

Islesboro Housing Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 4, 2026
In-Person Meeting at 5:00 PM, Town Office

 **APPROVED**
9/1/26

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Michael Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 3 members present

Members Present: Chair Michael Nelson, Susan West, Lindsey Govoni, Jennifer Selendy, Peter Rothschild, Ex Officio

Members Present via Zoom: Elizabeth Hayden

Members Absent: Cate Blackford, Ginnie Hess

Others Present: Secretary Carrie Reed

Others Present via Zoom: Elizabeth Hayden

3. Approval of Minutes of June 4, 2026

Motion: To approve Minutes of June 4, 2026, as written, J. Selendy, seconded by L. Govoni. No discussion.

Motion passed, 2 yes, 0 no, S. West and J. Selendy abstained.

4. Committee Membership Update

- Michael reported that Tom Tutor has stepped down from the committee due to increased efforts that he's putting into Islesboro Economic Sustainability Corp (IESC).
- We need to find a replacement.

5. Housing Awareness Program Proposals

- Michael stated that at the last meeting, there was discussion about the budget and how the committee might spend those funds. We would like to throw around some ideas.
- Lindsey suggested an Island Housing Incentive Grant, to help property owners update rental space, with heat pumps, electrical costs, or anything that might help them pass an inspection to make it rentable. They would be eligible for this grant if they commit to renting to year-round people for a certain amount of time, such as 1 to 2 years, or 3 to 5 years.
- Jennifer stated that this is a good idea, but there's not enough in the budget right now to do that. She added that the Islesboro Economic Sustainability Corp. (IESC) has just adopted something very similar.
- Michael stated that IESC program is a pilot program, which will run for the next 12 months. It provides loans for year-round rentals that will be affordable, using the Maine Housing Affordability Index, at \$1,000 to \$1,200 a month. The loan program funds renovations to make space more livable.
- Jennifer suggested that the Town provide tax incentives for people who own property that's underutilized, to make year-round rentals.
- Michael replied that we can put some words together to propose that. Jennifer will draft something.
- Michael added that he had talked to a couple of people about his suggestion of a very detailed and professional communications plan towards the community. This would entail fundraising. The two places that can accept funds are IESC and Islesboro Affordable Properties (IAP). There are a lot of people we don't reach in our communications. We need some kind of vehicle that allows us to reach almost 100% of the people who are here both seasonally and year-round.

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- Jennifer stated that Peter Rothschild has talked to Dan Tutor about outreach. Dan has done a lovely job for the school. He has taken this focus beyond the local sphere. We could pay Dan to create a broader communications plan.
- Lindsey suggested a Housing Concierge, someone to coordinate a website for resources to be pooled, and to help people who are considering moving here. Dan Tutor also does websites.
- Jennifer stated that, if not for private fundraising, the family with two new teachers would not have been able to move here.
- Jennifer added that Hannah Pingree was on the island last night. She seems to be focused on affordable housing as a statewide issue.
- Lindsey suggested a Welcome Housing Fund, where we can help with first-time moves, with perhaps first-month's rent or moving costs.
- Susan asked that if Dan sets up a website that's connected to this committee, who will oversee it and field calls and queries? Could the money be used to set up the website and then pay someone?
- Lindsey suggested that there would also need to be some way to measure success. If we were to put this in place and ask for funding for next year, the Select Board will want to see the results of how that went.
- Jennifer stated that a concierge could be a phase-3 goal, after available housing and communications.
- Discussion about details, having affordable housing stock, and marketing.
- Jennifer suggested we could make it seamless for developers of housing, in terms of knowing that the town would make the roads public, and knowing that whatever zoning issues could be dealt with. The Codes Enforcement Officer could be instrumental in working with us.
- Peter stated that he is willing to carry the torch with the Select Board for anything the committee can do. He thinks that there will be support in the Board for whatever is proposed.
- Susan asked about Sue Hatch's list of underutilized properties and if we've acted on it. Michael replied that it's been made available to the superintendent.
- Susan added that there are some summer folks who don't come anymore, and their houses might be worth pursuing as rentals.
- Michael clarified that the Housing Committee's goal should be to find year-round housing for people who want to live and work on the island.

6. Planning Update

a. Islesboro Affordable Properties (IAP) Activity

- Michael stated that IAP has accepted the challenge to go faster and bigger. That will take a fair amount of money and support from the community.
- Sunday there will be a housing discussion at the Islesboro Forum. This is a first step in talking to the people that we don't get a chance to talk to regularly. We need to let them know that their summers here may be in jeopardy if we don't do something to get the services that we need to keep going. Things like that will drive home the need to raise more money, so that IAP can build more, and more cost effectively.
- Susan asked Michael and IAP to consider tiny houses. She thinks it is viable. Newly married couples, single people, and single older people who can't keep up with their larger properties would all be candidates for a tiny home community.

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- Michael stated that one of the issues on the island is that people aren't used to density. IAP has been dealing with noise complaints with the new homes. The way a tiny house community is laid out will be important. In the case of IAP, we need to make some changes to the road layout a little bit because it wasn't well thought out relative to existing homes. The piece of property needs to be right, and the town needs to embrace a density change again. Right now, the smallest lot you can build on in a Town Center is 20,000 square feet. For a tiny house community, we would want something a little smaller per house.
- Discussion about the distinction between an Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and independent tiny houses. In most cases, ADU's can't be sold off; they must remain with the primary house. Jennifer asked if there might be a way to incentivize people to build ADUs and rent them (or sell them if the selling restriction were eased).
- Carrie stated that a few years ago, the ordinances around ADUs were updated based on state requirements, which allows for greater density and more opportunities for people to build ADUs, especially in Town Centers. There is language in the ordinances about renting ADUs and requiring them to be rented longer-term.
- Michael added that one of the disappointments about the Town Centers is that not many people have taken advantage of the opportunity to build on smaller lots.
- Discussion about marketing the Town Centers, ADUs, and rental opportunities.
- Michael stated that the next step is thinking through what we might do from a Town point of view, and put it into an overall proposal. Look at Dan's work on the Islesboro Island News website, the IIT website, IAP's new website, and the school's new website. He does a wonderful job. We could leverage that and get Dan to do something that highlights the community.
- Jennifer added that Dan also has a whole social media strategy.
- Peter talked about a community he visited in Seattle last year. It was an interesting model, with mixed sizes of units, where young families and elderly people could live next door to each other. The elderly people helped take care of the kids while the parents were off working. They had a communal kitchen that was optional to use. It was inspiring. There are models out there for integrating tiny houses with conventional houses.
- Michael stated that it's worth talking to the Planning Board in advance to ask about the requirements, hurdles, etc. for this kind of project.
- Susan asked if there's anything happening with the Durkee's Store property.
- Michael replied that IESC has a proposal for the Durkee's Store property that kind of meets his requirement but doesn't tie it to that. It's a three-party deal. We will sit down with him in October. IESC would like to do something similar to what was done with the Island Market, which includes buying the property and buildings. Someone else would then buy the business, and rent the building from IESC, then IESC would find a buyer for the land. Approximately 15 acres out of the 18 would be pushed for housing. There is a fair amount of perc-able land.
 - There's a sliver of Islesboro Islands Trust (IIT) land that comes between much of the property and the road. IIT hasn't been amenable to a right of way for access. They have talked about being willing to do land swaps to support housing, but there is another way to get in there.

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- IESC is going through the Maine equivalent of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Durkee's used to have gasoline pumps at the store, and the group has written a report. The tanks are gone, and the state paid to do whatever cleanup there was. There are some minor things from the last report that came in, but Michael doesn't think that will be an issue.
- Tom has been talking with the Belfast Co-op and learning about the process to set up a co-op rather than sell the store to an individual.

b. Island Institute Housing Coalition

- Michael reported that the Island Institute has hired a new housing person. She was on island a couple weeks ago visiting. She has experience with housing in Portland and Westbrook. She's spending time visiting island and coastal communities before she calls a meeting together.
- Jennifer suggested sending her a recording of the Forum meeting.

7. Any Other Business

- None.

8. Visitor Comments

- None.

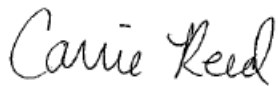
9. Next Housing Committee meeting date

- Regular meeting: Tuesday, September 1st, 5:00 PM.

10. Adjourn

Motion by J. Selendy, seconded by L. Govoni, to adjourn at 5:58 PM. Motion passed, 4 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary