

**Rockland Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Meeting May 22, 2014**

**Minutes (draft by J Holden). Approved as presented 06/26/14**

In attendance:

Joann Billington, Member (Chair)  
Tina Plummer, Member  
George Terrien, Member  
Valli Geiger, Member  
Robin McIntosh, PBRCC  
Steve Roberts, Member  
Mark Breton, Member  
John Holden, Community Development Director, Rockland

1. Minutes from the April 24, 2014 meeting were approved.
2. Camden Street. V Geiger reported that the Comps Committee is now meeting twice per month, partly to address considerations to code and zone changes for Camden Street. One meeting per month is focused on Camden Street and to present recommendations as charged by Council.
3. Chamber Update. R McIntosh provided update. Visitor Center activity is picking up. The Chamber has been participating in events and meetings to address improvements in higher education and training in Maine. The Maine Tourism Association met at the Samoset and the Chamber hosted a familiarization tour for the operators of the State Visitor Centers in Rockland. The Maine Motorcoach Association is meeting in Rockport and the Chamber will participate to encourage more motorcoach visits.
4. RMSI update. J Holden reported, briefly, of RMSI participation in the National Downtown Conference as well as RMSI much-appreciated assistance to welcome new business to Rockland.
5. REDAC discussion, RE: REDAC role in fostering improvements to the City educational system. The Committee had a long dialogue and discussion with Committee Member Steve Roberts who is also the current Chairperson of the RSU School Board. The conversation included the following comments and points.
  - a. Search for new Superintendent underway. Interim Superintendent term extended through June 30.
  - b. The position and role of the Midcoast School of Technology was discussed. This arose partly due to one Committee Member learning that a number of local business were seeking qualified technical staff. J Holden reported that he has met with MCST and together with Committee Member would revisit MCST. M. Breton expressed interest and J Holden will set follow up meeting. J Holden and M Breton will meet with MCST

and report back to the Committee any ideas or ways to make the most use of MCST for economic development.

- c. S Roberts made note of the challenges of the Schools Board and school systems to meet reporting measurements as required by the State. Currently Rockland schools have been given “grads” of A, B, three units with D, and a C. The Rockland High School is not assigned a grade.
  - d. On REDAC’s “role,” S Roberts was not sure. He suggested that “support” of the schools is important. At times of budgets hearings the most vocal opinions are those with negative things to say.
  - e. The Committee asked if there were data on past graduates from the High School.
  - f. S Roberts commented on the “culture” of public education and recommended his vision for changes.
  - g. G Terrien suggested that perhaps the City and School system could “meet” or “connect” with another school system from a community “a far” to discuss common issues and what if anything changed the “culture” in that community.
  - h. It was suggested that the Committee might perhaps find or suggest ways to engage the parents of school age students.
  - i. S Roberts noted that there is a subcommittee report due soon (of the School Board) that he would ask to share with REDAC.
6. Update on City Projects
- a. The Economic Development Council of Maine has approved and will hold a 1-day conference in Rockland on November 18 on downtown redevelopment and brownfield programs. J Holden hopes to invite members of other organizations, developers, and others. A session and, weather permitting, walk around the Tillson Avenue District will be planned.
  - b. The Brownfield Program has three properties approved for Phase II reports—all in the Tillson Avenue District. There is hope of some potential new applications.
  - c. J Holden noted that the City’s TIF Policy will be reviewed and he will be recommending changes so that the Policy meets updated standards of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. The Policy was provided to the Committee.
  - d. J Holden noted that he is still seeking proposals to produce a bi-fold for Business Development and Expansion in the City. It will include a card describing steps for property improvement (code requirements, fees, etc.). J Billington recommended that when in draft form it be presented to the Committee and private sponsors be asked to pay for its printing and design costs.

- e. J Holden provided an update on the insert in Progress Magazine. He noted private interest in the City and that Progress has helped identify other parties in Canada for one local business to discuss possible joint projects, or for a Rockland business to serve as a distributor of a new product, and identified a company that will exhibit at the Maine Boats, Homes, Harbor Show.

Next meeting will be June 27, 2014.