MIC Meeting
August 16, 2013
10 am – 2pm
4th Floor Conference Room, Island Institute
Rockland, ME

Participants
Bev Johnson (Chebeague)
Roger Berle (Cliff Island)
Donna Weigle (Swans Island)
Mark Greene (Long Island)
Donna Damon (Chebeague)
Alden Finney (Great Diamond)
Bev Roxby (Frenchboro)
Katelyn Damon (Islesford)
Paul Gleason (Great Diamond)
Nancy Gleason (Great Diamond)
Cheryl Minor (Peaks Island)
Mary Anne Mitchell (Peaks Island)
Caitlin Cleaver (Island Institute)
Karen Burns (Island Institute)
Shey Conover (Island Institute)
Heather Deese (Island Institute)
Suzanne MacDonald (Island Institute)
Eric Waters (Island Institute)
Brooks Winner (Island Institute)
Annie Stephenson (Efficiency Maine)

MIC business
• The next MIC meeting will be held on November 8th in Rockland from 10 am – 2 pm and the panel discussion will focus on island stores.
• Representatives unanimously approved the May MIC minutes.
• The treasury report will be shared at the November MIC meeting.
• Donna Damon (Chebeague) is stepping down and Herb Maine will be the new representative from Chebeague. Beverly Johnson will continue to serve as the Chebeague alternate.
• Mary Anne Mitchell who serves on the Peaks Island Council has also been appointed as the alternate representative to MIC.
• Cliff Island will be hosting the Island Institute board of trustees in September.
• Karen Burns (kburns@islandinstitute.org), the Community and Economic Development Director and Kate Tagai (ktagai@islandinstitute.org), the Community Development Associate are now the point of contact at the Island Institute for MIC representatives.
Island Institute Update (Shey & Heather)

Strategic plan

- We’ve revised and shortened our organization’s vision and mission statements and condensed our strategic plan goals into a 2-page summary available for download online at: http://www.islandinstitute.org/documents/StrategicPlan_April2013.pdf
- This document and our strategic plan evolved from a number of community meetings and input from the MIC last November. Thank you for taking the time to contribute to the discussion.
- We defined objectives and then within each program, these objectives led to the development of internal program-based work plans.
- Please direct specific questions to any of our staff.
- Organizationally, we are committed to flexibility in terms of staff expertise and funding so we can be responsive in our work.
- Through the planning process, we identified five core areas of work: Education (K-12), community and economic development, community energy, marine resources and fisheries, and media and publications.
- We valued the community meetings we held for the strategic planning process and we would like to continue to have this presence within the communities, but would like to gather input on how to do this and address particular issues unique to different communities. We are hoping to hold additional meetings this winter.

ISLE, Fellows, and Karen Burns, Community & Economic Development Director

- Shey introduced Karen Burns, the new Community and Economic Development Director. Karen lives on Vinalhaven and taught English for 10 years before joining the Institute. She will coordinate ISLE, MIC, scholarships and internships as well as the fellows program.
- ISLE recruitment is currently underway and the application is available on the website. Please send names of possible participants to Karen (kburns@islandinstitute.org) or Shey (sconover@islandinstitute.org)
  - Island Sustainability through Leadership & Entrepreneurship (ISLE) is an opportunity for individuals to develop a social change business plan for a nonprofit, for profit, or community/town project while also undergoing training in advocacy, leadership and communication skills. ISLE is entering its third year. In the first two years, 33 people have graduated. The training takes place over three in-person weekend meetings followed by a six-month mentorship with a peer in the ISLE cohort as well as someone who will provide guidance for implementing the business plan. The Institute provides the resources in exchange for the participant putting in the time for the in-person gatherings.
- New fellows begin this September and we will also be looking for placements for
September 2014 so please, expect to hear from Karen about project needs. There will be 6 slots available.

**Policy**

- Ben Goodman, a natural resource and fisheries staffer with Congressman Michaud’s office in DC joined the meeting and was excited to learn more about the issues island communities face. He offered to be a resource whenever possible. ([ben.goodman@mail.house.gov](mailto:ben.goodman@mail.house.gov); 202-226-1916)
- Avery Day has been tracking key legislation in Augusta. We are nearing the start of the short session and we are wondering how to more effectively use the information that Avery gives us and share it more broadly. MIC may be a potential platform for identifying strategies to strengthen those connections and messages. Each week we get a report from Avery with all of the bill titles for Education, marine resources, energy, and economic development related issues. We would like the MIC’s input on how to share this information.
  - Would it be affective to form a policy advisory group where individuals review bill titles and develop strategies on how to address the issue?
  - Our challenge is the breadth of issues that communities and we care about.

**Panel discussion on energy efficiency:**

**Panelists:**
- Annie Stephenson, Communication Specialist from Efficiency Maine
- Suzanne MacDonald, Community Energy Director from Island Institute
- Brooks Winner, Community Energy Associate from Island Institute

**Introduction:**
- Island Institute’s Community Energy Program just wrapped up its Summer Institute late July/ August and now will be moving into weatherization. Brooks will provide an update on E4Me program that involves schools on Islesboro, North Haven, and Vinalhaven.
- It’s important to know more about Efficiency Maine and understand what they have to offer, their relationship with the state, and how they may be able to help people save money on energy.
- Also Suzanne hoped that this discussion is an opportunity to identify community priorities.

**Annie Stephenson:**
- The Omnibus energy bill that passed increases energy efficiency funding.
- Efficiency Maine offers incentives through commercial and homeowners/residential programs.
- Their mission is to provide efficient and cost effective energy. They recognize that it costs a lot less to use energy than it does to deliver it so they are working to reduce electric consumption although they also have other programs to reduce heating fuel costs.
Efficiency Maine business programs:
- On the prescriptive side, we have a menu of pre-approved strategies we know can save money like specific equipment that saves electricity, heating/cooling, high efficiency lighting in stores, restaurants, etc. and would qualify for our incentive programs.
- Or, you can work with Efficiency Maine to tailor an approach and be granted pre-approval. The key is that it works economically and there is a limit of $50,000 per tax ID (grant). It is a grant, but you may have to pay to qualify.

Efficiency Maine residential programs:
- $600 air sealing incentive: In exchange for having 6 hours of air sealing work completed on your home, you can get a $600 rebate.
  - Air sealing can save 80 gallons of oil each year.
- PACE/PowerSaver loans allow homeowners to borrow up to $25,000 to help pay for energy saving projects. The loan payment is then lower than current utility costs.
- Additional loan programs will likely be available to more Mainers in the coming year.
- Projects can include heating improvement, weatherizing, cooling, energy efficient lighting, etc.
- There is also the Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program. The rebate forms are available online and you typically get one with your purchase of an energy efficient appliance. Annie is wondering if these forms are made accessible to residents on islands. If not, she would like to work to improve that.
- Residential Lighting Program decreased the cost of LEDs and CLFs to consumers. Basically, Efficiency Maine purchased the bulbs at price, but then they were able to sell them to customers at a lower price to save them money and incentivize the purchase of energy efficient bulbs. Annie was wondering if island stores might be able to participate in this program.
- Funding was dedicated to residential heating solutions. We haven’t yet had an incentive for adding a pellet stove or upgrading a boiler. Most of the incentives have been focused on appliances, but we will be rolling out a new residential heating program.
- Split heat pump units are used for heating homes and have been installed on Peaks Island. They definitely make sense for a lot of homes and we would like to work to make that technology available across the state. They’re definitely not usable on a 20 below day, but you get a 3 to 1 gain on BTUs on electricity (Mark Greene)
- Heat pumps work like your refrigerator. They can take heat and dump it outside in the summer and take heat from outside and dump it inside in the winter. The new generation of the ductless mini split heat pumps work well and they cost $3,000 – 3,500 to purchase and install.
- Heat pumps can be connected to solar panels for approximately $5,000 – 10,000 for a home system.
Suzanne MacDonald, Island Institute’s Community Energy Director

- We are working on lowering island energy costs through weatherization and are trying to figure out ways to make Efficiency Maine’s incentives more accessible to your communities.
- Islands pay much higher than mainland for heating fuels and it’s an area where we can work and make a positive impact for all islands, but this work is also challenging in terms of logistics, finances, and awareness.
- With air sealing, you need an auditor to be a part of that process and there are no BTI certified people on the islands. We’ve tossed around the idea of training people to become BTI certified, but it’s too expensive.
- So we’re identifying the right technical support to do this work and being aware of the resources that exist.
- We have also been involved in building interior storm window inserts. To date, there have been 22 workshops. These inserts decrease draftiness and sound and have been placed in community buildings and other places. The initial workshops have spun off into much larger workshops and this approach is replicable and is helping to get people involved.
- The insert instructions are available online, but the supplies are best bought in bulk so we order the materials in bulk and then send materials out to each Island.
- Window Dressers is a group active in getting materials out to Peaks and Vinalhaven.
- Weatherization week minimizes barriers to participation and addresses the low hanging fruit by getting an audit. We organize the trips in bulk so doing 8-10 houses per week. This approach limits travel and the transportation costs are split among the homeowners. People are spending $200 or less to get this work done.
- Word of mouth has been very important. Once they have an audit and talked to the auditor, they’re much more likely to do the bigger jobs and then the auditor can organize that work in bulk if multiple homeowners are interested.
- To date, 163 houses on 4 islands have gone through the process: 35 on Vinalhaven, 104 on Peaks, 17 on Monhegan, and 7 on Isle au Haut.
- Next steps:
  - We are scheduling an open house on Peaks to start talking about doing additional work there.
  - We are looking to do this in communities where there is a community organization partner or fellow to help organize logistics.

Brooks Winner, Island Institute’s Community Energy Associate

- We just wrapped up the third Summer Institute, which is an energy camp for students. It’s an opportunity to kick off STEM programming before the school year starts.
- Energy for Me is a school program that involves 9 schools from Camden to East
Machias, 3 of which are island schools. They have done some great work. The Elm Street School did a lighting inventory of gym, the students collected the data, an electrician came in to give an estimate, and the students gave a presentation to the school board. The school board voted to replace the lights in the gym and ultimately, the lights in the entire school.

- eMonitors have been placed in each of these schools, two homes, and a community building in the community of each participating school.
- E4ME TV was developed as a webinar series to educate anyone who tunes in about energy issues. You can access the webinar through the Institute’s website so we encourage you to tune in for those!
- In the coming year, we’re hoping that the skills that students and teachers learned over the last year can be applied in the broader community to engage communities in data-driven energy action that promotes measurable reductions in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Other work includes fuel in fisheries fact sheet series.

**Island Energy Conference is being held in Belfast on October 18-19th**

*Discussion & Questions:*

- Suzanne and Brooks are trying to find an auditor to serve Downeast and then they plan to start their work on Swan’s, and then go to Frenchboro, and the Cranberry Isles. The Cranberry Isles use a lot of wood from the mainland or propane. It’s difficult to transport fuel to the Cranberries in the winter. Katelyn thinks the Cranberries could really benefit from weatherization since there are a lot of old homes with single pane glass, but people are living in them year round.
  - Suzanne and Katelyn Damon should connect to discuss.
- The STORMS and WeatherBlur programs are more geared towards elementary aged students. Donna Damon mentioned trying to get the high schools involved. Is it possible for the Institute to apply for additional funding and go back to those schools?
- It may be difficult to overcome perceptions of energy efficiency on Frenchboro, Swans, and Matinicus.
- Donna Damon: what is air sealing?
  - Annie: it’s sealing up gaps between the inside and outside of the house and spaces inside the house that go between floors. Most homes are affected by the stack effect where warm air rises and sucks in cold air from the outside. Air sealing slows or stops excessive movement of air from the outside into the house.
- Donna Damon - does the auditor just identify problems or do they fix them as well?
  - Suzanne: The contractor does a minimum of 6 hours of work to address low-hanging fruit, simple air sealing and insulation. They do less modeling and less information gathering than a traditional audit so there is no
formal audit report, but it is more affordable and allows more time to be spent on fixing the problems.

- Donna Damon – We built our house and moved in 31 years ago today. We use electric heat with wood supplement. One idea for a project would be to organize community nonprofits with office buildings to encourage buy-in of energy efficiency measures by community organizations.
  - Suzanne – Great idea and the whole community benefits. Current incentives do not apply to businesses or nonprofits. The auditor on Peaks also did work at the Brackett Church. There may be other incentives available soon.
  - Donna D. – You could have a meeting with businesses and nonprofits to gauge their interest.
  - Heather D. – How many of the Chebeague buildings are historic?
  - Donna D. – 6 out of 8
  - Heather D. – there may be some incentives geared towards historic buildings.

- MaryAnne M. – Island Energy Conference was great! Weatherization Week was great! Contractor was wonderful. Thank you to Island Institute for making it happen.
  - Suzanne M. – The good news is that the contractor is Portland-based and is interested in working on all Casco Bay islands.

- Donna W. – Does auditor stay on island? Is it one guy or a team?
  - Suzanne M. – It depends. They did stay on Monhegan, Vinalhaven, Isle Au Haut, but they commuted to Peaks.

- Bev R. – Does it have to be a week? Are you booking weeks?
  - Suzanne M. – No, we can be flexible to meet needs of each island (e.g., Peaks). We haven’t gotten to scheduling yet, but we are getting close. Right now, we’re thinking Peaks in September/October, Chebeague in early 2014, and maybe Swan’s in late 2013? We may be able to do Frenchboro in early 2014?

- Bev. R expressed in Island Teachers’ Conference.
  - Shey C. – We are working to finalize the agenda. It will be held on Oct. 11. We are interested in having School Board members come.

- For videos about the Island Institute’s work, please visit Vimeo.com and search Island Institute.

- We’re interested in other ways we can help, particularly around the businesses including fishing co-ops, main street businesses or hotels. There are a lot of ways to reduce the electric load.

**Island Community Check-ins**

*Chebeague* (Donna Damon & Beverly Johnson)

- Currently, we have 200 people switched from wireless to DSL, but we still need to add additional fiber.
• Janice Cooper, instead of Steve Moriarity, now represents Chebeague and Long Island at the State House due to re-districting.
• We have 8 new kids in the school and may need to hire a new teacher.
• Sanford Doughty passed last week at 93 and he was our last real fisherman.
• The town has gone to court over construction on Hope Island. They ruled in our favor to restore the damages in the shoreline zone.
• We’ve identified the next set of roads to pave, which includes from the West End School to the wharf.
• Signs are going up to limit parking to one side of the road in hopes of reducing congestion.
• We’ve had challenges with outdoor music and a lot of weddings. The weddings have also affected ferry travel; CTC is trying to provide additional boats to reduce congestion during weddings and funerals.
• We’re starting to put up access and right of way signs to the shore.
• Brian Beal spoke on Chebeague about the green crab infestation and its effect on clams.
• Land trust lobster bake is this Sunday.

*Long Island* (Mark Greene)
• We hosted the first lobster boat races in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the town and they went well.
• The historical society has featured an exhibit of the town, which closes next week.
• Our theater group performs original plays and one has been postponed until next year.
• The year-round housing corporation will regroup this fall.
• There was a good debate and a close vote at the town meeting to fund public works and off island contractors.
• There have been a lot of EMS calls with more people and an aging population. The volunteers are being stretched thin.

*Swans Island* (Donna Weigle)
• Lyme disease continues to be a problem. Two preschool aged children were recently diagnosed. We are going to work aggressively this fall to what steps we can take.
• Our store is closing on October 31st. It may be closed only for the winter, but not certain about that.
• We will have recycling in place some time this fall.
• Lobsters are in abundance and are wreaking havoc on our ferries. Trucks coming to the island to load up on lobsters get priority so it displaces everyone else. The co-op price is $1.70/ pound + bonus (co-op) and about $2.50 from other buyers. We have 3 dealers on Swans.
• In the school, we are losing some kids this year, but we’ll still have 45 kids in the elementary school.
• A new police officer started in January and he has been certified to draw blood for alcohol and drug violations.
• We had a bomb scare on the mainland side which turned out to be a box of wine.
• The electric co-op manager is stepping down and a board of trustee member will resign from the board to become the manager. The co-op is outsourcing all of its work at this point.
  o We pay a minimum charge regardless of use, which is now set at $30/month. This minimum charge is going to go up to $50/month. In the past, we received an $800,000 loan to upgrade our infrastructure and now, we need to pay that loan back. We are a bit concerned about the state of our electric cooperative and Bangor Hydro does not want to take us on.
• The elder care project is going well. We had 5 clients in June and we provide a variety of services, including home health work and grocery delivery; each client has different needs. We need to invest in a van for grocery delivery and transport.

Vinalhaven (Kathy Warren)
• There have been public meetings over the summer about the Comprehensive plan and it’s now being sent off to the state. There will be a vote on the plan in November.
• The Skippers program will be piloted this fall. Bruce, Robb, and Kathy have also been attending planning meetings for Many Flags, a 9-16 education program in the Midcoast area to increase access to higher education where they can begin to earn parts of their degrees in high school.
• We now have broadband out to the Poor Farm Road and about 180 households have broadband now - happy people!
• Time Warner has laid a new cable between North Haven and Vinalhaven to improve service.
• Taxes are going up (mil rate up from 8.9 to 9.95) mainly due to the increase in the school’s budget. Less money was taken from the fund balance and more of Maine State Retirement was transferred to the school plus we have a new teacher’s contract, increase in insurance costs, and 2 new ed techs were added to the budget.
• The sidewalk project on Atlantic Ave. is completed.
• It seems like it’s been a pretty busy summer for the stores downtown...

The Cranberries/ Islesford (Katelyn Damon)
• We are dealing with a high school budget. We currently have 7 students from Islesford and 6 who travel to Islesford to attend the Ashley Bryant School. Two new teachers have been hired. The Ashley Bryant School is undergoing a lot of renovation. The Longfellow School on Cranberry is undergoing ADA work as well so it can reopen some time soon. A lot of the town budget goes towards upkeep of buildings.
• The fire department has a new pumper. The rescue service has gone on about 11 calls so far this year. There is one new EMT on Great Cranberry. Great Cranberry has been holding fire department meetings. Rescue service does get paid which works out to about $50/call because most calls are 2 hours. It keeps that volunteer spirit up and we don’t charge patients for runs.
• A new family moved into the cert house increasing the number of kids in the school.
• We’ve had a record catch of lobster in terms of most pounds caught ever at the co-op, but the price is so low. The co-op is trying to market Cranberry Island Lobsters to see if they can increase their price.
• Town voted down the application of mosquito BTI granules, but some residents are doing their own spraying, which is concerning.
• The Islesford neighbor house is ADA compliant and energy efficient.
• Lady’s Aid on Great Cranberry had a fair and raised over $12,000 through a white elephant and bake sale.

Peaks (Marry Anne Mitchell)
• Peaks has been busier than ever. One day, we had 200 cars come over to Peaks. It’s more expensive to keep your car in garage on the mainland than to bring it over to the island.
• The Peaks Island Council is officially elected and we serve as an advisory board to Portland. The Council was created after Peaks tried to secede. Out of the island transportation fund, we gave some to the taxi service to get a new cab and part of the fund is for need-based ferry tickets.
• There’s a food bank and a senior center; all of these groups will be giving out free tickets to people in financial need and are helping people to be able to stay on Island.

• We’re working on controlling invasive species. Cliff has done a wonderful job with this effort. We’re hoping to educate people on what’s OK to plant so planning and planting sample gardens of what’s appropriate for island habitat.
• We’ve started a tree group, made up of mainly volunteers and planting more street trees. Part of that program is a memorial tree program.
• AA group on the island is up and running again as well as a cancer support group and a general support group. It’s important to be able to offer these types of services.

Great Diamond (Alden Finney & Paul Gleason)
• Construction is ongoing with approximately 30 construction workers arriving early in the morning. It makes sense to keep the 6:30 am ferry service going beyond Labor Day.
• Restaurant, run by the prior owner of the Chebeague Inn, is providing good food and hasn’t had a lot of big events. There have been few noise complaints.
• Diamond Cove recently hired a security person.
• The cottage side of the island has reopened the store that closed in 1975 and it’s able to turn a profit. We cleaned up the hall and the store is located in the basement of the hall. We’ve booked four weddings in the hall.
• City of Portland came out last week this year and the big issue was fire. Overall, restrictions have been relaxed and there are certain appliances that have been approved for fire use as long as the flames are less than 2 ft. high. The new fire chief has deemed the fire safety standards on the island equivalent to the ones in Portland, which is a little disconcerting given we have a volunteer fire department and no one on island is on call. The security person hired partly for this reason.
• These types of issues bring up the need to educate visitors on the island, to remind them that they’re a visitor, that people live here year round, the danger of fires, and the limited resources.
  o Peaks Island and Great Cranberry both have brochures for this purpose. Donna Damon mentioned working with the Island Institute to create this type of pamphlet.

**Frenchboro** (Bev Roxby)
• Please see handout from Bev and email her at beverlyteach@gmail.com with any thoughts or suggestions.
• It was determined that no dredging is necessary.
• The town administrator from Portland who was part time recently resigned.
• The number of select board members went from 5 to 3 and the head is leaving. We have a volunteer town clerk and no constable.
• Our new teacher has a number of certifications including special ed. and elementary education. We recently hired a principal one-day per week.
• Trash to treasure yard sale was not as successful as hoped. We were trying to raise funds to provide free ferry tickets to those who take cardboard and redeemable bottles off island.
• We were able to raise $10,000 for the church.
• Frenchboro’s library has Internet, good books, but has recently been subject to some acts of vandalism.
• No energy efficiency programs underway and Frenchboro is a part of the Swan’s Island Electric Cooperative.
• There has been a lot of turnover of houses to summer people.
• We need an influx of young families to get different perspectives.

**Cliff Island** (Roger Berle)
• Currently, there are 4 kids in the school. We also have 3 pre-pre school aged children and two other couples who may consider having children.
• We held a fundraiser for a new school playground, which is a $20,000 project, and we were able to raise $4,000.
• The store by the wharf is about to be sold and there is concern that it may displace the sternman and his family currently living above the store.
• Sustainable Cliff Island, a new nonprofit, is currently in negotiations with the City to offer a piece of land on Cliff as a public works depot in exchange for working waterfront and a possible affordable housing project.

• We hire a graduate student each year to run our invasive species management and removal program, which is in its fifth year. Right now, we’re dealing with Phragmites.

• We have 25 homes on the island that we rent to tourists and they don’t attend our events and educational opportunities so we’re trying to do a better job of engaging those renters.