



**Town of Camden
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Community & Economic Development
Advisory Committee**

**March 24, 2014
5:00pm**

PRESENT: Chairperson Deb Dodge, John Arnold, Martin Cates, Staci Coomer, Peter Gross, Robin McIntosh, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent, Development Director Brian Hodges.

ABSENT: Pete Brown, Ellis Cohn, Kipp Wright

GUEST: Jerry Squiers – Sierra Peaks Tibbetts

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm.

2. Approval of Board Minutes

Peter Gross made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2014 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Robin McIntosh. It was unanimously approved.

3. Jerry Squiers – Sierra Peaks Tibbetts

Jerry Squiers of Sierra Peaks Tibbetts briefed the committee on the recent purchase of the company from IntriCon. Squiers presented information about Tibbetts including photographs of the miniature microphones the company designs and manufactures. He said the microphones are used for hearing aids, headsets, acoustic sensors and specialty electronics. He reported that the company trains new workers, offers good wages, and has a low impact on the environment. Squiers noted that the new owner of Tibbetts, John Rockwell, wants the company to be more involved with the community. He also thanked Brian for the tremendous support they've received.

John Arnold asked how CEDAC could help support the company. Squiers responded that finding labor would be their biggest challenge. Deb Dodge suggested a tour of the facility.

4. Update on significant events outreach

Robin McIntosh said that she had talked with the director of Pop-Tech and will be meeting with staff at the Camden Conference as well. She reported that Midcoast Magnet has decided to move their Juice Conference from the Camden Opera House to the Strand in Rockland. Reasons for this move were discussed, with the primary reason being that

the Opera House seemed too big for their event. While the Opera House seats 500, they feel that the Strand with 350 will be more appropriate for the size of the Juice Conference. In addition, McIntosh said that they may have needed more give & take from the Opera House staff in making arrangements for the conference. Brian added that he spoke with president of Midcoast Magnet and was told the same about size but was also told that the “vibe” of Rockland was more in line with the conference.

5. Downtown Master Plan implementation

Brian Hodges said that a discussion on Tactical Urbanism had taken place at the last Downtown Network Board meeting and that TED film had been shown featuring examples from various cities. Deb Dodge noted that retail sales in the newly designed areas had increased substantially. Several sites around town were suggested for these improvements. Meg, Pete and Brian will work on a list of spaces in Camden that could be developed in this way.

6. Tax Increment Financing update

Brian Hodges said that the TIF amendment package had been completed and submitted by the deadline. He said he had then reached out to the MDOT for follow-up and anticipates an approval letter within the coming weeks. Hodges described the process of how the CEA would work when a developer approaches the Town to make this arrangement. CEDAC would advise the Select Board, which then would enter into a CEA contract with counsel from the Town’s attorney, he explained.

7. Tannery Update

John Arnold reviewed guiding principles for the redevelopment of the Apollo Tannery site. The thirteen principles he outlined included marketing the site to new owners who can create well-paying, year-round, sustainable jobs, who will allow public access to the Riverwalk, who will develop the site to be aesthetically compatible with the neighborhood, and others. Zoning and housing were discussed, as was the possibility of an educational facility on the site. Lowrie Sargent pointed out that he didn’t think residences could be constructed on a Brownfield site.

Brian Hodges talked about a possible TIF for this area. He said that a third TIF in Camden could include the Tannery site, Tibbets, Sagamore Farms, Mt Battie Street, the Weymouth properties, and the old Moss Tent building.

Deb Dodge suggested holding a work session with the Planning Board. Arnold said that he and Hodges would work on putting together an information package.

8. Goals Update

a) Partner with the Opera House Committee

Hodges reported that the Opera House economic impact study has been held up, and that he is unaware of the expected timeline for its completion.

b) Develop Entrepreneurial Incubator Space

Hodges said that the midcoast had been selected for an Innovation Hub though in the Knox-Waldo area. The Hutchinson Center will be the beginning point for this effort. Hodges explained that the hub would be more of a virtual concept and less of a physical bricks & mortar approach. Creation of the Innovation Hub is being spearheaded by Midcoast Magnet in conjunction with the Maine Technology Institute.

c) Building Inventory – second floors – no report.

d) Market Camden to target audiences - high tech and recreation

Hodges said that he would be rescheduling the Marketing Summit. Deb Dodge reported that the CDBG website is being developed, and that they have brought recreation up to be highlighted on the front page.

9. **Public Comment/questions**

There was no public comment.

10. **Adjourn**

Deb Dodge made a motion to adjourn. Peter Gross seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:40pm.

Next Meeting

The next CEDAC meeting will be held April 28, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Brace
Recording Secretary