

ISLESBORO PLANNING BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING  
FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2022  
In- Person Meeting at 6:00 PM, Kinnicut Center, ICS

**MINUTES**

Call the meeting to order.

Chair Bill Schoppe called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Members Present: Bill Schoppe, Jennifer West, Gil Rivera, Jesse Burns, Isabel Jackson, and Roger Burke.

Others Present: Dave Dyer, CEO, Janet Anderson, Carrie Reed, Earl MacKenzie, Bonnie MacKenzie, Owen Standish, Ken Smith, Rachel Rolerson Smith, Donna Seymour, Phil Seymour, Kathy DeGrasse, Richard DeGrasse, Elizabeth Hayden, Terry Cowan, Kara Masters Siekman, Melissa Burns, Lauren Bruce, Jane Wherren, Barry Wherren, Mark Small, Linda Achorn, Bob Achorn, Maggy Willcox, Peter Willcox, Kim Grindle, Gaby Grindle, Bill Boardman, Dylan Purington, Pam Larson, Becky Schnur, Jack Schlottman, Phil Berry, Audrey Berry, Stan Makara, Mike Hutcherson, Carol Pierson, Hank Conklin, Page Clason, Julie Reidy, Ellen Berry, Janis Petzel, Myra Sinnott, and Anita Willcox.

Presentation by Earl MacKenzie on the Big Tree Beach All-Tides Swim Program Proposed Dock, representing the Town of Islesboro, Application MD 01-22.

Earl gave a brief history of Big Tree Beach and Moseley's Dock, and how Seal Harbor has been getting busier over the years. He emphasized his concern for safety at the current boating dock, saying it is a priority, as there have been many close calls with swimmers almost getting hit by boats. There have also been complaints by boaters about swimmers. He then spoke about the proposed project and showed visuals of the plans via a slide presentation. This will be a phased project, with the dock application first. Road safety and parking will be addressed in the second phase. He would like the dock to be approved before this summer, rather than wait for the second phase to be approved.

Questions from the Planning Board

- Jesse Burns: What is the depth at low tide off the proposed float? Earl answered 5-8 feet.
- Gil Rivera: How are you going to access the pier? Earl explained that there is plenty of width between the road and the shore. There is a culvert where we will build a wooden bridge and make it ADA compliant.
- Isabel Jackson: Can you describe the walk? Earl: The walk from almost anywhere on the property is wide, a trail can be built between the road and the shore.
- Gil Rivera: Those plans are for Phase 2. How will you get to the dock for Phase 1? Earl answered that cleanup has already started, and people will be able to walk to the dock as it is. It can be addressed in a few-days' work. Volunteers are ready to go.

Questions from Abutters: None

Questions from General Public

- Phil Seymour: Who will be supervising work, and who is going to do it? Who's going to maintain it? Earl: I volunteered to be the project manager, as I have a lot of experience building docks. Trevor Dakers has volunteered to bring his big machine to clean up the deadfall. A couple of people have volunteered to bring small excavators. It is Town property, so the Town will maintain it, and volunteers will help. The incline and float will be put up in the winter.
- Janis Petzel: American Red Cross says that anything less deep than 9 feet has a higher risk for spinal cord injuries for people diving off floats. If this will be 5 feet, that means there's a safety concern for kids diving off. Other concern is the BTB sailing is on the other side of the existing dock, so kids will be in several places instead

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of in one place. Earl: The Big Tree sailing is supervised and completely separate. Janis: Increasing traffic at parking areas. Increasing safety risk in three different ways. Also, who's paying for this? Is it going to raise our taxes? Earl: Last year, the town appropriated \$30,000 for this, which paid for the incline, the engineering, and design. We did some repairs to the float that was donated. We raised \$53,000 in donations. We've asked for an additional \$10,000 to finish this phase of the project. The walkway is all volunteer.

- Gabe Pendleton: To address the taxes issue: There's \$10,000 appropriated in the budget this year that has yet to be approved by the Town. I think it's a roughly \$4M budget.
- Terry Cowan: I think that the Board and the Town need more information, specifics. What is the criteria: size of the property, setbacks, accurate depths of the water, etc.? My concern is I don't see how anyone can make a decision about this project without more information. There seem to be issues between various committees, and no overall coordination, both in terms of presentation of information and in terms of design. The plans for the future are speculations. Questions need to be answered specifically and not generally. Does the Harbor Committee have the authority to keep kids off the public dock? Earl: Harbor Masters do have that authority if they deem something is unsafe. The design was done by a licensed engineer, to code. The depth was taken with soundings with accurate equipment, by engineers. Regarding the depth, you have to take the tide into consideration when it comes to people diving. Overriding concern is the safety around the boats.
- Mark Small: There are moorings inside that swim area. Is there going to be another float, too? Earl: Phil Berry's is the closest mooring, it's not in the swim area. There's a yellow marker, that's not a mooring.
- Kara Masters Siekman: Four main concerns: 1. I first found out about this when I drove by Big Tree Sanctuary; I was shocked to see the amount of clearing that was going on. I still don't know if there was a permit for that cutting; is there? Dave Dyer answered Yes. 2. I directed swim programs on Islesboro for 30 years, and the best way to teach kids is at the Y. It's progressive. They did not show up the many summers we offered beach-side lessons. 3. I'm shocked to see the development of our sanctuary, which we paid taxes over the years to preserve. The ancient soil is what keeps ticks and caterpillars at a lower level. We're suburbanizing our island; we're killing parasites in our soil. It's something we need to learn about. 4. I'm unclear about which committees and groups have been making this plan for what will be best for our island. I found out Big Tree Beach was given to the Town in 2021, and a lot of people didn't even know that, and we're developing it already. What if we had a whole harbor that was for sailing and paddling and swimming, and people could swim from the beach to the existing float, a perfect reach... I don't want to kick the teenagers off their float... Maybe boats can go to Gilkey Harbor... the water quality is threatened with effluent, toxic chemicals, off-gassing. We need to advocate for our swimmers. The float will take up swim space. It's a small, delicate sanctuary, let's keep it. Earl: We actually have a video which was shot of our sanctuary. If we don't start working on it, we will not have much longer because no one is tending to it, and there is a lot of erosion. We can plant Rosa Begosa, or something with heavy root structure, along the shore.
- Ellen Berry: I'm from Camden, and you can barely get a boat through Camden Harbor now. With 70 moorings in that field already, how is bigger better? What are we doing to preserve so that we don't get all squeezed in like Camden?
- Becky Schnur: I've been swimming at Big Tree since I was a kid. I know that the kids have been swimming from the dock... I've been increasingly worried... Earl is absolutely right. This a good solution. We can kick the kids off the dock and give them another place to go. The Planning Board has to look at the plan before them. While it's nice to have a path, and the parking plan can be considered later, it's also not necessary. Most of the kids get dropped off or ride bikes or walk. The kids that are down there are not usually heavily using the parking lot. I think we can put signs that say No Diving, and do some education in the school about water safety... This is a solution that's relatively affordable. Bill Schoppe: In answer to the question about what the Planning Board needs, we need an application, which we've got, and we've got an Ordinance Book that we have to see if it complies with, and we're getting some questions answered along the way as we're doing this.

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- Gabe Pendleton: For clarity, is the intention that the parking, until Phase 2 is complete, is going to be what we see now with parking along the side of the road? Earl: I don't see any change there until we do the second phase. The walkway will be an improvement.
- Myra Sinnott: I have enjoyed swimming at Big Tree. It seems that if this is something that the Harbor Committee has been considering, wouldn't the HC also consider moving some of the moorings out so they aren't so close to the swimming area? Earl: One issue is water depth. The organized harbor is delineated on maps. The moorings furthest out are out of the organized harbor. It gets very deep out there. To put moorings in the deeper water gets very expensive. We are maxed out in close. There are no rental moorings, they are all private. Taxpayers have a right to have a boat and mooring. Seal Harbor is very well protected from storms, the best place for moorings.
- Ellen Berry: Not everyone has a right to a mooring. In Camden there is a list because there's not enough space for everyone. Earl: I understand what you're saying. In Camden Harbor there is no more room.
- Kara Masters Siekman: I would like to propose that someone who has expertise in swimming be involved in this decision-making process. Earl: I understand. I am a swimmer and licensed diver... We have clean water by any standard.
- Gabe Pendleton: This is a joint effort by the Recreation Committee. This has been an ongoing conversation at the Town level for several years. This was something that was voted on both in appropriating funds in the budget last year as well as accepting the gift from the IIT with the express purpose of creating a place for people to swim. This is something that the Recreation Committee is actively excited about promoting swim lessons and swimming there. There is no question that this pier is safer for the kids who are swimming, and I applaud Earl for all the time and energy he has spent on this.
- Janis Petzel: What are the ordinances that have to do with this? Does it meet the Ordinance? Bill: That's something that we're determining.
- Dylan Purington: The effluent is not coming from the boats in the harbor. The reason we can't just move the moorings is the dock is the access point. If we don't get the kids off the dock, someone's going to get a severe head injury or laceration.

Chair Bill Schoppe called the Hearing to a close at 7:13 pm.

Respectively Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary