

**CAMDEN RIVERWALK and PUBLIC LANDING PROJECT**  
**PUBLIC FORUM #4**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
September 16, 2013

The meeting was convened at 6:30 pm at the Mary Taylor Middle School on Knowlton Street. Brian Hodges, Camden's Development Director, welcomed the 82 citizens and business owners attending the presentation and thanked his advisory committee, CEDAC, and members of the Town Working Group. Mr. Hodges presented a brief overview of the origin of the projects in the Downtown Master Plan and the history of the Design Team's development of the proposals that will be introduced this evening. Noting how the design had evolved based on input from citizens, Mr. Hodges cautioned that the schematic plans being presented at this forum are "90% proposals" – the designs will be fine-tuned and the finished plans will be presented to the Select Board later in the fall. He asked that participants look at the plans with a broader vision, and consider how the proposal looks overall understanding that Camden must still decide how and when to implement various components of the plans.

With regard to the design proposal for the Public Landing, Mr. Hodges shared the research he had done at the Camden History Center, and noted that beginning in 1936 with a collaboration between Mary Louise Bok and the Olmstead brothers, he found continuing references to planting trees, landscaping and creating green spaces at the Public Landing – the idea of using the Public Landing for more than just parking is not a new idea.

*Sarah Witte Landscape Architect*

Addressing those in the audience not familiar with the project, Ms. Witte briefly explained the history of the Team's work to develop two separate proposals. She explained the project scope and the concept design tool called the Emerald Necklace explaining how it was used in developing the Riverwalk proposal.

Providing a brief history of the three previous public forums, she reviewed the benefits of the Riverwalk as they apply to individuals and families, neighborhoods and communities, transportation, health and the economy. Ms. Witte stressed the fact that studies have shown that property values increase in relation to the proximity of trails and open spaces, and briefly mentioned other kinds of tax-based incentives that Camden might consider to encourage abutter participation in the Riverwalk project. More information on the economic impact of the projects, along with preliminary cost estimates, recommendations for phasing construction, and details regarding easements and permits, will be provided at the time the Implementation Plans are introduced.

*PUBLIC LANDING*

The Team's assignment in creating a proposal for the Public Landing was to determine the current and best uses for the property, taking into consideration both the waterside and landside features, and develop a proposal to create an area where these uses can work together in

harmony in a flexible space enhanced to provide for increased opportunities for use by the public. Pedestrian safety, improved traffic flow, retention of parking for downtown businesses, accessibility and safety at the water's edge were all taken into consideration in this design. Adding amenities like lighting, accessible surfaces, more seating, shade, and showers to accommodate boaters, while retaining spaces for restrooms, food and water, and tourist information were also part of the design considerations. Issues heard at public forums such as making Commercial Street safer for pedestrians; using natural materials for surfaces that would maintain the look and feel of the Town and be durable enough to stand up to winters; developing an alternative to Commercial Street as access to the Landing; protecting the "Roberta Smith" tree; and creating green space were also incorporated into the design. (Detailed information is outlined in the Minutes of the public forums. They, along with all Power Point presentations, are available on the Town's website at: <http://www.camdenmaine.gov>. Follow the Riverwalk and Public Landing link from the Banner; on the project home page find the link to Community Meetings.)

Ms. Witte explained that she had developed three proposals for the re-design of the Landing called Boardwalk, Compass and Sails. They all build upon the same basic components, and vary in that the number of parking spaces decreases as the amount of green space increases. These basic components include:

- Improvements to enhance the existing alleyway to encourage pedestrian traffic from Main Street down to the Landing including light colored cobbled surfaces with steps and handrails in steeper areas. The area is too steep to be made ADA compliant, but there is room to include a ramp to accommodate strollers, etc. The goal is to create a new point of access to the Landing and to reduce foot traffic on Commercial Street. The possibility of future plantings, window boxes, and lighting will make the area even more inviting.
- Improvements to pedestrian safety on Commercial Street with the construction of narrow sidewalks on either side of the street. Elevations of doorways to shops along the street will determine if the sidewalks can be raised above street grade to provide clear delineation, or if a different surface material will be used for this purpose instead. TYLin engineers agreed that there was barely room to fit this sidewalks into the existing street width, but believe that something can be done to encourage pedestrians to stay to the side and to improve safety.
- Cantilevered overlook and "pocket park" at the waterfall end of the Landing is a new feature to draw people to this end of the Landing and make useable a neglected part of the property with great potential and wonderful views.
- The entire Boardwalk is wider and extends all the way to the waterfall park. They are proposing cable railings in two areas of the Boardwalk to improve waterside safety while not interfering with the working areas of the waterfront at the piers and ramps.
- A stub pier, which DEP says is allowed with a Natural Resources Protection Act permit as long as the Town can show there is no other reasonable alternative, will be the location for a new fishermen's hoist. There is room along the boardwalk to site the hoist if the Town decides not to go with this more expensive option.
- Relocating the Harbor Master's office out of the view shed -the new site is near the area dedicated to fishermen and the Town floats.

- An example of a bridge to cross the harbor near the waterfalls has been included. All the design elements stand alone as options to possibly consider in the future. Separate cost estimates, useful for informational purposes, will be provided for all the design components including the bridge, underground utilities and the railings.
- The parking areas will be separated from the boardwalk by low granite block walls instead of the Rugosa Rose hedges that create that barrier now. The walls are intended to serve as waterside seating as well.
- There is a dog rest area by the sewage pumping station.
- A new seating area consisting of a circular bench with a shade tree in the middle is proposed for the area where the Landing transitions to Sharp's Wharf.
- Demolition of the current public restrooms and expansion of the Chamber building to house new bathrooms and showers as well as a Chamber welcome center. (The Chamber is looking to relocate their business offices somewhere with combined office space larger than the Landing building offers.)
- To accommodate winter plowing and provide for greater flexibility in the use of the property for seasonal events, all surfaces will be flush with grade, and no design features are in the path of snow removal and storage. The design components unique to each of the various proposals are designed to be removed to accommodate winter plowing as well.
- Parking spaces at the water edge have been retained.
- Ticket sellers' tables are maintained in a bumped out area of the Boardwalk.

### *The Concept Designs*

*Boardwalk:* 2370 SF of green space, 19,200 SF of "paved" surface and 89 parking spaces (down from the current level of 99) - incorporates a "Boardwalk" which is a surface-level walkway that can be wood, pavement, brick or stone – which delineates a centered pedestrian walkway leading from Commercial Street to the water. At each end are tall archways which are designed to imitate the framework of a boat's hull. This same archway design can also be used to draw people up and down the alleyway, and in other places where it is desirable to direct foot traffic. The archway would become the "brand" for the Landing.

*Sails:* 4,170 SF of green space, 19,200 SF of "paved" surface and 79 parking spaces - incorporates installing sails over centralized green spaces located along the pedestrian boardwalk referenced above. Sails would provide covered shaded areas where seating could be provided. In this case, sails replace the archway as the Landing's brand.

*Compass:* 6120 SF of green space, 14,400 of "paved" surface and 67 parking spaces incorporates a compass design inset into green space midway along the pedestrian walkway. Banners/flags on tall poles surround the area which can be used during events like Schooner Days for vendor spaces or as a location for artists to display their work.

All these designs build upon each other and can be accomplished in cumulative steps as the Town desires. Different surface treatments help define areas where cars should and shouldn't

park, as do different colored surfaces. The Plans offer choices ranging from real cobblestones, concrete planks or, wood for the pedestrian walkway, stamped or imprinted surfaces to resemble brick – what the Town chooses will depend on how much money they have to spend. Although possible sources of funding will be provided with the Implementation Plan, the Team mentioned DEP’s SHIP grants (Small Harbor Improvement Grants) and BIG grants (Boating Infrastructure Grants) that can be accessed for some of this work.

In response to previously stated concerns, a discussion was had with the Tree Warden about relocating the “Roberta Smith” tree; he confirmed it could be done. In addition to hearing concerns about Commercial Street, citizens requested that the bench seating along the Boardwalk be put back into the design – many of those benches are memorial donations and need to be retained.

### *RIVERWALK*

The layout of the Riverwalk, including the basic design components, has not changed since the last presentation. Although there has been progress in finding landowners willing to allow the pathway along their riverfronts, no trails sections on private property will be shown until all easements are in place.

In order to make the details of each pathway section easier to view, and to have space to provide more information and details, Ms. Witte has divided the trail into five sections. Dividing the trail into sections also makes it easier to see how the plan can be implemented in phases, and it shows more clearly what parts of the trail are already useable and where work needs to be done to secure access in the future. The middle school is looking at how they might incorporate the Riverwalk and access to the river long-range into their curriculum. Areas of the trail here will require permits because bridges and wetlands crossings are involved, and access over Town-owned property at the Wastewater Plant is complicated by the grade along the river. The final location of the trail will drive the need for bridges or crossings, but the Team will recommend a unifying design for these components. In areas where the right-of-way can accommodate a 12’ trail, that is what they recommended in order to accommodate multi-uses -- like walkers and bikers using the trail at the same time. It is also possible that portions of the trail might serve as cross-country ski trails as well. The surface they are recommending for many portions of the trail is called “Superhumous” which contains a mixture of wood fiber and gravel among other things. The surface is ADA compliant, will accommodate bikes, wheelchairs and strollers, and is especially good in woody portions of the trail.

When trails are multi-use, guidelines help ensure the uses remain compatible. No motorized vehicles and dawn to dusk hours are two common guidelines. If the Town does permit dogs on certain sections of trails, then rules requiring leashes and places to dispose of dog waste are helpful. The Town should bear in mind, however, that when trails cross private property, it may not be appropriate to permit dogs on these sections especially if property owner’s have concerns in this regard. The Town should also consider where there might be

opportunities to eventually link to other existing or proposed trails, and not take actions that would preclude those connections in the future. They have shown one possible future connection to the Mount Battie carriage trail, but there are endless possibilities in the area.

Ms. Witte noted that the village locations are good places to include some opportunities for interpretive history, and to incorporate the trail location into the infrastructure. Boston does this with the Freedom Trail where sidewalks have colored brick trails for visitors to follow. There will be a need for the Town to develop signage and informational brochures to help people find and use the trail, and the more special the trail is the more visitors will want to stay longer in Town simply because it is here. Ms. Witte designed a sign to use as an example of how the signage can be unique to Camden.

The trail can be constructed as funding becomes available, and estimates on maintenance costs will be provided. The sidewalk out to Shirt Tail has been proposed for many years, and it is currently in the capital improvements funding. Some repairs to existing sidewalks have been made as a result of the feedback heard at various Riverwalk public forums. The Team has not elaborated on the possible use of the Tannery property for this project because that is beyond the scope of their contract. They do believe it is a good place to transition from the “urban” part of the trail coming from the village to the “rural” section ending at Shirt Tail. Mr. Hodges suggest that if people feel strongly that the Town should revisit the use of the Tannery property in light of comments heard at these meetings, that conversation needs to be had separately. (Detailed information is outlined in the Minutes of the public forums. They, along with all Power Point presentations, are available on the Town’s website at: <http://www.camdenmaine.gov>. Follow the Riverwalk and Public Landing link from the Banner; on the project home page find the link to Community Meetings.)

Mr. Hodges thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 8 pm.