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**CAMDEN PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
June 20, 2013**

10 **PRESENT:** Chair Chris MacLean; Members Richard Householder, Jan MacKinnon and Lowrie  
11 Sargent; Don White, Select Board Liaison; and CEO Steve Wilson

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13 The meeting of the Planning Board was convened at 5:00 pm.

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22 **1. Public Input on Non-agenda Items:**

23 No one came forward to speak.

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44 **2. Minutes:**

45 June 16, 2013:

46 Page 2 Line 10: The term “non-residential” had been misspelled

47 Page 2 Line 29: “...his ~~professional~~ profession as a biologist...”

Page 3 Line 1: The Board held a Workshop on the Northern Gateway District not a Public Information Meeting

Page 3 Line 43: “...the Village District ~~existing~~ existing B&BS...”

Page 6 Line 28: “... the ~~elect~~ Select Board ...”

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101 **MOTION by Mr. MacLean seconded by Mr. Householder** to approve the Minutes of the Camden Planning Board of June 6, 2013 with the redactions and corrections noted.

102 **VOTE: 4-0-0**

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201 **Overview of Zoning Amendment Process:**

202 The Chair explained how Public Information Gathering Meetings fit into the process the Planning Board goes through when considering changes to the Zoning Ordinance:

- 203 1) Proposals for Zoning Amendments can originate in several ways: The Planning Board or the Planning Office may recommend changes to the Ordinance based on their experience using the Ordinance; the Select Board might ask the Planning Board to make a change; or citizens may come forward with a request to the Board or they may initiate a Citizen’s Referendum.
- 204 2) The Planning Board maintains a list of these proposals and requests, and when the time comes to begin consideration, the Planning Board looks to the citizens to provide feedback so they can become better informed early in the process. Bringing the public into the process early on has served the Board well over the past few years, and they have avoided the problems created when concerns were not heard until the amendment process was in the final stage of Public Hearings.

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301 In the case of the two proposals being considered this evening, both were changes requested by citizens. The Board has had several meetings with the citizens making these requests to hear their arguments and discuss the Board’s initial concerns. The Board determined they would take the next step of opening the proposals up for comment from

1 the public – that is where they are this evening. Mr. MacLean reminded the public that  
2 these proposals are in the very early stages with nothing set in stone.

- 3  
4 3) At the end of the Public Meetings the Board will decide:
- 5 • Whether or not they want to continue with the amendment process;
  - 6 • Whether they need more time and more information and want to slow the process  
7 down by moving the time to Town Meeting from this November to next June; or
  - 8 • Whether or not they want to consider using a different approach altogether.
- 9  
10 4) If the Board does decide to go forward they will hold Workshops to start drafting the  
11 actual amendment language.
- 12  
13 5) If they go forward there will be additional opportunities for the public to comment at  
14 Public Hearings – at least two hearings before the Planning Board and one before the  
15 Select Board.
- 16

17 After these hearings the Board will decide if the idea is still viable and will make a  
18 recommendation to the Select Board and send the proposal on to them to make the final  
19 decision on whether or not to include the proposal on the Town Warrant.

20

21 The Chair ended by saying how valuable public comment was to the process, and how  
22 grateful the Board has been in the past when informed citizens have come to discuss these  
23 matters in a civil and considerate manner. There are a great many people here this evening, so he  
24 asked everyone wishing to speak to limit their comments to five minutes.

25

### 26 **3. Proposed Future Zoning Amendment: River Business District: Public Information** 27 **Meeting**

28

29 Paul Cartwright described the Business River District by saying it encompassed two sites  
30 in Town – the old Tannery Site and a few properties further up the river. The District was  
31 created to encourage mixed use on these properties and was written open-ended with regard to  
32 uses in order to encourage development. There were two conditions for development in the  
33 District: Only triplex residential is permitted and only when it is above a commercial space; and  
34 all street-level development must be for non-residential uses. Mr. Cartwright gave a brief  
35 presentation on his proposal to change these two aspects of the current zoning for this district:  
36 He would like to see the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor multi-family dwelling requirement changed to allow single  
37 family residences; and he would like to see the restriction on no dwellings at street level  
38 eliminated *only if* there is the same square footage of non-residential use created. There are very  
39 few properties that will, factually, be affected

40

#### 41 **QUESTIONS from the BOARD:**

42

43 Ms. MacKinnon: She note that the proposal still reads “non-residential uses” when the Board at  
44 their last meeting wanted to see that term limit uses to those specific commercial uses currently  
45 permitted within the District. Mr. Wilson replied that he and Mr. Cartwright will be working on  
46 amendment language that will incorporate, by reference, all the appropriate uses.

1 Mr. MacLean: He asked what happens if there is a lot with separate residential and commercial  
2 buildings as Mr. Cartwright is proposing and the owner decides he wants to split off the  
3 residential area and sell the commercial space; can this be done? Mr. Cartwright replied that the  
4 lot could be split, but the new lot with the residential building would have to create new  
5 commercial space immediately – either by building a new structure for an allowed commercial  
6 use, or by converting half of the space used for residential use into commercial space. If not, the  
7 owner would have created a non-conforming lot, and that is not allowed.  
8

9 Mr. MacLean asked the CEO how this provision would be enforced, and Mr. Wilson  
10 replied that if it got by the deed research stage – they are usually very careful in checking on  
11 local zoning restrictions when creating deeds – that the Town would catch it in the Assessor’s  
12 Office when the registered deed copy is received from the Registry of Deeds. At this point the  
13 Town would move to nullify the deed.  
14

15 Ms. MacKinnon: She believes that Mr. Cartwright has done a good job of addressing the  
16 Board’s concerns as they have moved through the process to date.  
17

18 Mr. Sargent: He clarified that this change in the River Business District would have no impact  
19 on the restriction of uses adopted by the Town for this property; that vote trumps the Zoning  
20 Ordinance.  
21

22 **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**  
23

24 Leonard Lookner: He is not opposed to a zone change of this type, and he encouraged the  
25 Planning Board to look at what they might do in crafting the language to encourage and reward  
26 property owners to allow the Riverwalk on their land. Perhaps there are some other uses that  
27 could be allowed – or more uses – if an owner participates.  
28

29 No one else from the public came forward.  
30

31 Steve Cartwright: He wants Mr. Lookner to know that he is very strongly in favor of the  
32 pathway and would do what he could to support the project including allowing passage over his  
33 land if and when he owns it.  
34

35 The public comment portion of the Public Information Gathering Meeting was closed.  
36

37 **DELIBERATION by the BOARD:** To continue with this proposal or not  
38

39 Ms. MacKinnon: She feels this is a very reasonable proposal, and suggests the Board set a date  
40 for the first Public Hearing; the other members of the Board agreed.  
41

42 The proposed language will be ready for Board review on July 11, and if all is well,  
43 proposed amendment will go to Public Hearing on July 25.  
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1 **4) Northern Gateway District (B-5): Public Information Meeting**  
2

3 Maryanne Shanahan, the owner of the Hawthorn Inn at 9 High Street, presented a much  
4 revised proposal for three B&B properties on lower High Street. Reading from a prepared  
5 statement, Ms. Shanahan stated that the owners have three goals and objectives: 1) To achieve  
6 business parity within the community, which will foster greater economic activity; 2) To be  
7 nimble in their business operations in order to achieve healthy competition within the town and  
8 with other towns; and 3) To maintain the value and standards of their properties and the  
9 immediate lower High Street area. They contend that there has been a shift in the immediate  
10 area to a quasi-commercial-residential section which, at this time includes three inns, a gallery,  
11 two apartment houses, two condo dwellings and two vacant residential houses, and this proposal  
12 is intended to expand their business opportunities in this setting.  
13

14 Different from their three former proposals, this one was not written as an amendment to  
15 the Ordinance, but instead, the group suggested that the Planning Board and the Planner should  
16 be the ones to develop the proposal into the appropriate format. What they want to see as the  
17 result of an amendment are two changes that will help them achieve their goals: 1<sup>st</sup>: Increased  
18 flexibility in their victualer's licensing; and 2<sup>nd</sup>: Increased flexibility in their event restrictions.  
19 How this is done is up to the Board, but they anticipate participating in the development of this  
20 proposal as they have in the past.  
21

22 Jesse Bifulco: The Board, looking for more substantive information on what is actually before  
23 them tonight as a proposed amendment, asked Jesse Bifulco, owner of the Windward House and  
24 a party to the original proposal, if would offer more detailed information. Mr. Bifulco came  
25 forward hesitantly, saying that he had already spoken enough of this with the Board; he offered a  
26 brief comment: These business owners just want their businesses to succeed with Town and  
27 within the region. He noted that he hoped the Town's development motto: "We're rolling out the  
28 red carpet and not the red tape!" would be made to apply to existing businesses as well as new  
29 businesses. All they want to do is to serve dinner and to do events that Function Halls can do –  
30 all low scale and low key.  
31

32 Mr. Sargent and Mr. MacLean asked Mr. Bifulco questions about the intended uses the  
33 group had wanted to see in the past – are spa services still to be an option? Is the proposal still  
34 for multi-use lodging facilities? Mr. Bifulco had returned to his seat, however, and stated that he  
35 had completed his statement.  
36

37 Elizabeth O'Connor, owner, with Kip Wright, of Abigail's B&B, and a party to the proposal:  
38 She informed the Board that the group's request is very simple: The Bifulcos want to open a  
39 restaurant; she wants to serve dinner to her guests; and Maryanne wants to be able to do  
40 additional events – she can now do eight and wants to do more; all they want is to be able to  
41 maintain their businesses. In this proposal they pared back what they were requesting previously  
42 – no spa services and no retail are being requested – the request is very simple.  
43

44 **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**  
45

46 The Chair noted for the record that the Board was in receipt of several emails and read the names  
47 of the people who wrote and the dates of their email. He did not classify whether or not the

1 comments were pro or con the proposal, but they are part of the public record and anyone is free  
2 to come to the code office to read them. (The list of those sending emails is attached here.)  
3

4 Kristy Bifulco came forward with several letters that were also entered into the record;  
5 she read the names of the people who had written in support of their proposal.  
6

7 The Chair prefaced opening the floor to comments by saying that the idea of this  
8 informational session is not to generate a public record preceding a vote of the Board, but to  
9 inform the Board of concerns; it is perfectly OK to say “Ditto” if agreeing with another’s  
10 comments – there is no need to repeat concerns.  
11

12 Dyke Messler: Mr. Messler has made a career of renovating historic houses and now lives off  
13 High Street in the area once proposed for inclusion in the new district. He understands that  
14 businesses are vital to the Town, and know of Camden’s constant struggles to be a year-round  
15 community; he supports efforts to increase the year-round viability; but he cannot support this  
16 proposal because this proposal would allow the creation of businesses that aren’t needed;  
17 businesses that would compete with established businesses already struggling to stay open year-  
18 round – like restaurants. Do we really need more restaurants in this Town? Function Halls: He  
19 built meeting places into each of the Wellness Center buildings because the Town needed more  
20 meeting space. He asked if we really need more meeting space at this time. Spa: He cannot see  
21 how a B&B could financially support having a spa within their building – there simply isn’t  
22 enough business to do so. However, he does support the owners being able to bring in a massage  
23 therapist if a customer makes that request.  
24

25 Deb Dodge: She presented the Board with an informal petition opposing the proposal with 94  
26 signatures from a broad area of Town – this to show that the opposition is not just among High  
27 Street residents, but is, instead, Town-wide. She read the petition which essentially says that the  
28 residents object strongly to a zoning change that promotes “Creeping Commercialism.”  
29

30 Ms. Dodge also had an email from someone who could not be present and asked to read it  
31 into the record. Ms. Shanahan objected saying that Ms. Bifulco had not read the letters she  
32 presented. It was noted that the Board had received a copy of Ms. Snead’s email, and that it had  
33 already been reviewed and entered.  
34

35 Ms. Dodge went on to say that she is not clear on what is being heard this evening: She  
36 does not understand what exactly is meant by the language “increased flexibility in our  
37 victualer’s licensing” or increased flexibility in our event restrictions.” The CEO responded that  
38 B&B’s must maintain a victualer’s license to serve the breakfast and afternoon snack they are  
39 allowed to prepare and serve at this time. If they serve dinner to guests – or to the public – this  
40 would require a change to that license.  
41

42 Ms. Dodge went on to say that the requested increase in events speaks to no specific  
43 number – are there limits to this request proposed?  
44

45 She believes that approving this request will open the door to more commercial uses. The  
46 proposal has swung from having a purpose of protecting the neighborhood to be able to compete

1 with other B&B's that serve dinner – these B&B's however, are in a commercial district, not a  
2 residential district.

3  
4 She believes that when these three owners bought property in a residential district they  
5 should have realized the limitations imposed because of that classification. Now they want to  
6 compete with those businesses that are in the commercial district, and they want to change the  
7 character of the residential district in order to do so. She believes that this proposal has no merit  
8 and should be Tabled; the Board doesn't need to go any further with this discussion.

9  
10 Hillary Stineau: Ms. Stineau spoke in favor of the proposal and giving a family more ways to  
11 keep their businesses going so they can afford to stay in Town. They are raising their kids here  
12 and creating jobs – both things Camden says they want to see. It is very clear what they want to  
13 do and she has no problem with any of the proposals. She has no problem if the proposal  
14 included retail as well.

15  
16 Betsy Parry: She and her husband, Neal Sweet, live at 31 High Street year-round and own a  
17 small business. They moved to High Street because it was a residential neighborhood, and  
18 despite the fact that there are many properties for sale on the street, they and their neighbors  
19 believe that High Street is alive and well and well-cared for. She is afraid that this proposal will  
20 open the door to High Street turning into Elm Street and lose the historical character; the Maine  
21 Stay is only steps away from Abigail's – will they be included? Will all the B&B's on High  
22 Street be included?

23  
24 She is confused by the lack of specificity in the proposal and is not sure what has  
25 changed from the version presented to the Board at the last meeting. She also doesn't know  
26 anyone who has been contacted as the Planning Board asked.

27  
28 Carla Ferguson: Ms. Ferguson, who spoke in favor of the proposal, was interrupted more than  
29 once as she spoke about the small impact these changes would have on High Street, which, she  
30 said, is Route One – a very busy highway. She does not think the extra traffic would be noticed,  
31 and parking will not be a problem at these B&Bs. She supports additional restaurants because it  
32 gives residents more choices of where to eat. It gives the owners more ways to make money and  
33 stay open year-round.

34  
35 Mary Barnard O'Connell: Ms. O'Connell views herself as the proud caretaker of her family's  
36 home for future generations. She is proud to be an owner of High Street because of the nature of  
37 the neighborhood, and requests that no change be made to the Ordinance that would endanger  
38 that character.

39  
40 Meg Barclay: Co-chair of the Camden Historic Resources Committee: The Committee's role in  
41 Town Government is advisory, and she is here with the Committee's recommendation regarding  
42 this proposal: They advise the Board that no change should be made to this nationally registered  
43 historic district that would adversely impact this character.

44  
45 Ms. Barclay spoke of the changes that were proposed to the Ordinance but noted that  
46 these changes keep shifting. The Committee is concerned that the changes proposed last meeting  
47 would permit maximum build-out of lot coverage with no restrictions except the requirements

1 for buffering. They are concerned that the proponents say that they don't intend that these  
2 changes will have any visual impacts, but there is nothing in the language that would prohibit  
3 major changes. They say that there will be no physical changes to the exterior of the buildings,  
4 but a full-service restaurant requires significant a ventilation system and that will be visible. In  
5 addition, the Committee believes that there is the possibility that signage could increase along  
6 the street.

7  
8 Shane Flynn: Harbor Road just off High Street. Having been through the Zoning Ordinance  
9 amendment process before this Board, Mr. Flynn knows well how contentious this process can  
10 be. And although it was not an enjoyable experience, the end product of the work with the Board  
11 and the public was satisfactory.

12  
13 Mr. Flynn has seen the changes from more business in Town to less and now back to  
14 more business. He has also seen the recent residential push in this area. The Board's job is to  
15 keep a balance so both can co-exist, and spot zoning at the request of these business owners is  
16 not the way to keep that balance. He hopes the Board will look at all the things that *could*  
17 happen if these changes are made. He noted that the Board should also consider what happens  
18 when the Ordinance takes uses away. Business needs consistency: Is this change fair to other  
19 business owners in other areas of Town who paid premium prices to be in the commercial  
20 districts? He believes the Board should look very carefully that the fabric of the Ordinance isn't  
21 damaged; he opposes this request.

22  
23 Jonathan Carlson: His parents own 36 High Street – an area that is unspoiled, and he is in favor  
24 of zoning and historic preservation efforts that will keep it that way. However, this request for a  
25 change is simply one being made by people who rely on the local economy for their livelihood.  
26 These three B&Bs are an anchor for this area of High Street, and this is only intended as a way to  
27 help them increase their business so they can survive. He supports their request.

28  
29 Nancy Hughes: Through her business she is very familiar with the historic houses in Town, and  
30 knows how difficult it is to pay for the upkeep of the larger homes. These are businesses that  
31 take care of their properties, just like the residential owners along the street. But that takes a lot  
32 of money, and she is keeping an open mind that some way can be found to make this proposal  
33 work. She noted how opposed people in Town were when the Knox Mill was first proposed to  
34 change from commercial to residential. That has ended up being a good change and the mill is  
35 full of new residents -- that was a big zoning change for the Town to make, but people got used  
36 to it. She thinks this change can be worked out so that it is acceptable.

37  
38 Kristi Bifulco: Owner of Windward House with Jesse Bifulco: She appreciates that so many  
39 people have turned out in support of the neighborhood. She asked people to remember that these  
40 businesses must be owner-occupied and that in itself is a self-regulating factor. There are  
41 examples of exactly what they want to do in Town already – the Whitehall Inn and the Camden  
42 Harbor Inn are both in residential neighborhoods and fit in well. She noted that everyone keeps  
43 saying that this is a residential neighborhood and reminded them that these B&Bs pay  
44 commercial taxes.

45  
46 Ms. Bifulco also reminded the audience that Camden has a noise ordinance which  
47 controls the level of noise between 11 pm and 7 am. However, they have enforced even stricter

1 time limits on noise at events they have hosted. This is one of the ways that living in the inn will  
2 be self-regulating. They are in the business of “sleep” – that is what they sell, and they are not  
3 going to do anything that will harm that aspect of their business. These are good business – they  
4 are an anchor for the neighborhood. These kinds of businesses are a great opportunity for a  
5 young family to live and work in their home. They just want the business to be sustainable  
6 financially.

7  
8 Trygve Bratz: Mr. Bratz lives in the neighborhood and, as a developer; he has a financial  
9 interest in maintaining the character of the area. Businesses are important to the Town,  
10 especially the hospitality business, and he is in favor of what these businesses are requesting. He  
11 doesn’t see that any of the changes will have any impact and believes the Board should consider  
12 ensuring that there are no exterior changes that will have a negative impact through regulations.  
13 He spoke to the issue of spot zoning, and believes it is not worth considering that issue because  
14 grandfathering of existing businesses *is* spot zoning. It should be about the use of the property,  
15 and whether that use is acceptable. He believes that by strengthening these businesses, High  
16 Street will be strengthened.

17  
18 Joyce Laurent: She does not understand exactly what is being proposed. She believes that any  
19 new restaurant will be competition for the thirty restaurants already in Town. There are empty  
20 business places in Town now, and the Town should be working to invite businesses to those  
21 locations, not creating more competition for businesses in the downtown.

22  
23 Mary Jo Brink: Owner with her husband, Michael Salmon, of an inn in the Elm Street  
24 commercial district. They developed a business plan, and when they decided to move to  
25 Camden and looked at properties they knew they wanted to be able to have a restaurant. They  
26 considered their choices and narrowed them down based on what the zoning allowed.

27  
28 She has seen these particular properties change hands several times. These are new  
29 owners and they had a choice when they moved to Town to buy in the commercial district where  
30 they could have a restaurant, or to buy in the residential district where they could not.

31  
32 She asked if the numbers of functions are tracked by anyone. They know that in their Inn  
33 there are people who come to stay that are attending functions at some of these B&Bs. She  
34 knows that some of these functions are hosting many more people than just their own guests, and  
35 wonders if there is any limit on how many people can attend.

36  
37 Maryanne Shanahan: Speaking as an Applicant: The comments made have been helpful and  
38 informative. It has been challenging for the group to focus in on exactly what they want to  
39 propose. In an effort to communicate what it is they do want to do, they have reached out to the  
40 Board several times over the course of the process of their effort to bring form to their vision,  
41 with the personal belief that what they want to do has the potential to improve the area.  
42 Sometimes businesses have to look at what is possible to do to improve business and then look  
43 for a way to do it.

44  
45 Ms. Shanahan spoke to her history with functions over the years she has owned the  
46 Hawthorn Inn. She has done 70 events with no incidences of negative impact except for the  
47 disastrous first event she hosted. She learned her lesson with that one incident, and will not

1 agree to host events that won't fit into her own set of restrictions. She believes that setting  
2 restrictions on her ability to make her own business decisions while her colleagues are not  
3 overseen in their day-to-day business is not fair. She is asking for this change so she can make  
4 more money. She hopes the Board will look at the parameters that restrict efforts of businesses to  
5 be successful. Businesses need to be recognized for their potential to grow; the passion that  
6 people have for their businesses also needs to be recognized.

7  
8 Elizabeth O'Connor: Speaking as an Applicant: She is hearing people say that their plan is  
9 ambiguous and they are not sure what the group wants. This is what they want:  
10 Abigail's wants to serve dinner to their house guests; Jesse [Bifulco] wants to serve dinner to the  
11 public; and Maryanne [Shanahan] wants to do a few more events a year. The only changes that  
12 will have to be made for any of this to happen is to the Windward house interior to accommodate  
13 a restaurant. That is all they want.

14  
15 J.C. Dewing: Resident of High Street, former owner of the White Hall Inn: Camden has the best  
16 selection of B&Bs and is rightly proud of the hospitality business. But the greatest asset Camden  
17 has is the limitations imposed by the Zoning Ordinance. The Historic importance of High Street  
18 is a legacy the Town has that is worth protecting as it is representative of what is best in Camden.

19  
20 Kim Taljadonsos (spelling of last name not clear): She asks that the community not come to  
21 these meetings so much up in arms when all these businesses are doing is coming to the Town  
22 asking for help in trying to better accommodate their guests.

23  
24 Neal Sweet: 39 High Street: Mr. Sweet spoke to the passion on both sides of the issue and how  
25 uplifting it is to see democracy in action. The passion needs to be put aside, however, and  
26 people need to look at the actual proposal and what are the implications of tabling the proposal  
27 or of going forward as written.

28  
29 These owners are speaking in good faith but the issue is the long term impact of their  
30 request. This is clearly spot zoning and spot zoning should not be perpetuated.

31  
32 Leonard Lookner: He thanked everyone for coming saying Camden is special because people  
33 participate in keeping it that way. It is important to stay involved in what is happening. He also  
34 noted that when a zone is changed it stays changed. Changes should not be made for the people  
35 involved because those people will change, and new owners could be looking to maximize  
36 unintended loopholes in the Ordinance. As Planners, Mr. Lookner hopes the Board will look  
37 closely at the parking and delivery issues that will result from these changes.

38  
39 Mr. Lookner then spoke to the history of the creation of the lodging category of Bed and  
40 Breakfasts. When the original Zoning Ordinance was created the drafters look hard for ways to  
41 help the people who owned the big old houses on High Street. It was agreed that letting owners  
42 bring people into their homes on a paying basis would help supplement the household incomes to  
43 provide money to help take care of the properties. He stressed the work "supplement" again  
44 because these B&Bs were never intended to be businesses – never intended to provide the sole  
45 income for the property. As happens, the concept and the original intent were abused and there  
46 was a B&Bs with eleven rooms. As a result, the category of "Home Stay" was created with the  
47 same intent of supplementing incomes but very tightly written to avoid such abuses.

1 Now we have grandfathered “inns” that would be illegal under the current Ordinance. He  
2 reiterated that they were *never meant to be businesses* even though some of these houses have so  
3 many rooms. He asked the Board to please keep this as a non-business zone and don’t change  
4 the Ordinance.

5  
6 Jeff Dodge: High Street. He bought in a residential neighborhood because they did not want to  
7 live next door to a business. Following on what Mr. Lookner said, Mr. Dodge noted that both  
8 Windward House and Abigail’s are bigger than the Ordinance intended. He is worried about  
9 sprawl if this request is approved. It is not his job to give up a beautiful residential neighborhood  
10 so these people can make more money. If they have things they want to do with their business  
11 they should move to a zone where it is permitted.

12  
13 MR. Dodge spoke to the “policing” of existing businesses. He has looked at B&B  
14 websites and some are already offering bars and the ability to buy gifts to their guests. What  
15 they are doing now is actually not legal, but no one is policing what they are doing. By making  
16 these changes it will enhance the Applicant’s property values while decreasing other property  
17 values; that should be considered.

18  
19 Dennis McGuirk: He agrees that B&Bs are an asset to the Town. But, the owners knew the rules  
20 when they purchased the properties; asking for parity with other B&Bs in commercial areas of  
21 Town when they live in a residential area simply does not make sense. Parity in the case is not  
22 possible. He added that the ability to have unlimited events would change the character of the  
23 neighborhood – there could be multiple events every week-end day of the summer. Businesses  
24 are an important part of the character of the Town, and he is also opposed to increasing the  
25 ability to host more events in a year because it is not fair to existing businesses who count on  
26 these events for their livelihood.

27  
28 What these folks are asking will alter the character of the residential neighborhood. The  
29 only ones who will benefit from the change are these three owners.

30  
31 Joanne Ball: Owner of A Little Dream B&B on High Street: She is not sure what is being  
32 proposed, and has just become aware of the proposal. She was never contacted; the Camden  
33 B&B Association was never notified; nor was any of her neighbors – no-one was informed of  
34 this proposal. She was invited to a meeting on June 17 – three days ago, and that was when she  
35 learned of this proposal. This is a meeting that should have been held long ago as the Planning  
36 Board requested. She believes that when the Applicants saw the extent of the push-back from  
37 those attending the meeting they decided to change their proposal.

38  
39 Ms. Ball spoke of her experience being the first to operate a B&B in the neighborhood,  
40 and the fears her neighbors expressed about what could be down the road. The result of the  
41 interaction of neighbors and B&B operators was the creation of an operating model for B&Bs  
42 where owners agreed to honor the residential character of the zone; to be owner-occupied  
43 businesses; to stay small in size; to limit the number of employees; and to respect the neighbors’  
44 rights to enjoy their properties. This set of rules worked then, and it is still working where  
45 owners still follow the rules. Any change to the Ordinance can tip the balance that has allowed  
46 these B&Bs to co-exist with residential neighbors. High Street is coming back and it should be

1 given a chance to recover without giving it away. Tipping the balance in favor of these B&Bs  
2 *will destroy* the residential character of the neighborhood.

3  
4 (Name not legible): Zoning Ordinances are a set of rules and restrictions on the use of property.  
5 Most businesses find a way to work within those rules and restrictions, and so should these  
6 owners. The Board should respect and protect those residents who do live within the rules and  
7 not make this change.

8  
9 Judy McGuirk: Ditto – we have to have balance.

10  
11 James Cook: He and his family moved here because Camden was a small Town that found a  
12 way to make things work. When he started looking for work, however, he found that he had to  
13 “cobble together” several things to make living here work for him. He is a professor and sees  
14 many of his students “cobbling” things together to make it work so they can afford to go to  
15 school. That is what these businesses are doing – they are trying to “cobble together” enough  
16 business to stay here and raise their families. He is a sociologist by profession, and he knows  
17 how important young families are in a State that is the “oldest” in the nation. B&Bs are a good  
18 business for young families and he is encouraged by the comments made this evening that the  
19 Town can find a creative solution to helping these businesses while guaranteeing that everything  
20 on the outside will still look the same. They need help to make it through the low economy and  
21 the Town can find a compromise – we need to because it is young people who make the small  
22 town work.

23  
24 Russ Miller: Current owner of the White Hall Inn. He came because he wanted to learn more  
25 about the proposal; he has not been contacted by the Applicants and is not taking a position on  
26 the issue. He does take exception to the way this is being done because he doesn’t think that a  
27 zoning change is needed.

28  
29 The mission of a Planning Board isn’t to look just at what is being proposed today by this  
30 Board, but how a change in the Ordinance might be interpreted by those sitting in the Planning  
31 Board seats 50 years from now. There has to be a way for these three inns to make separate  
32 requests of the Town to be able to do what it is each of them wants to do. They should come  
33 with a request to make an addition to their Special Exception permits. He is not opposed to the  
34 owners being able to make more money, in fact when they do host events they bring more people  
35 to Town than they can house and he ends up with more business. He believes there is some  
36 merit to this request, but it is being gone about the wrong way. The danger is that it opens the  
37 door to what the business could become and what Camden could become in the next fifty – 100  
38 years.

39  
40 While he may be a commercial establishment in a residential area, he knows that he paid  
41 dearly to purchase the privileges that go along with the grandfathering of an inn that has been in  
42 business since 1901.

43  
44 Bill Fontana: A Little Dream B&B: If the Board approves this request they will be approving  
45 the capacity of all three properties to do all that is included in the proposal. It is not written that  
46 only the Windward House will have a restaurant – there could be three new restaurants. The  
47 Board should keep this in mind.

1 Libby Shrum: She lives with her parents on at 5 Harden Avenue, a very small business owner  
2 and she wants the Board to know that it is very difficult to live in the Town as a young person.  
3 When Mr. Cook referred to “cobbling together” she knows exactly what he means. She cannot  
4 speak for her parents, but she does not believe that there will be any major impact on the  
5 neighbors if the Board approves this request. She does understand that the folks who live further  
6 up High Street are concerned about property values. But she is sympathetic to the needs of the  
7 owners of the B&Bs. If they cannot afford to maintained property values will be hurt. She is  
8 also sympathetic to the notion that you do have to change and that Camden won’t always stay the  
9 way you want it to. If you want new people to come in you may have to be open to change and  
10 allow them to cobble things together. By doing nothing there is the possibility that it will mean  
11 that these people will not be able to afford to stay here, that homes in this area will be harder to  
12 sell, that there will not be a way to afford their maintenance and properties will deteriorate – that  
13 will hurt everyone’s property values. There are not a lot of ways to make a living around here,  
14 and a change will allow these owners to take advantage of Camden main business – tourism –  
15 and give them a way to earn more money and bring more business to Town. She believes that it  
16 is worth further conversation and perhaps a vote of the Town.

17  
18 Robin Ledwith: Norumbega Drive: There is still a lack of clarity in this offering. If the Town  
19 will be doing a comprehensive review of the B&Bs involved that is one thing.

20  
21 If, indeed, these people are putting forward a much more limited request, then all the  
22 emails referred to earlier this evening, and all the testimony based on the broader proposal and  
23 citing the worst possible situation possible, are not relevant. This proposal ought to be reviewed  
24 solely based on what they are asking. Look at each inn, at what they do now and at what  
25 additional amount of business they specifically want to do. This is not a zoning change he  
26 believes, and arguing in generalities back and forth is misleading when it does not apply to the  
27 precise request of the applicants. He challenged the Applicants to let the Board know that, if  
28 they have collectively reduced their request to the same point, are they all in agreement on how it  
29 is being presented? It would be much more productive if the discussion was limited to the  
30 specific issue that is before the Board; although the issues are interesting, they are not relevant.

31  
32 No one else came forward and the Public Input portion of the meeting was closed.

33  
34 **DELIBERATION by the BOARD:** To continue with this proposal or not

35  
36 The Chair led off the discussion by saying how impressed his is, again, with the view  
37 expressed. The Board now needs to decide where to go from here: Does the Board want to keep  
38 considering this proposal; do they want to move ahead; do they want to consider it in another  
39 way?

40  
41 Ms. MacKinnon: She ended up pretty much where she began - she is not sure what the actual  
42 proposal is. You can’t have three different proposals for zoning changes for three different  
43 properties. With respect to finding another way to go forward so that a request for a small degree  
44 of change can be reviewed by the Town on an individual basis, she is not sure exactly how that  
45 could be accomplished.

46

1 Mr. Wilson would recommend that if the Board wants to keep working on this issue, that  
2 the Board keeps the people here involved in a conversation, and be prepared to be the ones to  
3 come up with the solution. The Board should look at what is being requested and then consider  
4 if – or how – it can be permitted. In order to advise them Mr. Wilson would have to do research  
5 into ways to accomplish the request.  
6

7 Mr. MacLean: He does not believe that the three proponents can be faulted for having a lack of  
8 clarity this evening. They came forward with some ideas to give them some flexibility in their  
9 businesses, but they do not have the obligation to come forward with a specific plan. The  
10 Board's issue right now is whether or not Camden will benefit from making changes within this  
11 zone; does it make good planning sense to contemplate any changes in this zone?  
12

13 Mr. Householder: People have given them a lot to think about and the Planning Board  
14 appreciates people coming out to share their concerns.  
15

16 Mr. Householder then spoke to the impact of the view of High Street and the view of the  
17 harbor as you round High Street had on him and his wife when they were considering moving to  
18 Town. He then read a written statement regarding the value of the wealth of historic properties  
19 to the Town; the value of the resource that is the High Street Historic District; and the role  
20 citizens play in protecting those resources. He referenced the uses set out in the Applicant's  
21 fourth proposal – the one discussed last meeting – and the inclusion of all of High Street in the  
22 new district. He is firmly opposed to that proposal as it endangers the historic character of High  
23 Street.  
24

25 Mr. Sargent: Thanked everyone for coming – it makes the Planning Board's job easier if they  
26 know what the public is actually thinking. They try to use what they hear around town to assess  
27 concerns, but it really help to know what those concerns are of the people who will live next  
28 door.  
29

30 Part of his difficulty with this proposal is that it has been a moving target. They have  
31 gone from a proposal covering one property, to ten properties, to three properties, to forty-five  
32 properties and now it is back to three properties. At one point there was a specific list of intense  
33 uses and now it is down to ambiguous and "squishy" requests for changes that are hard to  
34 understand. If there was no public input tonight he could get behind it because he is not sure  
35 what "increased flexibility" in victualer's licensing and event scheduling means. The Board has  
36 learned that you can't write lose zoning ordinances – they must be very specific; there is no  
37 specificity here.  
38

39 He did a quick tally of the speakers and found that about 1/3 were in support of the  
40 proposal and 2/3 were not. Of all the emails and correspondence they received he guesses these  
41 percentages would be about the same. The Board has requested from the start that the  
42 Applicants go out into the neighborhood to discuss the proposal; that didn't happen in a timely  
43 fashion. By the time the meeting was held people had formed opinions based on a different  
44 proposal than the one that is here this evening. The uses appear to be less intensive, and he  
45 doesn't know if those who spoke and wrote in opposition would change their minds based on the  
46 new proposal. He is very disappointed that there was no effort made through the B&B

1 Association; he doesn't know why they didn't take that approach, but it seems that it might have  
2 been helpful.

3  
4 He can't support it now because it is not well defined, but it is important to keep all the  
5 interested parties - specifically the neighbors who came here tonight – working together. He  
6 believes that it would be very difficult for the Board to create a proposal that would satisfy those  
7 attending this meeting. He suggests putting the proposal back into the hands of the Applicants,  
8 and have them continue to meet with neighbors and the B&B Association. When they have  
9 something that is fairly firm that has support, they should come back to the Board. As it is, not  
10 progress is being made.

11  
12 Mr. MacLean: Everyone who has spoken this evening is concerned about Camden in the future,  
13 but there is a difference of opinions and these opinions are held in good faith. He puts no stock  
14 whatsoever in the numbers of opponents and proponents, but this is not a poll and not important  
15 at this point. However, proponents of zoning changes must continue to make a persuasive case  
16 that the Board should continue to move things forward. The Applicants didn't do that this  
17 evening; it would three of four members wanting to go forward. He hears Mr. Sargent and Mr.  
18 Householder not wanting to proceed, and although his views on the proposal are mixed he would  
19 vote to go forward with discussion, joining Ms. MacKinnon in that regard. That means the  
20 proposition to continue fails on a tie.

21  
22 The Chair took the opportunity to let people know there were openings on the Planning  
23 Board, and they could use some fresh faces. He then spoke to the importance that this Board has  
24 placed on getting public input with the goal of avoiding creating contentious situations and of  
25 avoiding neighborhood warfare. The Planning Board also does not want to take hours and hours  
26 of time on an issue that is going to cause a lot of tension, anxiety and uncertainty, and perhaps  
27 not even have the Select Board, the political body in Town government accountable to their  
28 constituency. The Planning Board doesn't have to please constituencies.

29  
30 He is not opposed to building businesses, and is not opposed to change. He does not  
31 believe that Camden will always stay the same – it has changed over the years he has known it,  
32 and it will continue to change. He would like to see more competition for business in Town  
33 because he thinks competition brings out the best in businesses and people. He doesn't believe  
34 they should be working to preserve economic ways of life that exist now; serving dinner to  
35 guests in B&Bs is fairly innocuous and is not going to cause the demise of the neighborhood –  
36 this is his neighborhood and he can't imagine how this proposal would impact his way of life.  
37 But, there is evidently not enough support on the Board to bring this particular proposal forward.  
38 However, he does not think that the Board should see this as the end of the road; he thinks they  
39 should continue to look at zoning with the idea of keeping businesses vibrant - changes that will  
40 benefit Camden. Perhaps as the composition of the Board changes there will be a broader view  
41 on the subject.

42  
43 Deb Dodge: She asked what the Chair just said actually means. Mr. MacLean replied that the  
44 Planning Board works by consensus on matters that are not actual applications. There is no  
45 timeline to decide this issue, and the decision tonight means that this is not an issue that they are  
46 going to fight to get to the Select Board in September. If they had decided to move forward they  
47 would have scheduled Public Hearings, and moved to craft actual language so it could go

1 forward to the Select Board and on to a vote in November; they are not going to do that.  
2 However, that doesn't mean that they won't be discussing this issue sometime in the future.  
3 These proponents, or anyone else, can come to another meeting to have an informal discussion.  
4 And if they want to bring a proposal before the Board again, the next opportunity to put  
5 something before the voters will be next June.  
6

7 Mr. Wilson suggested that anyone who might want to revisit this particular issue  
8 approach it, not with actual language, but with a listing of what they want to be able to do when  
9 the thing is done – what are the actual uses that they want. Then the language can be crafted to  
10 reach this result.  
11

12 The Chair thanked everyone for coming.  
13

14 **5. DISCUSSION:**  
15

16 Because of the lateness of the hour, the Board did not consider Item 5.  
17

18 There being no further business before the Board they adjourned at 8:40 pm.  
19

20 Respectfully submitted,  
21

22  
23 Jeanne Hollingsworth, Recording Secretary