

Maine Islands Coalition Meeting
April 22, 2022

MIC Members

Roger Berle, Cliff Island, Co-Chair
Kendra Chubbuck, Isle au Haut. Co-Chair
Donna Wiegler, Swan's Island
Mark Greene, Long Island
Rachel Bishop, Frenchboro
Eva Murray, Matinicus
Ingrid Gaither, Cranberry Islands
Jennifer Fox, Great Diamond
Jim Buccheri, Monhegan

Organizations

Island Institute
Brenna Cohen, CDO
Kate Tagai, SCDO
Lisa Millette, CDO
Alex Zipparo, CDO
Melanie Nash, Fellow
Mia Colloredo-Mansfeld, Fellow
Yvonne Thomas, SCDO
Great Lakes Islands Alliance
Matt Preisser, Support Staff
Peter Huston, Support Staff, Put-In-Bay, OH
Bob Anderson, GLIA Board, Beaver Island MI

MIC Guests

Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines
Mark Higgins, Maine State Ferry Service
John King, Islesboro
Mary Anne Mitchell, Peaks Island
Phil Crossman, Vinalhaven
Lydia Crafts, Maine State Rep District 46
Sarah Lawrence, District Representative,
Congresswoman Chellie Pingree
Kelly Cotiaux, Staff, Senate

Welcome

MIC Co-Chairs Roger and Kendra

Next meeting date will be in Rockland in-person tentatively on May 20th.

Organization Updates

Peter Huston GLIA – last week was the warbler migration. Big weeks in bird migration which is a big deal on many of the Great Lake Islands. Convening a meeting on affordable housing, Mackinaw Island has 12 units of workforce housing and is building their second set of 12 units. Are sharing the Solutions Library affordable housing stories from Maine. GLIA is running a webinar series. They've had leadership, invasive species and next up is a webinar on Green Islands – what islands are doing to be more green.

Legislative Updates

Kelly Cotiaux – The deadline passed for federal spending requests, our Bangor office has 150 requests. The Senates in recess, please email Kelly anytime if she can be of help.

kelly_cotiaux@collins.senate.gov or 207.945.0417.

Sarah Lawrence, Rep. Chellie Pingree: Apologies for the internet challenges from my end! No major Congressional update to share, beyond what Kelly Cotiaux shared. Glad to be with you all this morning. Be in touch if and as we can be helpful, please! Sarah Lawrence, District Representative, Congresswoman Pingree's office (Portland) -- 207-774-5019; sarah.lawrence@mail.house.gov

Lydia Crafts – wrapping up legislative session, glad to be here and represent Monhegan

Feature Topic: Ferry Electrification

Hank Berg, Casco Bay Lines

- Casco Bay Island Transit District, AKA Casco Bay Lines is the lifeline to six islands in Casco Bay Maine.
 - Ferries have been serving unbridged islands in Casco Bay since 1871
 - Terminal located in Portland, Maine operating 365 days a year
 - Pre-pandemic
 - >1.1M Passengers (residents, commuters, contractors, tourists, school kids)
 - >40K vehicles
 - >500,000 pieces of freight (mail, packages, home goods, construction stuff)
 - CBL has a fleet of 5 vessels (4 active 1 standby)
- Ferry ridership dropped significantly at beginning of pandemic, paused marketing and tours in 2020 to keep islanders safe, this summer will resume marketing and tours to attract tourists to ride ferry.

- Useful life of a ferry is 30 years
- 20 diesel engines
- > 220K gallons of fuel
 - 2014: 80/20 biodiesel mix
- Machigonne II serving Peaks Island is 35 years old
- Maquoit II serving downbay islands is 28 years old
- Replacing Machigonne with a diesel/electric hybrid – quiet, clean; aim to replace each ferry as it ages out with alternative propulsion system
- Requirements for 40 ft longer vessel, capacity for 599 but will limit the Portland to Peaks run to 499. There is a separate space for freight and a 15 vehicle capacity. Freight will no longer impact vehicle capacity.
- Battery charging takes 10 minutes but can only happen at Portland, without major infrastructure updates on the island side. They do not want to fully discharge the battery to preserve 10 year battery life. They are installing an automated charging by Stemmann, because there is an 8-10 minute window at the dock to charge while people/cargo is on/off loaded. They system detects tides and boat height to be able to connect itself to the vessel. They want to go fully electric, but at the moment the peak hour electric rate is too high to make it financially feasible.
- Potential work arounds – mobile batteries; shoreside battery bank; a public transit demand rate that is much lower. The peak rate issue is a nationwide challenge to implementing electrified public transit systems.

Question: Roger Berle – how are these vessels named?

Hank – the board names them when they're close to completion, they asked island schools to name the last new boat completed and the Long Island students came to the christening; tradition to name Wabanaki and Machigone after Native American Communities from the region.

Comment: Peter Huston- We got a chance to see this new 80 vehicle electric ferry that goes from Kinston, Canada to Wolfe Island. I believe that it also has a diesel back up. <https://globalnews.ca/news/8246956/electric-ferries-kingston-picton-terminals/>

Question: Bob Anderson- How is the electricity at the charging stations generated?

Question: Peter Huston- Is this hybrid power design possible for refitting existing ferries?

Mark Higgins, Maine State Ferry Service

- Strategic planning to 2035, fleet age was 35+ years old prior to first replacement, plan in place through 2032 to replace them with a plan to be carbon neutral by 2050.
- Looked at 5 vendors, picked hybrid diesel electric and BAE; exhausting process to search for these systems, few providers in US – Norway, Europe, with our current infrastructure hybrid was

best; HybriGen Assist – delivery fall 2023 and in use December’23/Jan ’24, the Dinsmore (named after Captain Al Dinsmore), built at Synesco.

Question: Donna Wiegler- Where will the first diesel/hybrid do? What island will it serve?

- It will be in service out of Rockland because there is the infrastructure and easy access for specialized providers, the Spear will transfer to Swan’s.

Comment: Donna Wiegler- Love the name DINSMORE! Al was a long-time captain on the Swan’s Island run and was/is a great man!

- 80% reduction in carbon footprint, 40% reduction in fuel use
- Repowering Thompson to reduce carbon footprint by 20-30%
- Islesboro all electric ferry, construction to begin in 2025, lots of public involvement, ~\$25 million for construction
- 2028 North Haven replacement
- 2031 replace Thompson, will become spare vessel, and retire Philbrook
- What goes into costs? Infrastructure, crews quarters, wave fences, pens, dolphins, transfer bridges, ticketing systems.
- \$140 million invested in state ferry system over 15 years.

Question Roger B.: included population projections?

Mark – looked at census, future ridership, back to pre-pandemic levels of ridership, we expect to exceed it this summer, construction on islands is high – Viking and Hammond lumber, landscapers; on Islesboro – number of people that had work out there; working on several infrastructure projects

- As a state agency we have an edict to be responsible, Maine is ahead of other states
- Add EV charging stations
- Limited parking in Rockland but there are infrastructure upgrades that could be made like adding a deck with solar roof.

Lisa Millette, Island Institute

Marine Decarbonization Efforts

- Spark! Energy Grants – up to \$4000 for working waterfront projects reducing fossil fuel reliance
 - Electric oyster boat, heat pump on deep sea vessel, solar dock to charge EV boat on the water, solar powered tumbler/washer for oyster float, solar kelp drying system
- Rolling grant applications
- Electric outboard pilot – retrofit and/or full boat trials spring/summer ’23; II will take on financial risk
 - Quiet boats may increase social licensing acceptance for aquaculture
- Navier electric-powered hydrofoil water taxis trial
 - Less rider seasickness
- MSFS study on Infrastructure
- Email Lisa lmillette@islandinstitute.org
- Island stakeholder outreach in May

Question: Donna-Is there funding that reduces the cost burden on riders?

Hank: The majority of capital funding is federal dollars but need 15 or 20% local share which Casco Bay Lines finds through group tours and cruises. They need to find multiple funding sources

Mark: Federal highway, FTA, grants, pilot programs, June '22 and Jun '23 NOFO process – looking for \$8-10 million for this.

Questions:

Bob Anderson: Diesel/electric propulsion has been used on submarines and locomotives for literally decades....back to WWII. I wonder if the providers of them are an option?

Mark: BAE systems is the main contractor. They have experience in this arena.

Island Updates

Monhegan

Monhegan is expecting an increase in visitors in 2022, without knowing specific numbers, last year felt overwhelming to many. Our solid waste budget was increased to be ready for the influx. We are planning to have a port o' john on the wharf to accommodate the needs of visitors, especially day trippers.

Demand for summer housing by year-round residents and some summer workers is as high as it has been in years. Insulated year-round homes have been purchased by seasonal occupants, limiting the number of affordable rentals. The plantation is coordinating an island wide effort to evaluate the available housing and determine what homeowners, non-profits, state and local entities we can engage for guidance.

We're anticipating a visit from a National Geographic Lindblad Expeditions cruise ship in 2023. Originally scheduled for 2022, Lindblad decided to reschedule after a meeting with our community and a representative of Cruise Maine. Community members have many reservations and are reluctant to support such a visit, it's so out of character for Monhegan.

Long

The preparations for May 14 Annual Town Meeting continue - Finance Committee has worked hard to balance many urgent needs with available revenue. Tax rate potentially will rise to approximately \$8.10 if approved. Included will be partial funding for a Town revaluation - only the second one since incorporation almost 30 years ago. Will be done in house as before.

Comprehensive Plan Committee is finalizing its extensive document for Town Meeting
Comp Plan has certainly elevated awareness of the dire situation concerning housing availability and affordability and its future impact on the well being of the community. With no kids in the pipeline for the school some obvious realities are sinking in. With an aging population and ever more retirees settling here all with increased expectations and needs for services to support that population, it might be time for some reckoning.

Partial repairs to the missing wave break at Mariners Landing are underway. This missing section, removed for piling replacements last fall, contributed in part to the extensive damage to our floats and Rescue Boat berth. Much more additional wave break and replacement of what is there is needed pending funding solutions. The costs are going up faster than we can budget for them.

-Relaxation of Covid restrictions and reopening of town buildings and events is welcome, but a cloud still hangs as local cases of Covid continue to emerge.

-Wellness Council has added Physical Therapy on a weekly basis with therapist from Chebeague holding sessions weekly. Many folks have signed up with rave reviews!!

-Broadband hookups are continuing at a brisk clip as seasonal residents return and sign on.