

# Chebeague Island Community Association

<http://www.chebeague.org/cica>

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## MEETINGS OCCURRING ON YEAR-ROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR CHEBEAGUE

CICA's Housing Committee held a public meeting on year-round affordable housing on Sunday March 21, attended by about 35 people. CICA has been working on this issue since 2007, and was both reporting on its work and asking for public ideas about a new opportunity to create such housing.

**Need:** A 2005 study found prices on the island for land and houses that are much higher than year-round island incomes can afford, as well as a lack of year-round rentals. Young people on Chebeague -- singles, couples and families -- need year-round housing that they can afford. A more detailed study of this need is being done now and will be reported on next month.

**Recent Work:** In 2007 CICA bought a 3-bedroom house that is rented as an affordable, year-round house. Last fall the group asked the Selectmen if they could explore construction of affordable, year-round housing on the Town-owned Curit property. When Cumberland bought this land the shore half was designated as a conservation easement held by the Chebeague and Cumberland Land Trust, while the upland was intended for affordable housing. The Selectmen agreed and asked for a proposal that could go to Annual Town Meeting.



**Current Opportunity:** In the past month, the ME State Housing Authority has announced a \$2 million affordable housing program specifically for islands. Applications will be accepted this spring for grants up to \$400,000 per island for new construction or rehabilitation of existing houses.



**Discussion at Sunday's Meeting:** There was general support both for creating year-round affordable housing on Chebeague and for applying for this State money. Some people supported building on the Curit land. Others said they would like to see renovation of existing foreclosed houses. Arguments for new construction were that it could provide more "bang for the buck" since the Town owns the land. Modular houses that look like stick-built are also energy efficient and less expensive. Arguments for buying land and existing houses to be renovated were that no additional land would be used, and no new septic systems would be built.

**Ongoing Process of Discussion:** Sunday's meeting was just the beginning of a public process to decide whether to apply for these State funds and, if so, for what:

*Wednesday April 14 at 7:00 at the Hall:* CICA will bring a tentative proposal on the Curit parcel to the Selectmen, as they had requested last fall.

*Sunday April 18 at 1:00 at the Hall:* CICA's recent research on the need for housing will be discussed along with the Curit proposal and a proposal on rehabilitation of an existing house.

## A Community Effort

The Housing Committee is interested in hearing creative ideas as well as concrete proposals from the community. The solution to affordable housing on Chebeague must be a community effort in order to be successful and consistent with community goals and values.