

1/13/14

Islesboro Looking Ahead

Islesboro Looking Ahead, a statement prepared by the Board of Selectmen about the Town of Islesboro, was first adopted by the 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 and related perspectives: building on Islesboro's past, protecting and up-dating the island's present assets, and considering 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 continued cooperation and goodwill, its residents, both year-round and seasonal, with conscious fostering of the dignity and worth of all.

- 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
- Establishment of Health Center Endowment Fund

- Public Safety and Emergency Services enhanced
- A re-surfaced runway at the airport
- Transfer Station renovations
- Town Study of Internet service.
- Acquisition of land and plans for a new Preschool
- 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 and beyond 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.

Sustainable growth requires fiscal responsibility in the present and sound investments for the future. This means: 1) good management of present resources; 2) careful planning and prudent budgeting; and 3) well-constructed initiatives that will add jobs, commerce, and maintain a fiscally-sound tax base.

Islesboro must also continue a close monitoring of the Waldo County annual budget, to which the Town makes a substantial tax contribution, and pay attention to regional and state issues that will affect the Town.

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.

- 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 must also monitor and be alert to changes in the nation and the world, and be prepared for the effects of such things as climate change and events good or bad beyond our control.**

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.

Town officials, private organizations, and residents must be concerned with and plan for rising sea levels and increasingly severe storms, which will threaten shore-lines and vulnerable areas such as the Narrows and Grindle Point. The Town of Islesboro in 2015 received a federal grant to study the effects of a rising sea-level on Grindle Point and the Narrows. A "Resiliency Planning Committee" has been formed to report by December, 2016.

Recently proposed developments in Penobscot Bay – a 23 million gallon LPG tank in Searsport with an accompanying international tanker supply system, and a massive, proposed million cubic yard dredging project to expand dramatically the Searsport Harbor for global shipping – underscore the importance of active monitoring and engagement with regional issues that will directly affect Islesboro.

- Islesboro is a multi-faceted community with a good mix of summer and year-round 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 make special efforts, including reviewing housing and commercial innovations, to attract new business, social and cultural **amenities** to the island.*

- 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 at Grindle Point and Seal Harbor.
- Health Center
- Emergency, Communication, and Safety Services
- Alice L. Pendleton Library expansion
- Town Beach, Pendleton Point, and up-island boat access to the water
- Maddy Dodge field improvement
- Public rights of way to water
- Town-supported Broadband Internet on Islesboro
- Measures to protect residents from tick-borne diseases, Lyme and others

- Reduction of fire hazards through clearing of blow-downs
- Repair and good maintenance of Town and private graveyards

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

There is always room for improvement in the functioning of any Town Government. Priorities for Islesboro include:

- Continuing up-dating and additions to the Town's website, including new census information as it becomes available. In addition, research prepared by the 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.
- Improved communications between the Town and residents through a variety of media, print, and electronic means including Town of Islesboro Facebook and Twitter pages, especially during weather emergencies.
- Increased opportunities for professional development of Town employees.
- Planning for a long-term shift to a "paperless" government, including medical records where appropriate to facilitate telemedicine.
- Town support for recruiting, training, and effective management of Fire Department and Ambulance **Service** personnel.
- 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, existing enterprises, and plans for the future.
- Island-wide access to high-speed internet, cellphone, and transportation systems.
- A long-range energy plan to stimulate cost-effective energy for homes and businesses, including an energy audit of Town operations and the application of solar and other renewable energies.
- 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 improve both the island economy and community life.*

- Continuing support of trained staff for the year-round Pre-School and Daycare Program, as it develops a new facility to encourage young families to stay on Islesboro and others to come to the island.
- Encourage local food production.
- Strengthen access to social services.
- Consider changes in development ordinances to encourage a variety of housing and small business options.
- **Consider the addition of locally controlled financial institution such as a credit union to serve local businesses, families and individuals.**

3) *Investigate and encourage 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 year-round 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.

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

- Up Island. There are several new and historic areas of potential growth: the area from Marshall Cove to Meadow Pond, which includes boatyard activities, the Town Transfer Station, and the Islesboro Sporting Club; and, the area around Durkee's General Store on the corner of the Main Road, Heald Road, and Ryder's Cove Road. There are also pending proposals for locating fire and emergency municipal services up-island.
- Dark Harbor. Historically, there have been both seasonal and year-round shops and offices in this down-island center. At present there are two office buildings, a bookstore, and five seasonal shops - a soda fountain/newspaper/gift shop, a bakery, a pottery studio, and two shops selling housewares and clothing.

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 and/or multi-household dwellings.

- 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.
- Our Single Aquifer. All development proposals that may increase density must consider the protection of Islesboro's water supply, including the possibilities of increasing lot-size on lands in known re-charge areas.

Considering new activities for the future will require careful review of existing Town of Islesboro ordinances, policies, and practices. Possible changes and additions that are intended to encourage sustainable growth in the future will be presented for open discussion to the Islesboro community in a variety of ways - and when fully reviewed - will be ultimately submitted to Town meeting for decision.

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 and the Town Manager are circulating **Islesboro Looking Ahead** and will welcome the comments and ideas of Islesboro residents – both through individual conversations, at regular meetings, and at winter, summer, annual, and special Town Forums and meetings. **Islesboro Looking Ahead** will be up-dated annually by the Board of Selectmen based on those individual and group discussions.

Board of Selectmen
Town of Islesboro
January 3, 2012

Amended and Re-affirmed
January 2, 2013

Amended and Re-affirmed
January 15, 2014

Amended and Re-affirmed
January 29, 2015

Amended and Re-affirmed
January 13, 2016

W: Islesboro Looking Ahead 1 13 2016