



**Town of Camden
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Downtown Network Board**

**May 13, 2013
3:30pm**

PRESENT: Co-Chair Peter Gross, Co-Chair Oscar Verest, Rick Bates, Pete Brown, Martin Cates, Deb Dodge, Dave Jackson, Robin McIntosh, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent, Town Manager Pat Finnigan, Code Enforcement Officer Stephen Wilson and Development Director Brian Hodges.

Guest: Don White, Camden Select Board

ABSENT: Erick Anderson, Bernice Berger, Ellis Cohn, Staci Coomer, Samantha Hill, Janis Kay, Jill Lang, Sue Michaud, Barrie Pribyl, Liz Valente, and Kipp Wright.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm.

2. Approval of Board Minutes

Peter Gross made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 11, 2013 meeting. The motion was seconded by Pete Brown. Deb Dodge noted one change, that she is not a part of the 17-person work group working on the recommendations for the Riverwalk and Public Landing. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Update on Riverwalk and Public Landing projects

Brian Hodges told the group that the Community Meeting focusing on the Public Landing had been held recently and that it had had a great turnout, with 100+ people attending. He said that attendees represented a good mix of residents and businesses. Those who had been in attendance at the Community Meeting gave an update on the content of the meeting. Some of the ideas discussed there were:

- keeping some parking on the Public Landing, though more limited, and adding green space;
- possibility of moving the Harbormaster's building;
- the idea of a bridge to link Harbor Park with the Landing, or an elevated boardwalk;
- adding public showers and laundry facilities to the restroom facility to be more welcoming to boaters visiting the harbor.

Hodges reported that the next Community Meeting would be on June 24th, and will be a check-in from consultants to gather feedback on whether they are on the right track.

4. Maine Downtown Center Annual Conference

Hodges invited Downtown Network Board members to attend the Maine Downtown Center Annual Conference that was scheduled for May 31st at Point Lookout. He described the content of the conference and said that it would be an opportunity to network with representatives from other towns implementing programs under the Maine Downtown Center.

Hodges told the group about an opportunity to advertise on a flyer that would be handed out at the conference, explaining that the cost of advertising would be \$250. The Board agreed that this would be a good idea. The group also supported that idea of offering a gift basket that would be raffled off at the event featuring items from the area.

5. **Development Budget**

Hodges discussed the fact that the Development Budget is likely to be re-visited at the Town Meeting on June 12th, adding that it would be good to have members of the Downtown Network Board present to support the Development budget. While this section had been approved as presented by the Budget Committee and the Select Board, the item could be reintroduced with funding ultimately decided by a floor vote.

It was noted that the emergency services line is likely to be the center of much discussion at the Town meeting. The CFAA issue was discussed by the group at some length.

6. **Priorities List for Expenditure of TIF funds**

The Board reviewed possibilities for how best uses of the \$30,000 in TIF funds currently available for projects. Priorities discussed were (not in order):

- Further signage
- Opera House renovations – (providing initial funding to kick off the effort that the Friends Group will carry forward);
- Public Landing / Riverwalk projects
- Engineering study for the Waterfall / Dam Repair
- Town-wide Internet

Peter Gross told the group that CEDAC is also discussing priorities and recommendations for going forward. Likewise, he noted that CEDAC is addressing establishing a TIF for the Knox Mill and hoping to have this ready for a vote in November.

Pat Finnigan spoke in favor of adopting a project with the TIF money that would be tangible and visible to the community.

Don White described the Opera House facility improvements to satisfy the needs of hosting large conferences and to keep them in Camden. He provided some detail on the 3rd floor renovations that could help solve these problems.

Oscar Verest spoke about the attraction of other towns around the country that have installed a public internet system and the publicity that has resulted from this. While a town-wide Wifi would cost more than the \$30,000 in TIF funds currently available, Hodges noted that more TIF funding will be available in 2014. Verest also noted that the internet project could be completed relatively quickly. Visitors would arrive on a landing page

branding and promoting the Town of Camden.

Gross reviewed the topics that would be covered on the subsequent agenda:

- Costs of an engineering study to fix the dam; (Pat)
- Approximate cost for installing free town-side internet and specifics of how much area/territory it would cover; (Brian)
- More on the Opera House fundraising and what could be done with the money in the near term (Don)

7. Public Comments/Questions

There were no public comments.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Downtown Network Board will be held on June 10th.

Adjourn

Pete Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave Jackson seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Brace
Recording Secretary