

Minutes of the meeting of the CICA Board and Housing Committee, Tuesday June 21, 2011 at 7:15 at the Parish House

Present: Mabel Doughty, Bob Earnest, Frank Durgin, Deb Hall, Beth Howe, Ruth Slagle, David Whiston, John Wilson

Others: Cathy Mac Neill

Action items marked in bold. Next meeting Tuesday July 19 at 7:15 at the Parish House.

School House Road Housing

What has been done? Bob

He said we got a tentative “go” from MSHA after Town Meeting. Have developed a survey of the land, site plan, septic design and have pushed the envelope by clearing trees. But MSHA is concerned with controlling the process and wants to see and approve the RFQs for all the work before we can go ahead. They are willing to have us accept a higher bid from an island bidder, but need to be able to explain why it works in each case.

Tree cutting: Sent RFQ to two bidders.

Excavation: budget has \$60,000 for this. We sent RFQs to four people and got three responses. This includes the septic system, road, foundation hole. It is difficult to compare the responses since different bidders each suggest different ways of saving money on the contract.

The well will be done without bids by the usual island well driller.

Still need to do specs for the plumbing, electrical work, heating.

The approval process is a matter of sending drafts to Norm and getting them back to him. It may be possible to put out the last RFQs fairly soon.

Deb asked what the timing for ordering the building is. Bob said that the Keiser operations and sales people have been out to the island. Once MSHA has given formal approval to the project, it will take 6 weeks to build the building. Then we have to find barging times. We can only bring one or two barges per day because they have to land at exactly high tide. The building will come from the East End in Portland to the Stone Wharf because the racks have to be backed off the barge and that is easier at the Stone Wharf. It costs a bit more for the trip. Bob hopes to be able to bring two boxes in each load. Lionel Plante has two barges. Bob did talk with CTC about the barging but after running some figures on what they could do, everyone agreed that it was not reasonable.

Once the building has been put together it will be made waterproof by the Keiser crew. But there will still be finish work to be done by Bob’s crew. Painting and landscaping may be done by volunteers, see below. The site will be left with rough grading, but will not have raked topsoil. Beth asked where the topsoil would come from. This has not been addressed.

Deb asked whether the wires would be put underground. Bob said he had talked to Lenny at CMP who thinks that underground may be cheaper. This depends to some extent on the amount of the electrical service. The more service the larger the cable and the more expensive. John said MSHA requires 200 amps.

Bob said even when the Construction people at MSHA have signed off on the project, it still has to go to the Finance Department. **We should talk with Liza to develop a time line for how long this is likely to take.** We also still haven't spent money on "legal" expenses. Beth said she thought that all the deed work that Lew is doing would come out of this. Bob said he thought Lew was working pro bono. **Beth will ask Lew what he has spent.**

As the General Contractor, Bob will continue to work out all these issues with Norm Fecteau and the various contractors/bidders.

Land Transfer: Beth

Two of the three abutters have approved the transfer of land from the Town to them. The third has not responded. Both Lew Holman and the Town's attorney David Slaterly are willing to write the deed for the transfer from the Town to CICA to say that the decisions about conservation and trail easements can be made after the transfer. **Beth will work with Lew Holman to see that the ALTA/ACSM standards for the survey and boundary documentation required by MSHA can be met.**

Process of finding residents: Beth

Beth went over the application criteria and process that had been used twice for 226 South Road. The criteria and a point system for rating applications used by the Housing Selection Committees were attached to the agenda. There are two requirements that everyone must meet: income and year-round residence on Chebeague. If this project comes in within budget, we will only have operating costs for things like taxes, maintenance and insurance. There will be no mortgage. This means that we can afford to rent to people in the very low income category. In fact there may be a requirement that one of the units has to be rented to someone of low or very low income. Beyond income and residence on Chebeague, other factors such as working on the island, children in the school, length of residence on the island, and community involvement and references from past landlords can be considered.

The Housing Selection Committee was made up of five people. One was from the CICA Board but not on the Housing Committee. We need to decide who should serve on this committee in this round.

We also need to have publicity about the availability of the housing, but this cannot go out until official MSHA approval has been reached.

There was a discussion about how to deal with the fact that these units both have three bedrooms. We have tried to make sure that there are enough bathrooms so that if there are single people sharing a unit, they can have bath facilities. But this raises the issue of how such an arrangement might work and how the incomes of individuals would be counted. Cathy said she had hoped that there would be more openness to single people. Beth said that it would be possible for a

single person to occupy a whole unit. Because the number of applicants at any given time is usually small, we needed to create units that could be used flexibly. If we build one-bedroom units, assuming that there will be elderly or single applicants and there are none, we have a problem. Some of the application criteria could work in favor of single people.

It was decided to create a subcommittee to work on the issues of the application criteria and the selection committee. Deb, Beth and Frank volunteered for this. This subcommittee will report at the July meeting.

Painting and Landscaping: Beth and Bob

We hope that these tasks can be done by volunteers, and a broader group than just CICA Board. As we get closer to the time we need to publicize the project and the role that volunteers can play in it. **We can try to have articles about the housing in the Calendar, the Forecaster and the Working Waterfront, and maybe the Portland Press Herald. We can also announce the opportunity at public events on the island. It may be useful to have a publicity committee, which can be appointed at the next meeting.**

Refinancing 226 South Road

The current contract with Genesis will end in August. We need to figure out what comes next. When we bought the house we thought we would rent it for three years to get the experience, and then sell it. The initial mortgage was for more than the price of the house minus the money we had raised and the grant monies, in order to provide a reserve that could be used to subsidize the rent. The collapse of the housing bubble changed the calculation on selling the house, and we got one more year of financing from Genesis at the subsidized 3% rate. But that was already a longer term than they usually give, so it may not be possible to extend that even if we would like to. Beth said she had talked with Liza at Genesis about coming up to talk about what to do now.

Options were discussed:

Sale, not as affordable house

Sale as affordable house, by lowering the price by raising money.

Sale as affordable house by rent-to-own. Beth said that Long Island had been thinking about a plan such as this.

Refinancing with Genesis. John said that raising the interest rate from 3 to, say 5.5% would not cost an impossible amount more.

Refinancing at a regular bank since interest rates are fairly low. Talk to Genesis about what banks would be sympathetic to doing this for an affordable house.

Beth said that a group of us should go up to talk with Liza. She asked that John be included. Deb volunteered. Beth will arrange for the three of us to go up.

Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

Bob asked what would be the advantage of this. Beth said they had been very active in getting the green energy and housing bill that the islands program is part of through the Legislature. It might be useful to have contacts with housing people in the rest of the state. The cost is their lowest category -- \$100/year. Bob said he is already on the email list. John said it sounds like it is primarily for larger organizations primarily concerned with building affordable housing. Is

that what we expect to do in the future? He suggested not making a decision until the current project is completed in the fall and we see where we may go next. **Decision deferred to fall.**

Green Lantern Farm

Bob said that Erin Whetham had applied for three small grants from the Island Institute to support her Green Lantern farming project on Jonathan KomLosy's land [there used to be a green lantern in the house on the farm]. Beth said that she, Bob and John had raised some money to support Erin's application and provide the non-profit sponsorship that she needed. She got all the grants. One of them supports having Caroline Summa work with Erin as an intern. Erin also raised money from holding a plant sale. Beth said that Bob is already working with them, and suggested that any other CICA Board members who are interested in this to work with them.

PACE: Beth

Beth said she had not been very diligent about following through on providing publicity about the PACE program for energy efficiency loans that was adopted at Town Meeting in February. The Island Institute has had a workshop on it. Bob said that there is another one coming up next week sponsored by another organization. **Beth asked if anyone else would be interested in helping her work on this. There may be publicity materials available from the State. Ruth said she would.**

Internet Service on Chebeague

Beth said that David Hill had asked Bob whether CICA would be willing to help Chebeague.net get funding for its plan to upgrade service. They had tried to get money from the State program but had not been successful, partly because Chebeague already has wireless, and maybe because Chebeague.net is a for-profit organization. Beth said she thought the need for an upgrade is important and pressing, since Chebeague.net seems to be being overwhelmed by the additional demand that comes now in the summer.

John asked what CICA's role would be? Providing a non-profit front or actually raising money? Beth said she thought CICA has enough on its plate now and that probably we should not get into this now. But it is a real issue. **Bob said he would explore what role CICA might play and we can have further discussion at the next meeting.**

More on Affordable Housing

Cathy thanked the group for letting her come to the meeting, but again expressed her disappointment that the affordable housing program is set up to favor families and is less likely to serve single people. Beth said that John has suggested working to encourage the construction of accessory apartments in existing houses and that might tend to help single people.

Respectfully Submitted

Beth Howe

