

Maggie Hays
President

Bill Roberts
Vice President

Gary Madeira
Treasurer & Secretary

John Boynton
Nominating



Matthew Baird

Jim Green

Will Hudson

Ned Nalle

Chris Reece

MISSION

Section I.1. The Mission of the SRA/TMD is to provide an effective means of communication between the summer residents and the Town Leadership on issues that concern the current and future well-being of the Town. The Board of Directors of the Corporation seeks to represent the views of the summer residents and to keep them informed of, and involved in, the Town planning process on current and future issues.

Section I.2. SRA/TMD seeks to be the timely and constructive voice of the summer residents with the Town government, working closely with the Town leaders to preserve and protect the unique character, culture, environment, and quality of life of the town, through both a voice and financial contributions to further the mission of the Summer Residents Association.

Annual Members Meeting Agenda and Minutes

5:00 pm, Wednesday, July 21, 2021 Town Hall Meeting Room, Northeast Harbor, 26 members in attendance.
Board members: Maggie Hays, Jim Green, Chris Reece, Gary Madeira, Ned Nalle

Welcome Remarks, Maggie Hays and Moderator, Jim Green

5:05 pm, Treasurer's report: Gary Madeira

Gary reported a 30% increase in membership (we went from 178 members last year to 228 this year; almost all of that number is reinstated members with 3-4 new members) and Jim noted that owning property, paying taxes but not having a vote in town means that having a voice and part in the SRA for a \$25 annual membership fee is the best bang for the buck around.

Gary summarized the final disbursement of the Covid funds, after fees and a \$10,000 donation to the Chamber of Commerce (as a thank you for its help in vetting qualified businesses), the final amount of \$31,000+ was donated to the Bar Harbor Hospital with a restricted use for Covid relief.

5:10-5:25 pm, Christie Anastasia, ANP Public Relations: Storm Damage and repairs, Park Update

Christie spoke first about the record-breaking storm on June 9. The micro-bursts of rain, never seen before in recorded history in the park, brought the stream gauge up from a normal average of 1.5 to 2 feet to over 10 feet. The damage was extensive with more than 10 miles of carriage roads being stripped of 2-3 layers of gravel and packed sand. At this time, the carriage roads have been repaired and stabilized enough that all but part of Around the Mountain are reopened. Work on the Eagle Lake loop had to be delayed as workers needed to be moved to assessing the bigger problem: the gravel and silt that was moved by the intense rain

has run into the streams and wetlands. They have a rough idea of how much was moved based on the amount of materials replaced (this amount was not given). This situation has larger implications for wildlife and plant-life but the park is still assessing it and trying to determine how to fix it.

With emotion, Christie relayed the heartbreaking damage and total destruction of the Maple Springs Trail. Only one anchor rock remains of the original, historic trail. One of the oldest trails in the park, the middle section was completely destroyed and the park service is at a loss to even begin to consider if or how to reconstruct it.

Christie moved on to talk about this year's "park popularity", a fancy phrase for congestion. Visitation is up 47% for June and if this continues to track, Acadia could reach 4.4 million visitors this year (1 million more than our average, keeping last year as an outlier because of Covid). The park is always on the top ten list of most visited parks and a bump in number like this could move the park from the number 7 spot to the number 4 spot. However, since all the top ten parks are experiencing similar influxes of visitors, it is likely the numbers will increase but our spot on the top ten list will remain the same.

Christie noted that the new reservation system at Cadillac mountain is working beyond expectations. The number of cars allowed equal the number of parking spots and the entire experience (for \$6) is a pleasant one. An added benefit is that the park has not had to close the road once and accidents have been almost non-existent.

Christie then moved on to alerting the group about the American Aquafarms Frenchman Bay Project. This Norwegian based company is proposing 16 football fields worth of salmon pens in currently untouched Frenchman's Bay. There is notable opposition among many groups and ANP services has asked to be kept closely in the loop because, though the pens would not be in the park boundaries, the closest point would be only 2000 feet from a park boundary. The park is not putting up the signs you may be seeing popping up all over the island; but is not supportive of the plan. A member asked who makes the decision on whether this project moves forward. The answer is the Department of Marine Resources at the state and federal level. The link below will direct you to many articles on the project.

<https://frenchmanbaypartners.org/aquaculture-and-frenchman-bay/american-aquafarms/american-aquafarms-frenchman-bay-project-media-and-information-links/>

Christie Anastasia can be reached at Christie_Anastasia@nps.gov

5:25-5:40 pm, Tony Smith, Public Works Director: Main Street Project

Tony expressed disappointment at the delay of the project and summarized the issue as being a backlog caused by unsigned easements. The issue has been resolved and the last easement has been signed. All bids had to be resubmitted and new companies brought on board, but all this has been accomplished and Versant and its subs are on board and ready to start work in October. RF Jordan could not proceed with their part of the project because Versant could not move forward; they will continue in October as well.

Tony brought up the puddles forming all over Main Street after all the rain and wanted everyone to know they are all being addressed in the final phase of the project. He also confirmed the curbs would be brought to a normal height when the final paving/ grading of the street takes place. The parking lot at the end of the street, near Knowles, needs a final layer of paving and will be completed. Its net gain of spots will be +1, plus 2 Electric vehicle charging spots. The pop-up park in front of 123 is planned to be completed in the final phase as well. This park will be made of pavers, different from the road material, to delineate where two-way traffic

ends and one-way traffic begins on Main Street during the high season. It will be level with the road so in the off season it can be plowed. In the high season it will be cordoned off with barriers and planters to create an outdoor park and eating space. The town will provide picnic tables and will maintain the planters (hoping A.C. Parsons will be responsible for them) and garbage, being sensitive to the fact this park is in front of a business.

Tony noted his disappointment at the current landscaping company's attention to the projects on Main street and has given them a deadline to get their act together or he will contract another group at their expense.

A note on the utility poles: Tony is aware that many do not like them but relayed that they were chosen by a committee that represented different groups in town. He assured the group they will become invisible as time passes and that pursuing replacing or changing them would be inadvisable as all of Versant's work / conduit size, etc. will be upended by a change as it is all based on the current size of the selected poles. Adjustments are being made to the location of one of the poles planned for John Boynton's property and other adjustments had to be made for a new building on Main Street that was built too close to the road and directly under the new wires.

5:40-5:55 pm, Kathy Miller, MD 365: New Housing NEH

Kathy started her presentation by reminding the group that MD365 was formed in 2017 to address concerns of local businesses raised by the cruise ship controversy. Rather than bringing in more tourists on cruise ships, they looked to increasing the year-round population of town of Mount Desert, starting in Northeast Harbor. Kathy reminded us that MD365 is here for the Town of Mount Desert, not the island (at this point) and that is why it is not MDI365. MD365 took the goals of the 2009 Town Comprehensive Plan and the 2012 Urban Land Institute report recommendations to start planning how to bring back a year-round population and revitalize the economy.

Over the last several decades, there has been a shift of homes in Northeast Harbor being sold from year-round families to seasonal residents, and new year-round families moving to Pretty Marsh, Somesville or off-island, where housing prices are more affordable. As a consequence, the school population has dwindled and local businesses suffer as the year-round population disappeared. Currently, another issue affecting the ability of year-round residents finding housing on the island is the trend of year-round homes being converted to vacation rentals. Families and students cannot find year-round rentals as many are being sold out from under them. She noted things are out of balance and that year-round families cannot afford to live near here is the root of the problem.

MD365 is working on developing three lots of land on Summit, Manchester and Neighborhood roads to address the housing issue. They are staying within the bounds of the town zoning rules and asking for no special considerations. They are planning to build year-round housing affordable to families earning up to \$121,000 per year. A member asked for a definition of workforce housing and Kathy's reply was that the rules around purchasing these houses are the families earn a combined income up to \$121,000, are pre-approved to finance a home, that the homes are their primary, year-round domiciles, they cannot be rented as vacation rentals and that any future sale stays within the same limitations. The hope is to create small pocket neighborhoods of year-round families. Their initial plan for the corner of Manchester and Neighborhood Roads is for 6 single family residences that are sustainably built, environmentally friendly and affordable to run. The homeowner can choose the style and color etc. so that like a regular neighborhood, each house has its own character. In answer to a member's question: To keep costs in keeping with what these families can afford, the homes would have 2 parking spaces each, but no garages.

A question came up about why the homes couldn't be built on Town land between Sargeant Drive and NEH and this was a question Kathy did not have an answer; but offered to follow up on. But the current thinking is that building further out of the town center will be more expensive because there are no town services like sewer and water, so wells and septic systems will have to be a part of each plan. A secondary consideration is that these homes are also hoping to attract consumers for NEH businesses. Building in town makes it more likely people will shop in town. Kathy reiterated that nothing has been set in stone and they are considering all options. Local contractors came in with building estimates too high for average family incomes, so MD365 realized the only affordable option was to work with a modular home builder. They, MD365, have high standards and want homes that will blend in with the area, so they have not arrived at design choices they can show yet. A member asked whether it needed to be six homes on the lot in question, or if it could be less. Kathy's response was that the demand is there, and the land is there so while it is not being ruled out, it felt like the right thing to do would be to offer the most homes to families in need of them, while working within town ordinances. Another member asked the question differently; inquiring as to how many homes in total could be built on the three lots on Neighborhood Rd. if they were completely maxed out, while keeping with town ordinances. The answer was 16.

Another question from a member was: What is the fate of the Harvey Heel House? MD365 would like to keep the house and maintain the character of the neighborhood. They do not plan to renovate but rather to offer it at a much lower price point to a family that has the desire to renovate. It would still have all the same restrictions as the new construction homes in terms of ownership, rental and resale.

Other MD365 initiatives are bringing Broadband to town, an update on the completion and use of the new building on Old Firehouse Lane and the continuation of the Business Bootcamp Series.

The Broadband Committee is working to bring town-wide fiber-optic broadband and has sent out surveys. If you are a homeowner and have a few minutes to complete it and send it back, it would be appreciated. The more data, the better. There will be a public hearing on July 27th in the Town Hall Meeting Room to discuss the pros and cons and how to move forward. MD365 is working hard with the town committee on trying to get all the moving parts in order so the town can be shovel-ready to access any available state or federal funds.

The new building on Old Firehouse Lane is complete with the exception of landscaping. This cannot be completed until the Main Street project is completed. The building houses the Maine Seacoast Mission, MD 365 offices and two rental apartments. MD365 is sharing its conference room space with other local groups, like the Chamber of Commerce, for board meetings etc. The building is fossil fuel free as well.

The Business Bootcamp: An every-other year proposition, this is a highly successful and popular skill development program run for local businesses by MD365 at the NEH Library. In addition, at the end of the skill development program, there is a pitch competition at The Neighborhood House and winners are awarded prize / grant money totaling \$10,000. MD365 is in the planning stage of the next program for November 2021.

Kathy Miller can be reached at kmiller@mountdesert365.org or 276-0555.

5:55 pm, Other business

None.

6:00 pm, Adjournment

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 18, 2021. Please watch for details.