

## FOX HILL, The Rest Of The Story

To the Camden Planning Board:

I am compelled to write and address some misconceptions which have, so far, NOT been reported as part of the discussion. I am writing rather than speaking because I cannot speak in the language of the ordinance as requested. Never the less, I wish to be heard. This letter is not against rehabs in Camden, rather, my effort to speak regarding the zoning changes, and the alleged benefits to the town if such a change is allowed.

When I arrived to Camden over 30 years ago, I fell in love with THE TOWN, it's people, and the slower pace of life. To speak of this town as dying, is a very shortsighted view of Camden. In my short time here, there have been good economic times and busts ... In the 80's prior to the boom of the 90's the community was and has always had, a core of residents, born, raised or imported to this area who protected it's well being and character and accepted this town for what it has always been, a beautiful piece of Maine which was NOT, nor would be, a big economic hub such as Portland or Bangor. They worked for or owned businesses big and small, grew with the times, always finding ways to hang on during difficult economic conditions. My guess is those people will remain long after most of the people, who treat Camden as their own personal monopoly game have left. The people who come here to make big money come and go. The hard working "little" and big people of our town are still here and will remain. It is an insult to all of those who own and operate businesses, deliver your mail, clean houses, pump gas, build homes, care for and teach our children, do repairs and provide help with all the other necessities of life. To insinuate that this proposal is Camden's last chance to be saved from a bunch of old people who don't understand change, or from being called an "assisted living community" is arrogant, as well as inaccurate. People of all ages do understand, many just have a different opinion as to what they expect from, and want for, the town of Camden.

There have been claims of economic benefits to the town, (other than taxes, which any owner will pay,) but the details seem incomplete, and therefore, misleading. For example, no break down is given regarding jobs they intend to create. "Staff" does not say how many of those jobs are minimum wage jobs and how many are professional medical and supervisory staff with larger salaries. What does that break down look like? How many full time new jobs will there be and will those people actually live full time in Camden and contribute to the local economy on a consistent basis? The same with money listed for operating expenses, are they saying it will all be spent in local Camden stores? I think not! Will uniforms, bedding, cleaning and office supplies, even food, consistently be purchased from local providers? I think not!

The other issue that has been ignored is the assertion that this rehab facility will bring recovery from alcohol and drug addiction to Camden and the surrounding community's. This is an incomplete view of the current recovery available in Camden. THERE IS, AND HAS BEEN, FOR A VERY LONG TIME A LARGE, THRIVING and VIBRANT RECOVERY COMMUNITY IN THE ENTIRE MIDCOAST AREA. The present choices are varied from, for profit and nonprofit substance abuse counseling, to detox. There is also recovery that does not charge a fee for participation. You will find many maintaining a productive long-term sobriety from both drugs and alcohol, people who have been helped by some, or all, of these opportunities. The same free and paid for services are available for family of addicts and attended by many. Many of those who maintain their sobriety, are your neighbors, business owners, clergy, professionals in

every field, construction workers, housewives...they clean your houses, feed your families, and participate in their community at every level, quietly enjoying and passing recovery information to any who ask. New people and their families, suffering the ravages of addictions are finding free, or paying for available resources, every day, right here in Camden. Some have traveled outside our area for rehabs, if they had the money, but others never left our town and have been successful in recovery. This letter is not recommending one recovery over another, it is simply an effort to set the record straight about the opportunities available here in Camden. I am hoping this information will cause the board, to dismiss claims that rezoning "will bring health benefits to our area" or effect the drug and alcohol use among our population.

My hope is you will also not pass this on to a vote by the public. Zoning should not be done by vote, with decisions based on individual business proposals and promises. Just because you can pass your duty on to voters, does not mean it is the proper use of your power. If you want to have a vote on zoning, then be thorough and have an up or down on repealing the entire existing comprehensive plan and start over. Do you really want to open that battle again? Please uphold the present, clear zoning guidelines and don't relinquish your duty to the emotional pleas of the investors and their well-meaning friends. Promises to not leave town in a few years, could leave us with changed zoning, and another kind of new business tenants at Fox Hill that we are powerless to stop. Claims of increased recovery by our community members are not relevant. Allegations of economic growth to the community because of this change are exaggerated. Please, focus on the zoning and the precedence you are setting. Please maintain the integrity of our town's hard worked-for and accepted zoning ordinance, that is the job you were elected to do.

Sincerely,  
Sue Morrison  
Camden resident