



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

**July 23, 2012
3:30pm**

- PRESENT:** Barrie Pribyl, Dan Bookham, Jill Lang, Lowrie Sargent, Martin Cates, Meg Quijano, Oscar Verest, Peter Gross, Rick Bates, Selectman Donald White and Pathways Committee Chair Geoff Scott. Also present were Town Manager Pat Finnigan, Code Enforcement Officer Stephen Wilson and Development Director Brian Hodges.
- ABSENT:** Bernice Berger, Deb Dodge, Ellis Cohn, Erick Anderson, Janis Kay, Kipp Wright, Liz Valente, Pete Brown, Samantha Hill and Sue Michaud.

1. Call to Order

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

Select Board Action of June 19, 2012

A. Establishment of the Downtown Network Board

Brian Hodges thanked the Camden Select Board for establishing the new Downtown Network Board at their June 19, 2012 meeting. Hodges noted that the Downtown Master Plan Committee had worked on the creation of the plan since September, 2011 and added that the Select Board's subsequent formation of the Downtown Network Board is an affirmation of the great work the group had done.

B. Public Meetings

Hodges told the group that a priority voiced by the Select Board on June 19th was to ensure that the meetings of the new Board are open to the public. To encourage citizens to attend, the meeting had been advertised through the large Downtown Master Plan distribution list and had been publicized on the Town's calendar, he said.

C. Appointment of Chair(s)

With representation from the Camden Downtown Business Group and the Camden Economic Development Advisory Committee, members suggested asking the Chairs of those groups to serve as Co-Chairs for the Downtown Network Board. Oscar Verest, Chair of the Downtown Business Group, said that the only way that he could serve would be if the Development Director took an active role in directing the group. Peter Gross, Chair of CEDAC, noted that CEDAC would be cutting down their meeting schedule to once a month, with the meeting of the Downtown Network Board taking the place of their second meeting.

Barrie Pribyl made a motion to nominate Oscar Verest and Peter Gross as Co-Chairs of the Downtown Network Board. The motion was seconded by Meg Quijano. It was unanimously approved.

D. Recommendations to the Select Board

Brian Hodges presented the purpose of the Downtown Network Board, explaining that the Select Board expects this Board to come to them with recommendations for projects based on the Downtown Master Plan. He said that the Select Board will be looking to this group to help prioritize those projects.

Peter Gross told the group that at the committee work session on July 17th, the Select Board had requested that each town committee report to them on a regular basis to keep them up-to-date on the committee's progress. Gross said that one committee would be reporting each month. Selectman Donald White noted that the Select Board would like to hear a report when the committee feels it's appropriate. Select Board Chair Martin Cates added that they will be asking committees to speak on a routine basis so the Board and the public will be informed as to their work.

2. **Maine Department of Transportation Downtown Revitalization Grant Application**

Hodges said that the first document that Camden had filed related to the MDOT Downtown Revitalization Grant application had been a letter of intent. The grant, which is part of the Quality Community Program Transportation Enhancement & Safe Routes program, is very much pedestrian-focused as opposed to vehicular, he said. Therefore the walkability sections of the Downtown Master Plan very much apply.

Hodges reviewed the site visit from Dan Stuart from MDOT who had come to Camden on June 29th as a follow-up to the original letter of intent. Hodges told those who were not present for the site visit that it had been very helpful in identifying which of our downtown projects would be most successful.

Information learned from the site visit included:

- It will be more successful to focus on putting in new sidewalks as opposed to improving existing ones;
- bump-outs are considered new and would be eligible;
- trees and landscaping can be included;
- MDOT is not as comfortable with putting in lighting, as they say it is hard to show that it improves vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Regarding the latter, Hodges said that if the Network Board feels strongly about lighting, the group can give that recommendation to the Select Board and it can be included in the application.

Steve Wilson added that it would be difficult to get projects extending across town lines funded, such as the sidewalk being discussed for the bus station to Quarry Hill.

The group discussed projects from the Downtown Master Plan that would be most eligible for inclusion in this grant. They included:

- Safe and defined pedestrian access to and around the public landing;
- Bump-outs and pedestrian islands, shortening the distance going across streets and providing a safe landing, possibly with lighting on the islands;
- A sidewalk that extends along Bay View Street to the Yacht Club for children who participate in the sailing program, continuing from the Yacht Club up to Laite Beach;

- A new sidewalk adjacent to the fire station and around the fire station parking lot;
- Lighting at the Fire Station parking lot;
- Additional lighting along Bay View Street, Mechanic Street and Washington Street.

Peter Gross said that the parking layout of the public landing may need to be altered in order to connect the sidewalk to the boardwalk by the harbor. Geoff Scott talked about the idea of bringing the sidewalk around the perimeters of the parking area, adding that the grant funds the design phase so the proposal does not need to include all details of the projects. Creating brick-style sidewalks was discussed, as was the safety of the sidewalk in front of Peter Ott's. especially in winter Verest suggested that the area behind the Post Office could be improved by stamping a brick-style walk that would connect the existing sidewalk that currently ends after Camden National Bank with the sidewalk that begins at Cuzzy's. It was noted that the textured type of sidewalk could also be put along Bay View Street.

The group briefly discussed traffic circles. Lowry Sargent noted that any bump-outs should not exclude future development of traffic circles should they be pursued later. Signage was also discussed but Stuart had advised that it might be better as part of a separate grant. Scott reviewed the Pathway Committee's objectives for sidewalks around town to increase connectivity, as detailed in the Downtown Master Plan.

Rick Bates suggested that because the grant is offered every other year, only the most crucial projects should be included in this round. Jill Lang pointed out that public awareness of projects that are done well builds support for future town improvements.

Verest asked about the timeline for the grant application. Hodges replied that the grant is due on August 3rd and would be reviewed by the Select Board at their meeting on July 31st. Briefing packets would need to be prepared for the Board on Thursday, July 26th, he said.

3. **Prioritizing Other Projects in the Downtown Master Plan**

Hodges noted that the Select Board has asked the Downtown Network Board to look at the entire Downtown Master Plan and prioritize projects that should be undertaken. Verest asked Hodges to send out a list of projects from the Downtown Master Plan so that the Network Board can be prepared to discuss them at their next meeting.

4. **Maine Downtown Center Site Visit**

Hodges told the group that a site visit from representatives of the Maine Downtown Center is scheduled for August 6, 2012 from 9am – 1:30pm. He said that this will be an informational session and asked for suggestions of places to include during the visit. The Post Office, Library and Opera House were suggested, as well as the harbor, the public landing and Harbor Park. Hodges asked Network Board members to save the date and to attend the site visit if they could.

5. **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

6. **Next Meeting**

Hodges said that meetings of the Downtown Network Board will be scheduled for the second Monday of each month from 3:30 – 5pm. He said that the month of August would be skipped, so the next meeting of the Downtown Network Board will be held on September 10, 2012 at 3:30pm at the Washington Street Conference Room. The Downtown Network Board will be reporting back to the Select Board at their meeting the third week of September, he said.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Brace
Recording Secretary