

DownEast R C & D

Meeting May 22 2014

**Present:** Gary Edwards, Fred Cook, Kathy Upton, Betsy Fitzgerald, Orissa Sargent, Jolene Stanley, Jennifer Peters, Kathryn Lewis and Dale and Dorothea Crowley, representing the Washington County Development Board

Meeting began at 9:40 with approval of minutes motioned by Betsy, seconded by Kathy U.

Treasurer's report: We are actually in better shape than was thought last month, mostly because the state finally paid the Peer Network bill, but also because the RC&D areas decided to split their joint monies and each council got \$1000. The Julio Society is still not resolved but it is expected we will get a fair portion for all the work we have done over the years. It doesn't show up in our accounts but we still need to work out the transfer details. We expect Washington County to kick in their share. Betsy added we should submit a bill and get it sooner.

Possible new project: Betsy presented the board with a proposal that we partner with Washington County Development on the portion of the Cutler Naval base that has not been sold and developed for condominiums. This particular section has been designated commercial and there are several enterprises on the site. The current owner, who lives in Portland, has lost his enthusiasm for the project and he is open to someone willing to take on the development aspect of the project. There is a half built septic system and several buildings in need of tender loving care. A lot of potential, including a commercial kitchen, leading to local foods and biomass projects. It might also support some form of aquaculture. There was a yacht builder interested at one time.

The WCVA was created to take over the property from the government and was then authorized by the legislature to do this with other projects. Jen noted that SCEC was also involved and still has a lot of the records still available.

In short, the development authority has voted to pursue this and believes it would be of mutual benefit for us to join with them. We both have different, complementary resources for this. Motion Gary, second Orissa, to pursue this possibility. It was thought other organizations, such as WCVA, the USDA and even Delta Corp. might be interested. All have access to other streams of funding.

The only possible drawback is a TIFF through the town of Cutler, but it's likely they'll feel better if they get back taxes on the property.

It was agreed that inspection of the property is a good idea. Several members will inspect, take pictures and make a powerpoint presentation at the next meeting. Jen said she would loan the binder to Betsy.

Fred gave an update on where DART is headed. Maybe DART doesn't quite know where it's headed. They had only one applicant for Barbara Maurer's job (WCOG) and it came too late to include in the meeting. It is a job often requiring more than the 20 hours a week and they want someone with Hancock as well as Washington County connections. They went this route because of uncertainty, but don't seem to understand the sweetheart deal they've enjoyed – up until our funding ran out. They understand the loss, not the benefits. List the cost/benefits on paper for them, Kathy U. said. It might help if Gary comes and talks to them. A discussion about the frustrations on all sides ensued.

**Projects:** Cherryfield Academy: Open mike night drew a huge crowd, there are now contra dance lessons, and the quilt show was packed.

Urann House: Gary will call and ask why the Maine Community Foundation grant didn't come through. Apparently they didn't see any collaboration, education or leadership value. The building is going to be interactive; for instance, visitors will not simply watch cedar shakes being made, they can take part. If someone wants to lie down on an old rope bed to see what it feels like they can.

Food Alliance: They don't do much other than planning through the summer but they did do something with soil health when Mark Fulford came down.

Destination Cherryfield: It's starting to come together. Brochures are going out. They're looking for bigger sponsors, targeting the banks. This is actually called the Riverside Music and Arts Festival and will be centered around the Academy. With music in the bandstand plus some talented local youth, horse drawn wagons for a local history tour, breakfasts at both the Congregational church and the snowmobile club and a treasure hunt featuring BB, the new mascot. He is a blueberry logo who will be hiding in the local stores and the person who fills out the card with stickers from all the stores gets a prize. If more than one, the winner will be drawn. Plus a farmer's market. They would like to include Harrington in coordinating this and their Oktoberfest. Orissa volunteered to sell the Downeast Acadia flags. It can be on Barbara's lawn – a perfect location.

Happy Grant: Last year's winner Brianna just came back from Washington DC where she received an award for being a community promoter. She's collecting books to go home with kindergarteners in their backpacks and is writing a book. This year's recipient is planting flowers in Grand Lake Stream.

CSO: If they get a grant from the Maine Community Foundation we will work with them to come up with a better way to connect schools with the community.

Jen said SCEC is doing a meet and greet the new director June 5 from 2 to 3 pm. Refreshments will be served. They have submitted a letter of intent to Maine Next Generation for half a million dollars – it's one of three in Washington County.

She also asked Kathy U. about libraries donating through food pantries. People who want to donate could drop them off at the library .

Meeting adjourned 11:30