

1 **CAMDEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**
2 **MINUTES OF MEETING**
3 **March 27, 2014**
4

5 **PRESENT:** Chair Lowrie Sargent; Members: Richard Bernhard, Richard Householder, Jan
6 MacKinnon, and John Scholz;; Jean Freedman-White, Comprehensive Plan Coordinator;
7

8 The Chair called the Meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee to order at 5:30 pm in the
9 Kay Tucker Room of the Opera House.
10

11 **1. FUTURE MEETINGS**
12

13 The Chair reviewed the schedule of Planning Board/Comp Plan Committee Meetings and
14 explained that the joint Select Board/Planning Board meeting of April 28 will include the following
15 discussions: The draft of the new Commercial Open Space District; how to make better/more use of
16 the upper floors of B-1 properties; and the Southern Gateway project. Reworking the streets/roads in
17 the area is central to the Gateway project. Because no one on Town staff has the time or level of
18 expertise needed to do the project justice, Mr. Sargent, who is the Planning Board liaison to CEDAC,
19 has been urging CEDAC to recommend that the Town hire a traffic engineer for the short term to
20 manage this project, as well as the implementation of a part of the Downtown Plan that also involves
21 traffic planning.
22

23 CEDAC is interested in the process cities have used in reclaiming space given over to traffic
24 and giving it over to pedestrian/public use – especially as it involves revitalization projects. “Tactical
25 Urbanism” involves a non-permanent change to traffic patterns like painting areas to be changed as
26 opposed to creating infrastructure. The result of and reaction to changes can be assessed, and designs
27 can be modified before large sums of money are spent. CEDAC is recommending a temporary
28 “installation” of bump-outs at crosswalks downtown this summer to make such assessments. The
29 Select Board will have to find the money for the project and it will be good if they can hear other
30 success stories.
31

32 CEDAC has also become re-energized about finding a use for the Tannery property and would
33 like to meet with the Planning Board to discuss uses in this District.
34

35 **2. CHAPTER 11: HOUSING**
36

37 Mr. Householder clarified the status of work on affordable housing in Town:
38

39 The Affordable Housing Organization is winding down – they have not met since August of
40 2013. Dana Strout and Joanne Campbell – and perhaps George Wheelwright – are all that is left of the
41 organization. They will cease existence once the remaining Lupine Terrace lots are sold – most of
42 these lots are the market rate lots and one affordable spec house. No one knows how they will be
43 replaced. The Housing Task Force does not exist. In this Chapter there needs to be mention that this
44 group is disbanding. The Town needs to work on forming another group to explore the opportunities
45 for affordable housing like rehabilitation and re-use of existing housing; in-law suits; and other
46 situations to create housing for people without much money or who don’t need much space to live.

1 Mr. Sargent noted that when affordable housing was first made available in Camden recipients
2 of the project were asked to “give back” to the Town by volunteering to be firemen, etc. He wondered
3 if this is a concept that might be revisited to address the need for police and firemen to live locally so
4 they can be quick to respond.
5

6 Mr. Householder received information from the Affordable Housing Committee and Habitat
7 for Humanity. That data was from 2013 and not the 2010 census. Mr. Householder checked with the
8 State website and found data, but there is still some information missing that he needs to obtain. None
9 of the five realtors Ms. Freedman-White contacted have responded, nor has anyone from the
10 Downtown Business Group. Besides this group, Mr. Householder does not know where to get a
11 current breakdown on the kinds of housing units that now exist – single family, multi-family, etc.
12

13 Mr. Scholz questioned the number of “seasonal” residences thinking it was low; and Mr.
14 Sargent suggested that the definition of seasonal is unclear: Does the term refer to houses that cannot
15 be lived in year-round or to those where residents come to stay only for the summer? If the numbers
16 are correct and 300 new housing units have been added in ten years, but the number of residents has
17 dropped by 800 people. He knows the number of “black houses” – those occupied only in the summer
18 – has increased greatly, and that may explain the discrepancy. He believes it also indicates that there
19 are no children in these new households, and many are probably occupied by single, divorced, or
20 widowed individuals. All agree they need more data to clarify this trend.
21

22 Mr. Sargent believes the take-away here is that Camden’s problem is no longer the lack of
23 affordable housing, but is instead the increasing number of dark homes in in-town neighborhoods:
24 Neighborhoods don’t develop when there are not year-round neighbors to interact and these home
25 owners do not participate in Town government – many are not registered voters. Mr. Scholz made the
26 point that they come to hearings and speak because they feel they have a stake in the Town as property
27 owners. But when they can’t vote it creates a problem of representative government. Mr. Householder
28 will develop some language to address this situation, and will find a definition of what is meant by
29 “seasonal” in the State’s data.

30 Mr. Householder is still missing much of the information to update the remainder of the
31 Chapter, and members also discussed the other inaccuracies in the charts and data in the rest of the
32 Chapter (as well as information that is missing):

33 Members discussed issues that need to be addressed: The age of the housing stock; the
34 accuracy of the description of the real estate market in the past years; housing values; average salaries
35 of workers; terminology regarding federal housing loans and subsidies; the characterization of the
36 affordable housing “problem”; the number of mobile homes within the Town – not just in the parks
37 but everywhere in Town including accurate information on how the mobile homes are dispersed
38 throughout Town; making sure the language regarding the right of anyone to place a mobile home on
39 any residential lot in Town is accurate with regard to changes in State law; addressing alternatives to
40 finding affordable housing sources and support; encouraging builders to look to new design standards
41 and efficiencies that can be implemented and still be in keeping with the character of neighborhoods;
42 highlighting positive examples of affordable home ownership; and the price ranges of houses and how
43 they sell within the categories.
44
45

1 **3. REVIEW of ZONING DISTRICTS: B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4**

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3 Mr. Bernhard presented the first in the series of discussions regarding all the individual zoning
4 districts within the Town. He has walked each of the four districts, and his report included his
5 observations and in some instance specific information on the numbers and kinds of businesses.
6 Members believe it is more important to provide general information in this regard than specifics
7 because these change over time. A general discussion of the kinds of uses found in the area – a
8 snapshot – will better describe the overall character of the district.
9

10 Mr. Sargent recommended that Mr. Bernhard include a discussion of the Downtown Plan in the
11 recommendations section of the B-1 District. That design calls for wider sidewalks, bump-outs and
12 areas that provide space for small street trees - something Mr. Bernhard feels the district needs. Mr.
13 Householder reported that even though the Select Board has approved the Plan, neither the Tree
14 Warden nor shop owners want trees along Main Street.
15

16 It was noted that Mr. Bernhard – and everyone else conducting district reviews - has the
17 opportunity to make planning observations and to offer recommendations to solve specific problems --
18 something that the Planning Board does not get to do in their normal work. Mr. Sargent
19 complimented Mr. Bernhard regarding his summation of the B-3 District – the district works because
20 of current zoning which should not be changed. He suggested that everyone should add a comment
21 that summarizes what is and what is not working within each zone and why.
22

23 **4. OPEN SPACE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT PROPOSAL:**

24
25 Mr. Sargent and Mr. Scholz prepared a draft of the new zoning district proposed for the Keefe
26 property at Camden Street and Route One. The work is being done now to coincide with the planning
27 for the Southern Gateway, but the zone may also apply to other areas in Town.
28

29 “Purpose: To create a new zoning category intended to allow a variety of commercial uses including
30 professional offices, distribution, light manufacturing and retail with higher floor-area ratios [FAR]
31 and protected natural spaces so that more efficient commercial developments can occur in smaller and
32 irregularly shaped land parcels.”
33

34 The purpose is to encourage a handsome, unobtrusive multi-use commercial space that is more
35 efficient to develop. To that end the proposal also includes design recommendations and architectural
36 standards to be reviewed by the Planning Board: smaller building-to-building setbacks within the
37 parcel; larger side and rear setbacks than for other commercial districts; encouraging taller buildings
38 rather than larger footprints using architectural standards in order to conserve land; encouraging
39 maximum development by including a FAR concept in Camden’s Ordinance for the first time;
40 requiring shared service areas and grouped (shared) parking areas that will be screened; requiring that
41 utilities are buried; and increasing landscaping requirements by providing detailed requirements for
42 boundary screening.
43

44 The Committee went on to discuss the proposal to discontinue access to Camden Street at
45 Route One and using a new road that would run from the light at Hannaford’s to the near side of the
46 animal shelter. This is being done to make the intersection at John Street, Camden Street, Conway

1 Road and Route One safer, and must involve the Town of Rockport because the portion of Camden
2 Street that would be closed is an important access for Rockport residents to Route One and part of the
3 discontinued section of the street is within the Town of Rockport. Discussions have taken place but no
4 concept design has been developed to facilitate those discussions. It is the hope of the Camden
5 planners that seeing an actual design will change the minds of Rockport's planners who appear to have
6 initially dismissed the concept.

7
8 The discussion turned to other areas of Town where this new zone might be employed to
9 encourage better use of properties that may no longer be desirable for residential use because they are
10 on Route One – specifically properties on High Street that are in the Coastal Residential zone the
11 Sagamore Farm area that could be converted to commercial uses.

12 13 **7. SCHEDULE**

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15 Solid Waste: Jim Guerra's comments are in but not those of other Board members. Mr. Sargent will
16 have this ready for Committee review for April 24

17
18 Government: Ms. Freedman-White will be ready for CPC review on the 24th as well

19
20 Recreation and Open Space: Ms. MacKinnon and Mr. Scholz are still on schedule for early May

21
22 Fiscal Capacity: Pat Finnigan should be ready soon

23
24 Regional Cooperation: Mr. Bernhard is on schedule for June

25
26 Harbor: Mr. Sargent is ready to move ahead without comments from Wayfarer since they continue to
27 be unresponsive

28
29 Mr. Householder had left the meeting, but it is assumed that he will have his zone reviews
30 ready for the 24th as well.

31
32 The Select Board will review the draft of the Open Space Zone on 4/28.

33 34 **5. Public Input on Non-Agenda Items:** None

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36 There being no further business before the Committee they adjourned at 7:15 pm.

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39 Respectfully submitted as transcribed from a recording,

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41 Jeanne Hollingsworth, Recording Secretary