

Summer Residents Association

Winter 2016

A Publication of the Summer
Residents of the Town Mount Desert

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Summer Residents Association
Members,

As we drifted away last Fall, town activities didn't fall away like the beautiful foliage. In fact, some exciting things have begun to take shape, speaking to the vibrancy of our community.

The town's Economic Development Consultant, Jackie Hewett, is doing impressive work in helping define the actions that reflect the interests and needs shared by both the year-round and the summer community. Jackie's summary, in the section following, is worthy of our attention, as is the Public Visioning Survey, enclosed, that kicks off Phase 2 of the village revitalization program.

In addition to the Board of Selectmen, the Phase 2 Program Committee will have the active involvement of Elly Andrews, Kelly Brown, Katrina Carter, Gordon Beck, Marsha Planting, Bob Pyle, Rita Redfield, Tony Smith, Sam Shaw and Ericka Wibby

I encourage you to give the survey your thoughtful consideration, completing and returning it to Durlin Lunt in the enclosed, addressed return envelope.

The town has formed a committee to evaluate and recommend what steps we should take to ensure that we are able to develop internet capabilities within the Town of Mount Desert that will best serve all elements of our community into the future. Our own board member, Lili Pew, is on that committee, and

provides us with a summary later in this newsletter. Additional members include Jeff Burnham, John Fehlauer, Ed Ganz, Philip Koch Wendell Oppewall and BOS ex officio members Matt Harte and Dennis Shubert.

In an important summary, John Boynton provides us with an update of his ongoing contributions to restoring Main Street to its past glory.

After a summer that saw the Colonel's and our venerable Asticou Inn carrying the burden for dining in Northeast Harbor, three additional venues for dining will appear next summer:

- Tasteful Tides will operate a bistro during the summer season.
- The Creamery at 123 Main will open in the spring and be managed by Tracey Aberman.
- Tan Turtle contracted with Kimball Terrace for 2016 at the site of the Watermark.

We should all take encouragement not only at the broad and general community interest in the process of village redevelopment and greater wireless access, but also in the important contributions of those in both the summer and the year-round communities in serving on and contributing to the accomplishments of the Revitalization Committee and the Broadband Committee. Their work continues while we are away. Kudos to Rick Wheeler, Kathe Gates McCoy, and Ham Clark, among others, for their participation from afar.

If any of you have interest in joining in the work of these important committees, do not hesitate to call any of us on the SRA Board, or Town Manager, Durlin Lunt.

SRA Board of Directors

Donald Graves, President
Averel Wilson, Vice President
Philip Moriarty, Treasurer
Lili Pew, Secretary
Jan Russell, Nominating
Matthew Baird
John Boynton
Larry Golfarb
Sidney Graves
Maggie Hays
Lynn Janney
Howard Lapsley
Chris Reece
Bill Roberts
Kent Schmidt

Contact:
The Summer Residents Association
of the Town of Mount Desert
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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.

Thank you for your continuing support of the SRA. I hope you each had a wonderful holiday season and look forward to a rewarding 2016.

See you in the spring.

Donald Graves
President

TOWN OF MOUNT DESERT

2015 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Progress to Date Plans for the Future

2015 Accomplishments

*Created a town brochure that highlighted each of the town's six villages. This brochure was distributed at all major tourist information centers along I 95 from Kittery to Bangor, at the Bangor International Airport, at the Thompson Island Information Center, in Bar Harbor at the main Ollie's Trolley station and throughout the island at campgrounds, hotels and shops.

*Created a Town of Mount Desert Facebook Page. This effort increased the town's online presence and generated a venue for the distribution of town events, notifications and activities.

*Created and aired a Town of Mount Desert Television ad. This 30-second spot was aired on channels 2 and 7 throughout the month of September.

*Compiled a list of all community events from May – October. This list was inserted into the online calendars of nine local, regional and statewide organizations. In addition, event rack cards that advertised all major and recurring events were produced and distributed throughout town and the island.

*Worked with Tilson Technologies to create a Broadband Plan and Network Design for the Town of Mount Desert that would provide state of the art Internet capabilities for the entire town. This plan was completed in September of 2015.

A town committee has recently been formed to evaluate the options outlined in this report and to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen concerning future actions.

*Secured amendments to Town ordinances to allow mobile food vendors to operate in the Town's Shoreland Commercial Districts. This expanded business opportunity

provides additional locations for food related businesses to operate in Northeast Harbor.

*Worked with the Event Committee to host nine outdoor movies from July 2nd – August 27th. These events were well-attended and brought additional late afternoon and evening receipts to the community.

*Partnered with the Town of Mount Desert Chamber of Commerce, village galleries and the Maine Seacoast Mission to host multiple "Thursday night in Northeast Harbor" events. The goal of this series was to market Northeast Harbor as the "place to be" on Thursday.

*Raised funds to support, and hosted, the 2nd Annual Antique Car Show in Northeast Harbor on August 15th.

Goals for 2016

*Work with the Town of Mount Desert's Broadband Committee to plan and begin to frame solutions for the town's future broadband needs.

*Work with the Northeast Harbor Village Center Planning Committee to create a future vision for Northeast Harbor's village center. Begin to implement this plan.

*Investigate the creation of a local Community Development Corporation. This organization would focus on business retention and the support of new entrepreneurial efforts.

*Work with the Town of Mount Desert Event Committee to plan and host two Acadia Centennial events.

*Continue to expand marketing efforts, plan new and support ongoing events, and work to attract new businesses to town.

The Town of Mount Desert is initiating a planning process to create a future vision for Northeast Harbor's village center. This plan will serve as a blueprint for future development and infrastructure improvements in the study area and will provide concrete recommendations for improving the village's appearance, functionality and vitality. A citizen committee of village residents, business owners and town officials has been assembled and will begin community outreach activities the week of November 16th. The first public outreach meeting will be held on November 19th, 2015 at 6pm at the Northeast Harbor Library. A citizen questionnaire will follow (Fill your copy of the survey out and return it now. It is enclosed with this newsletter), as will stakeholder interviews and, later this winter, a public "visioning" workshop. The committee expects the plan to be completed by next May. Updates about the planning process will be available on the Town's Facebook page.

123 MAIN STREET RESTAURANT, WHEELHOUSE AND MORE

We are tantalizingly close to opening the Wheelhouse on the second floor of the new building at 123 Main Street. All that remains is for carpet to be laid, Internet and WiFi connections to be made, and the sprinkler systems to be made operational. We will have five private offices, three desk spaces, and two conference rooms available. All will be furnished and have state of the art technology and office equipment in place and ready for use.

We will invite local non-profits to make use of our large conference room for board and committee meetings. Our website - www.WheelhouseNEH.com - will launch in November and will

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BROADBAND UPDATE

The Town of Mount Desert Broadband Project has made great progress since our first discussions in 2014. To recap, the Town of Mount Desert engaged Tilson Technologies of Portland, Maine in July to evaluate the current availability of broadband in the Town, and assess the feasibility of utilizing broadband as an economic development tool. The SRA has been a driving force behind efforts to develop robust and viable means of economic sustainability and growth for the future of the Town of Mount Desert and its Villages. Tilson is the premier consultant in the region with regards to Broadband Initiatives, and is working with many of the region's towns to help positively transform the economic future of Maine's rural areas through Broadband Technology.

Over the summer of 2015, Tilson performed an in-depth inventory of telecom assets currently in place as well as the underlying infrastructure for Internet service. This work resulted in real time mapping of current Internet service, the capacity of the existing service (upload speed-download speeds in mb/sec), and where the service gaps are. These results were presented at a public meeting in July, and followed by an open discussion with stakeholders and residents to better understand their experiences and future goals for Internet service. Critical to the success of this meeting was to create a common vocabulary and understanding for all about what Broadband means in our lives and workplace, and what the future improvements may offer. For many people, the Internet experience is a slow spinning circle on a computer screen with the words "still loading". Businesses, year-round residents, school children, and our summer community cannot perform, compete or be successful with limited Internet. Voices from residents who have no internet or very limited service shared stories of their children not being able to complete homework assignments that are delivered via the internet, unless they go to the library of venue that has internet. Businesses shared the same common stories. Beyond the immediacy of yearly resident internet

needs, the summer community and visitors use the internet to plan their activities and to extend their stay by working remotely, which is difficult at the least with the existing internet service.

After the public forum, several common goals surfaced. These included:

1. Improving internet services for residents and businesses (especially those currently under served or unserved) in the short term,
2. Investigating longer term, future-proof solutions for all residents and business, and,/
3. Offering WIFI as a hospitality amenity for villages and harbors.

Four Plans were presented that addressed these common goals and provided associated budget projections. They included:

WIFI in Harbors and Village Centers (\$30,000-\$60,000)

- Mini towers located on village and marina perimeters that would allow for consistent cell signal internet access in a set local geographic area
- Digital Subscriber Link Access Multiplier (DSLAM) (\$60,000+\$25k equip, \$15k labor)
- Converts signals from existing Fiber optic cable to run over copper wire with additional new nodes to shorten distance from fiber to copper and retain high connectivity
- 4GLTE Colocation and 2 New Cell Towers (\$500,000-\$800,000)
- Cable Internet via existing or new Cell towers beaming signal to individual modems
- Full Fiber Optic to the Premise (FTTP) - (\$13.3 Million)
- 100+ miles of full fiber build out to make ready and delivery to premise in the Town of Mount Desert.

Each of these solutions offers a "cure" for our Internet deficiency. Each solution has many technological elements that are complex and appear to be moderately to very expensive on first glance. In the presentation and in the detailed report, it was clear

that the WIFI and LTE solutions, while lower in cost, are limited in scope of connectivity, are negatively impacted by the topography and forested areas of MDI, and may not be considered to be viable for fast technology advancements. The DSLAM and FTTP appear to offer solutions that meet local needs, can grow with fast technological evolutions, and have minimal impact by weather and topography. Additionally, other Towns and the City of Ellsworth are considering DSLAM and FTTP Broadband options which would open the door for collaborations that could bring forth high-speed broadband solutions in cost effective partnerships for all of us! The FTTP is the way to future and if considered, would set the future of Mount Desert apart from others on all goal areas.

As a result, the Town of Mount Desert has created a Broadband Committee that has broad mix of members, some of whom are technical experts and some are not, which bodes well for a voice of reason in our research. The Committee is scheduled to evaluate each of the solutions against the goals that were voiced collectively to the Town of Mount Desert and Tilson, and make a recommendation for a future course of actions to the Town next spring. The first meeting is December 1, 2015.

LINK to the town of Mount Desert Broadband Plan: [www.mtdesert.org/Public_Documents/Town of Mt Desert Report_Final Draft.pdf](http://www.mtdesert.org/Public_Documents/Town_of_Mt_Desert_Report_Final_Draft.pdf)

Lili Pew
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123 Main Street cont.

contain full details on membership and pricing.

Most exciting, we have found exactly the right person to operate the food service business that Northeast Harbor has been craving! The shop, which will go by the name 123 (inspired by its Main Street address), will offer a variety of prepared foods, local produce, fresh seafood to order, and an array of dinner options ranging from family nights to



exclusive private parties. We aim to be open from June through October next year, and depending on how things go it is possible that operations could be expanded in 2017.

Once we complete work on 123, we will shift focus to the former Wingspread Gallery lot at 145 Main Street which will likely have retail/restaurant on the first floor and housing upstairs. We appreciate the ongoing support of the SRA and the Town.

John Boynton
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TOWN OF MOUNT DESERT

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