

SEDC Minutes
August 1st, 2019

Present: Julie Moringello, Evelyn Duncan, Dick Barnes, Sam Ostrow, Susan Robinson, Per Janson, Bob Winters, Kathleen Billings, Sue Buxton, Roger Bergen, Henry Teverow

Meeting starts at 7.30 AM

Minutes from the last meeting, July 11th, 2019, accepted.

1st Item, Food Truck Discussion: Kathleen introduces the subject by giving a brief overview of how some events have unfolded over the past few weeks. A food truck operated in Stonington for part of one Friday a few weeks ago. This raised the ire of a few restaurateurs in town, who perceived the unregulated operation of food trucks in Stonington as being unfair competition to businesses who contribute yearly property tax to the Town. At the most recent Selectmen's meeting, these concerns were voiced, but no action was taken. Several restaurateurs felt no compunction to ban food trucks because of a lack of perceived competition—one stipulated that they were fine with them as long as they weren't parked right outside the front door of a restaurant. At the upcoming meeting, there will be a public hearing on whether or not to append our parking ordinance with language banning the operation of food trucks in downtown Stonington. Roger vocalized the view that the food trucks come into Stonington, conduct business, pay and contribute nothing to the Town, and then leave at the end of the day. Kathleen rebutted by saying that in terms of trying to attract young people to a town with an aging and declining population and a school starving for attendance, food trucks are a pretty great thing to have. Henry said that him and Kathleen have been tossing around the idea of charging food trucks a yearly fee—maybe around \$500—for the use of any parking spot in town. However, this comes with its own sort of complications, because many of the trucks are quite large and take up more than one spot, and how many spots do we want to reserve for food trucks as opposed to other businesses? And do you increase the fee depending on how many spots you take up? But how do you come up with a fee that isn't so onerous as to prevent food trucks from operating in town, but that recognizes the value of a parking spot here in downtown? Dick said that he thought from Camden Ntl Bank to the Opera House should be a no food truck zone, but that West Main, the ballfield, and private property (Funeral Home, Odd Fellows, etc) were fine with him. The rest of the group seemed to agree with Dick. Evelyn said that

Hagen Dock was too much of a safety liability to have food trucks there and suggested trying to encourage food trucks to rent parking from private property owners.

2nd Item, Maine Bicentennial Discussion: Maine's 200th anniversary is coming up July 30th, 2020. Towns all over the state are taking advantage of the event to generate publicity, traffic, and commerce. Should Stonington get involved, and if so, how? Susan suggested creating promotional materials highlighting the historic nature of Stonington, and possibly doing some sort of historic walking tour based on the event. The group expressed clear interest in taking advantage of the opportunity, and suggested getting in contact with other island organizations to collaborate and brainstorm on a way to effectively make the most of this celebration.

3rd Item, July 4th Discussion: The theme for next year will be "Happy Birthday Maine". That's all to report.

4th Item, Waterfront Discussion: The Town submitted a grant application for Colwell Ramp a week or two ago, and expects to hear back in mid-late August.

5th Item, Ballfield: Susan presented revised plans that they've drawn up after meeting, getting public input, and rethinking a few things. The new plan adjusts the location of the parking lot to about the southern end of the lot, focuses entirely on the ballfield area and leaves the area across the street untouched, adjusts the location of the pavilion, and incorporates a couple of different options for a walking trail layout. Sam pointed out that the location of the backstop for the baseball diamond is untraditional and would render batters squinting at the sun, but Susan countered by saying that the field isn't regulation spec anyway and that it's what fits the best. The group is enthusiastic about the redesign. The next steps are to clear away the rocks from the ballfield to commence work on the fish pier and on Colwell Ramp. After this happens, surface prep can start on the ballfield. Special concern is given to fencing on the western portion of the field to mitigate liability stemming from people falling into the drainage area. Someone suggested getting in contact with the Brays, who own an adjacent piece of property—letting them know of these plans is a courtesy because it impacts what the Brays might do with their land.

6th Item, Fishing Rally Discussion: Kathleen was pleased with how the rally went, how peaceful, well-spoken, and focused the discussion was, and how well-received the message was by state legisla-

tors and politicians. The next steps are to continue advocating for data-driven legislation, and making the most of the comment period available to Mainers for the legislation.

7th Item, Housing Discussion: Henry is happy to report that the group has successfully fundraised to pay for the \$11,000 housing market analysis. This document was well prepared and contains a lot of good primary and secondary research. The upshot is that between 30 and 85 units of new rental housing at around \$800/month need to be constructed to fill the existing demand for rental housing. The reason why the group is focused on rental housing is because there are affordable options for home buyers, but in terms of trying to attract the workforce that this island lacks, entry-level young workers that would hopefully bolster the school population by raising families here, rentals are what's needed. That's the biggest demand and that's what would make the biggest economic development impact. Now that the housing group has the hard data from the market analysis, they will begin constructing a strategic plan that will show exactly how to create these 30 - 85 units.

8th Item, Internet Discussion: An exciting opportunity has arrived on the Blue Hill Peninsula in the form of GWI, a local internet company a la Spectrum or Consolidated, approaching the seven towns (Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Sedgwick, Penobscot, Deer Isle, and Stonington) that make up the PUB internet group to see if the towns would be interested in having GWI apply for low interest USDA loans on behalf of the towns in order to construct high-speed internet systems. GWI would own and operate the system, carry the financial risk, and deliver world-class internet speeds at around \$50-60 per month. Stonington and Deer Isle will be submitted in a joint loan application that is set to be put in for next May. Blue Hill has an application in the pipeline, and the remaining four towns are going in on a collective application set for a couple of months from now. Isle au Haut may join in on the DI-S loan app for May.

Meeting ends 9:30 AM.