

SRA Members Meeting Minutes

August 23, 2023

5:30-6:45pm

Neighborhood House

35 Attending

5:30: Opening remarks: Jim Green

Jim began the meeting by giving a recap of the July 26th meeting to let the August attendees know who spoke (Mike Zboray, Superintendent of school district 91 on the proposed consolidation of elementary schools on the island (and surrounding islands), Brian Henkel, the newly instated director of public works spoke on current projects in town and Amy McVety, Executive Director of the MDNA, spoke on the expansion of services the MDNA now offers island wide. Jim went on to ask the current board members to stand and noted that if anyone had questions; these were the board members to speak with. He noted as well that anyone with interest in joining the SRA or renewing, should reach out at: tracey@123neh.com Jim went on to introduce Bob Bechtold and Rebecca Cole-Will of Acadia National Park, the first speakers of the evening.

5:35: Bob Bechtold, Safety Manager at ANP and Rebecca Cole-Will, chief of Natural and Cultural Resource at ANP to speak on tick issue on the island and in the park

Bob began his talk on the tick issue on the island by recounting that he has been with the park for 20 years and has watched, over this time, the black legged tick (deer tick) become prolific and in turn, become an issue. Given the nature of working in a National Park; read: outside most of the time, Bob realized that the tick issue had the potential to make working outside on the trails a bit dangerous. As safety manager, Bob and the park staff felt the best defense was to educate the staff (on tick borne illnesses, on general knowledge about ticks, on how to identify and remove a tick and how to avoid coming in contact at all). This knowledge combined with proper apparel (the park provides pre-treated gaiters to protect the legs and ankles for its rangers and volunteers and trail staff) when out in the woods and diligent tick checks has resulted in very few bites per season. Bob (and Rebecca) both referred to the Maine CDC website as the best source for information about ticks:

https://www.maine.gov/search?q=Ticks&as_sitesearch=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.maine.gov%2Fdhhs%2Fmecdc%2F&site=test_collection&output=xml_no_dtd&client=test_collection&proxystylesheet=test_collection

In addition to this information Bob noted that if you do get a tick bite and remove the tick; one should keep it and bring it to a doctor or the park offices to have it identified because if, a month later, you start having symptoms, knowing the actual tick that bit you could go a long way towards identifying and getting a proper diagnosis and treatment.

5:45: Member Questions and Comments

Q: Do ticks fall out of trees?

A: Ticks generally do not fall out of trees but actually climb UP. It is more likely you will brush against a bush or tall grass and the tick will jump on and climb up to find a spot to bite. He also noted wherever you find deer, mice, chipmunks and small mammals, you will find ticks.

Q: A member mentioned being out on the golf course and searching for lost balls in the brush and wondered if wearing insect repellent was effective in keeping ticks off.

A: Yes! But you need to reapply it every two to three hours.

Q: How can you identify different ticks and where you might encounter them

A: See the CDC website for listing and images of ticks but a general rule of thumb is the brown dog tick (does not transmit disease) is found in the middle of fields and the black legged tick (deer tick; does transmit disease) is found on the edges of fields.

Q: How can you tell if a tick is on you? Can you feel it?

A: No. Tick checks are important and knowing your own body is important. If a freckle is growing or was never there before...it might be a tick! Bob also reiterated: save the tick and bring it to a doctor or to the park for identification.

Rebecca Cole-Will spoke next to negate the myth that a) deer are the source of the tick problem and b) that the deer population here is out of control and unhealthy. She said the park is healthy and the deer population is healthy and smaller mammals carry and spread ticks more than the deer. She noted that in the past, with colder winters, the tick population was kept under control naturally, but with warmer winters, the ticks have a longer season and have thrived. She also noted that, along with small mammals, invasive species provide new places for ticks to thrive. Fortunately, ANP is one of the healthiest parks in our system and has one of the lowest rates of invasive species.

She moved on to talk about the federal funding the park received as part of the infrastructure bill and that the funds are supporting restoration management which includes maintaining summit areas and keeping the wetlands healthy (by buffering the effects of development and climate change)

5:50: Member Questions and Comments

Q: Are we in danger of forest fires?

A: The park takes the risk of forest fires very seriously and works with all the towns' fire departments to prepare, but these fires are a once in 500 year occurrence and given the moisture in the ground (even in drought), there is a low risk of a great fire in Acadia

Q: How is the coyote population doing?

A: They are hard to measure but all indications indicate they are healthy and doing well.

5:53: Lillie Johnson introduces Adam Fraley

5:55: Adam Fraley, Owner of the Nor'Easter Restaurant speaks on business in a small town after covid-19.

Adam spoke from his experience of growing up on the island and joining forces with his best friend Ron to open the Nor'Easter. After describing how they started the business, how they got through Covid and business after Covid; Adam noted the workforce and housing challenges in town and also ended his talk by observing that in actuality, in our small seasonal town: WE ARE ALL SUMMER RESIDENTS. Please see the attached document for his entire talk.

6:00: Questions and Comments

Q: Are you open through the winters? Do you have enough staff?

A: In 2020, the Nor'Easter did close for the winter because they could not stay open through Covid, but since then they have been open on a reduced schedule with a staff of about 20, five days a week through the winters.

Q: Where do you find your staff?

A: The Nor'Easter posts on Indeed and other job boards and also participates in the seasonal visa programs. They jumped on the opportunity to buy the Holmes Building and converted four apartments into staff housing.

Comment: Member Peter Godfrey noted it is his 96th summer on MDI and that Adam's remarks reminded him that engagement and participation and working together is necessary to keep the town healthy. He noted we are all too busy and need to slow down and work together.

6:05: Jim Green took a moment to give a tribute to Gary Madeira, our Treasurer and Secretary for the past two terms. Gary's second term has come to a close and he is retiring from the board to share his time with the board of the NEH Medical Center. Jim noted that Gary was able to masterfully manage the Covid funds the SRA raised and disbursed them in an equally thoughtful way. He joked that if you think raising money is hard, try to give it away! Jim announced that Marnie Phillips will be taking over as treasurer for the 2023-2024 term.

Jim introduces Erika Wibby-Mitchell and Jamie Blaine

6:07: Erika Wibby-Mitchell and Jamie Blaine speak on the new ice rink in the marina and the warmer winters in Maine.

Jamie started by giving a little background as to how the rink came to be. It started as an idea that he thought couldn't really happen but as he approached others and found them willing to donate time and effort, they realized the idea wasn't so far-fetched. The group donated time, effort, raised money from the merchants to get it off the ground. The Nor'Easter offered a matching program up to \$2500 and the group corralled the help of the hockey and skating enthusiast, Peter Bronson, the new golf pro at the Causeway Club. Peter monitored and maintained the ice, taught skating and hockey lessons and the Nor'Easter hosted a hockey tournament (with a trophy designed by Dan Fault). The rink was up and running for the 2022-2023 season. It was a great success and Erika noted that a side-benefit to its vibrance was that the town itself was alive with activity in the winter. The water department donated the water, the fire department filled the rink; everyone watching it materialize gave it a big thumbs up and the town rallied around it! Erika observed the increased activity in town (180 visitors in the first weekend) could really have an effect on commerce on Main Street in the long run. However, Mother Nature, by way of climate change, put a damper on the group's ability to keep the rink open past 10 am, with a very warm winter. Not to be deterred, the group started considering a weather-proof option: piggybacking onto an existing project to redo the tennis / pickleball courts at the marina that had already been approved by the BOS, they considered installing a pipe network into the new concrete in conjunction with a compressor and cooling system to keep the ice solid throughout the year. This plan, for a 2/3 size of a full rink, comes with a price tag of \$500,000 and fundraising has begun in earnest. The goal is to have the new rink operating November to March 7am-7pm, seven days a week.

For more information: <https://sites.google.com/view/nehskatingrink/>

6:10: Questions and Comments

Q: If funds are raised promptly, can the new rink be open this winter?

A: No, as the project is in conjunction with the town project at the tennis courts, they must follow the timing on that project. The projection is that it could be open for the winter of 2024.

Q: Have you considered offering skate rental?

A: Currently, the town did not support that for liability reasons, but after consulting with other towns in New England that do this, Erika found it is possible with little liability. And, working with Brian Henkel, director of Public works, they are hoping to build a small pro shop nearby for tennis and pickleball in the summer and skating in the winter. This year, Erika hopes to be able to offer a skate swap.

Comment: Have you considered a semi-permanent system that has more of a mobile component?

A member gave an example of the problems they had at The Frog Pond in Boston and repairing it was expensive and required it to be dug up. A mobile system might be the middle ground in terms of expense and ease of repair. (Erika and Jamie were unaware of this option and said they would look into it)

6:15: Ned Nalle presents the nominees for the 2023-2024 board (2-year terms)

Inness Hancock, Northeast Harbor

John Slater Jr., Seal Harbor

Georgina Winthrop, Somesville

6:25: Members vote by show of hands for whole slate and unanimously elect the new board members.

6:30: Election results announced by Jim Green and new board members welcomed and a fond farewell is said to Gary Madeira, our treasurer and only Board member terming out this year. A motion was made by Jim Green to appoint Marnie Phillips as treasurer and was seconded by Ned Nalle. Board Members unanimously voted in Marnie Phillips as the new Treasurer and secretary.

6:35: Jim Green opens the floor to any other topic discussion

6:45: Meeting adjourned

Do you know someone or are you someone who would like to join the SRA?

Please reach out to us at tracey@123neh.com and we will get your membership in motion!