

Board discussions re: Sagamore Farm

You'll see the idea of a business Park has been around for many years – it comes and goes out of fashion:

10/6/2004

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW**

### **TOWN OF CAMDEN: SAGAMORE FARM ROAD**

Bill Lane of Gartley and Dorsky Engineering & Surveying represented the Applicant. The Town is seeking permission to place fill and revegetate about 2 acres off Route One in connection with the Route One reconstruction project. Doing this will keep Lane Construction dump trucks that are moving excavated material from going through downtown Camden. The Town owns about 77 acres off the Sagamore Farm Road, but for the duration of this project, trucks will access the gravel pit across land owned by Laite Construction. Lane has leased Laite land and buildings for their base of operations for the project. Until this Application is approved, Lane will use the Laite lay-down area to stockpile fill. Parker (Chip) Laite, Jr., represented Laite Construction, and was present to answer questions. He informed the Board that the Select Board had endorsed the proposal and that he has recused himself, as a member of the Select Board, from any deliberation.

The Town's property is largely wooded with some wet areas west of the proposed fill site. The site is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of re-growth after having last been used in the late 60's or early 70's for gravel. The fill area will be cleared of trees to be chipped on site. The mulch will be used to construct a berm to control any erosion and runoff. This site was taken down to ledge when it was used before, and once filled, covered over and revegetated, it will return to natural growth.

1/5/2005: Initial discussion by Board about a Business Park at Sagamore Farm

Mr. Macomber asked what role the Board could play in encouraging the Town to develop their property off the Sagamore Farm Road into a light industrial park as suggested by Mr. Laite. All on the Board believe that there is a need for more commercial property in Town and this is a great location. It was suggested that the property could assume Pine Tree Zone status if Wayfarer were to give up their designation. There are certain categories of job creating businesses that can take part in the program -- Marine Technology, Computer Technology, Bio- technology and Finance. There is no tax on capitol improvements but the business has to create jobs with above average pay and above average benefits. In Camden there are three current sites – the old Apollo Tannery, Tibbett's Industries and Wayfarer. The tannery site is so designated to act as an incentive to any possible investors, but Wayfarer may not be interested in participating any longer. The Board suggests that the Select Board be made aware of the possibilities for the Town's property. Mr. Nims suggested that the Board could go ahead and rezone the property as industrial as a flag that it is available for development. That could be considered in later zoning amendment changes.

2/2/2005: Discussion regarding possible Zoning Ordinance Amendments – this one did not go forward.

**Discussion:** Select Board member, Sid Lindsley, was in attendance and asked to address the Board with regard to their discussion at their January 5 meeting regarding creating a light industrial park on the Town property off Sagamore Farm Road. He had read the Minutes and was there to encourage the Board to move forward. He believes that past history shows that townspeople want to create areas where these businesses can take place. He knows there will be opposition, especially by those concerned about increased traffic, but he thinks if the amendment is crafted carefully with regard to what businesses are allowed, that it may pass. People fear oil and chemicals traveling in the area, but would support boat building and wood working, plumbing supply, etc. It is a perfect place for these businesses to go where they won't affect their neighbors because of the size of the parcel. He suggests using the existing road over the Laite Construction property that is being improved at this time, rather than the Sagamore Farm Road. This property might qualify for Pine Tree Zone development status and all the benefits that accrue.

Mr. Gross asked what the next step was. The CEO suggested that they could simply propose a revision to the Ordinance creating this district and define the uses that would be allowed. There was much discussion about what kind of information the townspeople would want to have before they would approve this concept: What were the costs? Who was going to organize and oversee the project? Would it require the creation of an Economic Development Committee to find tenants and to collect rents and handle leases, etc.?

Mr. Lindsley argued that those can be in the final details, but that the concept needs to be run by the voters first. There was not agreement on this position, and the CEO was asked to see how neighboring towns handled their business and industrial parks. Thomaston evidently has a major new project in the development stage and would be a good source.

Mr. Sargent suggested that if site information was gathered together with GIS information, they could get a pretty good picture— perhaps they could find an engineer to volunteer to do a feasibility study on how much land was suitable for development.

It was suggested that the local chambers may be able to provide information on whether or not companies had inquired about space availability – that may be a way to see what kinds of businesses are looking for homes.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Create a new zoning classification: Commercial (C) perhaps ready for June ballot

ACTION: Kelly Macomber will draft

2. Discuss with the Town Manager preparing a budget request to be submitted with the current budget request for \$25,000 for a Preliminary Feasibility Study using (perhaps) Eastern Maine Development Corporation who also handles the Pine Tree Zone work

3. Create a working group with Mr. Lindsley, members of the Camden business community and volunteers from the Planning Board to work on a plan for presenting the concept to the Town.

ACTION: Kelly Macomber and Lowrie Sargent volunteered from the Board

4. Contact Will Gartley regarding site information gathered for the land filling project on-going on the property now.

ACTION: Mr. Gross will contact Mr. Gartley

3/2/2005: Beginning discussions about changing zoning to allow the Wayfarer project at Laite Construction next to Sagamore Farm:

#### Sagamore Farm Road Commercial Park

There is a proposal drafted. The CEO talked to the Town Manager about including sewer as the road work is going on. She didn't think that it was realistic to draft a proposal in the time frame to go to the Town Meeting. Another problem is that there is no money to do a sewer extension. The nearest point is about ½ mile away. There might be a way to come across country a shorter way which could be done irrespective of the road project and the only disruption would be the crossing. Perhaps a pipe could be put in the ground at the Sherman's Point Road crossing so the road does have to be torn up again. Then sewer could come up the shoulder. It may not be possible to go before the Board in June

Mr. Macomber had question about revised proposal: The maximum height of the buildings had been changed from 50' to 40'. He believes that this may cut off use of some commercial uses. Mr. Scholz argued that the 40' limit may limit 3 story designs to a flat roof – if this was a concern then the Board may have to require sloped roofs. Developers can also take advantage of natural slopes to pick up some extra height. The Board would like a map that offers a better idea of what the land looks like. Will Gartley was going to overlay this map on a coarser grained topo which will give some of that info.

By waiting until November to present this change to the Town, this would allow the proposal on the Laite property to test the waters to see how commercial changes out that way go over with the public.

4/6/2005: Discussion of whether to let Wayfarer expand to a site abutting Sagamore Farm:

Jack Burgess: High Street abutter: Noted that a business park proposed for Town land off Sagamore Farm Road was turned down 25 years ago because of traffic concerns. Traffic is much worse now, and the concerns are still there. He is also concerned about drainage and chemical waste and debris – the Laites are on septic

August and September 2008 – Cell Tower Site Plan Review

#### REPORTS FROM THE SAGAMORE FARM BUSINESS PARK PLANNING GROUP:

05/06/2009: Mr. Sabanty reporting: They will walk the site next meeting and the next two meetings will be with people who have ideas on developing a business park. They also are in the information gathering stage. They will be meeting with abutters, looking at the feasibility of the entire project, and then looking at whether or not it is worth changing the zoning for the property to accomplish the project. It was noted that the cell tower project has not started any work.

5/20/2009: Mr. Nims reporting: The group met at the site and walked the property – wherever it was dry enough. They discovered the extent of the wetland but with the fill added during the Route One project there is plenty of high and dry land for development. Some buildings would have beautiful views of the bay from a 2<sup>nd</sup> story and the group was very enthusiastic at the end of the walk over the possibility of the site being a great attraction for someone wanting to develop an office park or something similar where a water view would be a great selling point. They are looking for a Wetlands Scientist to do an informal wetlands cruise so they know the boundaries of the lot they have to work with. On the whole they group left very excited about the great potential of this property. Next they plan to meet with some of the abutters to hear their concerns.

6/3/2009: Mr. Sabanty reporting: The group had met at the site and walked the property. They will be meeting with Ross Parker to get his ideas on the possibility of a sewer extension to serve the site and some idea of those costs. They will meet with Parker Laite, an abutting property owner, as well. They discovered that the Laite commercial property is for sale and wondered whether or not the Town should think about purchasing the property. Mr. Nims reported that he had heard from a possible buyer and suggested that the group might want to be in touch with him to see what his interests in compatible development might be.

### **GATEWAY 1 GRANT APPLICATIONS: PRESENTATIONS**

Three applications had been submitted for the Board's review and recommendation requesting funding under a Gateway 1 Planning Grant program. The Board will hear presentations this evening and make their decision on recommendations to the Select Board at the next meeting. The Select will make the final decision on which to send forward to Gateway 1.

The proposals were heard in the order in which they were received. Copies of the actual proposals, available in the Code Office, supplement these minutes:

NOTE: The upper limit set by Gateway for this round of grant proposals was very recently reduced by the Gateway 1 Funding Subcommittee to \$29,500, and the amount may be adjusted upward again. Proposals drafted before this action do not reflect this change.

**1. Business Park Planning Group:** Members: Kerry Sabanty, Kelley Macomber, Jeff Nims, Chris MacLean, and John French; Peter Gross, member and Chair of CEDAC presenting:

The group is seeking \$30,000 to develop a Commercial Property/Business Capacity Inventory and Economic Development Analysis to be used as part of CEDAC's mission to stimulate economic activity, business development and job creation in town. They will use this information to develop a business plan for a future business park. The group believes they will be able to determine if there are some spaces in town that might be put to better use for job creation or business development (and note if zoning adjustments are needed or other assistance is necessary to convert these spaces). With the goal of preventing sprawl through encouraging the re-use of existing commercial space and in-fill commercial development, the proposal addresses the Gateway Planning Grant requirement regarding benefitting the corridor.

Mr. Householder recommended that the group seek a consultant who is familiar with small towns. The Chair asked if there might be other grants or development money to do the kind of work proposed by the committee. Mr. Sargent suggested that this information would be a useful sales tool for realtors in the area. He suggested that perhaps the group could ask realtors to chip in on the costs - otherwise they will have access to this valuable information for free. Mr. Gross confirmed that the group was confident they could accomplish much of what they proposed for the money requested, and that the information would be valuable to other groups of people as well.

Mr. Sargent also asked if much of this information didn't already exist and just needed to be compiled - perhaps by an intern or other volunteers. Mr. Gross replied that the data would have to be run through a consultant to put it into a useful format in any case. Mr. Householder asked if any consultants had reviewed this proposal. Mr. Gross replied that the cost estimates came from consultants based on the scope of the work the committee was requesting.

Ms. McConnel asked what kinds of shortcomings regarding existing commercial space the group was referring to in their proposals. Mr. Gross offered an example of the former mill being classified as a "Class A high-tech space" - that has never been confirmed and it may not be so. Before the town markets the area as having this space available they should know for sure that they have what businesses are actually looking for. In this way they can determine what kinds of spaces are needed that are not available and what would work in the business park setting. The business park can fill in the missing gaps - perhaps offering cheaper rents, especially for those in home occupations who want to grow but can't afford downtown rents.

8/5/2009: Mr. Nims reporting: The group finally made the Site Walk with representatives from Gartley & Dorsky. They were amazed to find a great deal of very nice land and feel the location has tremendous potential. G&D will provide an estimate for an initial delineation of the wetlands. The group wants to look at the site as a whole

08/19/2009: Mr. Sabanty reporting: Mr. Nims, Peter Gross, Kelly Macomber, representatives from Gartley and Dorsky and himself met to review the proposal for an assessment on development possibilities on the property - G&D would charge \$17,000 to outline the wetland, draw up proposed building envelopes and otherwise asses the property for development. They did find out that there are about 20 acres on the Town-owned site that actually belong to the State Park. The land does not include the cell-tower site.

9/2/2009: Mr. Sabanty reporting: The group is meeting with Chris Shrum to discuss sources of funding for the site development assessment that Gartley and Dorsky has proposed.

11/4/2009: Kerry Sabanty reporting: The group had gone to the Board of Selectmen to request funding for feasibility/planning study and was turned down. Chair Kelley Macomber was the target of a citizen's tirade against the concept of a business park in this location, and received negative feedback from the members of the Select Board as well.

11/01/2012: Discussion to prioritize work for upcoming year

Research Open Space Commercial Zone for Sagamore Farm: Others agreed with Mr. Sargent that the Board should look to addressing this issue in the Comp Plan re-write, and Mr. MacLean

suggested that use of the park might be included as a future “Business Plan” for the Town is developed.

10/16/2014: **DISCUSSION SECTION #6. SELECT BOARD WORK LIST:**

The Board discussed the recommendations for items they will send to the Select Board for work in the coming year. Mr. Sargent will draft a memo to the Select Board Liaison and send it on behalf of the Planning Board. In no particular order of importance the six items are:

- The Planning Board wants to understand the Select Board’s role in decision making – how do they assess the Planning Board’s work on Ordinance Amendments?
- The Planning Board will ask that members of both boards be treated with civility and respect – especially during joint meetings or when appearing before each other’s Boards
- There is a State program that evidently provides tax relief to town’s board and committee members – the Planning Board would like the Select Board to authorize that relief for their members in the hope that it would attract new members
- The Planning Board will request that the quarterly joint meetings of the two boards is re-instated
- The Planning Board would appreciate the Select Board being better informed about Planning Board issues. They will ask that the Select Board members come to their review of ordinance amendments informed of the Planning Board’s decision-making process *before* making their decision on proposed amendments

Don White, Select Board Liaison, had presented a tentative list from the Select Board to the Planning Board:

- Review the Zoning Ordinance to modernize and clarify
- Be more proactive
- Sagamore Farm property