

# Summer Residents Association

Spring 2013

A Publication of the Summer Residents of the Town Mount Desert

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another summer is fast approaching, and many of us are making plans to clean up after the long Maine winter and to re-open our summer homes for the 2013 season. I am sure that many landscapers and contractors are anxiously awaiting our return, as well. So, too, are the hard-working shop-owners who are now building their inventories in preparation for the very important retail sales they will generate between Memorial Day and Columbus Day. And the restaurant owners are lining up their staffs and getting ready to reopen for the summer. Such is the annual cycle of a seaside community in New England of which ours ranks at the very top.

Since becoming your President in 2011, I have strived to improve the lines of communication and understanding between the Summer Residents and Town of Mount Desert (TMD) government. To achieve this goal, the SRA Board of Directors has also reached out to the many other important constituencies in the year-round community, including those folks from The Neighborhood House, The Northeast Harbor Library, The

Island Housing Trust and other Not-For-Profit organizations, the TMD Chamber of Commerce, Real Estate Agents, and many other leaders of the year-round business community. I believe strongly that there is a better sense of partnership today within this overall community, and there is a better sense of trust, as well.

As most of you know from reading past editions of this newsletter, there has been an ongoing initiative between the SRA and the Town to revitalize the village of Northeast Harbor. Under the leadership of Lanie Lincoln in 2010, a Revitalization Committee was formed with joint membership from the year-round community and the SRA. This effort culminated in a visit and then a report to the Board of Selectmen last summer by a Technical Assistance Panel from the Urban Land Institute. The ULI TAP Report, which was the subject of most of last Fall's Newsletter, can still be accessed on the first page of the Town's website at: [http://www.mtdesert.org/public\\_documents/index](http://www.mtdesert.org/public_documents/index)

I am pleased to announce that in recent months we have made critical progress toward achieving many of the recommendations included in

*For 2 years July-June 7th fiscal yr*

the ULI TAP Report. At the May 7th, 2013 TMD Annual Town Meeting, resident voters authorized the Town to spend \$25,000 for an Economic Development Consultant over the next year to coordinate initiatives aimed at revitalizing the Town. As noted in The Islander, the vote was

### SRA Board of Directors

P. Hamilton Clark III, President  
Kathe Gates McCoy, Vice President  
Charles Merriman, Treasurer  
Callie Brauer, Secretary  
Jan Russell, Nominating  
Donald Graves, Membership  
Jamie Clark  
Leslie Fogg  
Temple Grassi  
Lanie Lincoln  
Philip Moriarty  
R. Anderson Pew  
Rick Wheeler  
Averel Wilson

Contact:  
The Summer Residents Association  
of the Town of Mount Desert  
PO Box 790  
Mount Desert Me 04660

### SRA Mission Statement

The mission of the Summer Residents Association of the Town of Mount Desert 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 Steering committee (Board of Directors) seeks to represent and to keep them informed of, and involved in, the Town planning process on current and future issues.

The Summer Residents Association seeks to be the timely and constructive voice of the summer residents with Town government working closely with Town leaders to preserve and protect the unique character, culture, environment and quality of life in the Town of Mount Desert.

86-7 in favor. To support this effort and as part of the Warrant, the SRA has pledged to contribute a like amount.

Enabling and sustaining revitalization plans in our community on Mount Desert Island will take a concerted effort by all stakeholder constituencies, and with a consultant on board for potentially up to two years to coordinate this work, I am more confident than ever that we are now on the right path.

At the two SRA Meetings in July and August, 2013 your Board will again be discussing revitalization strategies with our members, and at that time, we hope to be able to introduce to you the new Economic Development Consultant. As always, your feedback and comments are most welcome at these meetings. In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you out and about on MDI this summer.

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### **SRA Proposes a Matching Fund with the Town to Hire a Consultant**

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(the following are extracts from a letter that was sent to Mr. Tom Richardson, Chairman, Board of Selectmen, TMD, January 18, 2013)

Dear Tom,

*This letter is a follow-up to you from the TMD-SRA with regard to the final report from the ULI-TAP... Since last summer, ongoing discussions and meetings have taken place to better understand what is actionable (from the Report) in the near term (0-2yrs), in*

*the intermediate horizon (2-5 yrs), and in the longer term.*

*Last September (2012), a group of 20+ concerned citizens met to discuss these opportunities under the umbrella committee called "The Future of Northeast Harbor." While this (and subsequent meetings) had the right intentions, any early momentum has now greatly slowed down [due primarily to the lack of coordination and oversight].*

*At the recommendation of (Selectboard member) Martha Dudman, I have spoken to the full Board of the SRA, and the SRA has now set aside \$10,000 in 2013 as seed money to jump start further economic development in NEH through the funding of a consultant to work with the Town and an Economic Development Steering Committee. This letter requests that the Town match this funding level ... in the 2013 budget. As this effort gains traction, it is hoped that both the Town and the SRA would consider a commitment of additional matching funds for this work if and when needed.*

*At this point in time, the Steering Committee (Martha Dudman, Durlin Lunt, Matt Harte, Sam Shaw, Kathe McCoy, and Ham Clark) is just coming together to define objectives... and overall accountability for this position. I do feel it is important ... to get this letter in front of you now [to intersect] the Town's budget cycle ...*

*Sincerely,  
Ham Clark -- President, SRA*

Note: the SRA Board subsequently approved an increase in their fund-

ing level to \$25,000, pending final Town approval for their share, and these funds are currently available on the SRA balance sheet. Additional matching funding beyond the Town's current fiscal year (October, 2013 – September, 2014) will be based on the progress and scope of the Economic Development effort, and this will require additional approval from both partners.

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### **The Town of Mt. Desert moves to hire an Economic Development Consultant**

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The Steering Committee has moved quickly, after formal Town funding approval was obtained on May 7th, to source and hire this position. Shown below is the "one-page" job description that has been circulated widely through a broad network of organizations in Maine and New England. The goal is to identify a robust candidate list by May 31st,, to interview finalists during June, and to bring on board the new consultant in the August-September timeframe.

#### **Economic Development Director, Town of Mount Desert General Job Description:**

This is a part-time, contracted position for an energetic, experienced professional to lead economic development efforts in the Town of Mount Desert. We are looking for a highly-motivated person with a background in community and business development, downtown revitalization projects, marketing, grant-writing, and communications. The successful candidate will work with business people, residents, lo-

cal organizations and government to attract more visitors, revitalize the downtown area, and improve the economic climate in our town.

### **Key Goals for the Economic & Community Development Position**

#### **1. Assist Business Development:**

Strengthen the commercial core of Northeast Harbor, and all the villages of Mount Desert, by supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones, including a year-round gathering place, such as a café, in the downtown area. Fill vacant lots; improve cellphone & internet coverage in the Town.

#### **2. Secure Funding & Support:**

Link with available local, state, regional, and national resources to secure funding, grants, and financing to assist existing businesses and attract new ones.

**3. Capitalize on Marina:** Leverage marina improvements with additional activities and marketing efforts to attract visitors. Help to link the Harbor with the rest of the village – and town.

**4. Make Main Street More Inviting:** Add amenities and animation to Main Street with streetscape improvements and better signage to improve the experience of visiting and living in Northeast Harbor.

**5. Improve Marketing Efforts:** Make Northeast Harbor, and the surrounding villages, “Beehives” of activity by encouraging, supporting, and promoting efforts such as a greenhouse education complex, farmers’ markets, street fairs, Maritime Museum events, and shoulder season activities. Make an inventory of existing businesses and at-

tractions to create a simple, usable guide for visitors.

**6. Bring People Together:** Work with all the various sectors of our community to promote collaborative efforts to build our villages, and our town, into a place people want to visit, a place where people want to stay, a place we are proud to call home.

Please submit credentials and proposal by May 31, 2013 to:

Durlin E. Lunt  
Town Manager, Mount Desert  
P.O. Box 248  
Northeast Harbor, Maine 04662  
(207)276-5531  
manager@mtdesert.org

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### **Other Developments**

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There have undoubtedly been many local developments since last summer, but here is a summary of the more noteworthy ones for your information.

- At the Annual Town Meeting, the 2013 municipal budget of \$14.8M was approved, which will increase the tax rate by 5.4%. Two separate bonding issues were also approved, the first for a major upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant in Northeast Harbor (\$5.0M) and the second for a replacement of the Town garage on Sargent Drive (\$2.4M). Additionally, two incumbent Selectboard members, Tom Richardson and Rick Mooers, were re-elected.

- The Town also approved a warrant to fund \$25,000 for improved signage in and around Northeast Harbor. Other village signage in the Township will be added in phase 2

next year.

- The on-going Land Use Zoning issues in Hall Quarry will be resolved by a vote at an open Town meeting on July 25th to determine if the Town wants to permit future granite quarrying, and if so, how to regulate it.

- The Stanley Brook Road in Seal Harbor will be closed to all private vehicles for six weeks beginning in mid July for mandatory repairs, so we can expect long detours then to the Jordan Pond House area. During this time, only the Island Explorer bus and some limited public vehicles have been permitted to access the Jordan Pond Rd. between Seal Harbor and the Park Road.

- Tasteful Tides, a specialty food store and catering business in Northeast Harbor, will be opening in space next to The Little Notch Bakery.

- FT Brown’s Hardware Store will now be managed by Buddy Brown’s son, Tommy, starting this spring. This continuity of ownership and management is very good news for all in Northeast Harbor.

- An application to conduct a Harbor Fest in the Northeast Harbor Village Green space in August, 2013 has been approved by the Town. At present, this will include an art show with potentially additional involvement from Morris Yachts.

***Thank you all for your support to the Summer Residents Association. Your Board looks forward to re-connecting with old friends in the not-to-distant future.***