

Calendar, December 2011

School House Road Year Round Housing

In September CICA reported that we expected that the year-round housing on School House Road would be finished and ready for occupancy in December. We spoke too soon. The very detailed closing process by the State Housing Authority (MSHA) was getting close to approval. But the process became a slow one, perhaps in part due to MSHA's attention being taken up by State Treasurer Poliquin's investigation of their project costs.

We have been assured that our plans will be accepted – so, we have cleared the site where the building will be, Wayne is finishing the driveway, and we dug the well while Hanson was here. But we have to have the formal closing with MSHA in order to receive the State money to pay Keiser Homes for the duplex building itself. Since it seemed clear that the closing would not occur until after December 12, the December window of frost-free days with tides suitable for delivery of the pieces of the building and the crane to put them together will have closed for the winter. So we have decided to postpone the rest of the project until spring.

Once the roads can bear heavy traffic in the spring, we will finish the site preparation, pour the foundation and bring out the building. We now expect to be finished in June. We also hope that this timing will be more convenient for potential applicants who may have had rentals through the winter that end at the beginning of summer.

The nature of the housing itself and the eligibility requirements for renting the two units have not changed since the report in September. We can report now that the cost of the project has increased somewhat beyond the \$356,000 in grants provided by MSHA and the Maine Community Foundation's Islands Challenge Fund. We initially chose an "off the shelf" Keiser duplex, but we've since learned that MSHA's building and environmental performance standards have increased the price. But, these changes will benefit the tenants, since they make the units more energy efficient and increase the durability of the construction and finish materials. There are also some contingency estimates built into our budget that we hope not to have to use.

Money for the project will go into the Chebeague economy for things like site work, the septic system, electrical and plumbing work, and for finish carpentry. We will rely on CICA volunteers for interior painting and landscaping once the building has been set in place. We hope the resulting three-bedroom units looking across a sunny yard to the undeveloped woods will be worth the wait.