

**Summer Residents Association  
Annual Meeting Minutes  
August 24, 2016**

Donald Graves, Board President, opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m. and welcomed all.

Board members present: Secretary Lili Pew, Nominating Officer Jan Russell, Larry Goldfarb, Maggie Hays, Lynn Janney, and Matt Baird. Also present were members of the SRA, the public, press, and Recording Secretary Joelle Nolan.

**Introduction of Town Selectmen**

Don Graves introduced and welcomed Selectmen Martha Dudman and Matt Hart.

**Economic Development Update – Jackie Hewett**

Ms. Hewett explained her duties have changed as of July 1; event planning and marketing have been turned over to the Mount Desert Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will be hiring an executive director to help manage and promote.

Prior to July 1 Ms. Hewett worked on, along with the Chamber, the town directory signs, movie program, funding, and marketing brochures. She continues to assist with the marina and Village Plan.

Last October a Village Planning Committee was started with an outreach program, followed by a town survey. The report is available at the Town office and outlines concerns and visions resulting from the survey. Richardson Associates was hired out of Saco in concert with CES, Inc./Bar Harbor, and Planning Decisions/Portland to create a vision for the village. The Committee has met several times, with another meeting scheduled for 6:00 p.m., September 15, in the Meeting Room, Town Hall, 21 Sea Street, Northeast Harbor; from which a land use plan and economic analysis report will be developed to present to the Board of Selectmen, then the public.

Ms. Hewett reported on her second effort: the creation of an Economic Development Corporation for the Town; for which the SRA has contributed to the set up cost. The Corp will most likely be a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4. This is the next logical step for moving the village forward. Some of the plans include grants and loans to purchase land for development, subsidizing rent for businesses, fiber optic broad band, and beautification.

Comments and questions from the audience included: can the report be emailed? Yes, the Public Outreach Report is available at the Town Office. It was observed that the Richardson Associates plan focuses too much on parking, when most residents feel there is no parking problem.

**Workforce Housing on MDI – Ted Koffman, Island Housing Trust**

As he introduced Ted Koffman, Graves noted from the most recent survey many people referred to the need for workforce housing.

Mr. Koffman stated the mission of Island Housing Trust is to develop an inventory of affordable housing for year round residents in perpetuity. We need enough housing to serve the workforce of 5,200 on this island.

Referring to the graph on the back of the hand out card, Koffman noted the gap in the median cost of housing from the median income. Most workers owning homes here now could not afford to buy that same home today. It is estimated that 3100 workers commute from off island. We want more of the workforce living on the island: sending their kids to school, volunteering [as firefighters, for instance], and generally participating in the community.

Island Housing Trust provides bridge grants to help middle income, year-round working residents the dream of home ownership on MDI>.

Comments and questions from the audience included: Is there help for rental properties? Can the new Economic Corp help? Mr. Koffman replied that almost 50% of renters in Hancock County are paying more than 30% of their income for rent which is a real challenge. He agreed rental assistance is needed. Are real estate taxes different on island from off island? Yes! It was noted that there is a real need for volunteer firefighters; there is a serious lack of people volunteering. Mr. Koffman agreed it is an issue; a firefighter needs to live within 10 minutes of a fire to be effective.

#### **Sustainability Committee/A Climate to Thrive – Gordon Beck**

Mr. Beck explained to the SRA that the Sustainability Committee was formed several years ago as an advisory to the Board of Selectmen; and he highlighted a couple of items the Committee has focused on:

The conversion of all street lights to LED, which is more efficient, will save money, improve quality of light, and is dark sky compliant. It is a long process; the Committee has benefited from observing what some southern Maine communities have done. Locally, the Town of Mount Desert is leading the way in this area. The Committee has just finished an inventory of all lights in the Town of Mount Desert. One hold up is that EMERA has to set the rates, and it has not rated LED's before. A public presentation will be done before installation of new lights.

The other initiative is solar installations. The Committee has visited all town owned facilities with an eye to solar installations/renewable energy sources. Again, solar installations would be a savings. They identified the Town of Mount Desert's Public Works garage as a good potential site and are working with Revision Energy. The Committee is now waiting on the PUC for review, and will know more after the elections in November.

Mr. Beck also reported that the Committee is going to start, this fall, a collection of energy data on town buildings to establish a baseline set of data to include electrical and water; along with occupancy. They are also looking at EV charging stations [electric vehicles].

A Climate to Thrive (ACTT) is an Island wide effort by a grass roots organization to have Mount Desert Island energy independent by 2023. See its website for more information: [www.aclimatetothrive.org/](http://www.aclimatetothrive.org/). The organization has several sub-committees such as energy, transportation, local food systems, Zero waste, and policies. They welcome support and would like to have the public engaged; it is truly driven by community effort.

Comments and questions from the audience included: regarding the street light effort to change to LED and be night sky compliant, wouldn't it be more economical if all island towns were involved. Mr. Beck agreed it would and they are encouraging other towns to join them. It was suggested that Acadia National Park is a good resource, as they have already gone through this process. When asked if there is an opportunity for funding other than through the Town, Mr. Beck replied there is no clear mechanism yet, but they are researching and trying to avoid upfront costs to the Town.

**Chamber of Commerce Status** – Durlin Lunt for Lisa Parsons.

Town Manager Durlin Lunt explained that he had been asked to speak on behalf of the Chamber since Lisa Parsons was unable to attend. He first described Mrs. Parson's role with the Chamber and the community: she is currently the President of the Chamber's Board of Directors and has done much to make the Chamber a more viable asset of the Town. She is a vice-president of Bar Harbor Bank & Trust and manager of the Northeast Harbor and Somesville branch offices; a very dedicated employee and Chamber member. He reported the Chamber information office had 4,200 visitors in July; and although August statistics are still being tallied, at least one day they had 300. This shows the Chamber's ability to communicate and that the building is being used. Certainly some visitors are migrating up the hill to Main street. Over 10 thousand Chamber Guide Books have been distributed throughout the State, with many in Bar Harbor. It's a good sign that Island Chambers are working together. Also, Chamber events have been successful: the marina movies are averaging 60 – 100 in attendance.

**Broadband Committee Status Report** – Lili Pew and Jeff Burnham

Mr. Burnham noted once again the hodgepodge of providers and explained that if you have internet, you have broadband. The Committee is looking for a high quality, high speed provider. He referred to the Tilson report again (available at the Town Office and on the Town's website [www.mtdesert.org](http://www.mtdesert.org)).

The current broadband survey, sent to an estimated 2,600 people, has had 660 responses, or about 25%. He encouraged those who have not responded to send their cards in as September 2 is the deadline. From the survey they have learned that there are a few areas with no service [Pretty Marsh]; and most people who have Time Warner are dissatisfied, as are Fairpoint and Redzone users. The Committee has developed 8 options ranging from only providing service to the Pretty Marsh area [Time Warner's price is \$300,000], to the other extreme of a full build out of broadband service at 13 million dollars. The Committee will be making its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen within the next 3 – 4 months.

Ms. Pew stated that the Broadband Committee met January through May, and has done due diligence in vetting vendors and verifying the facts in the information gathered. It wants to make sure every penny invested by the Town reflects the best decision for our community.

**Nominations for New SRA Board Members – Jan Russell**

Don Graves explained that one Board member's term has expired and all five of the other member's whose terms are renewable are willing to serve.

Jan Russell presented the slate of members and nominated the following to serve renewable terms of 3 years: Larry Goldfarb, Kent Schmidt, Howard Lapsley, Lili Pew, and Jan Russell; and new member Will Hudson for a term of three years.

It was moved and seconded to accept the slate of members as presented and the vote was in favor.

**Open Forum**

Mr. Graves stated that the SRA Board wants to reflect what the SRA membership wants to see done in the community and to do so needs membership input.

There being no other questions or issues, the Annual Meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Not presented at the meeting, but included in these minutes for informational purposes, Don Graves provided the following:

**Financials**

BHBT checking account:	\$15,645.30
Vanguard:	\$72,725.77
2016 Dues Collected:	\$8,025 (9/15/2015 \$7,950) with 3 weeks to go
2016 Revitalization:	\$9,115 (9/15/2015 \$15,607) SRA specific support needed for Jackie Hewett not carried through this year.

**Membership**

Membership trends vs last year tend to be flat. High point in the last 3 years was in 2014, with 345 dues-paying members. Communication with our summer constituents is down, with one less newsletter this year vs. last. This will be corrected and we seek to explore other ways to communicate with both our existing members and younger members (texting, Facebook or other means).

Membership through 8/24/2016:	316 (vs 317 in all of 2015)
EDC Gifts through 7/13/2016:	114 (vs 128 in all of 2015)

Respectfully submitted,

Lili Pew, Secretary