

MIC Meeting
October 29th, 2021
Succession Planning

MIC Members

Roger Berle, Cliff Island, Co-Chair
Donna Wiegler, Swan's Island, Co-Chair
Donna Damon, Chebeague
Ellen Mahoney, Peaks Island
Carley Feibusch, Monhegan
Mark Greene, Long Island
Jennifer Fox, Great Diamond
Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut
Cheryl Crowley, Cliff Island
Gabe McPhail, Vinalhaven
Lauren Jennings, Frenchboro
Ingrid Gaither, Cranberry Islands

Partner Organizations

Island Institute

Abby Roche, Community Development Officer
Kate Tagai, Senior Community Development Officer
Yvonne Thomas, Senior Community Development Officer
Tony Chatwin, President

Seacoast Mission

Sharon Daley, Director of Health Services

Great Lakes Islands Alliance

Matt Preisser, Support Staff
Peter Huston, Support Staff
Bob Anderson, Steering Committee

MIC Guests

Chris Rector, Regional Representative, Office of Senator King
Sarah Lawrence, District Representative, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree
Sarah Brake, Frenchboro Select Board Member, Guest Speaker
Bill Chamberlin
Ben and Melissa
George Baker-Jennings
Jane Oldfield Spearman
Mary Anne Mitchell
Elizabeth Marcheck
Wes Wolfertz
Melissa Yosua-Davis

Welcome

Roger describes his work starting in 1968 on Cliff Island, totaling approximately 53 years. Asks, “Who is going to do what needs to be done. Who is going to be next?” Wonders “is it that people don’t care” OR “is it that they see us older folks doing the work and think that it’s being taken of?”

Updates

- Federal – Congressional offices
 - King -Chris Rector, nothing in particular to report.
 - Pingree -Sarah Lawrence, nothing to report. New to the office and covers topics including trade, transportation, arts, education.

Feature Topic: Succession Planning

- Donna Damon -Chebeague
 - Pondering “what is community leadership?”, “who are community leaders?”, “who will take your place?”
 - Grew up on Chebeague and felt a big responsibility for community impact as a child -- collecting money for church, Girl Scouts, helping at community suppers. These childhood responsibilities helped them learn benevolence, entrepreneurial skills, and what it takes to run a community.
 - Believes that our generation has given our children “everything” and this is leading to issues with community leadership.
 - Some schools require community service hours. Yarmouth requires only 10 hours.
 - Importance of interconnectedness between generations
 - The need to train youth (share knowledge) for specific ways of doing things such as Roberts Rule of Order, managing money
 - Shares her story of advocating for a car ferry in Augusta and being on the Cumberland budget committee at age 21.
 - Learned how to listen, get along, and how to make it work --using political capital and being strategic about decisions and be open to collaborate with “competitors”, think about things from multiple perspectives -trying to consider how others might be thinking about the issue
 - How do we create an environment for the next generation of leaders in which “you’re not the target”?
 - Still pondering, “How do we engage the next generation?”
From the Zoom Chat: Donna Wiegler, “Donna, that was great! Thank you for sharing your wisdom and experience with us.”
- Sarah Brake -Frenchboro
 - Shares background on her journey to be a resident on Frenchboro, being on the selectboard
 - In 2015, they were facing issues of engaging younger generations in the town process
 - Advice:

- Share the entire story, history, or present moment of the board
 - Recognize that turmoil shifts people on and off the board --share those stories
- Put personal feelings of a person aside and be open to collaborating with new individuals.
- When you don't know something just ask for help.
- Feelings of disconnect between generations and how this can muddy the water of connecting individuals and communities.
- Being "OK" with individuals failing --continue supporting, caring, and encouraging them.
- "How do you manage change after such a long time in leadership?"
 - When someone in these big roles steps down we need to record and acknowledge their experiences and learn from them. Start practices that encourage this.

From the Zoom Chat: Donna Wiegler, "Sarah, thank you for sharing and for your honesty about being a first time select board member as a young person."

Questions and discussion

- How are you transitioning new folks in? Supporting new individuals? Recruiting?
 - Peggi: Thanks Sarah and acknowledges her journey. Identifies that oftentimes these transitions into leadership roles are difficult because
 - The public doesn't understand how difficult the transition to this role can be
 - Older folks aren't willing to step down
 - Keeping an open mind can be difficult (but is necessary)
 - Sarah: The importance of boundaries in community settings
 - Gabe: It's important to listen and consider young generations ways of doing things in leadership roles -considering how the leadership framework and how it could serve communities
 - Roberts Rule of Order -can feel chaotic, power lies in the hands of a few key people, doesn't allow for organic and natural flow of conversation for individuals to speak and share

From Zoom Chat: Sarah Lawrence, "Well said re: the limitations of Robert's Rules of Order, Gabe. I believe it doesn't have a mechanism to address grievance/harm experienced during a meeting, which is a concern of mine."

From the Zoom Chat: Melissa Yousha-Davis, "Completely agree re: Robert's Rules of Order. It makes it difficult to have actual conversation - and help move people towards a consensus."

- Moving towards a consensus building approach --takes a lot of soft skills to build this up
 - How the leadership framework has a big focus on these soft skills, allows people to lean into their strengths and create a leadership style that makes sense to them --this is as opposed to making people fit into a "box" of leadership

- How does apathy play into community leadership? How do individuals overcome (or not) apathy?
 - Sarah: going to people individually to engage them.
 - Donna: need to reach out to people and encourage them to be and stay engaged
 - Zoom allows for people to have access to the meetings --to watch and listen in even if they can't be at the meetings in person
- Jennifer Fox: The need to remember that generational differences are present --uses the example of 1950's women who had the time and capacity to dedicate themselves to community work. How this is very different from what happens today

From the Zoom chat: Matt Presier, "Job shadowing is one specific technique to ease transition and facilitate knowledge transfer - e.g., one month overlap between the person leaving and the new one coming on board. Have any islands experimented with this? One downside is the cost of having to compensate both people at the same time."

- Sarah B.: agreeing that shadowing and sharing experiences is important to help individuals to understand roles
- Donna MD: Shadowing does happen on Chebeague and it does/can cost money

From the Zoom Chat: Chris Rector, "I would recommend the Leadership Maine program through the Maine Development Foundation. www.mdf.org/leadership-development/leadership-maine/ Also the Maine Development Foundation Institute of Civic Leadership program. Both programs provide training. I did Leadership Maine 25 years ago and it was a life changing experience. Leadership skills are taught and learned and fun to learn. and the networking with peers through either of those programs are incredibly valuable. And don't let the price tag scare you, there is financial assistance available."

- Bill Chamberlin: If we can get some of the younger members of our community to join the board --even if they don't have the ability to commit entirely. Taking time to learn the ways, through smaller responsibilities and let them grow, allow them to serve on a committee.

From Zoom Chat: Peter Huston, "People are voting their interests with their volunteer time. Older generations expect newcomers to follow the traditional path, and to Sarah's point this may not be obvious to them. When I moved to the island full-time an islander spent time explaining to me the needs of the village. It was important that he went out of his way to do this."

Summarized advice to identify, encourage, and support new leaders and leadership transition:

1. Ask
 - a. Be fully transparent about what you are asking them to do
 - b. Provide history and context for the situations they are taking on
 - c. Be clear about expectations and time commitments
 - d. Be open to co-creating a different way of accomplishing the goal depending on the time they have to give.
 - i. Accommodate the time people have available and adjust tasks so they can learn over time with the time they have available
2. Expect failure from new leaders and help them through it

3. Help create a clear plan for transition
 - a. Have the people job shadow or at least meet if possible
 - b. Have clear role descriptions and clear expectations and time commitments
 4. Support and encourage young/new people in their positions, reinforce what they are doing right.
 5. Teach new leaders how to handle conflict
 - a. Through mentorship with effective leaders
 - b. Through training
 6. Recognize and adapt when generational differences lead to differences in expectations
 - a. This can include use of titles or names, technology, etc.
 7. Listen. What is the barrier preventing them from engaging?
 8. Use technology to increase awareness and involvement
 9. Plan for and fund professional development
 - a. Maine Municipal Association
 - b. Island Institute
 - c. UMaine Continuing Education
 - d. Maine Development Foundation
- Next meeting is Nov. 19 at 10 a.m. on Housing

Island Updates

Peaks: Summer water is off and it's finally getting quiet.

Window Dressing community endeavor continues with several opportunities for folks to build custom window inserts as the cold weather approaches.

The school will host a Halloween fun Run to augment the curtailed Halloween festivities- the Lions Club usually hosts a big event that is not happening.

Fall has been magnificent and there's a new push to attempt to manage invasive species on a few PILP properties. our work to reduce air traffic noise over the island

2) the forest fire threat assessment the Maine Forest Service is conducting for us.

3) the development of emergency evacuation procedures being developed with the leadership of the Portland Fire Chief

4) Resident priority boarding

5) The possible improvement of down front infrastructure addressed in the study entitled " Peaks Island Ferry Landside Operations Study" prepared jointly by the city and Casco Bay Lines