

MIC Meeting
Friday, November 2nd
Featured Topic – Housing

MIC Members:

Mark Greene – Long Island
Kendra Chubbuck – Isle au Haut
Andy Dorr – Vinalhaven
Eva Murray – Matincus
Bev Roxby - Frenchboro
Roger Berle – Co-Chair, Cliff
Donna Wiegler – Co-Chair, Swans
Randy Schaffer – Peaks
Cheryl Crowley – Cliff
Shey Conover – Islesboro
Jay Corson, Chebeague

Island Institute Staff:

Kate Tagai- Senior Community Development Officer
Andy Theriault- Community Development Officer
Molly Siegel – Isle au Haut (Island Fellow)
Kim Ratner- Communications Strategist

Legislative Representatives and Guests:

Mark Kontico- Representative Bruce Poliquin's office
Hannah Pingree – North Haven
Pinney Bee Bee-Center – Maine House District 93
Bill Overlock – Long
Betsey Ramage Healey – Peaks
Liza Fleming-Ives– Genesis Fund
Rick Rogers – Director, IAP, Islesboro
Joan Brady – Co-President, Monhegan Island Sustainable Community Association (online)
Bill Dowling –General Manager, Cranberry Island Realty Trust
JC Comelio – Vice President, Cranberry Island Realty Trust
Sue Jenkins – Trustee, Monhegan Island Sustainable Community Association
Toby Levin - Monhegan Island Sustainable Community Association

MIC Buisness:

Roger called meeting to order.
Discussion of meeting days and dates for 2019. Shift to the second Thursday of the month, and keep the quarterly meeting schedule but shift the August meeting to September.

Dates for 2019: February- TBD based on Legislative schedule and invitation
May 9th

September 12th

November 14th

Possible 2019 Topics:

Domestic Violence

Invasive Species Management

Community Connections where we invite DIS; Eastport

Mark – being able to compare pop/demographic data to measure what is happening in our community.

Bev- being able to expand membership to coastal communities –

- Could be thinking about adding to the discussion when ideas and themes match
- Benefit in having home ports involved

Bait – Deep connection to islands and important to share and talk about

Minutes from August Meeting – approved unanimously

Treasurer's Report –Great Diamond still outstanding \$100, North Haven and Frenchboro still outstanding \$200

Currently \$4700 in dues and expenses

Island Institute Exp. \$3700

Moved and seconded to accept the treasurer's report – unanimous approval

Island Institute Updates:

- There are a lot of new staff coming on.
- Waypoints: Livelihoods was published and is available on the website. There are a lot of data behind it and the staff of the Island Institute are happy to talk you through how to use it or help you find the data sets that informed it. Islandinstitute.org/waypoints
- ILEAD on School futures in January.
- SLR – recent community visits to Monhegan and Vinalhaven with expert from Rhode Island
- Energy – New staffing and looking at the future of our work. Excited to continue building energy efficiency on island communities.
- Fellows – Fellow site recruitment is happening, so communities should reach out if they are interested in applying for and hosting a fellow.

Legislative Updates:

Chellie Pingree's Office – The Congresswoman is happy to be in district visiting with constituents and working on matters that are important to islanders—including sea level rise, climate change, working waterfronts, broadband and healthcare. Emily Horton is just returning from maternity leave but would welcome open communication with anyone that needs our assistance and she hopes to attend the next MIC meeting.

Mark Kontico – Poliquin's office in Bangor – glad to be here to listen –

Pinney Bebe-Center – has been interim director for New Hope for Women – has been working with Island Institute to think about domestic violence prevention on islands. There is a coastal caucus – a bipartisan group dealing with sea level rise and coastal flooding. Expect to identify resources to further help island and coastal communities.

Hannah – do you have a sense going into the next Legislature of a clear agenda for the DOT to enhance customer service in the Maine State Ferry Service and address the growing frustration.

Pinney – my sense is that depending upon the election results there will be some changes at DOT.

Donna – just to add on to that there are many people at the table who are frustrated with Maine State Ferry Service. They are making decisions that are making it harder to live year-round on islands. There are no signs of improved customer service or communication with customer base, though these are things they claim are strengths.

Pinney – the next 3 months may be difficult to navigate because the administration will not transition until Jan. 20th.

Maine State Ferry Service – update

Andy – there are revised policies that vehicles should not be running which are going to be more strictly enforced. This has raised concerns about if emergency runs with the ambulance will be allowed to go, because to have heat and light in the back they need to have the engine running. They will be loading cars on the boats with enough space to make sure people can get in and out which may lead to fewer cars. The public hearing about a surcharge when the budget is not meeting expectations or there is a surprise expense, they are proposing that with a 21 day notice they can present a surcharge for 180 days.

Eva – there is a hearing in Belfast in Nov. 28 at the Hutchinson center about the rate change. Andy will send out the information to encourage people to bring as many questions as possible.

Pinney – There are very few areas the DOT and Transportation Committee have control over to raise money. They have federal money, state money but they raise it primarily from the gas tax. One thing talked about and dismissed in the last session was alternative ways to fund transportation. My hope is that we can have these conversations in the near future because we do need to find other ways to fund transportation.

Andy – they rolled out a capital investment plan for the fleet. They are proposing to spend \$55 Million dollars in the next 10 years to upgrade ferry infrastructure.

Donna – The emergency ferry runs have been a problem. Maine State Ferry Service Manager, Mark Higgins and MSFS Community Relations and Policy Director, Jennifer Smith met with the EMT's on Swan's in October. They are pushing the agenda to not use the ferry for medical emergencies. They are asking we use any alternative available. We are mandated to call Lifeflight before we call the ferry on after hours emergencies. Lifeflight is a valuable resource for the state with only three helicopters to cover a broad geographic area. Not every medical emergency is life or death, like a broken arm. It doesn't make sense to call Lifeflight and saddle

their neighbors with a \$14,000 bill. Our EMT's will not use lobster boats because it isn't in the best interest of the patient. If someone wants to go themselves, that's another thing. There is concern that a number of things being pushed are just not good policy.

Eva – having a conservative, weather based, Go-No-Go policy makes sense. It seems to come down staffing. There needs to be more people who work for the ferry service.

Shey – on Islesboro – there has been an ongoing conversation about emergency service. This includes contracts with the water taxi.

Featured Topic – Housing

Andy – on Vinalhaven we have a group that wants to form and are lacking someone who can take up the leadership. But housing is a broad topic- is it availability, is it affordability, is it the seasonality?

As a starting point I'd be interested in hearing how other groups have identified a focus area?

Hannah – All of us have Liza and the Genesis fund in common who have helped us get started. North Haven Sustainable Housing started in 2005. The issue was the lack of affordable housing stock; both to rent or buy. The current indicator for North Haven is that 65% of housing owned by seasonal residents. A typical family can afford only 39% of the avg. home sales price. Each island is so different. Vinalhaven right now has homes for sale that would be considered affordable on North Haven. We don't have homes that come up for sale at that price more than every five years. We rarely have a house that a year-round family can afford. In last 13 years we have done 4 ownership projects. Have built, renovated, helped sell homes into a covenant, sold land with covenant attached, sold a summer house back into year-round housing and added 4 rentals. Rentals are harder for groups to do because of the capital required.

We have folded weatherization work into our work and have weatherized 35 homes with support from the Island Institute.

For the past 3 years were the developer for a new eldercare facility on the island. We fundraised and renovated an existing home that was donated to our organization. It is about to open this month. Added a workforce housing apartment to that facility so that staff would have a place to live. The need is as urgent as its been. Recent turnover in an apartment and there were 6 applicants. A home had 3 quality applicants so there are a lot of people on the island who want to buy houses. We are about to undertake a large project in building a subdivision – which will require a change in the subdivision code on the island.

Working with Genesis to try to build up more coordinating work to try and get another state housing bond to help with funding. Hannah is also connecting with lots of different island communities.

Most of what we do involves fundraising, specifically, from the summer community. You have to have good fundraising to accomplish this. Every house we sell we put a year round

affordability covenant on it which requires us to attempt to find a qualified year round buyer when it comes up for sale.

Website - <http://www.nhshousing.org> resources found there.

Cheryl: What is your criteria for rentals?

Hannah: We are trying to rent within 120% of area mean income. Priority to people who have lived on the island for more than 2 years and who will use the entire space. We worked with a lawyer to draft the covenant.

Kendra: Are you seeing a preference for renting over buying?

There are always people who aren't ready to buy, or they haven't managed their finances in a way where they can get a mortgage quite yet. And a teacher who moves to the island doesn't want to buy a house quite yet.

Bev: Is your 501(c)3 managed by the town and do they have any management responsibility for keeping the housing maintained?

Hannah: We are an independent nonprofit with a board with 11 or 12 members, mostly made of up year-round residents with a couple of seasonal residents. We finance everything, rents are put into a fund to manage upkeep. There is a part time caretaker. Every town is different, but for North Haven, it would add another layer of complexity if people felt the tax payers were subsidizing the affordable housing.

Andy: Does the organization have staff to help with the administrative stuff?

Hannah: We have one part time staff which is me as the director. Our book keeper/treasurer donates his time and the board is very active volunteer board. Use a lot of volunteer labor to build and maintain the houses.

We send out a couple newsletters a year and take steps to raise the groups profile as a professional, active organization working on the island. Have built the reputation and successes over time which builds momentum. The more you can put it out there, the more donations you get when they see you can manage them well.

Roger: How does the town tax the Eldercare facility (multimillion dollar coastal property)

Hannah: The facility is tax exempt – all other properties pay the taxes, or payment in lieu of taxes. We are adding to the tax base with our projects.

Monhegan- Monhegan Island Sustainable Community Association–

Toby: I feel the organization is at a pivotal point. We have people that want to move with established lobster businesses. They are up and running and just need a place to live. We are trying to get existing homes to come into the program with affordability covenants that the house belongs to the homeowner but the land will come into the MISCA program. Currently only 2 buildable lots on the island which have been for sale for several years. The cost to build infrastructure, especially the utility work, means that they are not affordable. The organization is now looking toward building that infrastructure.

Building have not been donated in the past. What we are being asked to do is to come up with places for them to live. Working on getting the \$500K homes into the program. Have been successful in small ball fundraising: Lobster bakes, art auctions. They can be really successful but won't bring in the money we are looking for. Need to move to get bigger money to make it happen. Starting with newsletters. Showing success and fiscal responsibility. Have 2 rentals presently – would rather not be in the rental business-but it is a way to keep housing affordable. We have just sold a house which took months to figure out the way through that. We need to be financially responsible to ourselves. Knowing people for generations does not guarantee that they will be good tenants. So we are looking for ways to bring owners toes up to the line with default without having to confront them on the street because that doesn't build strong community. Have realized that there needs to be a clear If this-then that. We are seeking more clarity in our contracts going forward. Currently own/have covenants – 1 house, one commercial building – 2 rentals – sold a buildable lot – 8 all together either rentals/homes in the program.

Cliff

Cheryl – Looking at renovation complete in the next year. Hearing about setting up parameters about the expected care of homes so there are clear expectations. Ready to tap into Genesis.

Genesis:

Liza – Back in 2010 there was a housing bond called Green Affordable Housing Bond which made 3 million dollars available to create Island and affordable housing programs. Genesis fund worked with Maine Housing staff to develop a program that met the needs of islands. Funded 7 projects from those funds. Currently that program still exists at Maine Housing but there is no money to fund it. If there were a pipeline of new projects there could be potential to see funds developed again.

There is a \$15 million bond waiting to become available – if/when it becomes available there is language for rural and remote communities embedded.

There are 10 island affordable housing organizations that exist. Three have part time staff.

Peaks –

Betsey Remage Healey: Home Start -We are under Portland ordinances – continuing to work with the city council. The city added text to an amendment that reduced the minimum rental period from one year to six months. Rental is more affordable for people in a lot of cases.

Long –

Mark Greene: We keep using the word affordability – we don't even use it when we talk about housing on the island. We were unable to finalize our projects using the Maine State Housing money. Having to meet the affordability guidelines when it comes to state grant funding sets bars that are difficult to meet, and we simply couldn't afford to finish the project. We were a start up at the time. The town has given us land to work with. The problem is in the area of availability over affordability. Rental is the area that needs to be met first and foremost. Need people to be on the island.

Islesboro-

Rick Rogers: IAP has been around for 29 years. They are a 501(c)3 and all the income comes from lease fees, rental payments, or fundraising. Over those years we have tried many different strategies and built 14 homes. The initial build was 8 homes in a subdivision. Bought back 2 original homes. The last 8 years homes have been built for rental instead of sales. There are a lot of houses for sale on the island, but they are too old, not winterized or too expensive. The IAP subsidizes the rents based on the financials. For example – 2 houses came on market – put out the word in a single post – got 11 apps immediately. Currently have 6 rentals being managed. The rent is \$475 - \$675 depending on the house and sliding scale. The annual budget runs about \$150K and significant property donations.

Cranberry Island Realty Trust (CIRT) –

Bill Dowling: Currently has 5 rental houses; 4 on Great Cranberry – 1 on Islesford. Six of the 13 students in the school are CIRT families.

CIRT has built 2 houses through Maine State Housing bond. Property was donated. Had a bequest of a home which is on the market in the hopes of buying a home on Islesford. We have some selection issues. Would like to see how other housing authorities select tenants. Have multiple applications every time housing opens up.

Looking to the future – Helping aging population stay on the island. Community building is also very important and so we think about how our organization can fit within the community and help create a stronger, sustained year-round community without looking like we are trying to run things. The families that we have been working with – how can we help them move to that next step when they are ready to move beyond the rental? We are in the midst of a fundraising campaign right now.

Island Community Development Corporation –

Kendra Chubbuck: Isle au Haut still has 3 rentals.

Have you run into resistance from community members for providing affordable housing?

Roger: Calling it something other than affordable housing really helps, workforce housing or similar.

Hannah: We call ourselves NH Sustainable Housing – not affordable – as long as the situation is urgent you know the need is there. The majority of the population supports our mission, but it is very much about selection. There is a minority of the population who always say, ‘no one should get any help, I had to build my own house and figure it out on my own.’ And for us our selection has generally been people who have lived or worked on the island for a long time. But there will always be a segment of the population who will resist. As we prepare to hold a special town meeting to change the ordinance we are gearing up for some of that resistance from people who don’t want any more people or don’t want any new people. But so many families see their own kids who aren’t able to find places to live and they see the need for what we do.

Kendra: There are people who don’t want to be in the renting business because of bad experiences – it is very few people but can be loud enough to control the issue.

Do other orgs. Run into resistance to the idea of affordable housing

North Haven - A lot about selection – most of the people that apply are people who have lived for a long time.

Isle au Haut – Don't want to be in the renting business – it is very few people but can be loud enough to control the issue.

How do you decide who to select?

Rick: The school is a huge focus for us– Looking at the age and type of people who are in the rental.

Liza – what % of pop. Is currently paying more than 30 – 50% for their housing. Housing is affordable if it is under 30% of expenses.

Hannah: We have a ranking criterion: prove you can afford it, but prove you don't make too much money. Are you involved in community activities? We check past rental history and determine if you can take care of the house.

Kendra: We have an application process and then they do a background check and the board decides. The community doesn't have input.

How to populate the selection committee –

ICDC Isle au Haut: The board makes the decision on who gets the property.

Islesboro: The selection committee on Islesboro is a secret

North Haven – the board is the deciding factor – have open criteria/scoring

Long Island – tread quietly, gently. We had people who were in opposition to the affordable housing project join the selection committee.

Matinicus – we don't have an org. on the island. In the past when we have talked selection has come to be an area that has caused issues.

Legally how do you do this?

Depends on the pool. The bigger the pool the easier it is.

Liza – have to have a fair process for making the opportunity known. Must follow the process that you have set for yourself.

Island Updates:

Isle au Haut – Broadband committee working; Solar project being installed; weatherization; and there is a new Island Fellow who started in September.

There is a new ordinance in the Thorofare for mooring fees – Lobstermen will be paying \$25 for moorings; Hiring a new school teacher – Rita will be retiring after her 3rd year teaching for Isle au Haut. The school has five students. Tuesday's Table has started at the general store; Book group going great; Paving has been interrupted 1/2way through the project. Two recent community deaths.

Long Island – New wave break working well with Westerlies; Wellness Center opened and has been busy; Soup luncheons again; 50th Anniversary of Long Island Civic Organization celebrated; Lots of construction and growth going on-ordinance proposed about the amount of construction debris; The school has 16 students.

Frenchboro – Garbage truck wouldn't come across – finally resolved – Maine State Ferry Service had been clearing the ramp – will need to repair the ferry ramp; New teacher, new principal, 4 students in the school; Natalie (Island Fellow) looking for free beeswax to seal the wood for the garden; new landscaping at the church; Raised monarch butterflies – lots of milkweed – the deer really like it too; 2 whales washed up last summer – concern about the parts being taken by islanders (Allied Whale took the whalebones).

Matinicus – 2 students right now – may leave for the winter – new superintendent; new school board members; Response about the library has continued to be very positive; Trash program skyrocketing in use – hauled 3500 lbs of old fishing rope this year; Eva is the 2018 Solid Waste Manager of the Year

Swan's – 30 plus in elementary and 12 – 15 in High school; comprehensive plan is moving forward and there are community meetings coming up; Maine State Ferry Service captains and crew are great; There are a couple of Oyster Farms being developed on Swan's; The move to Emera Maine has been good; battling beavers and racoons.

Vinalhaven – 175 students; Maine State Ferry Service schedule change combining the 2:45 and 4:30 boats into one at 3:30; Sea level rise planning has attracted recent visits from Island Institute, Northern New England Association of Planners; Climate Adaption for the Sewer plant; substance abuse group is focused on supporting recovery; Ticks, the Maine CDC did a drag yesterday and collected 150 or so – trying to create a map and show the data; single stream recycling is going on; Island EMS have a director opening (3 in training); Lobstering – bait needs/shortage, talks of trap reductions; Aquaculture – Hurricane Island is expanding to their full 4 acre site; Broadband- the town is putting together a RFP for next steps of the Tilson study;

North Haven – 62 students; 2nd year of the High School magnet program (4 students plus an exchange); going to field a boys and girls basketball team; Eldercare facility is about to open; Maine State Ferry Service is an ongoing issue; really busy summer 4-5 large summer homes being built; Minke Whale being reconstructed by students; Islanders are starting to talk about how to deal with opiate issue proactively;

Peaks – 47 students at the school. They are concerned about Portland school boards enrollment and facilities study; small group working on assisted living along with their new Island Fellow; The impact of tourism is always an area of concern and the Peaks Island Council is drafting a golf cart recommendation. There is a flood of people every hour in the summer – Casco Bay lines is talking about building bigger boats to accommodate the traffic– looking forward to conversations with Casco Bay lines; Some concerns about how Air BnB type rentals are affecting housing on the island; Mainland parking remains a concern.

Islesboro – 100 students – 25 commute from the mainland daily; New school leader (combined principal and superintendent); Ferry is the big issue of the day, but the big boat is returning from dry dock. There is still pending litigation challenging the rate increase; A lot of land for sale – some affordably – an interest in donations of land to different organizations – Town accepted land and money to build a house for the school.

Attachment: Peaks Draft Ordinance Language

The following sections provide an overview of the draft ordinance amendments:

1. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADUs) – The proposed amendments are designed to make the ADU provisions that were adopted a few years ago more useable. Here is an overview of the proposed changes:

The minimum size of an ADU is reduced from 400 SF to 300 SF

The owner of the property no longer has to live there

The income and rent are tied to the City's affordable housing provisions

2. Reconfiguration of large, older residential buildings – The proposed amendments allow the existing floor area in large, older residential buildings in both the I-R1 and I-R2 Districts to be reconfigured to create more dwelling units as long as they meet certain requirements. The following is an overview of the provisions:

The lot must have been developed and used for residential activity prior to 1985 and the building must have a minimum of 1,200 SF of floor area

The lot must have a minimum of 6,500 SF if connected to the sewer and 20,000 SF if served by a septic system

The space in both the principal building and any accessory buildings such as a garage can be used to create one or more additional dwelling units

No stormwater can be discharged to the sewer system

The building must maintain its character and can only have minimal changes to the exterior

At least 50% of the units must be occupied as their permanent residence by residents meeting the income requirements of the City's affordable housing provisions

3. Development of "lots of record"

– The proposed amendments are designed to make it more feasible to develop small vacant lots if they meet certain requirements.

Lots of record with a minimum of 5,000 Sf if connected to the sewer or 10,000 if served by a septic system can be developed as an affordable single-family home

The side setbacks are reduced to 10 feet

The portion of the lot that can be covered by impervious surface is increased to 40% outside of Shoreland areas where it stays at 20%

The unit must be occupied by residents with an income of up to 120% of the AMI reflecting the higher cost of living on the island and be used as their permanent residence

If there are two adjacent lots of record that could be developed using this provision, the lots can be combined and a side-by-side two-family home built on the combined lots

At least one of the units in the two-family home must be occupied by residents with an income of up to 120% of the AMI and the requirements of the City's affordable housing provisions and used as their permanent residence

4. Off-Street Parking Requirements –

The proposed amendments reduce the parking requirement for affordable housing units in the I-R1, I-R2, and I-B Districts from two spaces per unit to one space per unit