

Summer Residents Association
August meeting
Thursday, August 21, 2014

Kathe McCoy called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and welcomed all those in attendance.

Sixty-one members of the SRA and the community attended, including Board members Kathe Gates McCoy, Charlie Merriman, Ham Clark, Lili Pew, Kent Schmidt, Larry Goldfarb, Donald Graves and Jan Russell.

Kathe also thanked the Board of Selectmen and the Board of the SRA for their support and their ability to work in partnership over the last year. Mrs. McCoy reviewed the meeting's agenda and noted that there will be a question and answer period at the end.

Charlie Merriman, Treasurer, reviewed for the members the usage of association funds:

In 2012, \$6,000 was spent on the Technical Assistance Panel From The Urban Land Institute. The long term goal involved revitalization of the Town. The initiative lead to the hiring of an Economic Development Consultant.

In 2013, SRA spent \$16,000 toward the expenses of the Consultant and \$10,000 toward the project to improve the signage around the Town.

So far this year, SRA has contributed \$11,000 more in support of the Consultant and an additional \$15,000 on the signage project.

To date, SRA has contributed \$58,000 in support of the revitalization undertaking. Looking forward, SRA has pledged to contribute \$26,000 more for the Consultant and \$5,000 more on signage. These two pledges are good through June 30, 2015.

If all of the funds pledged are utilized by the Town by the end of next June, SRA will have contributed in total approximately \$89,000 in support of the revitalization of the Town.

Donald Graves gave the membership report, highlighting that paid-in members of the SRA through July, 2014 numbered 318, the same as in 2013, but up 12% from 2012's 286 members. He noted that gifts were up 21% in the current year over 2013, to \$7,942..

Finally, Kathe announced the nomination of new board members, including Matthew Baird, Bill Roberts and John Boynton and the nomination of Donald Graves for a second term. She noted the particular appreciation that the Board of the SRA and other members should take in the efforts of Ham Clark, Callie Brauer and Jamie Clark during their terms on the board.

Town Manager Durlin Lunt was introduced. He noted his appreciation for the support of all the summer residents of the Town. After providing a hand-out to the attendees, Durlin took the group through a brief history of recent development efforts, going back to the Restore NEH Committee, the ULI study and the role of both the Selectmen in developing strategies to increase the number of visits to Northeast Harbor. Durlin recapped the sign program, particularly the Phase I wayfaring signs now being installed that are intended to direct visitors to the retail center, not the residential areas

Merchant feedback, specifically from Sabina Wood, noted that the WELCOME TO NORTHEAST HARBOR sign was needed and might have been productively put up sooner. Some confusion was expressed on the siting of the bus stops and the Phase II signs that are supposed to be installed near them.

Kathe McCoy thanked the Board of the Selectmen, including those attending: Martha Dudman, Matt Hart and John McCauley, for all their help, support and ability to work together.

Jackie Hewett, the Economic Development Coordinator was introduced.

- She thanked the Steering Committee for all their hard work. Members of the Committee include Kathe McCoy, Ham Clark, Martha Dudman, Matt Hart, Sam Shaw, and Nancy Ho. It has been an active 10 months.
- Most visible is the Event Committee. There are 10 dedicated members of the Events Committee who have been meeting throughout winter to bring events to town.
 - The Events Committee has brought family friendly outdoor movies to the Town Green every Thursday night this summer. The movie schedule is list on the Town website along with posters posted around town. Maine Seacoast Mission has provided free popcorn and water. Some of the local shopkeepers have donated snacks as well.
 - Jackie noted that a rack card was created that provided a calendar of all events in Northeast Harbor in the summer, and was available at all merchants on Main Street and at the Visitors Center.
 - She thanked the community for the tremendous cooperation necessary to produce the final product.
- The Events Committee also arranged for the visit of the tall ship Lynx. The boat took people out to sail. It is an interpretation of a Privateer ship from the War of 1812.
- An Antique Car show on Aug 16th was held from 12-4 pm on the Village Green. There were several local individuals and businesses involved, and food was available as well as music.

Signage initiative has been very important.

- While the Phase I (wayfaring) stage was car-related,
- the Phase II stage is pedestrian related, and will feature QR codes on every sign so that the information can be read by iPhones.
- The signage program was a combined initiative between local businesses and the summer residents

Ollie's Trolleys now comes to NEH 2 times a day. Patrons are given a map and coupon pamphlet for visitors. The Town website has been updated with the help of Coastal Computers and made more user friendly with all events posted.

Willie Granston installed historic maritime prints and reproductions in the Yachtsman's building at the Marina. The Maine Seacoast Mission has also added some of their historical information in the building as well

Lili Pew introduced Aaron Paul, a representative from Tilson Technologies, a firm that has been involved with Ellsworth in studying the implementation of broadband technology to Ellsworth as a way to encourage long-term job creation and population growth in the area.

- Mr. Paul indicated that Ellsworth is going fiber optic with the plan of encouraging 5-6 new businesses to relocate to the area. Aaron said that this study is something that Islesboro also is in the process of doing now.
- Communications technology on the island was discussed, and it was noted from the audience that TimeWarner and FairPoint are the only games in town, with little incentive to structure their broadband offerings or implementation in a competitive manner. MDI Hospital and JAX invested on their own in fiber optic technology in the Bar Harbor area, but this is not available to the general business community on the island.

Durlin mentioned that in 2009, we missed a contract deadline with TimeWarner and are currently negotiating with a number of other communities so that MDI can have a contract that sets minimum standards to which TWC must comply in their service implementation and pricing.

It was asked what options are available to MDI in contrast to Ellsworth.

- In Ellsworth, both the city and industry had to figure out where they wanted industry to be.
- We must do this as well.
- A private analysis was funded by money raised locally for a study. The Ellsworth study will cost \$30,000.
- Fiber optic implementation will be prioritized first for business and then residentially. The study money was raised privately.
- Northern Borders will then execute a \$250,000 project, but they are not able to partner with JAX or MDI Hospital in the implementation.
- Rockport has received an educational grant to study the implementation of fiber optic technology there.

- It appears from the cost of implementation, that any consideration of fiber optics might originate in the revitalization committee in MDI and subsequently expand to include other communities on the island in the project.

The public portion of the meeting concluded at 5:45 pm and the SRA Board met briefly to elect officers and adjourned at 5:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Graves