**TANNERY SITE TIMELINE**

as of mid-May 2022

1887-1953: Woolen mill.

1953: Sold to Camden Tanning and converted to a tannery (sheepskin hides). Tannery operations continued until…

1997: Leased to Apollo Tanning.

1999, spring: Fire on site.

1999, October: Apollo Tanning went bankrupt and closed. Acquired by Town due to unpaid taxes.

2000: DEP investigations indicated the presence of environmental impacts in the soil and groundwater on the site.

2001, June: ME Dept. of Env. Protection completed a Brownfields Site assessment on Tannery Property.

2002, April: Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) conducted on site.

2003, March: Camden acquired site in a tax lien foreclosure.

2003, September 15: Special Town Meeting where voters authorized Select Board to sell Tannery property (actually, “tax-acquired property”; at that time only the Tannery property qualified) “for any price and at any terms.” Town was in negotiations with United Trust Fund of Miami, terms not specified.

2005, June: $836,000 bond issued to demolish and dispose of the buildings at the former Apollo Tannery site, which was contaminated and unsellable due to its condition and liability. Total cleanup costs ~$1.2m+. The Town has been paying $50,000-$60,000/year for 20 years; should be paid up in 2025.

2005, August: Tannery Site Re-Use Committee formed by Select Board to discuss and recommend future use of site. Included 13 Committee members, 2 Select Board members, opportunities for public input, 7 community members listening in or presenting, plus Town Planner Jeff Nims. The point of the committee work and report was that the Select Board does not go in an unwanted direction; that the town does not sell the property with no caveats.

2005, September: Buildings on site demolished.

2005, December 19: Final report and recommendations presented to Select Board. Each sentence in report had to receive unanimous approval by committee. Recommendations:

Finish cleanup via Brownfield grant; incorporate Riverwalk; favorable to mixed use; commercial use by clean, non-polluting industry or manufacturing with good paying jobs; uses that emphasize and encourage economic activity, entrepreneurship and the creative economy; encourage environmentally conscious development on the parcel; a low-impact use such as a farmers’ market or artists’ village; maintain current zoning - best long-term economic interest of the town; keep existing street trees. Uses discussed: river pathway, playground, picnic area, farmers’ market, art festival area, artist village center, function hall, event rental, film production. Shared conference room or common facilities; trades- or crafts- person use with retail space. Character of the property should be welcoming, not an eye sore.

* Considered important: insure that sale be made with a guarantee that jobs will come from the sale and that it create taxable property. “The reward to the town would be a long-time benefit to its citizens”
* “This property has been instrumental in providing employment to hundreds of Camden citizens for over two hundred years. Clean, non-polluting industrial or manufacturing with good paying jobs would be a fitting consideration.”

2005, December: Local filmmaker Rob Draper proposed a film studio for his business Visionmill, which was considered a great fit with positive impact for community (jobs, creative economy, education). His proposal met with skepticism by some regarding financing and his abilities, in spite of his worldwide reputation. Due to his disrespectful treatment and the slowness of the town’s actions, his interest quickly evaporated and he went elsewhere.

2006, May: An additional Phase II ESA conducted.

2006, June:

* Focused Feasibility Study completed by Summit Environmental Consultants.
* Town meeting vote precluding town from selling tax-acquired property without citizen approval.
* Remediation plans made to remove subsurface soil contaminated by Stoddard Solvent (used to remove fat from sheepskins) and diesel range organics. 2,018 tons of contaminated soil dug up and hauled away, refilled with clean fill. An underground containment slurry wall poured around that remediation site and capped over (remediated area is southeast of existing concrete slab).

2007, July: An additional study “brainstorming” group began forming to look at the recommendations of the 2005 Committee and consider ways to develop the site.

2007, October: Apollo Tannery Redevelopment Work Group, 8 community members, worked to identify the types of businesses that would be suitable for the site, create a list of incentives and define the conditions and requirements the town would place on such businesses.

2008, February: Redevelopment Work Group Final Report and Recommendations: Preference be given to a qualified buyer who would allow public access to riverside paths and maintain existing trees along Washington Street. The town should consider the economic “multiplier impact” that the new employer would stimulate, without taking customers from any already existing business in the town. The town should encourage new owners/businesses in the Creative Economy sector. New owners should build “flexible structures that will be adaptable for future uses” and “be attractive and aesthetically compatible with the neighborhood.”

2008, June: Voters supported by a 2 to 1 margin the Tannery Reuse/Redevelopment Plan – including allowing the Select Bd to negotiate the sale of the property within the very specific requirements set out in the redevelopment plan.

2008, November: Camden voters approved referendum to permanently retain ownership of a 25’ strip of land along Megunticook River for Riverwalk Easement, to be held in trust by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust.

2009: Establishment of the Community Economic Development Advisory Committee, initially charged with helping the town sell the 3.5 acre tannery site.

2010, September: Camden offers Tannery site as “Free Land for Jobs.” Business must provide full-time rear-round positions that pay above the county average, at least $45,000/year, with full rebate for 24 net new jobs within 5 years, or 1/3 rebate for each eight new jobs. Funds offered as a purchase price rebate. Offer continued through 2018 with no success.

2011, January: Economic Development Analysis & Action Plan for Camden, Maine completed by Development Concepts, Inc. Maine Center for Business and Economic Research, U.S.M., funded by the Gateway 1 Corridor Action Plan. 50pp. Intention of report: to guide the economic development efforts of Camden for the next 5-10 years. Featured in the conclusions of the report were a “strategy of ‘in-fill’ development, on sites previously developed or located within existing development areas.” “Catalyze the Emergence and Growth of Technology and Innovation Businesses.” “Acquire a small inventory of under-utilized land that is potentially well-positioned for economic development.” “Focusing on ‘infill’ sites and properties for job growth will pay dividends towards the ‘triple bottom line’ of economic, social and environmental returns on investment.”

2011, April: Film company B. D’Turman’D Entertainment LLC , responding to the “Free Land for Jobs” incentive, received the Select Board’s approval to a purchase-and-sale agreement to build sound stages for movies on the tannery site, a $13 million project proposing to create 25 permanent jobs and 50 temporary full-time jobs for each movie production. They backed out because the site configuration did not meet their needs and they also were treated with hostility and suspicion by some community members. The planned May vote on the sale was cancelled.

2012, August: Maine DOT $18,500 award for constructing Tannery site Riverwalksegment.

2013: Construction of Tannery site Riverwalk with the help of Maine Conservation Corps.

2014, August: Camden Select Board voted to negotiate sale of the Tannery site to North East Mobile Health Services for $75,000. Neighbors filed suit due to noise and traffic concerns. The sale did not go through.

2014, November: Non-binding advisory vote held, giving voters the choice of keeping the land for commercial/business use or using the land for park/open space. The option most favored by the study groups, mixed use (some public, some business), was not offered. The results were very close: Business: 1,429; Open space: 1360.

2015, July: Friends of River Park organized to propose entire site be used as a park and permanent home for the Farmers’ Market, and that site ownership be retained by the town.

2016, January: Tannery Work Group appointed by town “to lead an inclusive, community-wide dialogue to determine the preferred use of the site.” The group had 14 community volunteer members plus Town Manager Pat Finnigan and Community Development Director Karen Brace, with input from professional landscape architects. They worked for 18 months.

2017, March: Tannery Work Group Final Report presented to Select Board. A multi-use concept was embraced which included some business/mixed use buildings, the Camden Farmers’ Market (in a “Community Use Area”), playground and some green space along the river.

2017, July: “Tannery Park” chosen by Select Board as name for the site.

2018, April: Camden is awarded $200,000 more from US EPA for further cleaning up of the tannery site. The work would further mitigate surficial soils, remove concrete slabs, and construct engineered protective cover systems.

2019, May: RFP work delayed. Camden administration felt they needed to learn more from the environmental assessment work on the riverbank: how the un-addressed solid waste in the riverbank can be cleaned up and/or rendered safe for the public, decreasing the Town’s liability, and how the remainder of the site will be used before they could effectively complete the cleanup in a way most appropriate for the areas’ uses.

2020, September: Camden circulated Requests For Proposals (RFPs) from interested parties, for development of the tannery site, deadline October 21. Four proposals were submitted:

* “Millville Apartments” by a Portland real estate developer, Northland Enterprises, to build workforce housing, up to 50 apartments in a 3-story building and a public playground. $85,000 purchase price.
* “Tannery Park” Affordable Industrial Eco-Village, proposed by Michael Mullins of Rockland (Cranesport LLC). $250,000 purchase price. “Tannery Park will offer flexible lease terms to support startups that have outgrown the proverbial ‘garage’ and are in the prototyping or early production phase, but are not yet ready to move into larger, purpose-built industrial space requiring a multi-year commitment.” A large event space and community spaces were included and space proposed for the Farmers’ Market.
* Tannery Park Community Proposal, submitted by Camden local Friends of Tannery Park, proposing creating a public park on the entire parcel, plus partnership with the Midcoast Chapter of Habitat for Humanity to build 2 or 3 affordable houses on a portion along with collaborating with the Camden Farmers’ Market. Ownership would be retained by Camden. Development would be funded through grants and donations.
* Midcoast Habitat for Humanity proposed that Camden donate three residential lots for three new homes.

2021, December: Town Manager Audra Caler provided updates on the RFP proposers.

* Northlands not interested in being involved in a contentious development project that requires a series of Town Meeting votes and various amendments and agreements.
* Habitat for Humanity realizes that a plan for three single-family homes does not fully-utilize the site.
* Friends of the Tannery: strongly advocating for full park use of the site.
* Cranesport LLC: Interested in continuing to work with the town to craft a successful and acceptable agreement and concept.

2022, June 14: Town Meeting, Article 16:

“Shall the Town authorize the Select Board in its best judgment to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement to sell the Apollo Tannery Property as described in Book 3148 Page 278 and 280 and as depicted on Tax Map 114 Lot 18 (“Premises”), excluding the fee interest in the land burdened by the Coastal Mountains Land Trust Declaration recorded in Book 4083 Page 81, subject to the following criteria:

1. The Premises to be developed consistent with the general principles of a central pavilion and gathering center, and flexible incubator workshop spaces, as provided in the Tannery Park Proposal from Cranesport, LLC, dated October 20, 2020.
2. The purchase price of the Premises will be no less than $250,000.
3. The Premises to have continued availability for a farmers’ market.
4. The Town to retain ownership of the Premises until completion of Brownfields remediation through the filing of an amended Certificate of Completion of a Voluntary Response Action Program from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.”