

Town of Mount Desert  
Economic Development Committee Meeting\*  
July 26, 2021

*\* Continuation of June 14<sup>th</sup> special meeting*

**Attending:** Megan Bailey, Jamie Blaine, Martha Dudman, Don Graves, Matt Hart, Nancy Ho, Durlin Lunt, Dan McKay, Kerri Sands, Seth Singleton, Rick Wheeler, Averel Wilson

**Absent:** Heather Jones, Kathy Miller, Stephanie Reece, Tony Smith, Micki Sumpter

Attendance was both in person and by Zoom.

Dan McKay convened the meeting at 4:04 p.m. (at which point Durlin began recording the proceedings)

The discussion began as a consideration of (1) the committee's role in the community, that is, our mission, and (2) the committee's goals, that is, in Averel's words, "what are we trying to achieve?"

Dan led off by saying that, "Because we have no money, we can't actually do projects, but we can be the facilitator of discussions." There is, Seth noted, "a wide range between project management . . . collecting ideas." He suggested we define a vision for Northeast Harbor (and the town of Mount Desert) and establish benchmarks for reaching it. By way of example, he suggested two goals: that (1) the town add two new (net) year-round businesses each year and that the elementary school increasing its student body by 3-4 additional students each year.

From there, the committee spent the rest of the meeting on a wide-ranging discussion, which touched on:

- the importance, not just of attracting new businesses, but of retaining and enhancing current ones;
- the creation of a data base that can track, among other things, population movement into and out of the town;
- extending the time seasonal residents spend here (the "shoulder" months);
- the ongoing – even accelerating – pace of conversion of once-affordable, year-round housing to summer residences and summer rentals (both houses and apartments) and the accompanying explosion of real estate prices;
- discussing with entrepreneurs their goals and the barriers they face to relocating here;
- the importance – and the difficulty – of confronting the desire to, in Rick's words, "have it both ways," that is, to want things to change for the better and yet stay the same – which elicited two key responses: (1) if things do not change, they cannot stay the same and (2) if we don't ensure the wellbeing of the year-round community, there will not be a summer community.

That culminated in a more focused discussion about, not just the goals we seek for the town, but the principles which will both define those goals and guide us in their implementation. Kerri then suggested that we challenge each member of the committee to articulate three principles which can guide us to answer, in a concrete way, “what do you want the community to look like in the future?” We all then volunteered Kerri to send an email to all committee members requesting three main principles for ensuring appropriate and sustainable economic development.

That email went out the morning of July 27<sup>th</sup>, with a response deadline of Wednesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Blaine