

MIC Call Notes 3/27/20

Attendees

MIC

Donna Weigle- Swan's
Donna Damon- Chebeague
Lisa Penlever- Peaks
Mark Greene- Long
Mott Fiebusch- Monhegan
Eva Murray- Matinicus
Randy Schaeffer- Peaks
Kendra Chubbuck – Isle au Haut
Rachel Bishop

Island Institute Staff

Suzanne MacDonald
Stephenie MacLagan
Kendra Jo Grindle
Kate Tagai
Meghan Grabill
Craig Olson

Island Leaders

Sonny Sprague- Swan's
Karen (Swan's Island Admin Assistant)
George Tarkelson- Matinicus
Peggi Stevens- Isle au Haut
Jessica Stevens- Monhegan
Sara Brake- Frenchboro
Laurie Dobson- Cranberry Isles

Michael Childers
Michael Gora
Bob Anderson
Matt Preisser

Partner Organizations

Maine Municipal Association (MMA)
Kate Dufour
SeaCoast Mission
Douglas Corman
Sharon Daly
Washington County Council of Governments (WCCG)
Jarod Guillette
State Government
Senator Dave Miramant
Senator Cathy Breen
Representative Genevieve McDonald

Representative Mike Sylvester- House Chair of Labor and Housing
Balmy Days Ferry Service
Bill

Action Items:

- _ Send info about community funds to Craig Olson – colson@islandinstitute.org
- _ Join facebook group/dropbox. Email Kate KTagai@islandinstitute.org or Andy atheriault@islandinstitute.org to join
- _ Have MIC members share resources to community Facebook pages as appropriate

MMA:

Director of State and Federal Relations Department (lobbying arm of the association) meeting weekly with reps from the governor's office to share lists, concerns, and resources with the Governor's office. Unless there are objections, if I hear of needs, I will be advancing that to the team next week. There have been positive conversations and to the extent that they can they are acting.

WCCG:

Regional transportation and ENV planner. They are working hard to support the continuance of business as usual for municipal functions. We have access to software and technology as well as the skills to facilitate public and municipal meetings so the public can still participate. But we are also supporting towns who are undertaking comprehensive plans and so we are trying to continue a democratic process of building a comprehensive plan with social distancing. We are also encouraging healthy lifestyles and recreation that are low rise of disease transmission.

I.I. Updates

- Facebook group, Dropbox, contact list
- Org response
 - Broadband bond
 - Small biz supports
 - Outreach to island stores - supply issues
 - Resource list - Direct inquiries to CO & CD:
<https://mailchi.mp/islandinstitute/commercial-currents-resources-help-you-1041541>
 - PD grants now
 - Glenn Fund later
 - Networking
 - Ferries meeting
 - Social service support
 - Resource List:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i9kOYiDbRwDVZ6T8aowELmP7JTzcx3-B3dy45-xsa4/edit?mc_cid=6d663a7f38&mc_eid=%5BUNIQID%5D
 - Community fund work, general assistance - funnel to CO
 - Outreach to other groups - teachers, artists, aquaculturists

Island Updates:

Cranberry Isles:

The basic travel restrictions don't feel adequate, but we are not empowered to change it. We are trying to set up a medical task force, trying to create an ordinance for emergency. Is there a way to get on other communities List Servs?

Swan's Island:

Maine CDC Director is doing a great job with the daily press briefings. He is kind, compassionate and is delivering great information. The number of cases are rising in the state, the level of concern is also escalating. EMS had a meeting this week and made changes to their protocol for how they are responding to any emergency. The ambulance has to be on scene, and they need to determine if there are respiratory symptoms. The health clinic has also changed protocols so that patients and clinic officer all wear PPE. The health clinic has very few masks, so a retired schoolteacher made masks that allow the reuse of the N95 masks. There were 7 people in person and a few online at last week's town meeting. We could use more training on digital technology with who can use zoom. A lot of people aren't used to the remote way of meeting so that we don't have to continue to have meetings in the town office with 5-6 people. The store has implemented changes including a senior only hour the first hour of the day. The store is too small to create a 6-foot distance.

Ferry schedule has been reduced to reduce exposure to the crew and revenues are down. If one of the crew gets sick, the whole crew gets quarantined, so we need to keep folks away from the ferry crews. We can be friends from a distance. We have written a personal letter to all the seasonal people who own homes on the island letting them know of the situation on the island regarding the ferry schedule and fragile infrastructure.

Frenchboro:

There are 35 people on island, 4 just back from Florida and in quarantine. The post office has implemented changes to keep the post mistress and public safe. Brian, the Swan's Island store owner, is helping supply Frenchboro. We have some people who keep jumping in to do things, which is normally wonderful, but in times like these it creates confusion and makes it hard to get accurate information out. The new schedule doesn't create a round trip for trash or fuel which will need special accommodations. Mark Higgins assures Frenchboro that it will be possible. The Ferry comes to Frenchboro, to the mainland, back to Frenchboro but then parks for the night on Swan's island. It also limits the number of spaces for Frenchboro residents.

Sharing information in a meaningful and useful way as a board of selectmen without limiting people's voices but letting the selectmen's voices be heard above the social media noise.

SUGGESTION: confusing FB threads- Perhaps create a post header called "Board* Verified info": (* depends on who is doing the verification)

Isle au Haut:

55 people on island right now including kids. More people are coming. The mailboat schedule has been reduced to three days a week and passengers have to call in advance for a reservation as it is only taking 6 people. We rely on our mailboat captains and we don't want them sick. We need to come up with a plan for transporting sick people. We don't have a plan yet, but we are creating a plan. The store is delivering groceries and are very conscientious about cleaning and limiting how many people in the store. There are notices posted on Facebook and the Town Website. We are asking people who are coming back to quarantine. The library and town office are now locked. In negotiations with the National Park about what is going to happen to visitors, because they are

dropped at the town landing and have to walk through town. Town meeting is delayed with no date for reschedule. Not everyone is on the internet, so advisories are going out by mail so the elderly and those without the internet feel included.

The Park Loop Road and all facilities on MDI are closed.

Islesboro:

There are about 400 people on island. The stores are closed with delivery/curbside pick-up only. The health center is doing a lot and people are restricting their trips to the mainland. When people do go off, they are on the mainland for a longer time increasing exposure. The schools are closed, and everyone is hunkering down. Most people who are coming back are good to self-quarantine. The main plumber is only doing small jobs and has said he will not be opening houses which will decrease the number of people who will be able to come.

The Community Development Corp is creating a bridge loan program for businesses who are applying to State and Federal funding but need a way to bridge the gap, up to \$10,000 or 4% of payroll until the Federal funding comes through.

Matinicus:

There are 30 of us last week, about 40 now, but the people who are coming are the people for who this is their primary home. We've done a good job of convincing others of the minimal resources. Eva is the EMS service, but without an ambulance or a lot of equipment the ability to respond is limited. Penobscot Island Air is going above and beyond to provide resources, but it is the link to the mainland, so we want to protect our pilots. If someone was gravely ill, they would go on a boat and not on an airplane because the planes are such a vital link for the rest of the community. For Maine Municipal Association, we will be looking for legal flexibility to hold the town meetings, so if there is a resource we would like to know. There is no formally structured community assistance fund, but our community is so small that informal things happen. We don't have a formally written EMS protocol; Maine EMS has put out some new information and Eva will be studying that. Matinicus doesn't have a formal EMS services. Eva is the only licensed EMT on the island. We need to be all in this together.

The Legislature passed a bill before we left making it legal to hold remote meetings and flexibility on budget timelines.

We have a lot of lobster fishermen in the population as that is our community's only significant industry. Sounds like that is not the case everywhere. Some of them would no doubt become our informal lifeline for supplies!

I am a local emergency management director and as such would like to toss out that every town should feel free to access their county EMA--in most cases no need to reinvent the wheel on Emergency ops plans, paperwork, networking...

Monhegan:

About 50 people on island. Task force meeting daily. There is no formal medical emergency equipment and the town water isn't on until the middle of April. Looking towards the future and the start of tourist season, as a Plantation we have limited political ability, but the State has been taking appropriate steps. We are hoping the legislatures are going to be considering the tourist industry and extending benefits for those considering part time workers. We are at the end of the supply chain and so are worried as more people show up to Maine that less resources will be available for us at the end of the supply chain. The EMA director is focused on getting up to speed

on fit testing for N95 masks. It is hard to get info on best practices and protocol to know at least what not to do or where to draw the line. The EMS provides first response and Fire Dept provides transport, but we are all volunteers. There are starting to be internet issues. The hardwired phone is down and the effect of that could be a problem. Trying to figure out how phone and Internet service providers can alert Monhegan EMA when services are down and how we can get priority repairs for those communication links for emergency purposes. We do have an emergency radio link in with Lincoln County EMA as back up. There is room for improvement with the ferry service protocol. The limited food and propane vendors go through Knox County and we are in Lincoln County, so we've got two counties to communicate with to make sure that service doesn't dry up. Started food assistance this week with a short-term plan in place.

Chebeague:

People are doing a good job with social distancing. We are fortunate to live on these islands because we have open space. The EMS is working on plans for various scenarios in case the boats stop running. Most of the non-profits have stopped running. The store has really good protocols in place to keep that service running. There will be an ice cream shortage but there is a toilet paper plan. About 450 of the summer houses are empty but the plumber has a key to every house, so they are reaching out to summer people to see if they can raid the supplies if it comes to that. The post service is critical. The town is going to set up a committee to communicate coordination and outreach to avoid duplicating efforts and to try and get info all in one place. It is a town advisory committee and the selectmen have the ultimate responsibility. If a need is identified and put in writing the board will meet within a couple days to address it. Every time we post a notice online, we will also mail it out to a targeted list so that everyone can see it. The school has a lot of food that was processed last fall from people's gardens and bulk bags of flour and oats. Anything there will be made available to the food pantry with reimbursement to the school. We have an ok to order food through the school's wholesaler to get food to the pantry. The church has been a leader coordinating with the committee and food pantry. There is already a subcommittee in charge of fundraising. We have a list of people to call if we start running out of money to supply the pantry. We all know who the people are who want to help us in our communities. The Church is also holding virtual services. To encourage creativity, we are looking at the visual and performing arts and writing. We are asking anyone who produces a piece of visual art and we are going to display on a wall, video a skit, and create a pamphlet of writing to send out, so that people can see what we were doing. A positive way for people to get through the isolation. People's reaction to stress is concerning. People react in different ways and so we have to have a plan for how to help people who are struggling. It is coming from a place of stress. The what-if's around transportation - getting to the remote lot from the bus if the bus doesn't run, what if the crews get contaminated, what if Casco Bay Lines can't transport people and it feeds the cycle of stress. We are trying to alleviate some of the unknowns by planning with the committee. We have people who have underlying health conditions and various needs. At what point do we say we may become totally isolated and this may not be the place they want to be? It could cause more stress, but if we do become isolated, this wouldn't be the safest place for them to be and if we identified a plan

Makuuchi's in Portland is the wholesale distributor for both the school and the store, but they have a very fragile supply chain in that if one person is contaminated the whole supply chain falters.

Chat Box Comment: I believe it is up to each individual to assess the level of risk they are willing to take. I have struggled with this, but in the end, the island is my home. I do not have the financial ability to move to the mainland even if I wanted to.

Long:

Selectmen had their first zoom meeting where they had more people than they have had at any meeting. We are wondering about town meeting. Right now, there is no plan to move, but would be curious for what others are doing. The finance committee is not required to have a public meeting, but they normally do and so it is online. The ordinance committee is required to have a public meeting and they have the shoreline zoning ordinance up for public comment. There are people returning. There was one rescue call this weekend that showed flaws in the well-intentioned plan of keeping the EMS safe. The Casco Bay Lines is our back-up to keep the rescue boat for the really serious things. The reduction in transport comes tomorrow. One ferry crew will do the whole day and keep other crews in reserve. April and Sam are going to town to keep the store supplied. All the town buildings are secured and locked. Everything is remote. The internet is slow, but everyone is getting by. We are ready to implement the broadband project to be voted on at this next town meeting. The transfer station is doing roadside pickup twice a week to keep people from going to the transfer station. The school superintendent had a nice piece about remote learning and April School Vacation. The teachers are working harder than ever to keep the remote learning going. April School vacation will be the real test if people are going to try to come back for a visit. Shared Rob's piece on the listserv to gently encourage people not to come if they don't have to. Created a food security committee to look into the food issue in the long term with different scenarios to consider getting goods and services back and forth across the Bay. They are working on a plan.

Peaks:

Peaks Island has a heating assistance fund. And tax-assistance fund. On Peaks Island, normally around 900 year-round people, but summer folks are returning. We have an EMT trained police and fire department. Volunteers have been asked not to respond to house calls. The Peaks Island Council agreed upon a statement for those from away pointing out factors they should take into consideration about behaviors and services. Building a database of credentialed professionals, or those who could get them quickly for medical/mental health services. We are operating on the assumption that the hospitals will be overcrowded, and people will be treated in place. Talking about protocols for getting ill people back and forth. We have a website, two listservs and a community Facebook page. The grocery store is a critical piece. They don't have strict protocols in place yet and supplies are getting low. They are only getting about half of the normal deliveries they get for the winter population, but they have summer people coming back.

MMA:

Please check the website for the corona virus updates and guidance that are put together with legal guidance. Please reach out with concerns, questions, and suggestions.

Legislators:

Lobstermen are self-employed and so there are items in the stimulus bill to help commercial fisheries, but they are not eligible for unemployment.
All the national labor chairs are convening today. No one has seen the full details of the bill passing through the House to be voted on today.

Resources:

NDEC's Free Zoom Training http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001S-tL1bOKyehyHwAI2Tglczr8VuR4KIGHoGBQnfR0qm2myWwklgzbs9we5eSlxgtXhr - g8Nxssf6RXxYT8s1ULaFJ9ZCAIGmex3jguHoEO1DTYaZabGfk5zI3Af95iHlsxTTiykKTNYOaaE7MW-zGSDyjozc7qFhDsIDg-czMdv9w--C6xPyUkloUYJcltRzFGUoTFPVdYyWS363t9feaIM-uwPVYA_e1RZJzRLcBAY=&c=gnVeEWkNKyDGy-L1qzhwyjbdWzyJ57zCkrQEJ9tYzwpqmqmWA9uUtyA==&ch=4NLOd6OylOD5UwWeOGgS6VzprCBReURaJB7kf5m4zTioR9u-U4SLjQ==

Identified question:

- What are the procedures for holding remote town meetings, legally?
- Working with the ferry services and transportation of 'normal' traffic and potential symptomatic passengers
- Best practices around protocol for transporting someone showing symptoms
- If connections for supplies go down, how to get supplies and critical services to/from island?
- Can lobstermen claim unemployment?
- How/do you communicate with those most at risk about the potential for the islands becoming truly isolated?

Identified difficulty:

- Sharing of information in a meaningful and useful way
- Keeping phone service repaired
- Safety and distance on the ferry loading/unloading of freight.

Identified need:

- Updates from communication companies on if/when services go down and prioritizing re-establishing connections for the islands

Chat Box Comments:

- Monhegan Businesses are also wondering if benefits will be extended to seasonal workers. Tourism isn't affected yet, so it might be pre-emptive, but we are concerned about that uncertainty.
- The World Health Organization is suggesting a shift in terminology. Their recommendation is using the phrase "physical distancing" in lieu of "social distancing" as a way of addressing the potential impact on people's social/emotional health.
- I'll chime in for EMS transport for the islands with daily vehicle ferry service...I think patients should be transported in their own private vehicle by a family member if showing Covid-19 symptoms, unless needing oxygen, etc., This way only the family member doing the transport is exposed and they have already been exposed. This protects our EMS responders and keeps them safe. Our island only has volunteer EMS, my husband being one of them. It's a lot to ask for volunteers to risk their own health and the health of their family members.