MIC Meeting  
February 11, 2016  
10 am-2pm  
Augusta, Cross Building Room 601  
Topic: Affordable Housing  

Attendees:  
MIC Members:  
Donna Wiegle- Co-Chair, Swan’s Island  
John Condon- Long Island  
Cheryl Crowley- Cliff Island  
Kendra Chubbuck- Isle au Haut  
Eva Murray- Matinicus  
Mary Ann Mitchell- Peaks Island  
Kathy Warren- Vinalhaven  
Andy Dorr- Vinalhaven  
Timmi Sellers - Peaks Island  

Legislature:  
Chris Rector- Senator King’s Office  
Carol Woodcock- Senator Collin’s Office  
Kate Norfleet- Senator Collin’s Office  
Patty Aho- Senator Collin’s Office  
Walter Kumiega- State Representative, Deer Isle  
Chuck Kruger- State Representative, Thomaston  

Island Institute  
Karen Burns- Community Development Director  
Kate Tagai- Community Development Associate  
Nick Batista- Marine Programs Director  
Heather Deese- Vice President, Research and Strategy  
Tom Groening- Working Waterfront Editor  

Visitors  
Rick Rogers- Islesboro Affordable Properties  
Newell Augur- Augur and Associates  
Betsy Ramage Healy - Homestart  
Cindy Bland - C&C Realty Management  
Liza Fleming-Ives- Genesis Fund  

MIC Business:  
Donna Wiegle calls meeting to order. Roger Berle is unable to attend. Donna distributes the vector borne disease cover letter and draft survey from the graduate student working with the Vector Bourne Disease Office at the Maine Medical Center. May is Lyme Disease awareness month. A comprehensive report will be published in 2017, so data
will be collected throughout 2016. After the report is published, the results will be presented at a future MIC meeting.

Treasurer’s Report:
Donna presented the Treasurer’s Report on behalf of Rudi Graff, Treasurer. There are two dues still outstanding from North Haven and Great Diamond Island. MIC is $200 under budget for the fiscal Year.

Island Institute Updates:
Research and Strategy- Heather Deese
The Research and Strategy department creates a new capacity for the island institute to form partnerships with community members and researchers around the state to collect data for research projects and planning. Heather wants to work with communities to understand their data needs, especially for their planning work. Already on the list for specific 2016 projects is to update the Island Indicators publication. It was launched in 2006 and has been updated every few years. It can be found in both hard copy and on the Island Institute website. [http://www.islandinstitute.org/resource/island-indicators-2015](http://www.islandinstitute.org/resource/island-indicators-2015)

The indicators will be expanded to include remote coastal regions and to align more closely with statewide indicators to show how islands compare to the rest of the state across multiple areas. Heather is looking for an informal set of advisors from each community to help structure and make the indicators as useful as possible. 10% of Heather’s effort will be looking at how the Island Institute measures the impact of our programs, making sure we have the impact we intend to have. Heather is trying to network with data resources across the state in order to understand what is there and what is available for our use, then linking islands to that data.

Marine Programs- Nick Battista
Ocean Planning regional draft will be coming out in the spring of 2016. The content is still unclear, but once it is known it will be shared. The document is to outline how Federal agencies relate to local communities and Regional/State agencies. The hope is that the agencies at all levels will be more responsive to local concerns. This fall the Marine Programs Department started an Aquaculture program with 23 participants from five different islands. Some participants have moved forward to submit permit applications for shellfish and seaweed installations.
The Fisherman’s Forum starts on March 3rd with a Changing Ocean Ecosystems Session geared toward helping fishermen understand changing ocean ecosystems. It will also feature Keith Coburn from the Deadliest Catch.

The Penobscot Watershed Conference is at Point Lookout Resort in North Port on Saturday, April 9th. It is organized by Islesboro Islands Trust. There will be lots of sessions. They are planning a comprehensive look at the entire watershed through this conference. Contact Stephen Miller at the Islesboro Islands Trust for more information.

The Climate of Change video series produced by the Island Institute has been making a video tour around the area and farther afield. During the events they show all four videos, followed by about 30 minutes of panel discussion. The whole event takes a little less than 2 hours; the response has been great. Communities have requested that the video come out to the island to be shown within the community. If this is of interest in your community please get in touch with the Institute.

Community Development- Karen Burns

We are actively seeking out applications for Fellows host sites. There are still slots available, so please be in touch with Karen. Applications are due March 26th. ILEAD Non-Profit leadership summit went very well, 22 participants took lots of information back to their islands, and we are happy to bring out modified trainings to the islands, as well as bringing neutral facilitation work with a modified fee schedule out to island organizations who need it.

Keynote Topic: Affordable Housing

Donna’s Introduction: We have invited folks from individual islands who are spearheading affordable housing and we have invited several organizations to join us today.

Liza Fleming-Ives: The Genesis Fund is a financial institution that has been around for 24 years. It has assets of 15 million that can be put towards projects all over the state. The Genesis Fund has worked with nine different island communities over the years to address elder care and affordable housing issues. In addition to financing, they provide technical support for community groups such as application for tax exempt status and incorporation paperwork. When it first started they were looking to help island organizations access private funds. There are many different ways to address affordable housing
issues, but the Genesis Fund has chosen to focus on renovation and building as their strategy. The projects are usually small in scale, the income targeting doesn't necessarily meet the needs of island communities. Often, individuals and families seem to be earning larger incomes and are, therefore, ineligible for affordable housing based on the income restrictions. But they are still struggling because of the higher costs of living associated with islands. Cost per unit to build is very high so it is hard to compete with mainland based non-profits. With the Island Institute, they created the Island Challenge Fund that allowed about 20 houses to be built with private donated funding. In 2010, they were able to get bond funds and create a program through Maine State Housing focused on helping islands and that has created 18 more houses on islands. Public funding has such strict restrictions on it that when Genesis wrote their program they started at 120% of median income which lessened the restriction.

Donna: Were any affordable housing projects done as town projects or were they all done through non-profits?

Liza: All the projects were done through non-profits. The only project that happened with an off island housing developer happened on Vinalhaven.

Kathy: Is it possible to do it with a municipality?

Liza: It was possible. Building affordable houses through the town was written as a program through Maine Housing Authority, but the funds originally in the project were drained by the seven houses they built. Now, it isn't currently funded.

Cindy Bland: C&C Reality Management
1. Economy of Scale: what you require to be financially feasible in construction phase needs to be balanced with long term return on investment.
2. Cost of construction phase (30% higher on islands) and cost of operating after is also much higher than on mainland.
3. Multiple sources of funding creating layers of processes that need to be managed. Each funding source has its own reporting requirements and/or funding restrictions.
4. Biggest issue after construction is the review of income, because the housing they handle is through federal funding with very strict requirements. The Federal process requires them to use 3rd party verification for income. Verification of income is crucial to protect owners/investors, but getting people to admit what they make on islands in a way that would satisfy the auditors is very, very challenging. Maintaining housing that is sized to the community is also a challenge.

C&C Reality Management mostly does 3rd party management, they are not involved in direct management. One house (15 units) was built through USDA Rural Development, Harbor Side (10 units) has two funding sources- the mortgage is through USDA Rural Development, and HUD did the rental subsidy. It was a project-based subsidy, but I don’t know as there is money left in programs. Projects may get mortgage subsidized, but may not get rent subsidized, which means there would be a sizeable rent, or it needs to have someone with a section 8 certification with houses that they own.

In Rockland waitlist is 60-80 for affordable rental housing. They maintain a waiting list for the apartments on Vinalhaven of 10-20. Part of this is that folks that live in one property already and they want to live near the water.

Karen: For a long time some of those units were empty- is it because of challenges in verifying income?

Cindy- Rural Loan Program through Maine State Housing Authority sets the income requirements so many units must be kept at- 50% or 80% of median income and who are willing to share their income and who make exactly within that slot of what we can take and can still afford the rent.

Question: Was there much community pushback for multi unit housing? Kathy: They are a very helpful because the units are meant for elderly who aren’t ready for assisted living, or for the disabled and I don’t know where else they would live on island. It was a benefit to the town, and the guy who developed it got a tax break. The other was an old grocery store that they repurposed into a different use. It may
not have always been meant for affordable housing, but it is affordable housing now.

Chart of Income Eligibility
Income Limit Guidelines and Rental Rates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th># in Household</th>
<th>50% Annual Median Income Limits</th>
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Kathy: Do you end up paying a higher cost for property management services (Lawn mowing, maintenance, etc.)?

I think sometimes they may try to take advantage of us. Some of the summer people are used to paying those high prices. The company tries to use contractors on the island, but it is very, very hard. The contractors they have talked to are booked a year out so they have had to bring in people from the mainland.

Chris: If you are in the apartment and your income increases can you stay or are you move on?

Cindy: It's complicated, but generally once eligible, always eligible, so you can keep the house. But we really encourage people to look at it because we take a percentage of their income (Up to 30%) so they may not want to pay that much for the house they are in. Folks can own their own home and move into housing because they look at assets and income.

Andy: Do you have a challenge with finding reasonable, responsible tenant's?

Cindy: Management company is very through in vetting tenants, they look at police records, credit reports, personal references, and landlord references. Maine State Housing Authority has a program they are trying to put
together on how to be a good tenant. However we have a responsibility to the owner, too.

Donna: We've stopped calling it affordable housing and started to call it workforce housing because we need housing for the teacher, the police officer, etc. Some of those folks aren't long term residents, and buying a house is so, so expensive, they aren't going to make that commitment, but there are so few year-round rentals available for people coming to the island to provide services. So many rentals are seasonal; it creates a different sort of housing challenge.

Rick Rogers- Islesboro Affordable Property:
The IAP has been a business for 26 years with 14 houses. One was a direct sale; eight were subdivision owner developed with town and community help. One family was about to lose their home to foreclosure and Islesboro Affordable properties (IAP) owns it and rents it back to them. Also they have five more rental properties that the Genesis Fund manages. People can't own property on the island if they are going to move into the affordable housing units. Very interested with families with young children and they have taken some heat for giving preferential treatment to young families. Income verification is a real mess because there are families with seasonal incomes that are cobbled together, and families that are cobbled together with different incomes, including unemployment, that may put them over the restrictive limits, even though they would be perfect candidates. Ancillary benefit is that the housing authority doesn't have to raise the funds to cover the debt because if the limits are met, it is forgiven. They are focused on debt reduction. Influx of forgivable debt money is crucial to their business model, especially with such seasonal incomes.

Rental properties help to float the affordable housing mortgages, especially through the lean months when people default on their payments. They've only had to write off one debt that they had to write off in the last 6 years. There are greater issues around personal money management that come into play with affordable housing, especially around seasonal based economies.

Kate: Is there a way you can have them pay an extra $100 during the months where they have money to cover the months
where they don’t have money so the Affordable housing authority doesn’t hold the liability?

Cindy: We do that, but we do it so that they are paying ¼ plus rent to catch them up if they fall behind.

Rick: We talked to the lawyer about this and he suggested setting up escrow accounts because otherwise it becomes an accounting nightmare, especially with such a small staff. I would be resistant to being the person who had to keep track of that sort of thing.

Eva: You get into strange dynamics when the community is so small that there is no professional distance. There is a causal neighbor to neighbor, “I’m going to tell you how I’m going to do my bookkeeping.” And who will strong arm him and impose the rules? It becomes a negotiation.

Rick: There is a charity and there is a business, and we have to decide as a board where in that spectrum we reside and be clear about it in our policies. Our board has 13 members, seven away and six islanders. The seven away are big donors and without them the business doesn't function. One of our donors is very generous, but is 80 years old, and so this is a challenge. They meet four times a year, but most attend through teleconference, except for the July conference. Rick is the only full time, paid staff person and they use contracted services for legal work, one of the board members has taken over the books for an honorarium.

Betsy Ramage Healy – Homestart Island Fellow Mary Terry and the Genesis Fund helped start Homestart. They Built two energy efficient houses in 2010 on Peaks Island. The biggest challenge is the politics on Peaks, which is part of the City of Portland. They send Portland about $5 million in property taxes to them and there is a lot of feeling that Peaks doesn’t get all that back in services. They handed the project over to Volunteers of America who own the two homes and administer them as rental properties. They own one house that is rented. They bought one house and subdivided two lots. The house is a winterized cottage, because a lot of the housing stock isn’t what it should be- old or not weatherized for cold. The organization is struggling with where to go from here. They are advocating ways that people spending their own money can have on keeping workforce housing and diversity of the island population
alive. Betsey made progress with the city council about accessory housing (in-law apartments) and how to do it without impacting property values to encourage development of rental properties. There is a huge housing shortage in Portland, especially in the affordable housing realm. So, Peaks is looking at zoning variances and other ways to work within the city restrictions. They are trying to work with city government to help people through the restrictions around building/adding. The affordable houses cost $350,000 apiece, which isn't all that affordable in the end. In-law apartments would have to be year round and rented within affordable guidelines in exchange for not increasing property taxes. How do you balance the perpetuity issues? How do you keep it affordable without limiting the owner to allow them to sell it down the road and not make what their neighbors make? These are questions they are wrestling with as they try to think of alternatives.

Portland just passed an ordinance that any housing unit over 10 units has to have a percentage as affordable housing.

Rick: Each of our houses seems to be restricted in a different way. IEP owns the property on which the Ruthie James houses sit, but not the houses, which has turned out to be a nightmare. Spent 18 months negotiating with Maine Housing in order to be able to sell one of the houses. There is a model we used where if they sell before 10 years, the affordable housing company gets a certain percentage of the selling price if it is higher than the price at which it was sold to them.

Genesis: There are forgivable loans, which stipulate that if the rental is maintained within the restrictions of income, etc. for a certain time period, the money that was loaned becomes a grant and is forgiven.

John: The islands are each treated differently, even though they are all the city of Portland.

John: Lived on Long Island for 15 months and I’m a selectman. One piece of property was just transferred back to the town which was converted into a cemetery. The situation on Long is that houses in families for generations are being sold off by the kids. Long Island doesn’t have any large projects on the horizon.
Kendra: No one from ICDC (Isle Au Haut Development Corporation) could come to the meeting. There are 3 ICDC houses built in the 1980's with the help of Genesis. 1 is vacant. Occupants are only supposed to be in houses for 5 years, but one family was in the house for 14 years. They finally got the house back and sold it to a full time fisherman and his family as an affordable house who will be moving out in May, but it needs a lot of work. 2 ICDC houses were just built in the last few years. We had the same problem where you want to rent to families, but we had a single guy who wanted to rent and he would complain that he was being discriminated against. There has been a lot of turnover of Families.

Cindy: We have tenant selection criteria where there is no question and we establish it to avoid some of these issues of discrimination.

Kendra: I think the criteria has changed over the years.

Rick: Our mission statement says individuals and families and maybe we need to change that. Our application is 22 pages long. Selectmen are looking at town centers and amending town ordinances so that private individuals may be able to build an apartment unit in town. This is still in discussion phase and needs to be passed at a future town meeting. But, if you start renting to the 25 and younger crowd, you really have to subsidize the rents and that is a significant fundraising effort to maintain.

Genesis: It is important to recognize that Islands are building for different reasons. Isle au Haut was building to attract families to the school, which is different than Islesboro and Vinalhaven who were trying to stabilize their populations by find housing for people who were already on island.

Kendra: The town has different criteria than ICDC, and they don't have any trouble filling their houses, but the rent is much, much lower. Is ICDC really affordable?

Donna: I think there is a great point that even though we live on islands it doesn't mean that our islands are at all similar, so the needs of our workforce housing and affordable housing is different.

Cheryl: Sustainable Cliff Island is interested in all the different criteria used for affordable housing. Genesis
has all the criteria on file. Cliff island has a piece of property that was taken by the city for payment of back taxes and it was proposed it was put up for affordable housing bidding rather than being put up for auction. Sustainable Cliff Island is building access to wharf, fuel access, store, and affordable house for the next 20 years for $10,000. The house needs renovation and they want to do the work to not have so many strings attached that it chokes us.

**Legislative Updates:**

Chuck Kruger: Representative of Matinicus and Crie Haven. Congress dealt briefly with impeachment; dealt with a bipartisan drug bill that will scratch the surface of a large problem. They are working on tax conformity to align the state tax code with federal code, but it has become very partisan. Walter Kumiega has just presented a lobster bill that lightens some parts of the limited entry system. The Governor has declared himself the new Commissioner of Education.

Perhaps this is a good time to propose new bond funding for Island based affordable housing?

Rick: I would ask that you allow one unit development within any bill that was proposed for affordable housing, because adding layers of more and more units required makes those funds available make it impossible for islands, especially small islands, to access those subsidies.

Kathy: Could you build a park of Tiny houses for stern men to sleep? Because some of the places that people are being forced to live in because there isn't anything available is smaller.

Chuck: I’ve heard there are conflicts with Federal housing being used because there are standards that some of the tiny houses don't meet.

Walter Kumiega: Had a huge public hearing (60 people speaking) on the bill on lobster licensing. There are several components, and people were all over the place on it. It proposes to give students until 23 to get a commercial license, which had a lot of support. Making it easier for people to get off the waiting list was not so
well supported. For fishermen to vote to get into the island limited entry changes from 2/3rds majority to simple majority. Allows someone apprentices in any zone, to move between zones so you don't have to apprentice in the zone you are fishing from. I don’t know what will happen to the bill, my guess is that it will pass in some form.

Heather: Will there be a requirement around a high school diploma?

Walter: You have to start the program before you turn 18, and you have to have a GED or a high school diploma.

Nick: There were students in Eastern Maine Skippers who testified in favor of changing the restrictions.

Update on the Ferry Bill: Senator Miramont and Kumeiga met with DOT and Commander Meyers from the Coast Guard. For blood transport, people must show that it is actual blood sample. They are placed in a locked box, the box makes the crossing, the waiting currier on the other side picks it up. There was a question about figuring out a way to do it with curriers? They have also set up an outside review system with another ferry system (probably with the Vermont State Ferry service) to review safety protocols in the Maine State Ferry Service.

Donna: That seems to be very agreeable to the islands who want to do it because the cost of the card is less than what they are spending now.

Nick: OA Committee has given out their report and there was a Bill before the legislator this session to formalize the OA committee. The bill was tabled but there is an informal coalition that has formed with a variety of stakeholders that is moving forward. The bill being tabled is a positive development, because it means we will have all the stakeholders around the table making decisions and it won't be costing the state money.

Carol (Senator Collins' Office): Energy Bill was being considered last week. Senator Collins and Senator King had put in a biomass amendment that passed, with a voice vote, but the bill was pulled after a filibuster on the Flint Michigan issue. This week they are confirming judges and reviewing the President's budget.
Chris (Senator King's Office): Next week there are 2 meetings in Bangor and Portland about how smaller public safety departments are addressing terrorist issues. This is for identifying areas where federal funds may help with equipment and training and what is out there and where the needs are.

Island Updates

Isle Au Haut - Kendra Chubbuck:
Kendra wanted to say thank you for all the replies to her request for info on School Boards, which they are using for their comprehensive plan. The school board has 4 openings. At the moment there are about 25 people on the island and she wanted to know if people who didn’t live on island full time, but were voting residents could be on the school board.

Isle au Haut has had 3 deaths in the last year of long-term residents, which has hit the island very hard. BDN had an article on the struggles the Isle au Haut town has been having - no town meeting, town employees not getting paid, back audits. No embezzling, just no one doing their jobs. 2013 audit is done, 2014 audit is almost done so hopefully the 2014 town meeting will happen in March and April. They don't know what they will do about 2015 town meeting, have to have the audits for the meeting, so don't know if they will be combining 2014 and 2015 town meetings or not. There is a challenge with finding qualified people, or people who are interested in doing the job and have the skills to do the job with such a limited population.

Andy suggested changing the bylaws to appoint people to the position rather than having it an elected position, so the select board could run a hiring process and have more of a choice. Chris Rector even suggested outsourcing some of the work. Kathy Warren suggested that writing job descriptions for the jobs so that people know what is involved in the job and expectations are clear.

Peaks Island - Mary Anne Mitchell and Timmi Sellers
In the past, there had been a movement on Peaks to secede from the city of Portland. Instead, the city set up the Peaks Island Council as a direct link to the Portland city council. The only benefit currently is the $40,000 budget, but it hasn't seemed to increase the island voice inside of city government. Originally, the money from the city was to
help islanders with transportation. The PIC had set a precedent by giving money to the Children's Workshop when they were having budget issues and in danger of closing one year and now gives some of the money to non-profits on the island. But no other neighborhood group gets money from the city. The community has been working on replanting street trees on Peaks for the last 4 years and removing invasive species, but the city doesn't have money to help with this project. They have an idea to promote memorial trees to generate enough revenue to cover the cost of the replacement. We are also looking to put trash cans in more visible places for island visitors to use. Ordinances' are suggestions, but who will enforce them? Who cares about these small quality of life ordinances when there are huge drug problems in the city of Portland? Peaks does have triple trained EMT's and Fire, which is a benefit. Right now, the PIC is in the budget process with the 7 elected council members voting to pass it. School ferry passes have been funded so students can use them through out the school year so families do not have to pay for tickets during the summer when ticket prices are the highest. The council subsidized the ticket prices so the school passes go year round (at about $89 per ticket). They also do fuel assistance, needs based ticket program, food pantry assistance. They are looking at having an Island Fellow for the coming year. Peaks did a really extensive comprehensive survey in 2003, and out of that came a plan which the council is looking at. They would love to have an Island Fellow to look at the plan and see what has been accomplished, what needs to still be done and if we need to do further surveys. This time of year the island is so quiet, you can walk down the street and not see any cars, you can appreciate why you are on the island. Sarah Lakeman, from the NRCM, was going to come out to talk about micro beads and micro plastics in the ocean which had to be canceled, but we hope that we can continue the conversation to keep plastics out of the ocean. In a short time three large bags of garbage and plastics were picked up off the beach down by the boat. In the city’s Capital Improvement Budget there is a request for a new boiler system for the school. Also there is currently an opening at Sr. housing which is really unusual, HUD funded, people from anywhere can come and there used to be a really long waiting list but currently there isn’t. Peaks Island Health Center (staffed by Maine Medical Center) is open 3 days a week and we are very lucky to have it.
Timmy Sellers- We have cleaned the main ferry landing which had become over grown and ignored, with some public works help and an invasive removal project, also with the help last summer of an Island Scholar. We are trying to make it highly visible area. Are their guidelines for working waterfronts, and abandoned boats, especially on small islands?

Donna: Swan's had a boat haul out area where people could bring their boats out with the expectation that boats would go back out into the water the next season. There was a ruckus because there was no space this year because the boats were left. There were guidelines that the boats couldn't be there for more than 9 months but it was never enforced. If you make the rule you have to enforce it. The selectmen did get boats out of there this year.

There is a new administration in the city and so there is hope the city will be more responsive to working with Peaks.

Frenchboro- Zain Padamsee
The limited winter ferry schedule impacts the affordability of living on Frenchboro by limiting access to mainland job opportunities. The 1978 housing development did attract new families but town surveys have indicated that any new projects should focus on rehabilitation of abandoned houses. Chili cook-off in March 18 when the Sunbeam will be out.

Great Diamond /Long Island- John Condon
Still fire captain on Great Diamond as well as being selectmen on Long where he just moved. On Great Diamond Island, the summer EMT is going to move off this summer so there will be 700 people this summer with no medical service. (note: since this meeting, an EMT for Great Diamond for the summer has been found). On Long Island, there is a new school superintendent- Barbara Powers came from Falmouth. There is a $900,000 new community center right on the town landing. The building won't be finished by the May town meeting. 18 kids in school k-5 with 3 new babies born this year. Nancy Jordon is retiring as tax collector. To attract someone to take over from her, they will probably have to go up with their pay scale. They looked at other towns but didn't find any clear answers, the town is in budget season now.

Vinalhaven Kathy Warren and Andy Dorr
It is winter, so people are leaving and there is a lot of snow. The Principal will be resigning in June. They are pursuing a new playground project to replace the 30-year-old existing play structure. Downstreet master planning is happening. There are 5 1/2 miles of State aid roads on the island that are slated to be resurfaced in a few years and they are trying to upgrade their sidewalk systems during that project. Selectmen put sea level rise on the agenda, unknown how they will tackle it or what the discussion will look like but the discussion is starting. They formed a committee. There have been a few legal issues recently and they always have trouble keeping people on the board. The Board is looking to provide better training and support for the committee members, especially since there were articles on the front page of the BDN about the legal trouble. Librarian passed away in the summer so they are searching for a new librarian, 3 EMT's are training to be EMT 2's. Chris- you may think about reaching out to Jane Lefleur for information, resources and money from the Orton Foundation as you work on your downtown master plan. Her work up in Bucksport is an example of the great work she has been doing.

Alana (Fellow) is doing after school programming and parent engagement and has been collecting information. She has been wonderful.

Matinicus- Eva Murray
Starting up Maine's newest, smallest library with an 8x20 shed with a renovated interior, informal but with a 501(c) 3 status and $6000 raised to get a Wi-Fi hotspot, a photovoltaic experiment and a better library. There is no other business to provide hotspot access on Matinicus. There are also a lot of questions around how the photovoltaics will feed into the micro grid system and no one wants to take the risk on their own system and their own house, so the shed will be the community experiment. There are hopes that they will eventually become an official library in the eyes of the Maine State Library System, who are very supportive but are tied by their own federal grant systems which require a public toilet, and certain fire regulations and paid staff which would be complicated for them to address. The intentions are not to create a huge Bureaucratic headache, but to create a feel good project that upgrades the book shed a little. She would love to have any information that may be useful in regards to photovoltaic systems or tiny rural library. They want this to be grassroots and so haven't pursued big donors.
Chris: Midcoast Economic Development District- Jeff Codbrok They are looking to buy solar panels collectively, if you are within the area to reduce costs.
There are 3 kids in school. No affordable housing committee or process but there is an extreme need for work force housing for the teacher, ed tech and resource people who are coming for short term jobs. People are wary of bad tenants, wonky furnaces, and dubiously winterized houses. They are desperate for tradesmen, small business men, school children and not more lobstermen who are buying houses to have Matinicus property that sits vacant so they can have fishing rights. They need 4 or 5 winterized apartments for folks to stay. Younger people can’t afford to move to Matinicus. You can’t buy a house for $40,000 any more, but you could in 1984.
100 year round population plus or minus 75.

Eva is the Chairwoman of the Maine State Advisory Council
  The question was raised about any signage on the Maine Ferry Service about island etiquette?
  Eva: No
  Donna: This is relevant to our topic in August which is Neighborliness and Educating Tourists.

*Swan’s Island- Donna*
  Town meeting is upcoming: 3 selectmen, 1 is done in 2017 and 1 is done in 2018. There is a position for an Admin Assistant being created and needs to have voters approve the funding. The job description was passed out; it will be a part time job. Board of Selectmen received a petition for roads to be opened up to ATV’s, dirt bikes and other recreational motorized vehicles. It is a controversial issue that the selectmen are trying to throw to the voters to decide, but it falls under the purview of the selectmen. They can only open up town roads, not state roads, of which Swan’s island has some. There are also no established, official trails on island with signage.
  Tonight is a public forum for arguments, no questions, 5 minutes for everyone 30 minutes per side.
  A Special town meeting was held in January to approve funding for a new ambulance. Currently, there are 4 volunteer basic EMT’s. 32-0 vote to fund the new ambulance, to replace the 30-year-old unit that keeps breaking down. Swan’s contracted with County Sheriff for an officer on the island, which has been great because he has the support of the whole Hancock CTNY Sheriff’s office. They live in an affordable apartment above the town office.
They have gotten involved in the community but need better housing. Swan's Island Electric Co-op, which has existed since 1959 is in talks to dissolve the coop and become customers of Emera Maine, which is a controversial decision that will reduce electric rates, but may increase response time for outages. The fear of the cable failing is always there. All the cables are old, but if Emera takes over they take on the responsibility of replacing the cable when it fails (approximately $5 million).

Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting: May 6th
Island Institute, Rockland 10-2
Topic: Island Historical Societies