

SRA Members Meeting

July 26, 2023

5:30-7pm

Agenda and Minutes

40 Guests attending

5:30-5:35 PM

Opening Remarks, Jim Green

Introduction Mike Zboray

Superintendent District #91

5:35-5:50pm

Mike Zboray to speak on

Proposed school consolidation

Plan

Mike introduced himself as a Maine educated (COA and UMaine Grad) lover and proponent of public education. He went on to describe the process of working with fiercely independent communities on a consolidation plan. A harbinger of things to expect, documented in “Consolidation” a movie recounting the consolidation of three rural high schools into what we now know as MDI High School. Watch the trailer; it sums up what will probably be the first round of reactions to this new plan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zMbMTivx1w>

Mike went on to describe why we are trying to consolidate the schools at the elementary level with the goal of becoming the best school district in Maine. The inefficiency and expense of 9 different schools (an individual burden on each town), a shrinking student population; not to mention the inability to staff each of these schools properly with the labor shortage, all add up to reconsidering what is best for our students, teachers, administrators and taxpayers. The goal is to create one school board, one budget and give the students and teachers better resources and class groups. Instead of each town

trying to manage a special Education program or an Advanced studies/ gifted program, they would be combined and be able to be taught effectively and efficiently.

The notice of intent has been filed and the process is underway. Currently four plans have been designed. Until the board of Education gives the ok, the plan is in a waiting mode and cannot move forward. To see the four plans and the article on the consolidation proposal:

https://www.mdislander.com/news/education/major-school-system-overhaul-proposed/article_68b4bd3c-ad33-11ed-8f3a-d76dd910f8eb.html

Mike expanded on how we pay for our schools: 67% valuation and 33 % enrollment and he also added that they are taking into account the debts that each school might bring to the table: for instance, the residents of Bar Harbor just voted to approve a bond well north of 50 million dollars to rebuild Connors Emerson School. Something the residents felt was necessary; though bringing that large debt to all the towns has to be considered; and through fundraising efforts they hope to bring it down to less than 50 million. In order for the consolidation to happen, ALL towns must vote yes.

For questions or to reach Mike Zboray: 207-288-5049,
mzboray@mdirss.org

5:50-6:05

Discussion, questions

Q: Will all buildings currently in use stay open? A: In all four models all buildings will be used and reconfigured.

Q: Does the park pay into public education on the island? A: the park offers educational opportunities to the island's students but does not pay anything towards public education.

Q: How does the curriculum for the Wabanaki fit in? A: The district works with the Abbe Museum to incorporate the Wabanaki culture.

Q: What shape is the high school in? A: A 12-15 million dollar Math, Science and library project is on hold bc attention must be given to the septic system/ waste disposal system at the school. Fortunately, the funds for building improvement has always been kept separate for other educational expenses, so overall the high school is in good shape.

6:05- 6:10

Ned Nalle to speak on
Membership and to introduce
Brian Henkel, Town Director

Ned introduced himself as Vice President and Nominating Chair and reminded those attending that we all love this town, this island and this community and keeping abreast of what is happening here is important. Joining the SRA is a way to connect, communicate and have a voice in our town government. Given SRA members cannot vote; joining the SRA gives us a consolidated voice.

6:10-6:20

Brian Henkel to speak on state
Of the town and upcoming projects.

Brian introduced himself with a bit of background: Educated in civil engineering at the University of Texas, San Antonio and with a varied career from away; he moved to Somesville eight years ago and lives in the IHT built neighborhood on Sydneys Way. He wears multiple hats here on MDI: He worked with the Friends of Acadia, he is on the school Board (and is working with Mike Zboray on the reorg plan) and in January, he has taken on the role of Public Works Director (from Tony Smith).

Brian went over some of the projects, past, present and future in town:

The Main Street project: He inherited it and the ugly poles, multiple, redundant crosswalks and glaring, glowing signage; so he

acknowledged frustration but commented on where we are now. The construction, paving, power lines, storm water drains and infrastructure is done and the project is down to a punch list of smaller details.

Paving Firehouse Lane: The project didn't fit with this year's paving budget, so it is on hold. The approved funds are being used to work on Oak Hill Road, Joy Road and Beech Hill Road

Beech Hill Cross Road: Replacing the old pipe with a stream smart concrete box to allow the brook to handle storm events so that the fauna that relies on the crossing can use it with no interruption. It is a more expensive solution but is ultimately a more natural solution with a longer life span than and iron pipe.

Parking Lots: The lot adjacent to the new firehouse and the lot below the town hall are slated for repaving. They will reconfigure the lots once the firehouse is complete (this fall) Additionally, the lot near Acadia Outdoor Center in Seal Harbor will be paved and 1 dual head EV charger put there.

6:20-6:35

Discussion, Questions

Q: Why are we still seeing overhead wires crossing Main Street? **A:** Most lines have been run through conduits underground but a few telecommunication lines are still in place until they are determined to be legacy lines that have no purpose. This is part of the punch list.

Q: Is there anything we can do about the telephone poles? **A:** No. They are here to stay.

Q: What is the ugly pipe on Jordan Pond road? **A:** The DOT changed the water flow in Seal Harbor and by correcting it with something ugly and visually unacceptable, the intent is that the park will fix it. First the DOT must do their part and then the park can do theirs.

Q: Why are there so many crosswalks and signs and why are none of them where people actually cross the street? Why did we need to lose

so many parking spaces? A: In order to follow state guidelines the crosswalks needed to be spaced a certain distance apart and once done, there is no parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk.

Brian ran out of time to address Recycling. You can read more about any of these projects on the town website: www.mtdesert.org

If you would like to reach out to him: director@mtdesert.org

6:35-6:40

Cammie Disston to introduce
Amy McVety, Executive
Director, MDNA

6:40-6:50

Amy McVety to speak on island
Wide expansion of services

Amy gave a bit of family background as she grew up here and noted members might remember George McVety, her father, who owned the pharmacy. Amy left for college and a degree in nursing at URI and Northeastern and spent 25 years building her career away from MDI until she made her way back to the MDNA. The MDNA specializes in in home patient care, nursing and occupational therapy. The staff does whatever it can to help patients stay safe in their homes after an operation, while dealing with an illness or disease or dealing with health issues from aging. A major limitation was always that the group's services were not covered by insurance and patients needed to pay out of pocket. Mazzie Gogolak, president of the MDNA, and the then Executive Director, Heather Lewis, and their teams, changed things dramatically for the organization by getting it certified for medicare reimbursement and in doing so the MDNA was able to expand its services to the whole island and Trenton and Lemoine. The group also offers a free loan closet of medical devices. Need crutches? A wheel chair? A post op bed? Get in touch with MDNA; if they have it, you can borrow it at no cost. With a team of 10 staff members, the group visits 300 in home patients a month now and could be doing much more with a larger staff. Recruiting new

staff is a challenge for several reasons: housing is expensive and MDNA operates in a small rural community and can't match the salaries bigger places can offer. Being able to match salaries is one of the group's biggest challenges in expanding and keeping staff. MDNA is extraordinary in that it does not deny services to any patient. They raise money by reimbursements from Medicare (\$.66 on the dollar, remarkably, the highest payer out there) and the hold an annual golf tournament to raise funds from private donors. This year they held an extremely popular Chowderfest (Winner: Sweet Pea Farm) in March, that was embraced by the whole community. MDNA is located at 12 Summit Road in Northeast Harbor. To contact Amy McVety: Amy@mountdesertnursing.org , 207-276-8440

6:50-7:00

Discussion, Questions

Q: Do you work with Healthy Acadia? A: Not really. Each group has its own lane but they do refer to each other and share information.

Q: Do you provide hospice care? A: MDNA helps keep people healthy at home but stops at hospice care. They do work closely with hospice and are in awe of the amazing people who help patients and families navigate a difficult time.

7:00

Closing remarks by Jim Green

Jim thanked the guests, noted we had no official business to conduct and offered a preview of one of the speakers at the August 23rd Members Meeting at the Neighborhood House: Erika Wibby will be speaking on the success of the new ice skating rink and its challenges in the face of warmer winters.