



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

**November 25, 2013  
5:00pm**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Deb Dodge, Pete Brown, Martin Cates, Ellis Cohn, Peter Gross, Robin McIntosh, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent.  
Guest: Leetha Filderman, President, Pop-Tech

**ABSENT:** Kipp Wright, Staci Coomer, Brian Hodges

**1. Update from Pop-Tech**

Leetha Filderman, President of Pop-Tech, shared a report with the committee on how her organization has grown over the 18 years since the event first took place. Filderman said it has been a challenge to operate the event in Camden due to the cost of traveling for event attendees, and that they have lowered their pricing by one third in order to boost ticket sales. The revenue lost by the lower pricing has been replaced with foundation support, she said. Pop-Tech has an operating budget of \$3 million and spends \$500,000 in the local community during the 2 weeks related to the conference for services that support the event like lunch contracts, lodging for staff, venue rentals, services such as printing and design, and temporary jobs while the conference is underway. These amounts do not include any indirect spending or benefit. (e.g. dollars spent by others)

Filderman described the Fellows program run by Pop-Tech. The organization has fellows in 305 countries around the globe. These people impact 300 million people world-wide, she said. Each fall the fellows present to our local high-schoolers, making a strong impact on these students.

The group discussed the possibility of working with Pop-Tech on an Innovation Hub in Camden.

**2. Resignation**

Deb Dodge reported that Dyke Messler had resigned from CEDAC. Possible replacement candidates were discussed.

**3. Approval of Board Minutes**

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

**4. Riverwalk and Public Landing projects**

Deb said she'd written letters of support on behalf of CEDAC for two grants that had been submitted: (1) to fund the next phase of the Riverwalk, and (2) a Small Harbors Improvements Program (SHIP) grant to fund widening of the boardwalk along the harbor and the installation of a fisherman's hoist at the Public Landing. Pete Brown said that he's been speaking with the Parks

and Rec Committee about planning the next phases of the Riverwalk.

## 5. **Progress Report on Goals**

### a. **Leadership to keep Downtown Master Plan moving forward**

Meg Quijano and Pete Brown said that the process has been started on planning the next steps of implementing the Downtown Master Plan.

### b. **Partner with Opera House Committee, economic impact analysis**

Peter Gross told the group that the Opera House economic impact study is complete and on the Town website.

### c. **Develop entrepreneurial incubator space**

Pete Brown reported on a Mid Coast Economic Development District meeting that had been held to look at incubator spaces around the state that are either in the planning stages or in full operation. He said there are currently four working sites as well as three sites that are being planned but haven't been opened yet. Pete described how the sites around Maine have so far been established as virtual operations offering collaboration, mutual support and sharing of ideas, as opposed to a physical location with available work space. There was some discussion on creating a communal area for innovators to share and work from in the Camden area. It was noted that it may be possible for the Town of Camden to construct a building at the Tannery property that would be set up as an incubator space. Pete noted that the Hutchinson Center had been referred to as a potential hub, in part because of its direct relationship with UMO.

### d. **Building inventory; assess upper floor space in Downtown**

Meg reported on the progress of the Downtown Network Board regarding the topic of second floor spaces. She said the discussion had centered around what Camden needs in terms of businesses that could be located on an upper floor. Ideas were: collaborative office space, a college or vocational learning center such as a hospitality school, more art galleries, a movie theatre, an exercise studio and a cyber cafe. DNB members had also offered ideas that the Planning Board could help with to encourage business: to loosen the requirements for parking, fewer restrictions on upper floor usages such as storage space, outdoor cafe seating, and allowing products to be displayed outside shops. Martin Cates said that a good forum for discussing these ideas would be at an upcoming workshop between the Select Board and the Planning Board. Planning Board Chair Lowrie Sargeant suggested that another good next step would be to involve landlords in the discussion. He also updated the group on the Fox Hill situation.

### e. **Market Camden to target audiences - high tech, and recreational tourism**

Deb Dodge spoke about progress of the Camden Downtown Business Group's Marketing Committee in developing their new website. She said she'd given her inventory of Camden's recreational assets to Kim Palermo for inclusion in the website's marketing content.

## 6. **Tax Increment Financing**

Deb asked the committee to give feedback on the proposed Credit Enhancement Agreement policy that Brian had sent out, along with the sample TIF ordinance and timeline. Committee members were asked to respond via email to Deb. It was noted that it is an aggressive timeline to get the Knox Mill included in the TIF.

## 7. **Tannery - marketing approach**

Deb said she'd met with Pat to talk about taking a new look at the marketing approach for the Tannery property. A work group may be put together involving two members of the Select Board and two from CEDAC, and dates would be circulated for a work session.

**8. Resources available through MCEDD (Mid Coast Economic Development District)**

The item on how best to utilize the resources of MCEDD will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

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

There were no public comments.

**10. Adjourn**

**Next Meeting**

The next CEDAC meeting has been changed from December 23 to December 30.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Brace  
Recording Secretary