

# **Town of Lincoln, Maine**

## **Economic Development Leadership – Council Briefing**

This expanded briefing is intended to clearly articulate the extraordinary depth of experience, measurable accomplishments, and strategic value of the Town of Lincoln's Economic Development Team. The individuals highlighted in this document represent decades of institutional knowledge, nationally recognized redevelopment expertise, and proven success in guiding communities through economic disruption toward long-term stability and growth.

# Steve Levesque – Economic Advisor

Steve Levesque is widely regarded as one of Maine's most accomplished economic and community development professionals. With more than 45 years of experience, his career reflects sustained success in solving the most complex redevelopment challenges facing communities—particularly those recovering from major industrial or military closures.

As Executive Director of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA) from 2008 to 2021, Mr. Levesque led what is now considered one of the most successful military base redevelopments in the United States. Under his leadership, over 3,200 acres of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station were transformed into Brunswick Landing, a vibrant mixed-use campus supporting advanced manufacturing, aviation, education, housing, and innovation.

The results of this effort are substantial and measurable: more than \$500 million in private-sector investment, over 1,000 direct jobs created, more than 100 new businesses launched, and a stabilized regional economy following base closure. These outcomes required navigating federal property transfer, infrastructure reuse, environmental remediation, aviation operations, and complex public-private partnerships—an experience directly relevant to Lincoln's current redevelopment efforts.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Levesque served as Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, where he oversaw statewide business recruitment, expansion, and retention efforts. He worked directly with the Governor's Office and Legislature, guided incentive and grant programs relied upon by municipalities across Maine, and helped shape policies that strengthened the state's economic foundation. His leadership bridged state policy and local implementation, making him uniquely effective as an advisor to towns navigating economic transition.

Mr. Levesque's work has been recognized at the highest levels, including acknowledgment in the United States Congressional Record and multiple statewide and national awards. His continued involvement with Lincoln brings not only technical expertise, but credibility, institutional memory, and proven judgment that significantly reduce risk in complex redevelopment initiatives.

# Vicki L. Rusbult, EdD, EDP, MPA – Project Manager

Dr. Vicki Rusbult brings more than four decades of hands-on economic and community development experience to the Town of Lincoln. As Director of Community Initiatives at the Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), she has become one of the region's most trusted experts in transforming community goals into funded, implementable projects.

Over the course of her career, Dr. Rusbult has supported more than \$50 million in state, federal, and private investment. She has successfully completed or supported more than 100 grant applications and provided direct technical assistance to over 40 Maine communities—many of them small, rural towns with limited staff capacity. Her ability to navigate complex federal programs dramatically increases Lincoln's competitiveness for funding.

Dr. Rusbult's expertise extends well beyond grant writing. She is deeply experienced in transportation systems, workforce alignment, brownfields redevelopment, and long-range planning. Her work ensures that projects are not only eligible for funding, but realistic, compliant, and sustainable once implemented. This reduces administrative burden on town staff and protects the Town from compliance and audit risk.

Her academic credentials—including a Doctor of Education, a Master of Public Administration, and certification as an Economic Development Professional—complement her practical experience. Dr. Rusbult is frequently sought out as a presenter and advisor at the state and national level, bringing additional visibility and credibility to the Town of Lincoln's redevelopment efforts.

# Ruth Birtz – Economic Development Administrator, TIF Administrator & Assessor

Ruth Birtz represents the backbone of Lincoln's economic development efforts. With 34 years of continuous service, she provides unparalleled institutional knowledge, fiscal discipline, and community trust. Her leadership spans economic development, tax increment financing, and property assessment—three areas critical to municipal stability.

Ms. Birtz guided the Town of Lincoln through the closure of Lincoln Paper and Tissue—twice—events that fundamentally altered the town's economic landscape. Her steady leadership during these periods ensured continuity of municipal services, transparent communication with residents, and strategic positioning for recovery rather than decline.

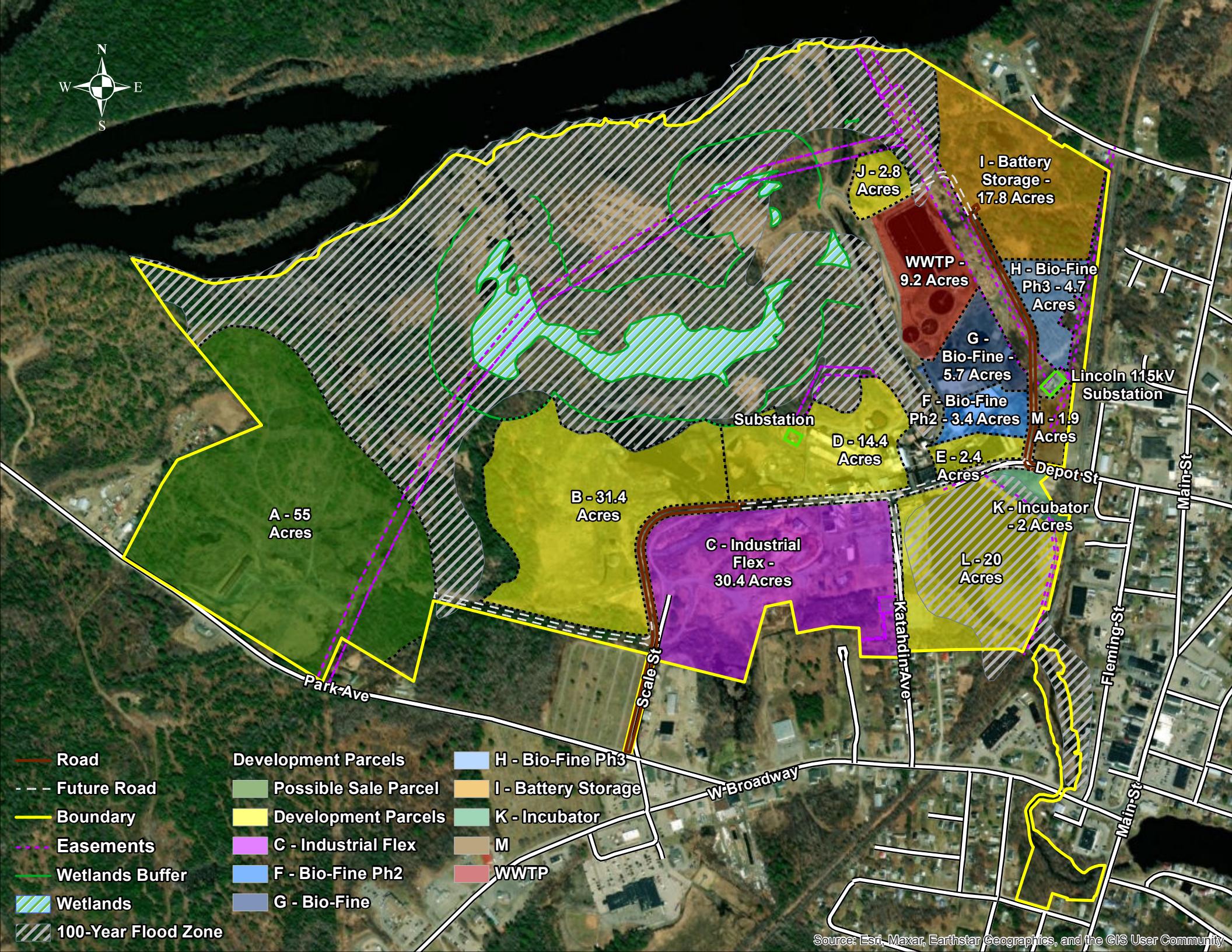
She is now a central figure in the redevelopment of the former mill site into the Lincoln Technology Park. The Town has secured over \$17.4 million in grants and \$1.27 million in loans as of December 31, 2025. These funds directly support site readiness, infrastructure, planning, and environmental remediation—laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth.

Ms. Birtz's professional excellence has been recognized statewide, including being named Assessor of the Year in 2024. Her selection as a featured speaker at the Brownfields 2025 National Training Conference further underscores her role as a respected leader beyond Lincoln. Equally important is her reputation for clear, honest communication, which has earned the trust of residents, businesses, and partners alike.

# Why This Team Matters to Lincoln

Together, Steve Levesque, Vicki Rusbult, and Ruth Birtz form an exceptional economic development leadership team whose combined experience is rarely assembled in a town of Lincoln's size. Their work significantly reduces risk, increases funding competitiveness, and positions Lincoln for sustainable, long-term success.

This team brings national credibility, deep technical expertise, and decades of practical experience to Lincoln's redevelopment efforts. Their collective value lies not only in what has already been accomplished, but in their ability to guide the Town through the next phase of economic transformation with confidence, transparency, and fiscal responsibility.



# Strategic Employers & Job Creation at Lincoln Technology Park

**Biofine Developments Northeast** is the owner of exclusive rights to a robust patent portfolio enabling the production of 100% renewable chemicals, carbon-negative biofuels, and biochar directly from waste lignocellulosic feedstocks. The underlying technology was recognized with the **Presidential Green Chemistry Award (1999)**, underscoring its national significance.

Biofine operates a pilot and demonstration facility (B2P2) at the **University of Maine Forest Bioproducts Research Institute – Technology Research Center** in Old Town, Maine, where the technology has been refined and proven through routine operations. In 2019, Biofine Developments Northeast was launched in response to growing global demand for biobased chemicals, fuels, and biochar.

In July 2023, Biofine announced a long-term **Offtake Agreement with Sprague Operating Resources** for the full output of its first commercial biorefinery, planned for the Lincoln Technology Park. The project is privately funded and supported by a team with decades of experience in chemical engineering, production, and business development.

## Biofine Key Impacts

- Commercial biorefinery planned at Lincoln Technology Park
- Converts waste biomass into renewable fuels & chemicals
- Carbon-negative process with global market demand
- Long-term offtake agreement secured

**Form Energy** is an American energy technology and manufacturing company developing long-duration iron-air battery systems capable of delivering power continuously for up to 100 hours. The Lincoln Energy Storage Project will be located at the Lincoln Technology Park and represents one of the most advanced grid-scale energy storage projects announced globally.

The project is expected to create approximately **100 construction jobs** and a core set of full-time operational roles. Additionally, Form Energy has committed more than **\$1.5 million** toward local workforce development, education, and community investment in partnership with regional organizations and the Town of Lincoln.

When fully operational, the Lincoln Energy Storage Project will consist of over **1,000 weatherized battery enclosures** and is designed to enhance grid reliability, support renewable energy integration, and reduce the need for transmission upgrades.

#### Form Energy Key Impacts

- 85 MW / 8.5 GWh multiday storage system
- Powers 65,000+ homes for extended periods
- ~100 construction jobs + permanent operations jobs
- \$1.5M+ community & workforce investment