



Town of Camden
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Camden Economic Development Advisory Committee
June 17, 2013
5:30pm

PRESENT: Chairperson Peter Gross, Pete Brown, Martin Cates, Ellis Cohn, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent, Kipp Wright, Development Director Brian Hodges.

Guests: Kristi Bifulco, Maryanne Shannahan

ABSENT: Rick Bates, Staci Coomer, Deb Dodge

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm.

2. Approval of Committee Minutes

Pete Brown made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 20th meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Ellis Cohn. It was unanimously approved.

3. High Street – request to rezone

Peter Gross opened an informational update on the High Street rezoning issue. Lowrie Sargent, liaison to the Planning Board, described the process by which applicants request a zoning change, reviewing the steps that take place leading up to a recommendation from the Planning Board to the Select Board.

Sargent said that the High Street rezoning request had originally come from the Bifulcos who run the Windward House, and that since that time ten High Street properties had joined in on the request. He explained that the interest of the B&B operators was to offer dinners to guests as well as to the public, to run small gift shops inside the establishments, to offer spa-related services, and to hold more events at their properties.

Sargent said that at one point in the process, 45 properties all the way up to Norumbega had been included in the potential rezoning. The number had since been scaled back to three: Abigail's, The Hawthorn Inn, and Windward House.

Maryanne Shanahan, operator of the Hawthorn Inn, said that there had been a lack of communication on the part of the applicants group in terms of speaking to neighbors to explain what the request was all about. She said she was holding a meeting that night to invite neighbors in to talk about it. Kipp Wright, owner of Abigail's Inn, spoke about striking a balance between the residential character of the neighborhood and encouraging economic sustainability by allowing some expansion. Kristi Bifulco, owner of Windward House, said that the historic character of the buildings along High Street is central to their interests and that it is important to all of them to maintain this character.

Peter Gross asked if the inns planned on adding additional space for functions. The owners

present said that this was not their intent.

Brian Hodges suggested that the discussions might lead to concessions by both parties and encouraged the applicants to build support behind the concept.

4. **TIF Funds**

Hodges reviewed two grants that had been recently funded: first, a grant to construct a sidewalk (being called the "bus stop sidewalk") to run from Leonard's in Rockport to Quarry Hill in Camden, with a pedestrian crossing at Hannaford's. Hodges told the group that the \$140,000 grant had been fully funded, with Camden's share at \$20,000 and Rockport's share at \$12,000.

Hodges continued by saying that the second grant to implement elements of the Downtown Master Plan had also been fully funded at \$491,000 with a 20% local match of \$123,000. This grant would fund downtown infrastructure improvements such as bumpouts, lighting, new sidewalks and repair of existing sidewalks. The money would be available at the latest in 2016 and possibly sooner, he said, if a state bond issue is approved. He explained that Camden could move to the top of MDOT's priority list if we were able to tell them that our local match of \$123,000 is available.

Specifics on how to find the local matches were discussed. The Committee walked through options for using TIF money to fund the local match for the downtown improvements grant. Projections for TIF revenue were reviewed looking forward four years. Hodges detailed how the TIF funds could be allocated according to when the money becomes available.

The Committee reviewed other TIF projects on the table such as the dam repair and Opera House renovations. Prock Marine's estimate to get the water flowing over the dam instead of around it was \$40,000, along with \$38,000 to repair the gate. While fixing the overall dam situation would cost nearly \$80,000, Prock had felt that the gate repair was not necessary at this time. A small portion of the dam project could be funded by the dam reserve fund set aside to maintain all of the dams in Camden, Hodges said.

Lowrie Sargent asked about Prock Marine's assessment of the gate mechanism on the dam. He asked if we could get a letter stating that the mechanism would be OK for a certain number of years.

Cost to fund all improvements including dam repair, Opera House renovations, and the \$122,829 match for the downtown infrastructure grant would be approximately \$202,829. The \$20,000 local share of the bus stop sidewalk grant could be funded by the economic development reserve fund, Hodges said.

TIF revenues would become available as follows: in three years \$140,191 would be available. Over four years \$187,191 would be available. Because sufficient TIF funds become available prior the time when the state releases its money for these grants, the general sentiment of the Committee was that it would be feasible to deliver the message to MDOT that our local matches would be available for these grants. This would ensure that Camden is at the top of the list for receiving the funds when the state is ready to disburse them.

5. **Tactical Urbanism**

The Committee postponed its discussion on tactical urbanism.

6. Public Comment/questions on agenda items

Peter Gross said that his three years on CEDAC would be up this month and that he would ask the Select Board to reappoint him as an alternate.

7. Adjourn

Meg Quijano made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pete Brown seconded this motion and the Committee adjourned.

Next Meeting

The next CEDAC meeting will be held July 22, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Brace
Recording Secretary