



**Town of Camden  
Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Community & Economic Development  
Advisory Committee  
October 6, 2014  
4:30pm**

- PRESENT:** Chairperson Robin McIntosh, John Arnold, Martin Cates, Paul Cavalli, Staci Coomer, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent, Jamie Weymouth, Town Manager Pat Finnigan.
- GUESTS:** Don White, Select Board Liaison; Bill Ernst, Pen Bay Beacon; Jane LaFleur, Friends of Midcoast Maine
- ABSENT:** Ellis Cohn, Deb Dodge, Kipp Wright

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

**2. Approval of Board Minutes**

*John Arnold made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2014 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Jamie Weymouth. It was unanimously approved.*

**3. Pen Bay Beacon**

Bill Ernst, publisher of "The Beacon" described the concept of his new publication. He said it would be distributed quarterly to 14,000 households along our area of the midcoast and 3500 additional copies would be distributed in multiple readership locations. Ernst owns another publication in Florida and spoke about why his family chose Camden.

**4. Community Institute**

Jane LaFleur, Executive Director of Friends of Midcoast Maine, spoke to the group about her organization's "Community Institute", an instructional program on community planning. She said that the first session of a total of three sessions would be called "Streets, Places and People" and would take place in Camden October 30-31. LaFleur said she would be asking the Select Board for permission to close a portion of the Public Landing so that the class could construct a temporary demonstration project based on the concepts in the Public Landing Master Plan. She described this project in detail and CEDAC members offered some ideas for community involvement.

*John Arnold made a motion that CEDAC support the Community Institute demonstration project on the Public Landing on October 31. Paul Cavalli seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved.*

**5. CEDAC outreach to existing major conferences and events**

Robin said that she'd drafted letters of support for Pop-Tech, Camden Conference and CIFF describing CEDAC's willingness to assist and support the major events held in Camden.

*John Arnold made a motion to support sending letters from CEDAC to the organizations running major Camden events. Meg Quijano seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.*

Cates spoke about the impact of our major events on Camden's economy, noting how the majority of these events had been planned deliberately to support business during the shoulder season. He emphasized how important it is that we make every effort not to lose them.

**6. Updates**

- a) Mid-Coast Economic Development District (MCEDD)  
Staci Coomer reported on MCEDD and told the group she'd be their next president subsequent to Brian's departure.
- b) Workforce Readiness Forum  
Robin updated the group on an upcoming Workforce Readiness Forum aiming to connect businesses, the educational sector, community and non-profits that work with youth leadership.
- c) Active Communities Conference  
Robin reported that she would be going to this conference and described its purpose and content.
- d) Fiber Optics Update  
There was a discussion on how to get high-speed fiber in downtown Camden. Robin said there was a conversation going on with the Rockport Town Office and described how this is one of the few municipally-owned projects of this kind.
- e) Brownfields grant  
There was an update on the MCEDD grant for our Brownfield study and on work being conducted by the Economic Development Council of Maine.
- f) Director search  
Pat Finnigan asked for input on the structure of the Development Director position. The group offered suggestions and Pat answered questions about the process. She said to she'd send out the job description that had been developed previously. Finnigan said that since she has past experience on TIFs it would be OK not to have a TIF expert in that position.

**7. Advisory Referendum re: Use of the Tannery**

Finnigan reviewed the fact that the upcoming Tannery vote would be advisory in nature. Once the vote is taken, she noted, nothing will have technically changed since the time of the Town Meeting where citizens had approved for several years in a row a Select Board

decision on the use for the property. The decision according to the Town Meeting vote had said that the Board could approve appropriate development of the site according to the guidelines, which provided criteria and safeguards in terms of what kind of businesses could locate there. Finnigan said the in the past process with Northeast Health, a significant problem had been that the public had not been willing to explore ideas other than establishing a park at the site and had given this perception to the investor.

CEDAC members discussed how it's important that the public clearly understand the issues and choices regarding the Tannery prior to voting on November 4. It was articulated that balance is an option, i.e., a business development that is primarily open space while still allowing commercial use. Thus a vote supporting business use would support both, while a vote for a park only supports creating a park.

Members agreed that it is an important role for CEDAC to get the word out through public education. White said it would be very helpful for CEDAC to get out in front of it by outlining the issues. He noted that there are already 25 parks in Camden that the Town supports. Weymouth said that rather than paying to make a new park, funds should go into improving a park we already have such as nearby Shirrtail. He made the suggestion that finding out what a park would cost vs. what it could generate in tax revenue could be pivotal in terms of public awareness of the choices.

Pat said this is a good opportunity for the community to work together on a vision for a development. If all options remained open, this format of a collective envisioning process could provide a template for cooperative progress when other projects arise.

Lowrie Sargent noted that there seems to be a pervasive anti-change sentiment in town, as we have seen in too many issues that have come up like Fox Hill. Another example he cited was the recent process of considering giving some of the local B&Bs permission to serve dinners to their guests. Arnold noted that as Camden gains a reputation for resisting development of any kind, developers get turned off from bringing businesses here. He commented that public support has to be closer to 80% as opposed to 51%, or developers will look at other towns.

CEDAC set some marketing strategies in place for the coming weeks to take on getting the word out in order to clarify the choices so that citizens are informed when they go to the polls.

**8. Public Comment/questions on agenda items**

There were no public comments.

**9. Adjourn**

**Next Meeting**

The next CEDAC meeting will be held Oct. 6.

Respectfully submitted,

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Karen Brace  
Recording Secretary