



**Town of Camden**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the**  
**Community & Economic Development**  
**Advisory Committee**  
**March 23, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Robin McIntosh, Martin Cates, Paul Cavalli, Lowrie Sargent, Jamie Weymouth

**ABSENT:** John Arnold, Ellis Cohn, Deb Dodge, Meg Quijano

1. **Call to Order**

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

There was some discussion on the budget process.

2. **Approval of Minutes of the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting**

There was not a quorum present so no vote was taken.

3. **Local Business “Meet and Greet”**

Mark Benjamin and Ari Meil of Naretiv spoke about their new marketing firm that focuses on the design of logos, websites and collateral materials and offers services including conducting ad campaigns, public relations and media relations.

Mark said that he had settled here because he felt that Camden was investing in things that Belfast and Rockland weren't, specifically things that affect the quality of life for residents like the library, excellent schools and the YMCA.

Responding to a question on what would help Naretiv as a business, Mark said that in addition to faster internet, a shared workspace would be very beneficial to serve the young entrepreneurs crowd. Points that he made were:

- Offering this type of space is the future of Maine businesses.
- Business connections can be made in shared workspaces.
- There is a tech-savvy group of young people in the Portland area, and they are beginning to migrate to the midcoast as it gets more difficult and “jammed” in the city. They don't want to live in suburbs such as Scarborough, he noted.
- Mark said he knows at least 30-40 young people who have moved from cities to smaller places, and the midcoast is attracting an intellectual powerhouse. The people he knows are making their decisions based on quality of life, looking for active and interesting communities to settle in.
- People want the outdoors, and also a feeling of authenticity. He said that the priority for his peer group is to settle in a community where they feel a true sense of connection.

Ari Mell spoke about his experience moving to the midcoast, describing how it can be difficult to meet people and find a way into established circles. Work spaces offer the chance for people with similar interests to get to know each other.

Currently Naretiv is operating out of Mark's home, and Mark said this can be difficult given

family distractions. Often he said he needs a space to meet with clients and that he would like to interact with other people. He gave the example of State Theater in Portland where 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors offered very cheap offices, saying how the critical mass of people in the building can create a productive environment.

Ari said that Camden will have to fight for this population as some work facilities are springing up in the towns bordering us. Martin and Paul talked about how the next 2-3 years will be critical for this in terms of timing.

The impact of quality schools for their demographic was also discussed at some length. Lowrie suggested that the old middle school building would make very good incubator space.

#### 4. **CEDAC Administrative Business**

Robin said that Jamie Weymouth had offered to serve as CEDAC's Vice-Chair. By-laws may need to be changed to include this position.

#### 5. **Tannery Site**

##### **a) Work Group – designate CEDAC member**

Martin Cates said that the Work Group had been formed to study uses for the Tannery site, and that John Arnold had volunteered to serve from CEDAC. A facilitator will help lead the process, he said. The list of the 15 work group volunteers was distributed.

##### **b) Brownfields Grant**

Robin reported on the status of the potential grant from MCEDD that would fund an environmental site assessment at the Tannery site. She said that Pat had learned that Camden's application had not been completed, so she had submitted an application right away requesting the funds for this project. If awarded, the assessment would be beneficial to prospective developers. Camden should hear soon from MCEDD.

#### 6. **Downtown Network Board**

Robin said that the Downtown Network Board is looking for up to three people from CEDAC to serve on the DNB/Organization Team. The other three teams within the new structure (Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring) also need volunteers, she said. Robin asked CEDAC members to look over the team descriptions and to get back to her as to whether they'd like to join one of the four teams or simply continue to serve only on CEDAC.

There was also a discussion on meeting attendance and whether CEDAC needs more members to ensure a quorum. (Currently there are 5 regular members and 2 alternates.)

#### 7. **2015 CEDAC Goals / Projects / Subcommittees**

Jamie Weymouth suggested that CEDAC's mission be streamlined so that tangible progress could be made on projects, with visible results.

CEDAC Goals were reviewed regarding the Downtown Master Plan, the Opera House, and entrepreneurial incubator space.

Paul noted that CIFF is looking for a home in Camden for workshops and smaller screenings at different venues other than a large theater. They would like to set up offices and an editing room, he said.

Lowrie recommended eliminating items or assigning them to other groups so that whatever's left is manageable for CEDAC to accomplish. He said currently it would be difficult to point to anything and say it was completed, but that if the list were boiled down so the group could focus their energy, it would be reasonable to expect more concrete results.

Lowrie said that the building inventory to assess available second floor spaces should be off the list since landlords had not expressed interest.

Robin suggested that the group prioritize what it wants to do.

Paul expressed interest in studying the housing situation. He said that when people think of Camden, they have the impression that homes are very expensive.

Martin said that affordable homes with a configuration suitable for a family are not readily available in Camden but that they are in Rockland. In some cases, he said, a family will buy a home in Rockland and rent a cheap Camden apartment in order to have an address here so they can send their children to the Camden school system.

There was a brief discussion on Habitat for Humanity.

#### 8. **Updates**

Robin delivered several updates to Committee members including: the Regional Economic Development Directors meeting, the high speed internet survey, and the Friends of Midcoast Maine / Community Leadership Institute. She noted that May 1<sup>st</sup> will be the Main Street Annual Conference.

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

There were no public comments.

#### 10. **Adjourn**

#### **Next Meeting**

The next CEDAC meeting will be held April 27, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

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Karen Brace  
Recording Secretary