

Minutes of the Meeting of the CICA Housing Committee, August 16, 2011 at 7:15 at the Parish House

Present: Donna Damon, Bob Earnest, Beth Howe, Ruth Slagle, John Wilson

4. Update on Green Lantern aka Lone Goat Farm by Erin Whetham

She has been selling produce to the Slow Bell Cafe. She has also been having a weekly farm stand at the Slow Bell on Thursdays from 9 to 1. About 30-40 people came. Donna said that the field where the produce is would be a great opportunity for on-site education. Erin said she plans to do this in the future. Bob asked if the farm has been a sustainable business this summer. Erin said not yet – she has too many things going and she had primarily intended to see how much she would grow on this small plot this summer. She has had a lot of landscaping business. She thinks for a first year it has been successful.

Ideas for the future include using the commercial kitchen at the Slow Bell to teach people about how to add value to the produce they grow. In addition, if the farm grew things in greater volume, it would make sense to grow things that will keep over the winter. That would also be an area for teaching.

Having Caroline Summa as an intern has worked very well and Erin would like to have someone again next summer. Donna said that the Island Institute usually provides support for two years for things like this. Then you have to develop capacity to keep it going.

Bob suggested it might be possible to create a non-profit farm to provide food for the island and other communities, with Erin as a paid employee. Beth moved, seconded by Donna that CICA explore this. Passed unanimously.

1. Updates on School House Road

Bob reported that the construction review work is about 95 percent complete. The DEP permit for the driveway has been sent in. DEP has a month to respond. He gave out new floor plans with the larger unit's design flipped, the kitchen rearranged a bit to provide more counter space, and things rearranged to provide access into the basement. These changes have been approved by MSHA.

He said that there is a possibility that the well driller could come next week. We had originally asked him to come at the end of the month. Everyone agreed that it would be better to wait till then. But we need to make clear to MSHA that we have to have the well drilled when the driller comes out – timing is not our call.

Bob is now organizing the full MSHA application and hopes to be ready to send it to Norm after next week; whenever the DEP permit comes.

Ralph Munroe has been doing additional work on the ditch on our property. We may accept this, but we should probably not just be quiet about it. It may make sense to have Lew write a letter to Ralph. **Beth will explore this.** We will have to put a culvert in the ditch in the area of the house because an open ditch is not safe.

Bob said that he has worked out a tentative timeline for finishing the project which suggests that we might finish in late December. The month that DEP has to review the permit application puts us out to September 10. At that point the full application will go to MSHA. Bob is hoping that the approval of the financing might come as soon as September 25. At that point the order for the building can be placed with Keiser. However, Keiser has reduced its production line from two shifts to one, which means that building the duplex will take about 10 weeks. This brings us to early or mid-December for delivery of the building. Finishing comes after that.

Beth reported that the transfer of the land from the Town to CICA is registered at the Registry of Deeds and two of the transfers to abutters have been registered. The third needs to have a transfer tax form filled out and will be registered next week.

Beth reported on the progress of the application requirements for tenants. Bob had suggested having a minimum rent that even someone with a very low income would have to pay. Beth said she was not sure that would be allowable to MSHA. **She will ask Liza.**

Donna said she had a couple of suggestions. She thought that the language favoring people who work on the island is discriminatory. People who commute to the mainland to work may contribute just as much or more than people who work on the island. This argument made sense to everyone else and it was agreed to take out that criterion. And someone suggested calling them “attributes” not “criteria” and that change was made.

Another suggestion from Donna was to allow pets. Beth said she was not altogether happy about it, but that she thought that explaining why pets are not allowed softened the hard-nosed appearance. John said it increases our insurance costs. The others agreed not to have dogs and cats.

Donna asked what happens if there is a couple or group of people in a unit and then one leaves. Beth said she thinks that in the lease it says that the rent will be renegotiated with the remaining tenant(s). Donna also asked what happens if the tenant’s income changes. Beth said we renegotiate the rent each year when the lease is up and that is a part of it. John suggested that we say that if a tenant’s income changes by more than 10 percent up or down this could trigger a renegotiation. Beth said it would be possible to ask Liza and Mary Terry how other islands handle this issue. John suggested having all lease renewals occur around May 1 after people have just completed their income tax for the previous year. **He asked Beth to send him a copy of the lease.**

Beth said she will revise all the application material to reflect the decisions made at this meeting. She will also put an article about the progress on the project in the September Calendar, encouraging people to let us know if they are interested in applying. We should also post articles on the web. We might also try to have an article in the *Working Waterfront*.

There was also a discussion of who might serve on the Tenant Selection Committee, and a number of names were suggested.

2. Update on PACE.

Beth said that she and Ruth were thinking of having a public informational meeting at the very end of August. There was not enthusiasm for this idea, but everyone agreed that a meeting would be a good idea. Saturday September 17 was chosen. It was agreed to have the meeting informal. We will talk about the program and how to apply. We will also ask Doug Ross to talk about what is involved in an energy audit. We should also see if we can get literature on the program from Energy Maine. **Beth will put a notice about this in the September Calendar.**

3. Sign-up for Chedemption was forgotten about.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Howe