

## **Islesboro Looking Ahead**

**Islesboro Looking Ahead**, a statement about the Town of Islesboro, was adopted by the Board of Selectmen on January 3, 2012. Intended as a general plan, our hope is that it will be a useful tool for the community, and that it will lead to increased discussion and interest in Islesboro's future. We also believe that **Islesboro Looking Ahead** can serve as a helpful guide for Town committees, other public bodies, private organizations and businesses, and for individuals and families. The Board of Selectmen plans to update the statement annually.

It is important to note that any proposed new ordinances prompted by **Islesboro Looking Ahead**, or any change to an existing ordinance, or any budgetary commitment by the Town will, as always, require a specific vote by the Townspeople at a regular or special Town meeting.

**Islesboro Looking Ahead** draws on research gathered in the years 2007-2011 by the Town's Comprehensive Plan Committee in preparation for a State-mandated Comprehensive Plan. Detailed inventories of that work are contained in an appendix to this statement. Copies of the statement and the appendix are available for reading at the Town Office, at the Alice Pendleton Library, and at the Islesboro Central School. They are also included on the Town's website.

The recommendations in **Islesboro Looking Ahead** have been formulated from three different perspectives: Islesboro's past, the island's present status, and possibilities for the future.

### **Building on the History of Islesboro**

Throughout the island's long and changing history, Islesboro has established a strong base upon which to plan for the future.

- 1) Over many years the people who live on Islesboro – both year-round and seasonal - have cooperated to foster careful community growth and mutual support for neighbors. Town government, privately funded institutions, businesses and individuals have worked together to establish traditions of progress and caring.

*The future of Islesboro will be built on the continued cooperation and goodwill of its residents, both year-round and seasonal.*

- 2) For over three hundred years, Islesboro has responded and adapted to changes on the mainland and in the world. In the 1930's, for instance, the advent of a regular ferry service for cars and commuters changed Islesboro irrevocably. In recent decades, new technologies have brought changed circumstances and possibilities for Islesboro residents, families, local businesses, and civic activities.

*The town's future prosperity will, in part, depend on thoughtfully managing new connections beyond Penobscot Bay.*

- 3) Islesboro's traditions of progress and caring have been greatly strengthened in the past twenty years. Public and private institutions, businesses and individuals who volunteer their time, energies and resources have responded creatively to economic, technological, and social changes on the island. The list of initiatives that have contributed positively to island life is long. Here are some, and there are many others that could be listed:

- A renovated and improved Islesboro Central School.
- Big Tree Beach.
- The Boardman Cottage.
- A bigger and better Islesboro Sporting Club.
- A new Community Center.
- Preservation of a number of sensitive land and shore areas.
- Sixteen new affordable houses.
- Improvements to the Historical Society, the Library, the Up-Island Church, the Lighthouse, and the Sewing Circle.
- Physical improvements to the three active churches.
- Re-built ferry and public dock facilities.
- Up-graded water and sewerage systems.
- Expanded health services
- Health Center Endowment Fund established.
- Public Safety and Emergency Services enhanced.
- A re-surfaced runway at the airport.
- Transfer Station renovations.
- The beginning of Internet service.
- Significant expansions of boatyards and markets.
- New small businesses such as the bookstore, physical therapy services, farmer's markets, and others.
- Home construction.

*The task of the next twenty years is to maintain local public and private achievements and to build on them - providing employment for many, a good quality of life for all, and opportunities for positive growth and change.*

## Protecting and Updating What Islesboro Has Now

The people of Islesboro should give priority to four primary assets that are central to life on the island – its natural resources, our residents, organizations that provide key services, and the functioning of Town Government.

- 1) Islesboro is an island – just 14 square miles – and over the past twenty years or more great attention has been paid to respecting and protecting our shorelines and beaches, the sea around us and the land itself, especially wetlands and other sensitive areas. The purity of our drinking water, coming as it does from a sole source aquifer, is of particular concern. Islesboro residents love the beauty and character of our island and believe that new man-made developments must continue to respect those fragile aspects of our surroundings.

*Islesboro's townspeople and their government should continue to safeguard the natural benefits and resources of Islesboro, 700 Acre Island, the fifteen smaller islands within the Town's jurisdiction, and the waters of the Penobscot Bay.*

- 2) Islesboro is a multi-faceted community with a good mix of year-round and summer residents that includes retirees and working people. In order to remain a well-rounded community, Islesboro wishes to be attractive to all who live, work and visit here. A priority is to retain young residents and to add new working families to the community. .

*Individuals, families, and organizations on Islesboro should continue the island tradition of welcoming and helping each other and, as appropriate, should consider special efforts to attract new business, social and cultural activities to the island.*

- 3) Islesboro offers nearly a full range of services and opportunities to its residents through local organizations both public and private. Looking ahead, all of these organizations will require ongoing program adjustments and physical maintenance in order to keep pace with the island's needs and expectations.

The Town's list of capital improvements and maintenance projects necessary for the good functioning of Islesboro's public infrastructure includes:

- The island's roads
- Harbor Facilities
- Health Center
- Emergency and Safety Services
- Alice L. Pendleton Library
- Town Beach Pendleton Point
- Maddy Dodge field

*Existing public and private organizations, both their programs and their facilities, should be sustained and improved.*

- 4) There is always room for improvement in the functioning of any Town Government. Priorities for Islesboro include:
- Additions to the Town's website. Information from the 2010 Census will soon to be available on the site. In addition, research prepared by the recent Comprehensive Plan Committee on employment patterns, housing stock and population should be updated periodically.
  - Systematic review of Islesboro's "Capital Improvement and Maintenance Plan," adopted by the Town in 2010 by the Board of Selectmen and at the annual Town Meeting.
  - Regular review of the Town committee system by the Board of Selectmen to ensure that individual committees are functioning well and that there is good communication between the committees, the Board of Selectman, and the Town Manager.
  - Consideration of changes to current Town procedures for election to the Board of Selectmen and to the School Board to enable the Townspeople to have a greater knowledge of the interests and capabilities of candidates..

*The Board of Selectmen, working in cooperation with the Town committees, should review the Town's procedures and practices and should make adjustments as appropriate.*

### **Considering New Activities for the Future**

The following have emerged as priorities to be considered by the Town, the non-profit sector, the business community and individuals:

- 1) *Maintain and add jobs to the Islesboro economy and pay close attention to the enterprises and activities that currently underpin the economic life of the community.* Strategies to sustain and expand their activities include:
  - Availability of up-to-date information on Town statistics, starting with an analysis of the 2010 Census.
  - Access to modern communication and transportation systems.
  - Cost-effective energy for homes and businesses.
  - Skilled personnel for island businesses through training island residents and recruiting working families from the mainland.
- 2) *Develop specific public and private initiatives that would strengthen both the island economy and community life.*

- Assisting the present Pre-School Program to find appropriate space and the resources to support trained staff, and considering the establishment of a Day-Care Center. Such a facility would encourage young families to stay on Islesboro and others to come to the island to live and work.

3) *Investigate the development of three areas that are natural centers for commercial and social activities on Islesboro.*

- The Post Office Center. This general location has the most traffic (car and foot) and the most visits of any spot on the island. The area includes the Post Office, the Island Market, Leach's Garage, Leach's Express and the Second Baptist Church. Nearby are the Town Office, the Fire Department and Public Safety office, the Health Center, Boardman Cottage, and the Community Center. The Ruthie James community is within walking distance. Two new houses there are under construction - also within walking distance of the Post Office.

This area presents an opportunity for imaginative and thoughtful planning that could improve traffic and parking conditions and include new commercial and housing activity.

- Durkee's Store Area. This important store on the corner of the Main Road, Heald Road, and Ryder's Cove Road is a natural anchor for potential growth in the area.

There are pending proposals for locating some municipal services up-island, and private initiatives could add to a future center of activity in this location.

- Dark Harbor. Historically, there have been both seasonal and year-round shops and offices in this down-island center. At present there are a popular bookstore, two office buildings, and a lively summer shop and soda fountain.

Importantly, a large section of the Dark Harbor village has a public septic system that has unused capacity, allowing for the possibility of small lot-size development.

- Main Road Housing. Over the long-term, attention could be paid to policies that would encourage the up-keep and construction of houses for island residents along the main Town road that connects these three potential centers of activity

## **Comments and Ideas are Welcome**

**Islesboro Looking Ahead** proposes that Islesboro's future will be built on its past traditions, and that the island's first priority is to maintain and update the very considerable resources that the island has now. The statement also proposes that by paying attention to economic, technological, and social changes, Islesboro will be able to consider appropriate new activities that can benefit the community and its residents.

The Board of Selectmen is circulating **Islesboro Looking Ahead** and will welcome the comments and ideas of Islesboro residents – both through individual conversations and at a Town Forum that will be held in the summer of 2012. **Islesboro Looking Ahead** will be up-dated annually by the Board of Selectmen.

Board of Selectmen  
Town of Islesboro  
January 3, 2012