

MDI Tomorrow — Community Design & Land Use
2/13/03 Meeting Notes

NEXT MEETING: Monday, March 17, 2003, 8:00 - 9:30 am
Malvern-Belmont Estates, 80 Mt. Desert Street, Bar Harbor.

Attending: Stuart Brecher, Jim Colquhoun, Robert Coolidge, Sam Coplon, Ellen Dohmen, Laureen Donnelly, Mike Good, Carla and Brad Haskell, Anne Krieg, Marla Major, Perry Moore, Sydney Roberts-Rockefeller, Julia Schloss, Cuff Train, Bobby Williams

Perry recommended “Getting to Smart Growth” a free publication, providing case studies for implementing the projects you want to see happen. Sydney volunteered to order 50 copies for the group.

An idea from the Watershed & Habitat Protection (W&HP) subcommittee’s last meeting: one way to get developers involved would be to build some sort of educational component into the permitting process.

Other discussion:

- What’s the carrot for the educational stick, and for probably increasing the cost of development by requiring car of the watersheds and habitats? Would a streamlined process “reach” developers, be adequate motivation?
- Need to be realistic about land development. All over the country communities are working, ultimately with financial tools, to realize their goals.
- In the end going to come down to individual rights vs. community good. Is there a way to establish a balance? Make people are aware that the decisions they make impact people next door, next generation, and/or other species.

The April 12 conference will be geared toward implementation of projects. Each working group is being asked to put forward 2-3 projects they would like to see put before attendees, for discussion about next steps to move them forward.

PROJECTS DISCUSSED FOR CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

1. Planning Tool Kit (Anne Krieg) – for example, if you have a desire to protect/add open space, the type of incentive zoning that will help accomplish that; PUDs defined, overlay zones, incentive zoning, etc. defined. Also, incorporating a proactive approach, working with individual landowners to figure out what would work on any particular development to accomplish landowners goals and promote community’s goals.

Including:

- Graphics (Sam Coplon)
- CommunityViz demonstration (COA).

2. Presentation on enabling legislation:
 - Current state, federal laws that are shaping things now. (Someone from State Planning Office, or Ted?)
 - What can we do with current laws? For example, wetlands definitions/protections is in hands of DEP -- are these protections adequate or should they be locally defined and monitored?
 - How can communities add to these regulations?
3. COA 1990 build-out map, a complementary map showing what's been built since then, and an updated build-out map and/or a map showing how the build-out scenario could be affected by some of the zoning changes we envision now.

NOTES -- In these presentations:

- Incorporate positive examples of what's being done now to accomplish the goals expressed.
 - Talk about the positive changes/actions being taken by various towns.
 - Include messages about how people can become involved: vote on zoning changes, vote in informed officials, explain benefits of comprehensive planning.
 - Include graphic demonstrations as much as possible, for example:
 - visual of watershed at work – did Ted say ANP used a model like this at Schoodic?
 - 3D depiction of MDI completely built out – show the houses, the commercial buildings, etc.
 - Provide *hands-on* opportunity whenever possible
4. Case study of a development approval process. Suggestion: Review West Eden Meadow – it's an example of a “positive” project, but could it have been even better? And how?
 5. Beginning with Habitats – Schedule for May with buy in from town government, planning and select boards, comprehensive planning committees, COA, etc.
 - Also: provide information about NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) opportunities, and CommunityViz.
 6. Watershed & Habitat Protection –
 - Have kids come and talk about their understanding of watersheds, doing part of the presentations.
 - Produce a watershed web page and interpretive brochure.
 - In partnership with COA and Acadia National Park, produce a watershed map of MDI with *groundtruthed boundaries*.
 - Educate MDI planning boards, town councils, selectpersons, and other bodies about watersheds: what they are, how they work, and why they are important to the health of the island.
 - Establish a center on MDI for the study of coastal watershed and habitat protection in the Gulf of Maine region by working with existing agencies/institutions, or by establishing a new year-round research entity.

- Promote inclusion of watershed and habitat awareness in the local town planning process by supplying information and helping draft local zoning guidelines for urban, residential, and rural areas (e.g., helping citizens set impervious-surface standards based on recent research at the University of Maine).
 - Declare a “Year of the Watershed” and facilitate hiring a watershed educator or storyteller to work with towns and schools on raising awareness of habitat areas and watersheds on MDI, including their relationships with the receiving waters of Frenchman and Blue Hill Bays and Somes Sound.
7. Presentation on economics of development – Developers’ Hows & Whys. Invite developers to present what makes development work for them (Developer from outside the area?)
 8. Guidelines for consistent planning -- twenty objectives of good planning legislation to accomplish positive development on the island.
 9. Formalize a process bringing together town boards/committees to work on comprehensive plans:
 - Look for common ground in all four towns, to greatest extent possible, for comprehensive planning
 - Coordinate implementation
 - Build on League of Towns model – COA could be rallying point, because they have data for all four towns.

PLANNING FOR THE CONFERENCE:

- Will there be OpEd pieces again?
- Do we need to recruit presenters, form sub-committee to prepare?
- Will COA be ready to present CommunityViz for the conference?

NEXT MEETING – Honing down the project ideas for the conference, and next steps.