

1 **CAMDEN DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN WORKING GROUP**

2 **Minutes of Meeting**

3 **February 21, 2012**

4
5 **PRESENT:**

6
7 There were fourteen people attending the third meeting of the Working Group including
8 four members of the Lachman Architects and Planners Team, and representatives from all of the
9 organizations comprising the Town of Camden's Team.

10
11 **1. WHERE WE STAND**

12
13 ❖ **APPROACH AND WORK PLAN:** Dennis Lachman

- 14
15 ▶ Since the last Group Meeting in February, and with the results of the 1st Public
16 Forum, the Team has been working synthesize the information and feedback they
17 have received, and begin to develop the Plan concept. This third meeting with the
18 Team is to review their progress and get the Working Group's feedback.
19
20 ▶ The next step is the second Public Forum on March14 in a location TBD. At that
21 meeting the Working Group will introduce the Concept Design that was developed
22 based on the comments received at the first Forum after asking: "What Do You
23 Think?" At this next Forum, the Team will ask: "Did We Hear You?" as they look
24 for feedback on how close the proposal comes to addressing the top "Hopes" and
25 "Concerns" noted by attendees at that meeting.
26
27 ▶ The Working Group is scheduled right now to meet later in March to review and
28 discuss the final Plan which was originally scheduled to go to the Select Board for
29 approval by the end of March; it looks now that the end of March deadline may need
30 to be revised, but that discussion is still under way.

31
32
33 **2. REVIEW FORUM #1 & THE SURVEY**

34
35 ❖ **MASTER PLAN BACKGROUND & PURPOSE:** Brian Hodges

36
37 The Development Director gave a brief overview of how the project got to this point and
38 cited the Camden Comprehensive Plan, which guided the development of CEDAC's *An*
39 *Economic Vision for Camden*, and led to the creation of the Downtown Master Plan project. Mr.
40 Hodges noted that the Comprehensive Plan Goals for the Downtown – "creating year-round,
41 higher-income jobs within walking distance to a pedestrian-friendly downtown and harbor" - is
42 the goal of the Downtown Master Plan as well. The Vision for the Downtown is the basis for
43 developing the Concept proposal: "A unique sense of place would be fostered by access
44 corridors to the harbor, harbor-side parks, and attractive architecture with protected pedestrian
45 access. Residents and visitors would be drawn to the center by essential public services and a
46 balanced mix of vibrant year-round businesses that support good livelihoods and that cater to
47 residents, tourists and markets outside of Camden."
48
49

1 ❖ FORUM #1

- 2
- 3 ▶ Mr. Hodges and the Lachman Team were very pleased with the large turnout – nearly
- 4 eighty citizens attended the meeting; it shows just how much interest there is in the
- 5 effort to revitalize the Downtown.
- 6
- 7 ▶ The Purpose of the first Public Forum was to take the pulse of the community by
- 8 holding informal discussions in small groups, and reporting back to the whole their
- 9 top hopes and concerns for the Downtown.
- 10
- 11 ▶ A summary of the expressed Hopes and Concerns has been posted on the Downtown
- 12 Master Plan web page on the Town’s website. (Copy attached here.)
- 13

14 ❖ SURVEY

15

16 The survey has been made available on the website, and is also possible to pick up

17 a copy at the Town Office. So far 110 people have completed the on-line survey, and of

18 those nearly 25% have replied that they plan on attending the second Forum. Emily

19 Lasher, a former IBM Executive, has offered to collate the data from the survey when it

20 is completed; this will be a big help in getting the results circulated more quickly.

21

22 Mr. Hodges showed viewers the website survey entry page as well as a sample

23 page of questions from the survey itself. Mr. Bookham did an email blast to Chamber

24 members with Camden zip codes, and Mr. Hodges has devised two flyers that will help

25 get the word around. Mr. Sargent asked if *Village Soup* has expressed any interest in

26 covering this project. Mr. Hodges replied he has been in touch with that paper and with

27 the *Free Press* and *Bangor Daily News* as well.

28

29

30 ❖ FORUM #1: RECAP/MEMBER COMMENTS

31

32 Steve Wilson: He did not participate in a break-out group and roamed the meeting space

33 listening to various groups as they discussed their Hopes and Concerns. At first he found

34 the tone of participants negative – We’ve been here, done this before, so why are we here

35 again? But as time progressed, and with the help of the facilitators to guide the

36 discussions, he found participants were expressing more and more positive comments.

37 He believes the expectations people had coming in to the meeting had turned around by

38 the time they left.

39

40 Martin Cates: He acted as a facilitator, and they had discussed as a group the likelihood

41 that old, negative comments would surface. They were determined not to let those old

42 complaints fester, and prepared to turn the conversation to more positive ideas when they

43 surfaced. By the end his group was positive and focused on the assignment.

44

45 Bernice Berger: She was skeptical of break-out groups, but found them to be very

46 effective. Individuals all got to speak and be heard; in fact she thinks the groups could

47 have gone on a little longer – they were in the midst of discussion when time was called.

48

1 Mr. Sargent: The biggest challenge still is to get people to understand that *everyone* in
2 Town needs to be considered, not just those who come out to the meetings. They may
3 not be there to express their points of view, but people know what these concerns are, and
4 they need to be considered.

5
6 ❖ FORUM #2 and FACILITATORS

7
8 Mr. Hodges suggested that this forum will be more challenging with regard to
9 managing the presentation of more information that is more complex in nature within the
10 limited time frame. He asked the facilitators to think ahead of time about how to get
11 thoughtful, productive responses from the breakout groups in light of this.

12
13 Mr. Bates suggested that the people attending this forum who did not attend the
14 first, will need to get caught up to some extent so they can make sense of the new
15 information that will be presented; it is important that this is done in a way that doesn't
16 bore those who did attend the first meeting.

17
18 Mr. Hodges asked those attending to encourage people to visit the web site if they
19 missed the first meeting. Minutes and copies of the presentations can be viewed there for
20 those who need some background.

21
22 Denis Lachman added that Camden has evolved as this project is moving along.
23 Some towns get stuck on the "how" (will we ever do this project) and never get to the
24 "what" (is this project going to look like in the end); it is obvious that there are many
25 people in Camden who are very engaged.

26
27 Mr. Wilson thinks finding a new location will help, especially if more people
28 attend; the first forum location did not work well.

29
30
31 **3. NEW ACTIVITY**

32
33 ❖ BUILDING INVENTORIES: Denis Lachman

34
35 ▶ Physical & Use Data: The data from the building inventory is being entered in five
36 categories: Total Net or Leasable SF; 1st Floor SF; 1st Floor Use (with comments); 1st
37 Floor # of Persons Employed; and the Job Types.

38
39 The Downtown has 971,284 SF Total of space (leasable space included); and of that
40 445, 525 SF is on the first floor. This is the beginning of plugging in the data to
41 provide a snapshot of what kinds of spaces there are in the Downtown:

42
43 ▶ Building Inventory Data will show, by floor, the following: Total Area Occupies by
44 SF and %; What is Commercially occupied by SF and % vs. What is Residential in
45 nature by SF and %; Which number and percentage of upper floors have elevator
46 access; How many properties are either listed or potentially eligible for listing on the
47 National Register by Historic District; and information on both private and public

1 parking lots by SF, whether or not they are lighted, and whether or not they are paved
2 (still to come are the numbers of cars that each can accommodate).
3

4 → The Working Group would like to see the parking lots named and the number of cars
5 each can accommodate provided as well.
6

7 ▶ There is a Photo Inventory of each building included in the inventory tagged with the
8 physical address.
9

10 ▶ The Economic Inventory for the Buildings includes an analysis of the business types
11 and occupations listed for each floor of every building. For each type of business
12 there is a breakdown showing total numbers and the percentage of the total square
13 footage available that they occupy. There is information of the number of people
14 employed on each floor of all buildings combined; and a further breakdown of the
15 occupations of all employees classified as office personnel into more specific
16 categories.
17

18 ▶ With this analysis the Town can evaluate the needs and/or excesses by type of
19 business. The information can be used to target marketing to certain types of
20 businesses the Town either needs or wants to encourage.
21

22 ▶ QUESTIONS:
23

24 1) The data shows restaurants on the 2nd and 3rd floors of buildings; are they different
25 restaurants than those shown on the 1st floors of those same buildings? If they are,
26 then those businesses are counted more than one time in the inventory; it appeared to
27 many in attendance that this type of business in particular was over-counted in this
28 listing.
29

30 2) Do the numbers also reflect occupancy in the Knox Mill Buildings?
31

32 3) The number of condominiums in the District seems far off base, and the figures that
33 include the Knox Mill condos should be double checked. The report shows 27
34 condos on the first floor, yet in all the business zones there can be no residential use
35 on the first floor. Where are all these condos?
36

37 4) Where did the numbers come from? Megan Cullen, the Team member who gathered
38 this particular data used previous studies, Mr. Lynch's interviews, the Chamber data
39 base, and the Town's data bases to gather her data; she is the only one who might
40 answer specific questions. Members urged the Lachman Team to encourage Ms.
41 Cullen to use local knowledge to answer the questions and double-check her data.
42 There are some places in particular where it will be vital to have totally accurate
43 information, and they can help her identify those particular "hot spots".
44

45 5) How are the different uses defined? How are individual businesses classified? What
46 exactly are "shops" - what are the businesses that were put into that category?
47

1 Mr. Lachman reiterated that the data is meant to give a rough snapshot so people
2 looking to locate here have some idea of what the physical inventory is like in Town.
3 The specific data can change quickly, so it will never be 100% accurate. He asks the
4 group if this is the kind of information they want to come out of the Master Plan. Will
5 this give them the information they need to do what they want with the Plan? These are
6 summaries of data that are meant to show trends, but not exact data. Mr. Bates stressed
7 how important it is to the credibility of the project to produce accurate data; there are
8 those who will be looking for a way to poke holes in the project – anything to discredit
9 the study - and figures should be as accurate as possible. He suggests that members
10 identify classes of data and specific locations that may be “hot spots” for criticism so the
11 Team can work on making sure that information is correct.
12

13 → Members want a description of the methodology used by Ms. Cullen to gather and
14 sort her data; something to help explain the numbers that they have been shown.
15

16 → The square footage of space available and space occupied for the different uses
17 should be cross referenced to the total square footage available on each floor, as well total
18 in the Downtown by percent.
19

20 → Members asked that the parking lots be labeled with a location/name instead of as
21 public and private.
22

23 ➤ ECONOMICS: Rodney Lynch
24

25 Mr. Lynch relied heavily on the interviews he conducted, as well as the long term
26 goals expressed in two previous studies that were done. He also used information
27 gathered previously, relied on internet research and on books. He introduced a format for
28 presenting the information and asked members whether or not this was an acceptable way
29 to present the findings when they are ready.
30

31 ➤ As a starting point for his research he relied on the CEDAC Study and the goal of
32 creating the Master Plan: “to provide a reference document and a framework for
33 attracting new businesses, strengthening existing businesses, increasing
34 employment opportunities.
35

36 ➤ He identified the economic values that can be enhanced or built upon, and in
37 addition to the 24 interviews he did with Downtown business owners and
38 residents, he interviewed Town and local business committees and working
39 groups, as well as Chamber and municipal officials. For consistency’s sake he
40 used the same language used in previous studies in conducting his interviews, and
41 to direct his assessment.
42

43 ➤ From those interviews Mr. Lynch identified the following economic values:
44

- 45 • The Town’s distinct character is unique in the mid-coast and in Maine; this
46 can be used to get people to bring more traffic to Town and to get more people
47 to stay.
48

- The Library as part of the Downtown economy bringing people to the Downtown.
- The Town is a good place for young entrepreneurs and start-up businesses.
- Downtown appearance: The Town is clean and well kept and maintained and important feature that needs to be continued.
- Camden is a quintessential New England downtown and they want to keep it that way.

- People wanted to see: Upgrade handicapped sidewalks and crosswalks; bike racks, street plantings, seating, and trash containers. People also want to see a movie theatre back downtown like there used to be.
- With regard to downtown office spaces, people want to see technological upgrades.

Using all this information, and relying on previous studies, he described the following Economic Clusters and the strategy for revitalizing, funding and implementation:

Mr. Lynch identified seven separate Economic Clusters that could be leveraged to boost the local economy: The Creative Economy, Events, History and Architecture, Healthy Living, Technology, New Business Growth, and Tourism and Visitors. Using the Creative Economy cluster as an example, Mr. Lynch outlined the specific economic strategies for each cluster:

- Creative Economy: Those artistic, culturally and knowledge based economic development activities which provide for employment and attract people to the Downtown.

Strategy: Upgrade the public facilities like the Opera House which has the following problems: 3rd floor in need of renovation including bathrooms, kitchen facilities and theatre dressing room.

What Else the Town Can Do: Conduct an Impact Study on what improvements would mean to the local economy; and develop a marketing and branding strategy.

Benefits: Some of the results that would be gained from the renovations include utilizing a public facility for the highest and best use, and the creation of jobs in construction and administrative support.

Funding Strategies included: Creating TIF Districts, and looking to government grants for Public Facilities. Mr. Lynch does not know which grants Camden may be eligible for; unlike many other towns Camden's high median income level puts them out of the running for the typical grants used to fund these kinds of projects. The Town won't know until they start trying to find out for sure where they might find

1 funding. There may be the opportunity to obtain a 25% match for some of the TIF
2 money.

3
4 Mr. Lynch described the other clusters briefly:

- 5
6 ▶ Events: Increase the number of conferences held in Town – with Opera House
7 renovations even larger events can be held. Mr. Lynch used the example of the
8 Toboggan Championships to illustrate the wide variety of events that can be
9 encouraged.
- 10
11 ▶ Historic Buildings and Architecture: Capitalize on the historic districts in Town to
12 develop/attract tours coming to Town for the specific purpose of enjoying this asset.
- 13
14 ▶ Healthy Living: This asset can be used to attract businesses to locate here – it is a
15 healthy place to live and work.
- 16
17 ▶ Technology: There are already technology conferences here, but the Town can work
18 to attract tech businesses to support other industries that are already strong here – like
19 a marine electronics business, for example. Supporting industries is a growing
20 business sector.
- 21
22 ▶ New Business Growth: Encourage small businesses so the failure of a large business
23 isn't disastrous.
- 24
25 ▶ Tourism and Visitors: The main driver in the economy may have maxed out coming
26 for traditional reasons. The Town needs to reach out to young people and young
27 families by creating reasons for them to come here.

28
29 Mr. Lynch asked the members for feedback on these particular clusters. Did they agree
30 that these are the areas that should be addressed in detail?

31
32 Opera House Renovations:

33
34 Mr. Gross noted that it is too late for requests from CEDAC to use any TIF
35 money for Opera House renovations this year. The only time expenditures can be
36 approved is at June Town Meeting; money can be moved from one budget line to another
37 at that meeting, but no new spending can be proposed. Mr. Hodges recommended
38 removing specific timeframe references from the final Downtown Plan so important
39 deadlines aren't missed for budgetary reasons: Language like "funding to be approved at
40 the first appropriate Town Meeting" can replace "funding to be approved at the June
41 2012 Town Meeting."

42
43 Mr. Gross did not believe that the \$30,000 that might be available from TIF funds
44 for Opera House renovations would be sufficient; they would need to supplement those
45 funds with money from elsewhere. Mr. Lynch noted that the cycle for CBDG grants
46 begins in the winter: the Town should first determine where they might be eligible, and to
47 do the eligibility work using the TIF proposal information.

1 It was also noted that using the term “highest and best use” of municipal buildings
2 to encourage economic development Downtown could be construed by the public as
3 meaning that the use should be residential; that is not the intention. This language
4 should be reworked so it is very clear what is meant – the term “most beneficial use”
5 might be more appropriate.
6

7 Mr. Hodges noted that he is seeing one theme in the survey responses that have
8 come in so far: Don’t forget the non-visitors and non-tourists in forming the Plan. It is
9 important to help the citizens of the Town understand how the Plan will help them
10 directly.
11

12 Discussion regarding the Clusters:
13

14 History and Architecture: The Chamber believes the historic nature of the Downtown is
15 a very important draw, and is working on an app that would guide people on historic
16 tours in Town by guiding them to the various Historic Districts.
17

18 Healthy Living: It would be good to have a way to help people connect to
19 walking/biking areas at Merry Spring, Ragged Mountain and the State Park – perhaps an
20 app for that purpose as well.
21

22 Tourism: Mr. Lynch noted that tourism accounts for 80% of the funding that comes into
23 Town, and Mr. Verest agreed, saying that it is perhaps the most important of all the
24 clusters to help revitalize the Downtown. Mr. Gross believes they need to make all the
25 clusters work together to get the Town on a sound year-round basis. Mr. Wilson
26 suggested they look to all the clusters to see which have the possibility to have stronger
27 year-round components – like Recreation (Healthy Living) and conferences, and
28 concentrate on growing the off-season business; summer seems to take care of itself. Mr.
29 Bookham replied that he is trying to get the concept across that towns that attract tourists
30 are not necessarily a tourist town. Tourist towns ratchet down in the winter; year-round
31 towns stay busy year-round and ratchet up to take care of the additional tourist-related
32 business; Camden *is* a year-round town that ratchets up successfully every year – long
33 time downtown businesses are proof of that. The Plan needs to concentrate on the rest of
34 the year to make sure that more year-round businesses can survive. Mr. Lynch
35 mentioned Charlie Colgan’s study done for the Town that talked about growing new
36 businesses; he recommends the Town refer to this report when they start applying the
37 Downtown Plan to encourage business growth.
38

39 Mr. Lynch asked if these were the clusters of the economy that the group wanted the Plan
40 to support.
41

42 Rick Bates: He believes the Opera House is the most important lynch pin in the
43 Downtown, and thinks they have to stop tip-toeing around talking about the issue
44 directly. The Town Office is also a very important use to have downtown, but they need
45 to look at the whole building to see if it is being underutilized. He knows the subject is a
46 land-mine but the Opera House will never be what it could be unless this discussion
47 happens.
48

1 Denis Lachman: His Team can contribute to this discussion by helping the Town
2 understand what funding might be out there to help with the necessary renovations; this
3 subject is one of their areas of expertise, and he will discuss his offer in more detail later.
4

5 Oscar Verest: He thinks it is important to introduce the issue of funding possibilities in
6 the Plan so that issue can be put into perspective when people are looking at a big
7 proposal.
8

9 Peter Gross: He suggested that they put renovations to the Opera House on a new
10 timeframe that addresses discussions about the future best use of the building. It may be
11 that plans for renovations change drastically from the ones mentioned earlier;
12 recommending funding changes to recently completed renovations would not be an easy
13 argument to make.
14

15
16 ➤ **STREETSCAPE: Regina Leonard**
17

18 Ms. Leonard prepared a detailed presentation of the Team’s recommendations for
19 improvements to traffic and pedestrian safety and enhancing the Downtown streetscape;
20 the following will be a brief summary of this very complex proposal. For those wanting
21 detailed information, the Team’s Power Point presentation is available on the Town’s
22 web site: www.camdenmaine.gov (Downtown Master Plan).
23

24 ❖ **IVENTORY ASSESSMENT:**
25

26 In preparing their final recommendations, Ms. Leonard and Mr. Sabatini 1st:
27 Researched the Town’s resources and needs; 2nd: Prepared an inventory and assessment
28 of the infrastructure including sidewalks, streetscape, circulation patterns, pedestrian
29 safety and public spaces; and 3rd: Created goals and objectives for improvements that
30 defined possible solutions while addressing the relevant constraints.
31
32

- 33 • **MAJOR ISSUES & CONSIDERATIONS:** Parking: Make parking spaces easier to
34 find with improved signage; Traffic: Calm traffic and promote side street activity;
35 Signage: Improve directional and information signage; The Best Use of Town
36 Properties: Consider Town Office, Chamber of Commerce, Public Landing, and on-
37 street parking spaces; and Pedestrians: Improve walkability with safe crossings and
38 routes, providing interconnectivity to areas of Town, and improving the pedestrian
39 environment.
40

41 ❖ **CONCEPT DESIGN STRATEGY:** Ms. Leonard identified three areas of Town where
42 recommendations will be made to three concerns: traffic, signage and pedestrian safety:
43

- 44 1) The “Northern Gateway” at the intersection of Routes One and 52 (Mountain Street);
- 45 2) The “Downtown Center Hub” where Mechanic Street, Route One, and Bayview and
46 Commercial Streets intersect; and, 3) The “Southern Gateway” at Union Street and Route
47 One.

1 The common goals for the areas are: 1) To clarify vehicular routes and circulation
2 to orient visitors using improved signage; 2) To improve and make safe accommodations
3 for pedestrians; and to generally improve these arrival zones with streetscape design
4 intended to calm traffic and make the Downtown more welcoming in general by inviting
5 drivers to stop in Town and get out of their cars and walk around.
6

7 • Gateway Design Tools: To better define the street corridors the Plan would: 1)
8 Reduce curb cuts; 2) add streetscape elements; and incorporate new signage to clarify
9 traffic flow at these intersections. To improve Pedestrian Safety here the Plan would:
10 1) Reduce Pedestrian crossing distances; add ladder style crosswalks; and change
11 current parking patterns to improve visibility between cars and pedestrians. (The
12 Power Point presentation on the Town’s website includes a design overview with
13 details illustrating the recommendations for the Southern Gateway at Union Street.)
14

15 • Streetscape Treatment: The Plan recommends carrying the same street lights,
16 sidewalks, street trees, and other design elements from Gateway to Gateway and
17 through the Downtown Hub. From the Hub these common elements will be extend
18 out side streets with the intention that this will physically extend what is thought of as
19 the “Downtown” to areas either side of Route One.
20

21 • Downtown Center Hub Design Tools: The goal is to better define the street corridor
22 from the pedestrian areas by reducing curb cuts, adding streetscape elements that help
23 separate pedestrian from traffic, and incorporating signage to help both pedestrians
24 and drivers to better find their way. Pedestrians will be encouraged to use alternate
25 routes – like Tannery Lane – to be safer and separate them from traffic. Streetscape
26 elements like bump outs make crossing distances safer and shorter.
27

28 • Pedestrian Safety: In addition to the elements above, the design relies on bump outs.
29 These are extensions of the sidewalk into areas of the roadways that are wide enough
30 to safely accommodate the loss of travel way. They shorten the distance pedestrians
31 have to walk to cross; they provide seating area and area where shade trees can be
32 planted; and they separate pedestrians from traffic in a clear way – often with bollards
33 to offer further protection. Bump-outs also result in the loss of parking spaces in
34 these areas, and can be controversial because of this. But, MDOT recommends that
35 Towns don’t allow parking 20’ on either side of crosswalks; so, the bump outs are
36 really occupying space that MDOT says shouldn’t be used for parking anyway.
37

38 (The Power Point presentation on the Town’s website includes a design overview
39 with details illustrating the recommendations for the Downtown Central Hub.)
40

41
42 ❖ **SIGN PROGRAM:**
43

44 • Currently the traffic flow favors residents and is very confusing to visitors – even
45 dangerous. Signage for the Downtown starts further out directing drivers to parking -
46 or to the Harbor – *before* they get to the Center Hub: reducing confusion by clarifying
47 routes is the biggest challenge for this area.
48

- 1 • Implementing a Sign Program involves concepts like tiered levels of signage that start
2 alerting drivers to various options *before* they arrive, and pedestrian eye-level signs
3 that direct them to their destination with a series of signage moving from the general
4 to the specific. Designing successful sign programs is a separate area of expertise,
5 but she showed two options other towns have implemented successfully so the Town
6 understands what lies ahead in this regard. One method involves signs of the same
7 color and design, the other signs color coded either by districts of town or by
8 business. Part of the Sign Program might involve kiosk located in various places
9 downtown or large signs showing area detail: there are many options.

10
11 ❖ **PARKING ~ CONCEPT DESIGN: Design Tools to “Rethink Parking”**

- 12
13 • Increase short-term parking in places where drivers are in and out quickly
14 • Set 2-Hour limits for other parking spaces
15 • Meter Maine Street parking – make it a commodity worth paying for
16 • Encourage off-street parking for the long-term – low cost or even free, and also a
17 possible source of income to the owners (like churches)
18 • Capitalize on shared use parking
19 • Introduce a parking shuttle
20 • Encourage employees to use parking lots
21 • Set large vehicle parking restrictions – steer RV’s off Route One to designated
22 parking areas *before* they get to the Central Hub or tie up three parking spaces.
23 • Designate loading zones (especially for Route One)
24 • Encourage alternate forms of transportation – add bike racks, encourage bike and
25 moped rentals, prepare bike route maps, put bike racks on parking shuttles
26 • Encourage the development of parking apps for Camden so people know where to go
27 before they get there
28 • Create more Town-owned parking – especially consider a parking garage, perhaps
29 along Mechanic Street across from the Knox Mill shops. Conversations have been
30 initiated along these lines and the idea should be further investigated.

31
32
33 ❖ **IMPROVING THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE:**

- 34
35 • Develop a River Walk and a Harbor Walk to link areas of Town and encourage foot
36 traffic to and from the centralized parking areas:
37
38 > Create a new opportunity for public green space in the Downtown by developing
39 the Mill Pond as a destination for walkers at the end of the River Walk: Talks have
40 begun between the River Walk Coalition and the Knox Mill Condo Association
41 because the project could involve a public/private partnership. As well as creating
42 new green space, there is interest in pulling business to the Mill part of Downtown
43 > Feature the Farmer’s Market as a walk able destination
44
45 • Implement the Bike and Pedestrian Plan adopted by the Town:
46 > Create trails to outlying recreational areas using way-finding signage to direct
47 walkers that connect to these walks

- 1 ․ Create connections to recreational areas – the Snow Bowl and State Park
- 2 ․ Create shared bike lanes – or dedicated where possible
- 3 ․ Take advantage of the growing interest in Mountain Biking and the active local club
- 4 and their trails

6 QUESTIONS:

8 Mr. Gross asked if uses had been re-assigned to the Town properties on the Public
9 Landing and Mechanic Street (Parking Lot): Mr. Lachman replied that the Public
10 Landing was a project in and of itself, and the Team is not able to come up with a full
11 blown plan during this project. They did three conceptual designs: 1) Minimal changes;
12 2) A design that includes a loss of 30% of current parking spaces; and 3) a design that
13 loses 50% of parking. The purpose is to begin public conversations to see what kind of
14 interest is there in moving further with any of these concepts. Regina Leonard
15 commented that it is important that conceptual design have “feet” so concerns and
16 questions can be addressed: the Team cannot go that deep into concept development as
17 part of this project.

19 Mr. Hodges believes that it will be important in gaining local support to show
20 how the proposed changes are linked to local benefits: the loss of parking spaces will be
21 outweighed by things like improved traffic flow through Town.

23 4. PUBLIC FORUM #2: Denis Lachman

25 The purpose of Forum #2 is to show how the comments gathered at Forum #1 have been
26 incorporated into this version of the Plan, and to introduce the resulting recommendations and
27 gather feedback. He proposes a brief introduction to “Where We Are” and a recap of Forum #1
28 to bring those who are new to the project up to date. He hopes not to have to provide too much
29 information on the past, but he also wants to avoid taking too much time away from the
30 evening’s presentation by having to cover old ground in answering questions; he asks how
31 members feel this balance of providing just enough information should be accomplished.

33 Steve Wilson: He thinks it is very important that all attending know that this is a *concept* not a
34 firm proposal: these ideas are up for discussion not a vote.

36 Rick Bates: He agrees that people need to be informed and be given some of the data, but the
37 presentation should be prefaced by the announcement that all the data has been discussed and put
38 into play, and it is now “on the ground” with these concept proposals.

40 Dave Jackson: He hopes that much of this factual data and information can be released ahead of
41 the Forum so people can come prepared. They should be encouraged to look at the website and
42 at the proposals so they understand where this project is in the process. Perhaps the meeting
43 should be a general discussion without leaking any of the recommendations. Ms. Leonard
44 replied that without giving sufficient information on how the concept was developed, the concept
45 loses its qualitative components; the audience must understand *why* the design is presented as it is.

47 Denis Lachman and others thought it is necessary to give a brief catch-up for everyone on the
48 process to date and inform the audience that more information is available on the website. To

1 save time for more discussion it was suggested that the Buildings and Economics presentations
2 could be condensed, and the focus be put on the streetscapes; that is what everyone is interested
3 in. Mr. Verest thinks it would be too bad to cut short the other two components – buildings and
4 the economy - because they explain the facts of the current situation; the Town needs to see that
5 there is a lot of opportunity for growth here, and the data should be directly connected to the
6 proposed recommendations.
7

8 Dave Jackson: He believes the first question people will have after seeing the presentations is:
9 “How much is this going to cost?” and “Where will the money come from?” They need
10 information that will cover the span of time involved and a sense of how the project could be
11 financed. Mr. Lynch added that information will be part of the Financing Plan, but there are no
12 details to discuss at this time. Mr. Gross reported that CEDAC is still working on funding issues,
13 and hopes to have a proposal ready for the June Town Meeting – if everything can come together
14 in time.
15

16 Lowrie Sargent: He is concerned about two things: Parking is an “ownership issue” and the
17 Team needs to be prepared for some tough questions on the subject; and the Presentation itself –
18 Regina Leonard had to hustle during this meeting to get through everything and she was
19 presenting to an informed group. He does not see how she will be able to get them to understand
20 the concept in such a short time. Ms. Leonard responded that she anticipates that the audience
21 will be a hard sell, and she shares his apprehensions. Mr. Gross suggests that they concentrate
22 on how the various improvements – especially those like the bump outs that will lose parking
23 spaces – be emphasized for their overall “improvement” value.
24

25 Bernice Berger: She suggested that someone – perhaps the Town Manager – make a simple
26 statement about the finances: This is a do-able project and the Town Manager herself is
27 committed to making it happen – we can pull this off.
28

29 Dan Bookham: He thinks if the presentation emphasizes the importance of the Downtown there
30 will be support - that support has been obvious in many situations - and he believes that if the
31 Team emphasizes that these are ideas we *know* work well, they will be well-received.
32
33

34 **5. NEXT STEPS & WRAP UP: Denis Lachman** 35

36 Mr. Lachman announced that the Team is willing, at no extra charge, to conduct a workshop on
37 how to fund the Opera House renovations. They are experts in the process of funding
38 renovations for buildings on the Historic Register and can discuss how the Town can work
39 financing the project by leveraging specific funding sources. If this workshop can be tied to a
40 future Master Plan meeting date, that would be appreciated.
41

42 Mr. Lynch also noted that there will be information on funding other components of the Plan in
43 his Financing Plan that will answer the question: “How do we pay for this?”
44

45 Mr. Lachman suggested that the audience for this presentation is as wide as the group wants to
46 make it – they should feel free to invite all the property owners who might be able to take
47 advantage of the information, as well as officials from other Towns – as many people as they
48 want to invite.

1 Final Comments:

2

3 John Arnold: If the Team approaches explaining the recommendations based on answering the
4 question: “What can be done to improve the traffic situation?” he thinks there will be a lot of
5 interest and support.

6

7 Rick Bates: He thinks this question could be answered if the Town agrees to adopt and
8 implement all of Regina Leonard’s recommendations.

9

10 There is another Economic Cluster to consider as an important factor in encouraging economic
11 development downtown, and that is to encourage people to live Downtown by making it more
12 attractive to do so.

13

14 There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

15

16

17 Respectfully submitted,

18

19 Jeanne Hollingsworth, Recording Secretary

FEBRUARY CAMDEN DOWNTOWN PLAN WORKING GROUP

Name and Affiliation	Email
Rick Bates, CEDAC	rbates@municipalresources.com
Bernice Berger, CDBG	Store@onceatree.net
Dan Bookham, Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber	info@therealmaine.com
Martin Cates, Chair, Camden Select Board	mcates@jaretcohn.com
Peter Gross, Chair, CEDAC	peter@petergrossarchitects.com
Brian Hodges, Camden Development Director	bhodges@camdenmaine.gov
Dave Jackson, CDBG	dpjackson@roadrunner.com
Denis Lachman, Lachman Team	denislachman@architects.com
Regina Leonard, Lachman Team	Regina@rslsdesign.com
Rodney Lynch, Lachman Team	cpo9@ne.twcbc.com
Michael Sabatini, Lachman Team	Mike@LandmarkMaine.com
Lowrie Sargent, CEDAC and Camden Planning Board	lsargent@midcoast.com
Steve Wilson, Camden Code Enforcement Officer/Planner	swilson@camdenmaine.gov
Oscar Verest, Co-Chair, CDBG	oscar@camdenharbourinn.com
John Arnold, CEDAC	arnold2149@sbcglobal.net