

Town of Mount Desert  
Economic Development Committee Meeting  
October 13, 2021

**Attending:** Megan Bailey, Jamie Blaine, Martha Dudman, Matt Hart, Durlin Lunt, Dan McKay, Kathy Miller, Stephanie Reece, Kerri Sands, Seth Singleton, Tony Smith

**Absent:** Don Graves, Nancy Ho, Heather Jones, Micki Sumpter, Rick Wheeler, Averel Wilson

All attended by zoom.

Dan McKay convened the meeting at 4:02 p.m., noting that, since we did not yet have a quorum, we would delay approval of the minutes of previous meetings.

1. With a quorum present, Seth moved, and Kerri seconded, the approval of the draft minutes for the July 21<sup>st</sup> quarterly meeting and the July 26<sup>th</sup> and Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> special meetings. Unanimously approved.
2. Updates
  - a. Main Street Project. Tony provided a full written report (appended below). One final issue remains with regard to the only outstanding easement due to a drafting error in the transfer documents; legal counsel for the town and Versant are working toward a resolution. There is a meeting tomorrow (Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>) to discuss the “wire” portion of the project. Versant intends to begin work on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>, assuming all easements are in hand. R.F. Jordan plans to begin work on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The company will again use part of the Gray Cow parking lot for materials and equipment storage. If both Versant and Jordan keep to the schedule described, Tony hopes the project will be completed in the fall of 2022.
  - b. Parking regulation. A brief discussion indicated that Tony and Chief Willis continue to work on the overall parking issue, including plans for the COA building under construction on Main Street, overnight parking, and the parking for new housing.
  - c. Broadband. Kathy reported on the Broadband Committee’s July surveys (both paper and online) on residents’ use of, and satisfaction with, their current Internet service. While the data is still being analyzed, the 264 responses showed that 95.6% of the respondents had some service (80% cable, 12% DSL, etc.); 78+% use it for work and/or school; 53.5% were happy with their current service; and 40.4% were unhappy. Casco Bay has submitted a proposal to consult with the town. The company also has a proposal out to the county, so there is the possibility of TMD coming under the county umbrella. Dan reminded us that there is the potential for significant federal funding and urged the town to be ready to secure our share. The Broadband Committee’s next public meeting will be on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, and a representative from Spectrum will attend. Representatives from Consolidated Communications will attend the following meeting. Megan offered to help with the technology and funding. Martha noted that any town funds will require a vote by the townspeople at the annual

meeting; and Dan said he expected that federal funds would come with a requirement for a town investment.

3. Vision Statement. Kerri led the discussion of the proposed Vision Statement (document appended to these minutes), which included some examples of how the statement might in reality be used. Jamie read the statement and Kerri discussed the possible uses. A discussion followed about the statement's role as a framework for issues that come before the town and a general road map to guide the town into the future. Kathy moved that the committee accept the document as presented; Megan seconded; and the committee voted unanimously in the affirmative.
4. Discussion of the Brainstorming Subgroup's memo and next steps. The committee voted to take up this matter, including how the memo fits with the vision statement and suggested next steps, at a special session in November.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
James G. Blaine, Secretary

#### **Appendix A. Tony Smith's report**

- Versant rejected the last version of the last easement we need from them for them to move ahead with their portion of the project. When the town meeting approved the warrant article that sold the museum to their organization, it specifically stated that the transaction only included the building and the land directly beneath the building, not the entire piece of property. When the transfer document was prepared by town legal counsel for execution, which it was by both the town and the museum representatives, it mistakenly included the land around the building and the building and the lands upon which it sits. We had legal counsel draft an easement that corrected this error which included a copy of the original warrant article described above in it. This was signed by the town and the museum representatives. This was provided to Versant and promptly rejected. Versant provided us with a copy of an easement they felt they needed which essentially has the museum signing away a piece of property they have no legal ownership of or rights to. We continue to. Our legal counsel has been in direct contact with Versant's counsel as we work towards a resolution of this issue.
- There is a meeting scheduled with Versant for October 14<sup>th</sup> that includes RF Jordan, their electrical subcontractor, the phone company, and representatives of our engineering firm. They are meeting to look at the construction of the "wire" portion of the project. We are hoping someone from Versant will be in attendance that is involved with the easement process so our engineers can review the situation in the field with them. Versant intends to begin work on October 29<sup>th</sup>. We have been told in the past that they will not begin work until they have all easements in hand. We are in hopes to have the last easement issue resolved by then.
- RF Jordan plans to mobilize to town on October 15<sup>th</sup> and begin work on October 18<sup>th</sup>. We are waiting for a written schedule from them for our own use and to put on the town web

site as we have done in the past. The schedule will, at the least, let us know which end of Main Street they might be working on when they resume work. Major work to complete includes setting utility poles, placing wires underground from the east side to the west side of the street, sidewalks on the east side of Main Street, the pop out park, redo a short section of sidewalk on the west side of the street near the south end, rebuild and pave the street and some landscaping.

- RF Jordan will once again use a portion of the Gray Cow parking lot for materials and equipment storage.
- If RF Jordan and Versant both begin work as I just described, I am in hopes that the project will be complete by fall of 2022. If all goes well, the work in the fall of 2022 would include placing the surface course of pavement on the base pavement put down in the spring 2022 and some final landscaping work.

## **Appendix. B Vision Document**

### **Mount Desert Economic Development Committee - Vision Statement and Potential Uses**

#### **1. Economic Development Committee's Vision Statement for the Future of Mount Desert**

The Town of Mount Desert is a thriving year-round community enriched by a multi-generational seasonal population and a manageable flow of tourists. Composed of the villages of Otter Creek, Seal Harbor, Northeast Harbor, Somesville, Hall Quarry, and Pretty Marsh, the town's residents recognize that thoughtful change is essential to preserve our small-town character, our diverse economy, and the natural beauty that surrounds us.

The town's most pressing current need is for housing that local workers and young families can afford – which will enable the town to support a more diverse and sustainable economy, maintain our first-rate schools (which will in turn attract more young families), reinvigorate our volunteer services, enrich the institutions that serve all residents, and create a more cohesive community – all of which will ensure that our town moves into the future by building on the strengths of its present and the traditions of its past.

#### **2. Examples of how we might use the Vision Statement:**

- a) Present the Statement to the Board of Selectmen and/or a future Comprehensive Plan committee, to register our views on how economic development should be approached.
- b) Present the Statement as part of our reasoning why we would support or oppose specific projects proposed for the town or island (i.e., housing initiatives, cruise ships, industrial timber harvest, casino, co-op grocery store, etc.)
- c) Use the Statement to help us select the top areas of active work and focus for our Committee.
- d) Based on the results of c), perhaps:

- i. Use the Statement to work with other island and regional partners to promote Mount Desert as a place to live, and/or to promote the benefits of affordable housing (otherwise known as year-round housing, family-friendly housing, or workforce-friendly housing).
- ii. Use the Statement to make the case for reinvigorating the Economic Development Corporation which in turn will provide support for business development projects that align with the Vision.
- iii. Keep the Statement in mind when we act as a sounding board and incubator of ideas regarding current and future economic development.

**3. Alongside our Vision, we embrace the concepts outlined in the Idea-Friendly Town Creed: <https://saveyour.town/idea-friendly-creed/>**