



**Town of Camden**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the**  
**Camden Economic Development Advisory Committee**  
**September 23, 2013**  
**5:30pm**

**PRESENT:** Deb Dodge, Pete Brown, Martin Cates, Staci Coomer, Meg Quijano, Lowrie Sargent

**ABSENT:** Rick Bates, Ellis Cohn, Peter Gross, Kipp Wright, Development Director Brian Hodges.

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm.

**2. Approval of Board Minutes**

*Pete Brown made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 26<sup>th</sup> meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Meg Quijano. It was unanimously approved.*

**3. Upper Floor Space in Downtown**

Meg Quijano told the group that Lowrie Sargent had attended a meeting of the Camden Downtown Business Group to ask for input from merchants on uses for the second floors of the downtown buildings. She reported that the meeting had sparse attendance and asked Lowrie if he would be willing to come back to the Business Group in October .

Lowrie outlined the purpose of asking for the participation of store owners and landlords to determine best uses of the upper floors of the buildings. He said the Planning Board may consider zoning modifications to encourage doing business downtown. It was noted that CEDAC is currently working on a goal of providing incubator space for entrepreneurs, so the effort to fill second-floor spaces dovetails with that goal. Lowrie said that he had asked for feedback from CDBG by Thanksgiving. Next steps would be to take an inventory of current commercial and residential uses and to gather input prior to the time of formulating any recommendations.

**4. Comp Plan Review – Chapter 10, Land Use**

Lowrie talked to the group about the process of making revisions to the Comp Plan. He said they are trying to slim the whole plan down and make it more reader-friendly. He explained that once it's edited, the chapters would go back to the Planning Board and then a public comment session would be held. Those who had participated in the revision process would have a chance to see where the Comp Plan stood before final recommendations were put together.

The group went through Chapter 10 of the Comp Plan and added some information to update the document.

The Tannery was discussed, and the Committee decided that the approach to selling the property needs to be looked at it again. The assessment of the group was that the land-for-jobs program

had not worked. It was decided that CEDAC would make a recommendation to the Select Board that the Tannery be revisited.

5. **Opera House Assessment - feedback**

Deb Dodge said that Peter Gross has been working with the Opera House Committee on next steps for their project. An update will be on the next agenda.

6. **Tax Increment Financing (TIF): Knox Mill, CEA Policy**

Establishing a TIF district at the Knox Mill was discussed. The assessment for 2012 had risen from its low in 2011 but was not yet at the level it had been in 2009. Martin Cates said that re-sales of Knox Mill condominiums are occurring at a higher price than they were originally sold for, so the market for those units is rising.

The Committee talked about Credit Enhancements. CEDAC will work on establishing a Credit Enhancement Policy so that individual requests will not be considered on a case-by-case basis, but can instead follow a pre-established policy. The downfall of putting such a policy in place would be that the Town would have less room for negotiation. However, Pete Brown pointed out that a policy can be a starting point and modifications could be made in an extra Town meeting if a specific case extended beyond the boundaries of the policy. He noted that developers speak the language of credit enhancements so they are used to dealing with them.

Pete recommended that the Knox Mill be brought into the Downtown TIF. An upcoming agenda will address a new TIF at the River Business District in the area of Mt. Battie Street including the Tannery, Megunticook Management's spaces, and the Mid-coast Limo property.

Deb requested that everyone come to the next meeting prepared to discuss a Credit Enhancement policy. Brian Hodges has distributed a draft that could be used as a starting point.

7. **Update on Community Meeting**

Those who had attended updated the Committee on the recent community meeting to discuss the Public Landing and Riverwalk projects. They reported that benches around the Public Landing were a point of discussion, and that the plans that were presented had been less controversial than at the previous community meeting.

Cost estimates for the projects will be part of the consultants' presentation of the final documents during October. Lowrie recommended that TY Lin's estimates be reviewed by others in the field before they are presented to the public. He noted that cost estimates should take into account donations and in-kind contributions. The cost of underground utilities at the Public Landing will be contained in the estimates for consideration.

**Public Comment/questions on agenda items**

There were no public comments.

8. **Adjourn**

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Downtown Network Board will be October 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:30. The next CEDAC meeting will be held Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Karen Brace  
Recording Secretary