

Summer Residents Association
Members Meeting
Thursday, July 25, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm. Ham Clark, President of the SRA welcomed all those present. The members of the SRA Board introduced themselves. Ham introduced Dennis Shubert and Martha Dudman as Selectmen as well as Durlin Lunt, town manager. The SRA has gone into partnership with the Town of Mount Desert on an Economic Development Manager. Jackie Hewitt was hired as the consultant on Economic Development and will begin work the end of the summer.

Durlin Lunt then spoke. The Town of Mount Desert has taken on some capital improvements over the past couple of years and Durlin gave a report on their progress. Most projects are in the wind-down stage with no new ones on the horizon. He went on to explain some of the numbers included in the recent tax bill. The harbor is totally paid for by user fees, so that project does not affect the taxes. There were improvements to the town offices including a new air conditioner. Police security was improved in the building per the Homeland Security Act. Last year there was also an addition to the Town Office. The addition has improved the functioning of the building and was done in keeping with the spirit of the Blake's original gift.

Last year the town improved the sidewalks all over town. These should not have to be improved again for many years. The Public Works building is down and a new one is under construction by the recycling station. This should have been done 10-15 yrs ago.

The last piece is improvement of the water treatment plant down near the Swim Club. This should be finished by next spring. This project is particularly important because of the breadth of the township across the island. This area requires 3 water treatment plants. The town needs to have the capacity to deal with the swell in population during the summer. The plant here is the last to be rebuilt.

When Durlin began his tenure, he wanted to get a handle of all the town's assets. With this assessment, it was clear that a logical capital replacement plan was in order. This plan is now in place and working well.

Durlin went on to explain the expectations for Jackie Hewett the newly hired Economic Development consultant. Both the town and SRA have a real partnership in this deal and a lot at stake. The town and the SRA need to come up with a checklist of goals and timelines. We need a strong partnership between the town and SRA and figure out what can be accomplished in the next 12 months. Ms. Hewett has a great track record and we expect great things.

Quarrying is a big issue. There are ongoing discussions and meetings about this issue within the town. There is one quarry currently in existence at present. Many islanders assumed that the quarry in Hall Quarry was extinct, but that is not the case. Pink granite is the primary stone out of this quarry. There is a proposal currently before the town to license these businesses.

Durlin went on to discuss plans for improved cell coverage on the Island. There is a proposal to install a cell tower near the cemetery. There is one approved for Somesville, but its location is under appeal. There is also one approved in Pretty Marsh and this should go forward. There is no comprehensive plan for the Island.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of the improvements in the Marina project. The project was controversial but seems to be doing quite well. There is currently a large general obligation bond that needs service but this is being covered fully by profits from the marina. Anecdotally, there seems to be good feeling down at the harbor with increased traffic. Last summer there were 3 yacht club cruises THAT came in. Having a good restaurant near the marina has been helpful. It is hard to tell what the impact has been on Main St., but it is very helpful that the bus drops people by the Visitor's Center. Farmers Market is now on the town green, which brings traffic down there. In the next few weeks there is also an art show scheduled along with a boat show at Morris Yachts. It is being called Harborfest.

A question was raised as to whether we could have a banner to advertise events such as when the Steel band was here. The town needs to rethink its plan for advertising and signage as the current zoning ordinance limits advertising to non-profit organizations.

A discussion was held on plans to improve town signage. \$25K was approved for "Way finding signs" throughout the town. While the town has been slow to act on new signage to date, there may be more signs up by the end of the summer, and definitely by next summer, per Durlin. It was suggested that more maps be made available as well.

Dennis SHUBERT spoke about the great influence Durlin has had on the town from the improved attitude to the financial expertise. We are in great hands.

John McCauley was also introduced as a selectman

Durlin gave a short synopsis of Jackie Hewett's professional background. She has done commercial real estate in Bangor as well as economic redevelopment in Windham, ME. She will be at the August SRA meeting.

The construction happening between Hadlock Pond and the Golf Club is to improve the trails along the backside of Schoolhouse Ledge.

Ham thanked Durlin for all his information along with the three Selectmen present. Martha Dudman thanked the SRA for funding the partnership.

Ham explained that we now have real traction with the Economic Development consultant. Ham listed the five goals for the Development as quoted from the SRA newsletter. Bringing people together is critical to the success of the improvement of town.

Kathe McCoy reported for the Economic Development Steering Committee. This committee is now charged with oversight of the initiatives of the Economic Development consultant. Over the past eight months this committee was responsible for ensuring town funding approval for this

position and then recruiting candidates for the consultant. There were 11 applicants for the job. This committee created the questions and assisted with the interviewing process. Ham and Kathe will meet with Jackie Hewett on August 1st. Jackie will start in earnest on September 1st but plans to spend a lot of time here over the next month to get to know the area. Lanie wanted to thank Ham and Kathe for all of their hard work on the Steering Committee.

Kathe McCoy gave an update on the “holes” on Main St. The Wingspread lot has been sold to Joanna and John Boynton, and the new owners are thinking about plans for the property. Their concern is to do something that would be helpful for the town. The more worrisome piece is the lot at the end of the street where the Tan Turtle was located. The current owner is quite ill. He owns both the lot and the building to the left of Local Color. Dan Kimball’s lot is where the tent is located. There are several people working together to come up with a plan for that space.

Nancy Ho and her sister-in-law own 141 Main St and may put it up for sale.

The old drug store building is on the market for \$350K.

The old Red Bird building has been transformed into a private residential space and is for sale.

We need to make our organization more visible by putting up signage and have applications available at selected areas around town. We currently have 300 paid members this year.

Targeted philanthropy would be very helpful for the revitalization program. A suggestion was put forward to establish a non-profit fund/trust to assist on specific projects. This idea is in its infancy and needs more work, but it is being vetted. Tax abatement plans could help.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55