

# Summer Residents Association

## Newsletter Winter-Spring 2018

A Publication of the Summer  
Residents of the Town Mount Desert

### NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Summer Residents Association Members,

A hardy winter-early spring hello from Northeast Harbor! We are enjoying what appears to be an early spring, on the heels of a fabulous and robust winter season. While the snow has been less than what our winter outdoor enthusiasts have desired, there have been other wonderful benefits such as amazing ice skating on the ponds and a once in lifetime experience of being able to ice skate across the Great Meadow (from Sieur de Mont Springs to Kebo Golf course) with hundreds of friends from near and far away. Close to home, the Hadlock Ponds, and Little Long Pond have been gathering places for both skaters and ice fishing as the final elements of winter will soon melt into spring.

For the Town of Mount Desert and Village of Northeast Harbor, the energy and enthusiasm carried forth from a great summer and fall season by our seasonal and year-round residents have continued apace through the winter. As for community wide social events, the NEH holiday festival was a record breaker this year with both attendance and sales from retail shops (see Chamber of Commerce and Kelly Brown-Browns Hardware Store Reports). Seeing so many of you return to share in the family fun events and racing around town with full bags of holiday gifts was so fabulous and a glimpse of the power of progress! I was at Brown's Hardware Store at 5:25pm with 10 people still ahead of me at both registers...all with smiles of joy and gratitude for the winter success. The Kimball Shop, Holmes Store and Sam Shaw's, Lisa Hall, Swallowfield and all our local retail family were equally as busy and thrilled with the success and support.

On-going activities in NEH beyond our year-round retail operators, have focused on the Neighborhood House. The Fitness Center with Deborah Neale's Personal Training has kept many of us fit and healthy this winter. This has been needed in order to burn off the amazing food that the Community Café (every other Thursday) has offered to its over-

subscribed clientele! New this winter is the Sea Street Café which boasts the best cheese steak sandwich north of Philadelphia! McGrath's and Pine Tree continue to be our go to places for groceries, cappuccino and newspapers. All in all, the village has been far from quiet this winter.

I am thrilled to share reports from our core Town of Mount Desert Economic Development champions! As I look back through detailed reports prepared by Jackie Hewett, Economic Development Consultant, since the first NEH Village Revitalization Plan in 2010, we have come a long way! We will soon see results from the Mount Desert Economic Development Committee's establishment of two organizations: the Mount Desert Economic Development Corporation (MDEDC), which will focus on business retention and attraction, and the Mount Desert Community Development Corporation (MDCDC) whose mission to improve the vitality and livability of the Town of Mount Desert through enhancement of public spaces, infrastructure improvements, the preservation of historic structures and other efforts that will improve the shape and character of the community. MDI 365 under the excellent leadership of Kathy Miller, and Rising Tide Partners through John Boynton's outstanding efforts and vision have both launched plans and initiatives that will undoubtedly lead to lasting improvements for Northeast Harbor and its Main Street. Most exciting of all news is that the Maine Sea Coast Mission will be joining us in Northeast Harbor, through the hard work of MDI 365, in a new building off Old Firehouse Lane. Both organizations will be unveiling their plans and budgets over the coming months and will have significant updates this summer at our meetings in July and August. Jeff Burnham brings us a great progress report on the Broadband Project well underway, and outlook for future opportunities. The Chamber of Commerce report from Tom Reeve and Brown's Hardware Store adds a great cap to the winter updates.

Lastly, I heard from Kelly Brown and a number of year-round residents who volunteer for the Northeast Harbor Ambulance Service. All of us are directly or indirectly beneficiaries of having a local service right in town and a team of drivers and EMT's that selflessly

### SRA Board of Directors

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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 of the town through both a voice and financial contributions to better the goals of our Town.

answer the call of duty 24-7. As their plans for future needs are better determined, I urge our membership to stay tuned and join the Northeast Harbor Ambulance Service motto: How can I help? Thank you all for your dedication to this wonderful community and for sharing in our efforts to ensure a great future for the Town of Mount Desert!

Lili Pew  
SRA President

## TOWN OF MOUNT DESERT WINTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

### Progress to Date • Plans for the Future

#### **Jackie Hewett, Economic Development Consultant**

The NEH Village Center Plan Committee has been finalizing the design for phase 1 of NEH's renovation to Main Street. This design will be completed this month and will go out to bid in February. The plan is to have a firm construction cost for Town Meeting in May. Hopefully this cost will be funded at Town Meeting and actual construction work can start in the fall. This is very exciting and everyone working on the plan is extremely pleased with this first phase of revitalization.

The Economic Development Committee has been working on a variety of efforts. The first and most important was the establishment of the Town of Mount Desert Economic Development Corporation (a 501(c)(4)) and the Town of Mount Desert Community Development Corporation (a 501(c)(3)). These corporations are private but have two members of the Town's Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager on the board as ex-officio members. Both corporations will be funded with private donations, grants and some municipal support. The first project the MDCDC is working on is the Promenade Park that was envisioned in phase 2 of the Northeast Harbor Village Center Plan. This linear park would run along the bluff overlooking the harbor at the edge of the Gray Cow Parking Lot. Fund raising for this effort is going well and we expect to have sufficient funds to design the park this winter.

The Committee has also been working to increase mobile food vendor space in the harbor area of Northeast Harbor to provide a more permanent location for this growing economic activity.

#### **Durlin Lunt, Town Manager**

Greetings from the frozen tundra of Mount Desert to all of our summer friends scattered around the globe. This is one of the busiest times of the year at the Town Office as we prepare for Town Meeting in May to be quickly followed by your arrival back to our Town.

For those of you who reside in the western section of town, the project to provide high speed internet access to unserved areas is making steady progress. A construction agreement has been signed with Spectrum (formerly Time-Warner Cable) and all of their permits should be in place in time to allow them to install the cable by May or June. If this time table holds, the project will be completed this summer.

The cost sharing project with the State of Maine to reconstruct 1.1 miles of State Highway 198 from the Giant Slide Road (just north of Sargent Drive) to the Parkman Mountain Parking Lot will commence this spring. The reconstructed road will have paved shoulders making it much safer for motorists and bicyclists alike. We will be asking this year's Town Meeting for permission to complete phase two of the project from Giant Slide Road north to the intersection of Route #233.

The voters of Mount Desert will be asked to approve a bond issue to construct improvements to Main Street Northeast Harbor. Many of you have followed the development of this plan through various forums, including the July-August SRA meetings held during the last two summers. The final design is posted on the Town Website.

Stay warm and dry and we'll see you this summer

#### **Broadband Committee, Jeff Burnham, Chair**

Following the progress of the broadband project can seem as exciting as watching grass grow, but there has been progress. Here are the steps involved and where (as I understand it) we currently stand:

Spectrum has completed its survey of the project area, identified the poles to be used, and submitted its requirements to Emera, which owns the poles.

Spectrum and Emera personnel have driven through the area together and agreed on the scope of the project

Emera has provided a cost estimate to Spectrum for "make ready" - the process of moving existing wires (as needed) to make room on the poles for Spectrum's cables (there are rules about how close communication cables can be to power cables).

Spectrum has paid Emera for make ready.

We are now waiting for Emera to complete make ready - the law allows up to six months for this, so it could take until April or May.

Once make ready is completed, Spectrum will schedule installation of transport fiber and distribution cable. The actual build will be done by a subcontractor. There are no guarantees, but we think this will be completed in late September at the latest.

Connecting individual properties is the final step and will be arranged between Spectrum and individual property owners once lines have been installed along the roads.

Since Spectrum already has invested money and since the town won't pay its share until work is done, it stands to reason that Spectrum now has an incentive to expedite where it can. Unfortunately, ours is a very small project for a very large corporation. One of the things that had to happen was completion of a memorandum

of understanding between Spectrum and the town. That got bumped up to corporate headquarters and took months. To our surprise, however, while we were waiting for the MoU, Spectrum Maine went ahead with the pole survey and contracting for make-ready. So, if the remainder of the project stays local, maybe it will move a little faster than the timetable above.

#### **Mount Desert 365, Kathy Miller, Executive Director**

Mount Desert 365 is pleased to announce it is working with the Maine Seacoast Mission toward agreement for the Mission to relocate its administrative offices to 6 Old Firehouse Lane in Northeast Harbor by early 2020. The new office building will be constructed and owned by Mount Desert 365.

The Old Firehouse Lane building site abuts a public parking lot, with a view of Northeast Harbor, home to the Mission's vessel Sunbeam V. The new Maine Seacoast Mission headquarters, on the first floor of a multi-story building, will provide the Mission office space for administrative staff, a visitors' reception area, and easier access to Mission offices by the Sunbeam crew. The new site is also as close to the Mission's Downeast Campus in Cherryfield, Maine as is the Colket Center, in Bar Harbor.

Maine Seacoast Mission's new Northeast Harbor residency is expected to boost the local economy with 8-12 additional regular Mission staff and administrators year-round.

The two organizations are working together to select an architect to design the new building. Current plans call for a building with a mixed use of professional offices and residential apartments, in keeping with Mount Desert 365's goal of providing more affordable housing in the Northeast Harbor village center.

Final plans for the new building will need

approval of the Town Planning Board and other authorities.

In other news for Mount Desert 365, an intensive weekend Business Boot Camp is scheduled for March 9-11 in Northeast Harbor. The event is being coordinated with the Mount Desert Chamber of Commerce, and Bar Harbor Bank & Trust as a sponsor. The program will be led by COA Sustainable Business Faculty member Jay Friedlander.

The goals for the program are to:

- provide educational opportunities and forge new business-mentor connections;
- support local business growth into sustainable year-round enterprises;
- attract new businesses to launch or relocate here in NEH;
- enhance the public image of Mount Desert and NEH as a positive place to do business.

Ten businesses will be selected to participate. The weekend will culminate with a pitch competition at The Neighborhood House on Sunday March 11, with prizes totaling \$10,000 to support the winning business' plans for launching or expanding.

#### **Rising Tide Partners, John Boynton**

Rising Tide Partners (RTP), John and Johanna Boynton's group that created 123 Main Street cafe two years ago and managed the project that brought Pugnuts ice cream to McGrath's last summer, has created an exciting vision for 131 Main Street (the empty lot between McGrath's and the Kimball Shop).

131 Main will consist of a market, office space, and affordable workforce housing. The attractive 3-story building, designed by NEH architect Bill Hanley, will be set back 30 feet from Main Street to preserve a large and friendly gathering space for locals, summer residents and tourists. He envisions a pedestrian walkway connecting Main Street with Tracy Road, ample parking behind the building, and landscaping that will complement the other structures on Main Street.

The market will be run by the team at Sawyers Market in Southwest. Sawyers NEH will operate seasonally, providing our town with fresh meat, seafood, dairy, vegetables, wine and specialty goods. The decision to pursue a market was not made lightly; it was the outcome of extensive input from the summer and year-round communities. RTP hopes to eventually be in a position to operate the market on a year-round basis. The second floor will provide office space to one or two local businesses, providing workspace for 10+ year-round employees. These businesses would bring new energy

and year-round life to Main Street. The four residential condominiums will have designated parking, washers and dryers, and balconies and be priced to meet the needs of local families on the Island Housing Trust's existing waitlist. RTP is working with the IHT to provide these families the opportunity to own a home in NEH. It will be nice to reverse the population decline we've been suffering for so many years!

RTP is seeking partners to bring this vision to reality. Fundraising began this January and already 20% of the required funds have been raised. The hope is to open the building for summer 2019. To learn more, you can contact Tracey Aberman (tracey@123neh.com) or John Boynton (jb@123neh.com).

#### **Island Housing Trust, Clara Baker, Development Associate**

Island Housing Trust is pleased to report that, by this summer, two more houses in Mount Desert will be owned by year-round MDI employees. A donated house, recently moved to its new location on the Beech Hill Road, will be ready for purchase by one of the many applicants in IHT's queue by May. The other project, a house renovation on Sylvan Road in the Village of Northeast Harbor, is well underway.

The project on Sylvan Road is a new approach for IHT—it is the first house IHT has purchased and renovated before selling to a qualified applicant. The work will address safety issues and make the house more energy efficient. As it comes together, we look forward to showcasing the results at an open house in the summer.

The front-page picture in the February 22nd issue of the Mount Desert Islander, "Trust moves donated house," tells the wonderful story of the Beech Hill project. A generous donor offered a small cottage to Island Housing Trust and the house was moved to a small lot donated by residents of Mount Desert. Numerous businesses stepped up to prepare the site, connect the utilities and provide professional legal and financial services, all at reduced rates. The Beech Hill project has truly become a model of community collaboration.

Thank you to all the generous and energetic residents who are contributing to keep MDI vibrant.

#### **Holiday Festival 2017, Mount Desert Chamber of Commerce, Tom Reeve, Executive Director**

The weather was perfect for this winter's Northeast Harbor's Christmas Festival, cold,

but clear and no storms. Hundreds of people came out to the village to eat, play, and shop all day Saturday.

It started with the Frosty 5K at the Neighborhood House and ended with a fire on Main Street by the Great Harbor Maritime Museum. In between there was Santa's Workshop where a ton of children came to shop for their family and raise food for our local food pantries; card making at the NEH Library; caroling with the Girls Scouts on Maple Lane and at the Marina; Santa and Mrs. Clause in front of Carter's Real Estate; carriage rides down Main Street; and the Festival of Trees at the Mount Desert Nursery School.

Many business's reported having their best day of the winter; one even said that it was the best all year. Many places stayed open past their closing time because they just could not find it in their hearts to kick out the happy customers.

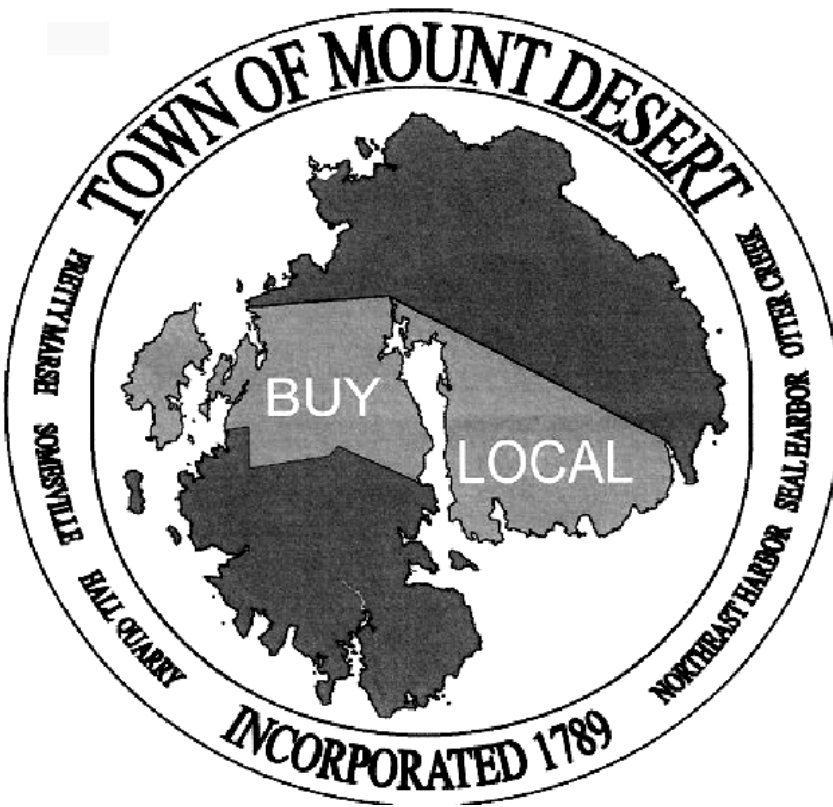
This year's festival could not have happened without the volunteers, businesses, nonprofits, and the Town of Mount Desert. Truly it is a community event.

#### **Holiday Festival 2017, Kelly Brown, FT Brown Mercantile & Marine**

The Mount Desert Chamber and Mount Desert Events Committee worked hand and hand to put on an exceptionally successful 2017 Christmas Festival. As a store owner of FT Brown Mercantile & Marine, I can say it was one of the busiest days we had all year. At one point, Buddy and Becky looked at each other and questioned whether there had ever been that many people shopping in the store at once! Now, that says something after being in business as long as Buddy has. The vibe was so very positive and festive. We celebrated the day with Christmas cookies, 35% store wide sale, and shop local punch cards. Many people had never been shopping in our village before that day and found our stores on Main Street to be full of beautiful items and very celebratory. This kind of exposure brings business, life, and enthusiasm to our Main Street and to our growing village.

**Buy  
Local**  
SPEND IT HERE • KEEP IT HERE





## TOWN OFFICE CONTACTS

[www.mtidesert.org](http://www.mtidesert.org)

### Board of Selectmen

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Martha Dudman – Northeast Harbor  
Matthew Hart – Seal Harbor  
Wendy Littlefield – Northeast Harbor  
James "Rick" Mooers – Somesville

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