfront becoming much more valuable for uses other than boat repair and storage (e.g. residential).

Wayfarer's competitors have, over the past few years, moved much of their boat storage and repair facilities away from highly valuable waterfront locations. For example, inland-based boat storage and repair facilities have been recently developed by Johanson Boatworks (Route 90) and Rockport Marine (Route 1); Lyman Morse (Thomaston), and Journey's End Marina (Rockland) have both expanded their boat storage and repair capabilities. Wayfarer/Laite has land available on Route 1 north of Camden where it can store boats, but the Zoning Ordinance currently prohibits the repair of boats there. Voters have previously rejected proposed changes in the zoning ordinance that would have resulted in the lifting of this prohibition.

The Task Force does not believe that residential or environmentally sensitive areas need to be compromised to accommodate business activities. Rather, we believe that creative solutions are possible if the Town and expanding business interests are willing to work together to develop acceptable alternatives. Thus, we recommend that the proposed "Futures Group" work with the owners of Wayfarer's to develop several acceptable alternatives that would satisfy their business requirements without adversely impacting surrounding residential or environmentally sensitive areas. In addition, we recommend that the services of the Island Institute be enlisted to assist in the further development of the Wayfarer properties as a viable working waterfront.

The Task Force believes that Camden's working waterfront is critical to the very nature of our community. We believe that the townspeople and local government must work with Wayfarer Marine in a cooperative and creative manner to ensure that Wayfarer will always be a viable presence in our harbor, and a significant employer of our highly skilled craftsmen. Alternative solutions need to be sought to allow Wayfarer to expand its boat repair and storage facility capabilities within or proximate to our town.

b. Re-developing the Red Sheds Site on Atlantic Avenue - The Task Force also recommends that creative and constructive changes be considered for the Zoning Ordinance provisions that impact the historically significant "Red Shed" properties located at the head of the harbor. Such changes should not compromise our commitment to a thriving working waterfront, but such commitment need not preclude consideration of creative options that would actually improve the viability of our commercial waterfront. We recommend that the identification of viable development options be one of the earliest tasks accepted by the proposed "Futures Group", and that a solution-focused effort involving the property owners, adjacent neighbors, and other stakeholders with interests in the well being of the harbor and surrounding area be initiated. Once

several viable options are defined, the Planning Board should then study the options for permitting the effective utilization of these parcels, within the context of the approved Comprehensive Plan, and recommend appropriate changes for voter consideration. The “Futures” organization would bear the responsibility for explaining the nature of the proposed changes to the electorate, using a variety of communications and appropriate meetings, so that both the intent and the limits of the changes are fully understood.



3.2.6 Developing the Town-owned Tannery Property

Although not specifically the focus of this task force, we believe that the three-acre Town-owned Tannery site should remain open for economic development purposes. We believe that ownership of this property by the Town offers us an opportunity to promote innovative development, particularly in which the Town could retain control of the site and its uses via land leasing arrangements. There were no suggestions from members of the Task Force for *intensive* commercial development of this property, as we do believe that most commercial development should be concentrated in the down-town area and that every effort should be made to protect the residential character of the surrounding area and to avoid the appearance of commercial strip zoning. A desirable feature of any development of this site would be for the Town to retain a public easement for a walking path along the Megunticook Riverbank.

3.2.7 Supporting Approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendments

The Town Planning Board and Select Board placed on the November 8, 2005 Town Meeting fourteen amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Many were technical corrections and clarifications of Ordinance text, but several had the potential of stimulating the re-use of existing commercial properties in new ways.

The Blue Ribbon Economic Development Task Force reviewed the proposed zoning ordinance changes for the upcoming November election and recommended to the electorate that all fourteen of those ordinance amendments be approved by the Town Meeting. As part of this action the Task Force sent a “

Letter to the Editor” to local news media informing voters of its support for the proposed changes. The electorate approved the proposed changes.

3.2.8 Developing Affordable Workforce Housing Within Camden

Residential property in the Camden area is becoming increasingly expensive and often out of the financial reach of many people currently working in Camden. In addition, the increasing cost of housing limits the appeal of our community to certain types of new business ventures. We will not attract new jobs into Camden unless we can show that we can shelter future workers in affordable housing. Accordingly, this committee fully supports the need for affordable housing within the town boundaries.

The Lupine Terrace project is an example of a project that needs to succeed. The July 2005 “Multi-Community Housing Assessment Study” for Camden, Lincolnville, Rockland, Rockport, St. George and Thomaston is an excellent Report which provides analytical detail, an action plan and implementation strategies leading to the creation of more affordable housing in the midcoast area. Dynamic communities need to have a range of housing types and opportunities available for a variety of citizens, including single people, young families, and empty nesters, in order to maintain an appropriate mix and balance of citizens who create viable and vibrant communities.

The workforce housing goals set for Camden are achievable, but attainment of their full potential for our Town may require some innovative improvements to our zoning ordinance. The Community Review Process, recommended above, is an example of such an improvement, as we believe that more effective communication must take place whenever workforce housing is being considered. Neighborhoods deserve to be consulted in the earliest stages of such proposed developments. Through such citizen involvement, better housing will result, and such workforce housing will serve as a welcomed addition to the neighborhood.

We also believe we can learn from successful workforce housing projects completed in other communities: Are there housing types that may be less expensive to construct and maintain, but actually fit better with our concept of a vibrant down-town village? Can we provide attractive, but smaller and less expensive, residential units that would be suitable for single workers or young couples? Because affordable housing is key to the continuing economic viability of our Town, our zoning ordinances should not preclude various housing types, such as cluster housing and townhouses, if they are suitable for a residential zone and complementary to the surrounding neighborhood.

Chapter IV – Benchmarking

Research proven techniques used by other communities to effect the changes needed to move from the “as is” situation to the desired “to be” vision.

4.1.1 Introduction

The Task Force recommends that the following longer-range activities be pursued so as to achieve the desired vision for the Camden community. These are the practices most commonly followed by ex-urban communities around the world that are successfully growing their local economies while being sensitive to the scale and essence of what people like most about their unique communities.

4.1.1 Create Benefits Beyond Life Style

Members of every community, whether it is Fairfield, Iowa, USA; Mitchell, Queensland Australia; Camden, Maine USA, believe their town has a desirable lifestyle. And why wouldn't they, they choose to live there.

Given this fact, one has to go beyond life-style to make a compelling case for attracting businesses to one's own community. Some of the practices used include building office or industrial parks with turn-key buildings, offering tax-relief incentives, bonding to subsidize start-up costs, creating venture syndicates to attract start-up and growing companies, establishing support agencies to provide counsel and training and creating infrastructure such as inexpensive broadband access for everyone in the community or region.

4.1.2 Assure Collaboration

We need to adopt an attitude that the community must work at the local, regional, state and national level, seeking help and creating awareness at each level. We must be clear on what is best accomplished through public entities and what is best accomplished through private entities.

In Town Meeting communities, public entities serve a very different and more limited role than in Town Council communities. Public entities move with great deliberation and compromise. Private entities can act quickly with narrowly focused vision.

Sustainable and celebrated initiatives are ones in which decisions are considerate of business, cultural and environmental concerns realizing that not everyone can be happy with every aspect of an accomplishment.

This general guideline, collaboration, is of particular importance in Maine given its low population density and the desire to maintain this characteristic. Distributing activity while creating a critical mass will require a high level of collaboration between sometimes seemingly competing entities. For example, the new President of the University of Maine is using collaboration as the foundation of his tenure and is already making it real with collaborative PhD programs with UNE and joint ventures with Jackson Labs.

4.1.3 Support a Champion

It should not come as a surprise that a successful effort to effect positive and sustainable change requires leadership.

In all exemplar communities we studied, one individual driving one group, driving one community, driving one region could be identified.

Sometimes this champion was a public servant, sometimes an organization leader, sometimes a private citizen.

Each day this individual woke up with a primary mission to grow and nurture their community's economy. This champion ignited other individuals, groups, the community and the region to strive for a common goal.

4.1.4 Think Holistically

Common to all successful community development efforts was a holistic approach, not expecting a single company, organization or institution to address the communities long term needs for diverse, balanced employment. There were many efforts, each building upon another.

Entrepreneurship should be the focus and not particular sectors. Clusters of technical, scientific, and cultural; service, product and entertainment; consumer, industry and business entrepreneurs proves to be the most successful approach.

Building a viable and sustainable business base is no different than building a viable and sustainable company. It is not an overnight process. A community should be prepared to encounter failures. Failures should be lessons for the future, not fodder for castigation.

Some of the efforts engaged by exemplar and award winning communities have been in process for eight to sixteen years.

4.1.5 No One Endpoint

Given the long-term nature of the process, there is no end point. The process is never over. Thus, it is important to recognize and celebrate little achievements all along the way.

Have prominent displays of awards in public and private places. Create a brag board. Hold events that chronicle and acknowledge accomplished goals and individual achievements.

As they say in non-profit circles, you can never thank a donor often enough.

Acknowledge the important role entrepreneurship plays in our community.

- Provide an Entrepreneur of the Year award;
- Perform site visits to local companies;
- Conduct local business plan competitions

Make it known that our community, Camden, is entrepreneur-friendly.

4.2 Develop a Long Range Strategic Economic Development Plan

In accordance with the General Practices above, the economic development process begins with developing a long range strategic economic development plan as outlined below:

- a. Introduction
 - i. The process leading to the plan – It must be logical and easy to understand, a process that provides significant opportunities to enlist the creativeness of every interested member of our community.
 - ii. Who participated – List the names and addresses of the citizens who participated and note the areas in which each person assisted in developing the plan.
 - iii. For what purpose – Explain the purpose of the plan and what we hope to accomplish by executing the plan.
- b. Preamble (As Is)
 - i. Demographic Trends (population age, income, size, education levels, disposable income, life styles)
 - ii. Business/Economic Trends (business age, income, size, workforce, sectors, salaries)
 - iii. Societal Trends (housing, government, education, beliefs)
- c. Mission (To Be)
 - i. A succinct, one 10 to 20 word sentence
 - ii. Three to five bullet statements giving meaning to the statement and why it matters

- d. Actions (How To)
- i. Four to six brief Goal statements capable of being measured or recognized when achieved. These goals should be directly relatable to the quantitative information provided in the Preamble. For example:
 - Sustain the economy so that the annual unemployment rate does not exceed 3%
 - Increase the high school graduation rate by 5% each year
 - ii. Two to four Strategy statements for each Goal showing how the goal is to be reached.
 - iii. Two or Three Action Steps in accordance with the strategy including who is to take the steps and over what time frame the step is to taken.

4.3 Act Now!

The most important common practice followed by all successful communities was to start taking action immediately.

- They would agree upon first drafts of the Mission and identify some actions that could and/or should be taken immediately.
- They did not wait until the plan was completed and totally agreed upon before acting.
- They began showing results by undertaking easily achieved or critical actions.

Town of Camden

Blue Ribbon Economic Development Committee Task Force

Subcommittees

- **Visioning**

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Leonard Lookner
Victoria Bryant
Tom Laurita
Matt Orne
Mike Nicholson
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- **Benchmarking**

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Micki Colquhoun
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- **Our Town**

Roger Moody
Philip Conkling
John Enright
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- **Moratorium Study**

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