



Town of Camden
Minutes of the Select Board Meeting
January 17, 2012
7:00pm

PRESENT: Chairperson Martin Cates, Vice Chairperson Morgan Laidlaw, John French, Jr., James Heard, Donald White, and Town Manager Finnigan. Also present were members of the press and public.

ABSENT: Town Attorney Kelly

1. Call to Order

2. Citizen Comments

Chairperson Cates reviewed the guidelines for citizen comments. There were no public comments so the floor was opened to board comments.

Don White thanked Camden Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Kuller for his efforts in formulating a compromise to the Snow Bowl pet rule, resulting in a policy whereby dogs would be allowed on leashes on certain areas of the mountain. He also commended the many volunteers who give their time to Town committees. He urged residents who may be interested in serving to contact the Town Office or to go to the Town's website as there are still openings on some committees.

White said that on Saturday, January 21st the Camden Opera House will utilize its new Specticast system to show the premiere of *The Red Machine*. The Opera House plans to host simulcasts and re-broadcasts of performances using this new technology.

James Heard echoed Don White's comments on the Snow Bowl policy, noting that it's a "people policy" more than a dog policy.

3. Approval of Board Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the January 3, 2012 meeting of the Board was considered. Chairperson Cates corrected the name on line 331 of the minutes from Cates to Laidlaw.

Don White made a motion, seconded by Morgan Laidlaw to accept the minutes as amended. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda

It had been recommended by the Camden Public Library that during the Winterfest event on January 28th Atlantic Avenue be temporarily closed for safety reasons. The Library had asked the Select Board to consider this item at their meeting.

Morgan Laidlaw made a motion, seconded by Don White, to add the closure of Atlantic Avenue during Winterfest to the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

54 Revised Consent Agenda:
55

- 56 a) Approval of a taxicab driver application for Essie Lynn Christianson of Rockland;
57
58 b) The recommendation that Atlantic Avenue be closed from noon to 3pm during
59 Winterfest on January 28, 2012.
60

61 *James Heard made a motion to approve the consent agenda. John French seconded this*
62 *motion and it was unanimously approved.*
63

64 **5. Communications, Presentations, and Recognitions**

65

- 66 a) Presentation by the Camden Conference - *Robert G. Hirsch, President*
67

68 Robert Hirsch reviewed the history of the Camden Conference, which was founded in 1987
69 by the West Bay Rotary Club as a way to create an educational event for residents and
70 visitors, and to bring people to town during the off-season. The Conference's first
71 president was Robert Tierney. Several citizens who had retired from the Foreign Service
72 and the State Department lived in mid-coast Maine and served as a resource for the new
73 organization. Hirsch said that an original element of the event was educational outreach
74 for college students, and that courses have now been created around the content of the
75 conferences at some of Maine's educational institutions.
76

77 In 2006 the conference sold out in three days, so at that point there became a need to
78 increase capacity of facilities to accommodate more participants. In addition to the
79 Camden Opera House, the Strand and Hutchinson Center were then added, where the
80 conference is streamed in real time. The Grand in Ellsworth is also a featured location now,
81 and the conference can currently accommodate 800 people. Hirsch reviewed the estimated
82 economic impact of the Camden Conference, saying that approximately 1000 meals are
83 served to participants by area restaurants during the course of the event and that over 200
84 people stay overnight for the weekend.
85

86 This year's theme is "The US In a 21st Century World – Do we have what it takes?,"
87 featuring keynote speaker Bill Richardson, former presidential candidate and Governor of
88 New Mexico, who also served as Energy Secretary and Ambassador to the United Nations.
89 In conclusion, Hirsch cited the organization's volunteers who donate thousands of hours to
90 put on a conference.
91

- 92
93 b) Recognition of the Camden Conference
94

95 Martin Cates commended the Camden Conference on its 25th anniversary, saying that it has
96 grown through the decades to become both a prestigious event as well as an economic
97 boost for the mid-coast region, contributing to the high reputation of our town in the eyes
98 of event speakers and attendees. He said that the Select Board recognizes the work of the
99 organizers of the Camden Conference and thanks them for their efforts. He presented a
100 plaque to Robert Hirsch on behalf of the Town of Camden.
101

102 **6. Select Board Member Reports**

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104

105 Don White reported that he had attended the Planning Board on January 5th. At the meeting,
106 Code Enforcement Officer Steve Wilson had reviewed the changes in MUBEC (the Municipal
107 Uniform Building Energy Code) which will require stricter rules on building permits. There
108 will be a public hearing on these changes and the topic will likely be before the voters in
109 June. He said that at their next meeting the Planning Board will discuss mobile food
110 vendors.

111
112 Don told the Board that the Camden Opera House Committee along with staff had met on
113 January 10th to consider their strategic plan. Areas of concentration include a plan for
114 renovating the third floor; investigating staffing needs; increasing marketing efforts in the
115 areas of branding and attracting premiere groups to the facility; and a review of COH
116 policies. Also discussed at the retreat was whether the Opera House should focus on
117 profitability. He reported that the group felt that the operation should strive to be revenue
118 neutral within five years.

119
120 White had also attended the Historic Resources Committee on January 10th where QR Codes
121 had been addressed. He noted that more details are forthcoming with regard to sizing and
122 location for the QR Codes. Also on the 10th, the Sign Subcommittee of the Planning Board
123 had held their first meeting to begin to address what signage might look like in conjunction
124 with the Downtown Master Plan. The Sign Subcommittee will be meeting every week on
125 Thursdays at 5:30.

126
127 Finally, White reported that the Regional Transit Group is looking at the possibility of
128 seeking some funding and is building a strategic plan.

129
130 Morgan Laidlaw reported on the Conservation Committee's December meeting. Their next
131 meeting will address the committee's goals for the year.

132
133 James Heard said that he had attended the Parks and Recreation Committee on January 12th
134 where the dog policy at the Snow Bowl had been discussed, resulting in a compromise to
135 allow dogs on leashes on certain areas of the mountain.

136
137 Martin Cates reported that he had attended the CEDAC meeting on January 9th where there
138 had been discussion on Camden Affordable Housing as well as on the Parking and
139 Transportation Committee recommendation.

140
141 Cates reminded people the first of two community meetings to get input into the Downtown
142 Master Plan would be held on Thursday, January 26th at 6:30pm at the Camden Opera
143 House. Residents and business owners are encouraged to attend. He noted that as a
144 resource for citizens, there is a section of the Town of Camden's website dedicated to the
145 Downtown Master Plan. Residents who can't attend the community meeting are invited to
146 contribute ideas by sending them to Brian Hodges, Development Director for the Town of
147 Camden.

148
149 Chairperson Cates said that CEDAC had also discussed the Tannery site and had looked at
150 the idea of collaborating with local realtors to market the property. Brian Hodges will be
151 talking with a few local agencies to determine how best to proceed.

152
153 Lastly, Cates reported the potential for the Opera House Committee's potential use of Tax
154 Increment Finance (TIF) funds which would need Select Board consideration.

155 **7. Town Manager's Report**
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157 Town Manager Finnigan noted that the Toboggan Nationals are coming up in early
158 February, and while the Snow Bowl is reporting that the two- and three-person teams are
159 sold out, there is still room for four-person teams. She said that the Snow Bowl had been
160 actively making snow and was getting ready to host three events over the upcoming
161 weekend including a ski lessons for people with disabilities. She also noted that she has
162 been spending time getting ready for budget season.
163

164 **8. New Business**
165

166 The Town Manager reviewed the process to address inner harbor marina improvements. At
167 the September 20, 2011 Select Board meeting, the Harbor Committee had presented a
168 request that the Harbor Projects Reserve Funds be used to upgrade the marina at the Public
169 Landing. The Select Board had voted to approve up to \$120,000 for this project. The project
170 was advertised for bid with bids due at 2pm on Wednesday, January 11th.
171

172 Town Manager Finnigan reported that they had received 5 bids for the floats and 3 bids to
173 install the pilings and dolphins. The process guidelines stated that bids were to be awarded
174 to the lowest bidder who can meet the bid specifications. Since both of the low bidders met
175 the specifications, it was recommended that the bids be awarded to the lowest bidders for
176 each of the elements of the project. The total bid price of both the floats and the piling
177 system amounts to \$102,340 which is \$17,660 under budget. The Town Manager reported
178 that there had been some concern voiced by members of the Harbor Committee during the
179 bidding process regarding awarding bids to local contractors, but that the guidelines for the
180 process had been followed. She said that the timeline on the project is that it should be
181 completed by early April.
182

183 *John French made a motion, seconded by Don White to award the bid for floats for the inner*
184 *harbor marina project to Custom Float Services of Portland in the amount of \$72,660, and to*
185 *award the bid for pilings for the inner harbor marina project to Art Tibbetts Marine*
186 *Contractor of Camden in the amount of \$29,680. The motion was unanimously approved.*
187

188 **Adjourn**
189

190 *John French made a motion, seconded by Don White to adjourn as Select Board and convene as*
191 *Board of Assessors. The motion was approved unanimously.*
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193 *****

194 **Board of Assessors**
195

196 **1. Consideration of a real estate property tax abatement and corresponding off-setting**
197 **supplement for Arissa L. Egan, Jonathan Egan, and Gary M. Huyser of 110 Rollins Road**
198

199 Wes Robinson, Assessors' Agent for the Town of Camden, explained the purpose of the
200 abatement request. He said that Gary Huyser had conveyed a portion of his property located
201 on Rollins Road to Arissa and Jonathan Egan, and had subsequently conveyed the remaining
202 50% in a separate deed. The assessment records were not updated to reflect that
203 transaction. The purpose of this abatement request was to correct that.
204

205 *John French made a motion to grant a tax abatement and supplemental assessment as*
206 *recommended by the Assessors' Agent. Morgan Laidlaw seconded the motion and it was*
207 *unanimously approved.*
208

209 **2. Consideration of a real estate property tax abatement request by Georgiana McCabe**
210 **of 156 Shermans Point Road**
211

212 Wes Robinson, Assessors' Agent reported that Georgiana McCabe of 156 Shermans Point
213 Road had requested that the assessment of her land value be reduced from \$1,516,100 to
214 \$1.137,375. He told the Board that he had found no evidence to support an over-valuation
215 claim and that he recommended denial of this request. There was discussion about
216 comparable properties in the neighborhood, the process of valuing waterfront properties,
217 and the status of the overall real estate market.
218

219 *John French made a motion to deny the real estate property tax abatement request by*
220 *Georgiana McCabe of 156 Shermans Point Road. Morgan Laidlaw seconded the motion. The*
221 *motion was approved unanimously.*
222

223 **3. Presentation by the Assessors' Agent**
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225 Assessors' Agent Wes Robinson made a presentation to the Board, reviewing processes he
226 goes through to assess properties in the town. He said that in Camden, assessment values
227 average out at 91% of selling prices and observed that the down real estate market had hit
228 Camden later than elsewhere in Maine. There was some discussion on tax abatements and
229 the process that a property owner must go through to provide evidence that they've been
230 over-assessed. Robinson said that there had been some cases recently where properties had
231 sold for substantially less than their assessed value. Lastly he informed the Board of his
232 work schedule during the periods of the year.
233

234 **Adjourn**
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236 *Don White made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Morgan Laidlaw. The motion*
237 *passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.*
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239
240

241 Respectfully submitted,
242

243 _____
244 Karen Brace
245 Recording Secretary
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