



**Town of Camden**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the**  
**Community Economic Development Advisory Committee**  
**October 28, 2013**  
**5:30pm**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Deb Dodge, Pete Brown, Martin Cates, Ellis Cohn, Peter Gross, Robin McIntosh, Dyke Messler, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent, Kipp Wright, Development Director Brian Hodges.

**ABSENT:** Staci Coomer

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Welcome new members of CEDAC**

New committee members Dyke Messler and Robin McIntosh were welcomed by Deb Dodge.

**3. Approval of Board Minutes**

*Pete Brown made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Meg Quijano. It was unanimously approved.*

**4. Update on the Knox Mill**

Matt Orne updated the committee on how things had been going at the Knox Mill. He reported that his buildings are full except for the restaurant space on Mechanic Street that used to be Brevetto's. Orne told the group that his vision has been to provide good quality office space at affordable prices and that his tenants have come to him through word of mouth.

Orne reviewed the current lease of the Mill's back parking lot to the Town of Camden for \$1 per year (this being the second year of a 3-year lease). He told the group that he feels the parking lot is under-utilized and that he hesitates to renew the lease if the space is not used more during the coming year. The committee discussed making it a priority for 2014 to get visitors and downtown employees to park behind the Mill. Brian Hodges noted that when the improvements take place on the public landing, those spaces could become paid parking and if so, it would become even more important to be able to offer the all-day parking for tourists at the Mill.

**5. CEDAC Goals**

**Leadership to keep the Downtown Master Plan moving forward** – Meg and Pete said they had met with Brian Hodges to talk about what is needed to implement the \$500,000 Downtown Grant. They had set three priorities:

- 1) To incorporate the results from the RALA Survey;

2) To develop a timeline and suggest some teams who could address topics like infrastructure and public education;

3) To look at the personnel side, i.e. who should oversee each step, potentially a Town department head paired with a community member.

**Partner with Opera House Committee on economic impact analysis** - Peter Gross reported that he had been assisting the Opera House Committee to look at how to approach their economic impact study. He said the study is in the works and that he will continue to act as liaison and check in with the committee.

**Develop entrepreneurial incubator space** – Brian Hodges told the group that he currently serves as VP of the Midcoast Economic Development District, and that MCEDD has several opportunities available to encourage entrepreneurs, including a revolving loan program. Hodges said that he meets monthly with his counterparts in MCEDD to look at potential regional projects, and that they've been gathering information about existing incubators in Maine to see if they could meet a need in this region that is not being met elsewhere. He noted that a presentation on this topic would be held in Camden the following week.

**Building inventory, assess upper floor spaces in the downtown** – Peter Gross said that a list of downtown spaces that had potential for more use had been compiled in 2010. Deb Dodge she would get a hold of this list and that it could be updated to help the Planning Board with its current project inventorying currently available second-floor spaces. Lowrie Sargent said he had asked the Downtown Network Board to survey members on their thoughts on better uses for upper floors and report back prior to Thanksgiving.

#### **Marketing Camden to target audiences**

##### **(1) Attract high-tech, internet-based companies – (is the infrastructure in place?)**

Kipp Wright spoke about the existing technology along Route One that could support high-tech businesses.

**(2) Explore opportunities for Recreational/Active Tourism** - Deb Dodge said she had started on a list of recreational assets in our town, saying that she hopes to connect with the mountain biking group. Martin Cates suggested that there is opportunity to collaborate with Rockport.

#### **6. Riverwalk and Public Landing project update**

Brian Hodges told the group that the consultants would present their final reports to the Camden Select Board at their November 12 meeting. He added that it would be helpful to have supporters present from CEDAC and other town committees.

#### **7. Tax Increment Financing**

**(1) Credit Enhancement Agreement (CEA) Policy** - Brian Hodges explained that a CEA refunds incremental property taxes paid so the funds can be reinvested back into the business. He noted that he had provided a draft CEA policy for members' review and that next step would be to define the purpose of a CEA (to attract jobs, investment, etc.). Pete Brown suggested that an update on this policy be included on a future agenda.

**(2) New/amended TIF** - Next the idea of incorporating the Knox Mill into the current Downtown TIF was discussed. Hodges said that an amendment to the Downtown TIF should be submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Gross noted that prior to that date, a public hearing would have to be held as well as a special town meeting after the state reviews the draft proposal. Hodges told the group he would come back with an outline of what the TIF might look like.

## **8. Tannery**

Dodge reported that she had attended the last Select Board meeting to recommend rethinking the free land for jobs program, and that the Select Board had asked CEDAC to come back with some recommendations for how to move forward. She said the hope would be to include the Tannery in a new River Business District TIF. Gross added that a CEA would help to make it enticing to outside investors to build there. Cates noted that as the zoning stands now, the first level would have to be commercial and that environmental situation is limiting. Dodge said she would meet with the Town Manager to figure out what can be done with or without a town vote based on established criteria.

There was discussion on the value of the property, whether to approach a local developer or let the market place decide on where its value stands. It was decided that this would be addressed at a future meeting and that meanwhile Cates would seek Pat Finnigan's input.

Hodges noted that with the Tannery in a TIF district, the Town could potentially construct a building using TIF funds and offer free or discounted rent to entrepreneurs who came in. He said that TIF money could be funneled from other parcels from around the town that are included in the TIF District. For example, the building construction could be financed by a bond and then the TIF revenue would pay off the bond over time.

## **9. Public comment/questions (none)**

### **Adjourn**

### **Next Meeting**

The next CEDAC meeting will be held November 25<sup>th</sup> NEW TIME 5pm

Respectfully submitted,

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Karen Brace  
Recording Secretary