

MIPOA Minutes  
Annual Meeting  
June 27, 2020

MIPOA Board members in attendance:

Bob Martin — President  
Betsy Lebel — Vice President  
Tommy Thomason — Treasurer  
Jeff Walker — Secretary  
Bill Pryor

Bob Martin called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM

Jeff Walker confirmed there was a quorum present including the five proxies previously received.

A motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the 2019 annual meeting was Made, Seconded, and Approved (M/S/A).

A motion to accept the 2019 Annual meeting minutes was made: M/S/A

Bob Martin, President reminded us that as previously announced by email and posted on the MIPOA & MIFD Communications Center website, the rescheduled MIPOA Annual meeting would have an abbreviated agenda.

Election of Directors and Officers: The nominating committee (Kristin Foster, Gae Melford, and Betsy Lebel) submitted the following recommendation, for which there was a motion to accept that was seconded and approved unanimously:

Officers

President: Betsy Lebel  
Vice President: Bill Pryor  
Treasurer: Tommy Thomason  
Secretary: Jeff Walker

Directors

Jeff Walker 2023  
Martha Ficke 2023  
Bailey Briggs 2023  
Bill Pryor 2022  
Tommy Thomason 2022  
Betsy Lebel 2021  
Archana Naik 2021

Report of the President — Bob Martin: See attachment: 1

Report of Treasurer — Tommy Thomason: See attachment 2

Motion to accept the 2020/2021 budget: M/S/A

Motion to accept the 2020/2021 dues: M/S/A

Report of the Secretary — Jeff Walker: See attachment 3

Reports from Committees — See attachments 4 & 5

Betsy and Tommy thanked our retiring President Bob Martin for his many years of dedicated service to MIPOA and presented him with a gift and a certificate from Mystic Seaport Museum in recognition of a donation to the Museum from President Martin's Board as a much deserved thank you from them.

Old Business — None

New Business — None

Motion to adjourn seconded and approved.

J. Jeffrey Walker, Secretary

## Mason's Island Property Owners Association 2020 President's Report

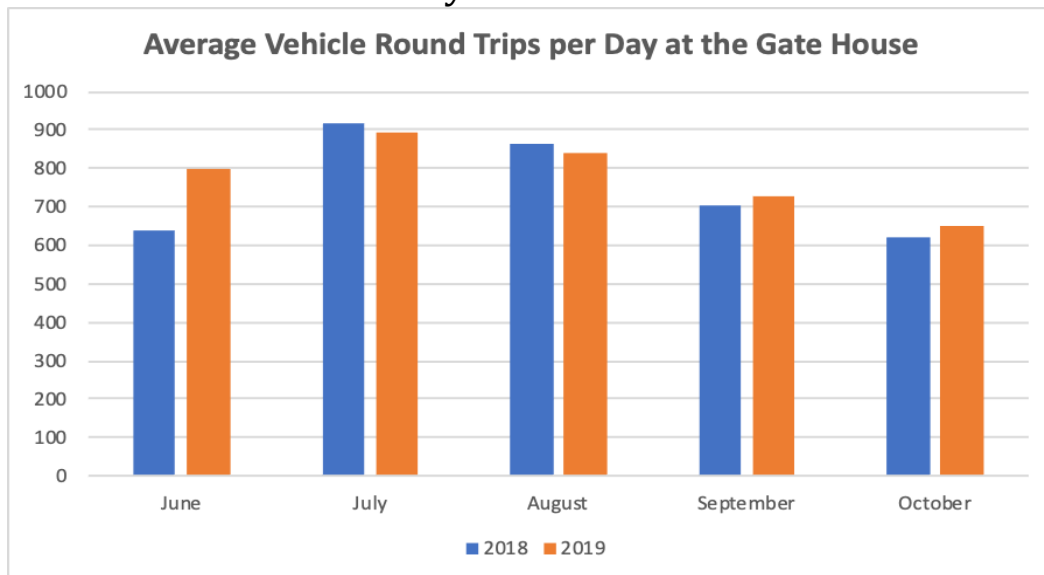
Typically, the MIPOA president's report is presented to a seated crowd inside of the Mason's Island Yacht Club. This year members can review a written report from the comfort of their own homes as we continue to practice social distancing and avoid large group gatherings in the year of Covid-19.

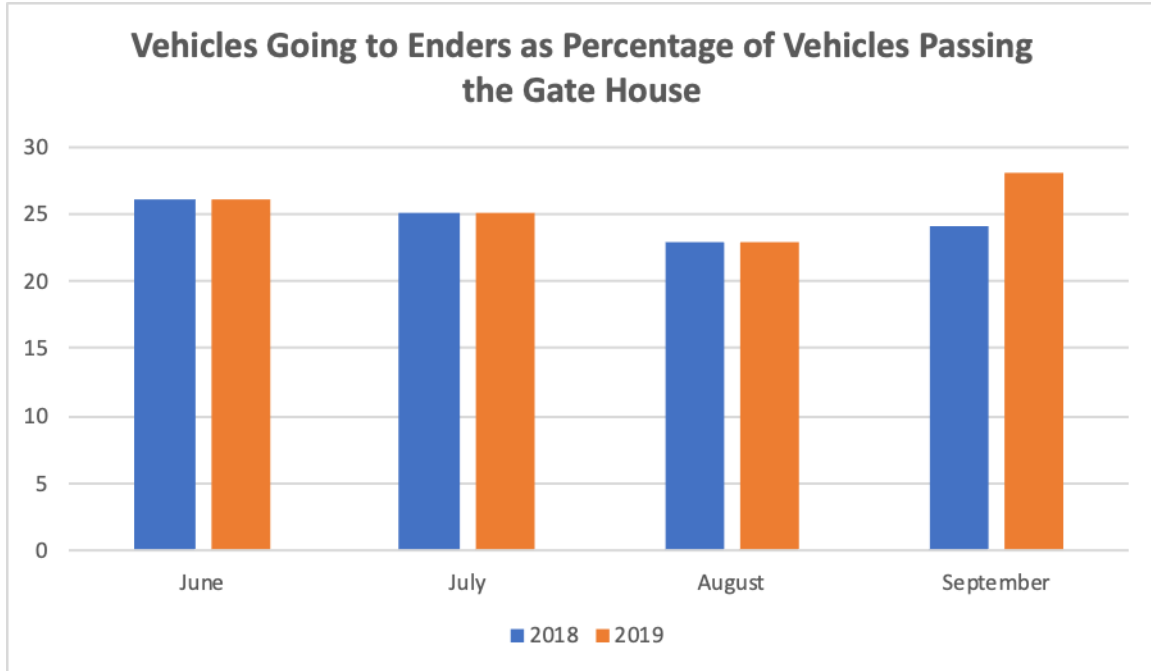
During the turbulent days of 2020, Mason's Island has been a refuge for many residents. In a time of a global pandemic, economic upheaval and protests to address fundamental inequities, we are indeed fortunate to reside in a quiet place with water views, spring flowers and returning birds. We also need to keep our small problems in perspective.

### Traffic

In the small world of Mason's Island, traffic and its potential impact on public safety remains a concern. Some residents have expressed the opinion that traffic volumes are increasing. Traffic counters were installed in June 2018. The charts below summarize the traffic volume for 2018 and 2019 and lead to two conclusions. The volume of traffic was largely unchanged from one year to the next. Traffic to Enders represents approximately 25% of the traffic passing the Gate House. We will continue to gather traffic statistics.

### Summary Traffic Statistics





In October 2018, Enders traffic represented 23% of Gate House traffic. Enders counter was removed during the October 2019 road repaving.

Spring 2020 posed new challenges to traffic on the island as there has been an increase in cars and bikers on sightseeing trips along the Connecticut coast. In response, MIFD increased the presence of the security guard at the entrance to Mason’s Island to seven days a week. New signs were added. Additional signage may be added in the future.

## Roads Report

In the fall of 2019, Connecticut Water completed the upgrade of the water mains on Mason’s Island. The repaving of most of the Mason’s Island roads was also completed. Please refer to the MIFD president’s report for more details.

## MIPOA Administration

Under the leadership of Tommy Thomason, a new website was launched. The MIPOA & MIFD Communications Center may be accessed at <https://mipoa.info>

During the year, the MIPOA board adopted a written conflicts of interest policy to document the approach that the board has always employed. The policy says that no one can wear two hats at the same time.

## Enders Island

As reported at the 2019 annual meeting, there are two lawsuits involving St. Edmunds currently pending. St. Edmunds suit against The Girl Scouts of America, Mystic Seaport Museum and John Steffan is currently in settlement discussions. The suit brought by a group of Mason's Island residents, known collectively as the Mystic Neighborhood Preservation Association, against St. Edmunds had been scheduled for trial for the fall 2020. However, Covid-19 has caused many delays in the Connecticut court calendar

## **Masons Island Company**

MIPOA was created in 2007 when the roads were transferred from MICO to MIPOA. Since that time there have been no changes to the MIPOA assets. At the annual 2019 annual meeting Rufus Allyn announced the intention of Mason Island Company ("MICO") to seek a buyer for MICO. A committee consisting of Bruce Burdge, Bob Martin, Kevin North, John Pryor and Bill Taylor had several meetings with Rufus to understand the MICO assets, the sales process and the potential impact of the MICO sale on Mason's Island residents.

Over the past year MICO has undertaken some small internal transactions in anticipation of a sale. Certain of the assets such as building lots and land should be of interest to a developer. MICO plans on hiring a broker to assist in the sale of these assets.

Other assets such as the Ice Pond are of particular value to the Mason's Island community. The Ice Pond is currently owned by MICO and maintained by MIFD. The pond is gradually filling with silt. In the summer, algae growth can be a problem. The Pond Committee, under the leadership of Chris Ficke, is looking at long-term solutions to maintain a healthy pond. Dredging the pond to restore it fully would be an expensive operation. One way to provide for such an expense would be for MIPOA to purchase the Ice Pond from MICO for \$1 and then ask MIFD to undertake the improvements. Such an expense would be part of the MIFD budget and would require approval of the taxpayers.

The road transfer agreement gives MIPOA the right of first refusal on the sale of all land, other than single family building lots. During the past year, MICO entered into a sale agreement with Lydia Herd for the sale of 15 acres of marsh, which is subject to an easement with The Nature Conservancy prohibiting future development. MIPOA did not elect to exercise its rights to purchase the property. The sale is pending.

MIPOA has also been in conversations with MICO about a transaction which would permit MIPOA to gain ownership of the dirt road portion of Old South Rd. This road could then be modestly upgraded and provide an alternative route in the event that Chippechaug was damaged during a storm. Further study, including conversations

with The Nature Conservancy, is required to confirm the feasibility of such a transaction.

Beyond the ownership of specific assets such as land and docks, it is worth pointing out that the Allyn Family and MICO have provided careful stewardship of Mason's Island for many years. At the time of the Roads Transfer, MIPOA and MICO entered into a management agreement whereby MICO performs all "necessary and reasonable actions and duties to maintain all of the Roads" in exchange for compensation of 15% of all expenses incurred in performance of roads maintenance. Rufus knows Mason's Island better than the back of his hand and is a property manager in residence. MIFD and MIPOA will face a real challenge in finding a third party willing to provide these services. Rufus has indicated that he will provide a one-year notice period before terminating the MICO management agreement.

## **Use of MIPOA Property**

As a Connecticut Revised Nonstock Corporation, the board of directors of MIPOA is responsible for the management of the assets of the Corporation. Since MIPOA was created in 2007 and took title to the roads, there have been no changes to the assets. However, in the past year, in addition to the conversations with MICO, the MIPOA board investigated several asset transactions which caused us to think about some fundamental questions.

In late 2018, the new owners of 33/35 Money Point, Barney Walker and Lindsay Chamberlin, requested an easement to formalize a decades-long travel restriction on a very short section of the southern spur of Money Point Road that dead ended in the property. The board requested comments from the three adjacent neighbors. Two had no objection. One did. After more than a year of discussions with the objecting neighbor, substantive changes and concessions were accordingly made in the request and the easement was granted by the Board and filed with the town of Stonington.

The Walker request caused the board to review the question of who controls the landscaping of the right-of-way. In general, MIPOA asks that residents maintain the right-of-way adjacent to their property. In turn, the resident gets to decide the landscaping. Landscaping should not compromise the safety of the roads or restrict the use of the roads by all. Landscaping on MIPOA right-of-way is subject to removal or relocation if the right-of-way must be modified or utilized for its stated purpose. Some folks have taken an aggressive approach and incorporated the MIPOA right-of-way as their own. When in doubt, property owners can consult the Stonington GIS website for a quick reminder of property lines.

The board also considered selling approximately 1200 square feet to the Walkers but concluded that the sale of property could have uncertain tax implications. It was decided that an easement was the best way to resolve the situation.

Property owners are reminded to talk with MIPOA representatives about any questions concerning the use of MIPOA property.

If you have questions about any part of this report, please contact me at [info@mipoa.info](mailto:info@mipoa.info)

## **A word of thanks**

This is my fifth and final report as president of MIPOA. Cindy and I and our children spent our first summer on Mason's Island in 1990. We have always considered it to be a very special place. Cindy and I became full time residents in 2015. My role with MIPOA has provided me with an excellent opportunity to better appreciate the character and personality of many of my fellow island residents. I have particularly enjoyed getting to know my fellow MIPOA board members and I am thankful for their support over the years. I would also like to thank the other members of the roads committee, Jim McAuley and Rufus Allyn, for their many contributions on behalf of Masons Island property owners.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Martin

## **Postscript**

If once you have slept on an island  
You'll never be quite the same;  
You may look as you looked the day before  
And go by the same old name,  
You may bustle about in street and shop  
You may sit at home and sew,  
But you'll see blue water and wheeling gulls  
Wherever your feet may go.  
You may chat with the neighbors of this and that  
And close to your fire keep,  
But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse bell  
And tides beat through your sleep.  
Oh! you won't know why and you can't say how  
Such a change upon you came,

But once you have slept on an island,  
You'll never be quite the same.

— Rachel Lyman Field



## Attachment 2: Report of the Treasurer

Lydia Herd, 12 Money Point Road, audited the MIPOA financial documents for fiscal year 2018/2019 at no cost. In summary, “I found no material misstatements involving the published financial statement and I found no problems or issues of any magnitude.”

For the fiscal year 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020, the net of revenue and expenses resulted in a small surplus. A shortfall in Dues for the year was offset by no need for Legal or Welcome expenses. Board members and Lydia Herd minimized the shortfall in dues payments by personally reminding residents who had not paid their dues of the need to pay for the liability insurance necessitated by MIPOA’s ownership of the roads that allows them to be private. The dues announcement for the forthcoming fiscal year has emphasized this joint responsibility.

During the year—at no cost—John Gregory, who grew up on Mason’s Island and frequently makes short visits to the family home here, updated the MIPOA website ([info@mipoa.info](mailto:info@mipoa.info)) and integrated MIFD documentation and reports with it. Per his recommendations, the hosting service was also changed to reduce cost and user--friendlier software employed to facilitate changes and frequent updates.

No significant changes in the 2020/2021 expenses from the prior year are anticipated. The MIPOA Board has therefore elected to keep the dues for the upcoming fiscal year at \$50, payable to MIPOA and either mailed to PO Box 344, Mystic CT 06355 or deposited in the MIPOA lockbox at 4 Anchor Lane.

Tommy H. Thomason  
MIPOA Treasurer  
15 June 2020

Mason's Island Property Owners Association, Inc.  
 2019-2020 Budget/Projected Actual  
 and  
 2020-2021 Proposed Budget

	<b>2019-2020 Budget</b>	<b>2019-2020 Projected Actuals</b>	<b>Proposed 2020-2021 Budget</b>
Home Owners	187	186	186
MIPOA Members	80 %	77%	80 %
Dues	\$50	\$50	\$50
<u>Revenue</u>			
Dues	\$7,500	\$7,200	\$7,500
Interest	\$2	\$1	\$1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Revenue	\$7,502	\$7,201	\$7,501
<u>Expenses</u>			
Corporation	\$200	\$150	\$200
Insurance	\$5,500	\$5,517	\$5,600
Internet	\$550	\$482	\$500
PO Box	\$108	\$122	\$126
Acct & Audit	\$350	\$350	\$350
Legal	\$450	\$0	\$450
Welcome	\$200	\$0	\$75
Misc	\$144	\$342	\$200
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Total Expenses	\$7,502	\$6,963	\$7,501
Surplus/Deficit	\$0	\$238	\$0

14-Jun-20

### Attachment 3: Report of the Secretary

We held seven regular scheduled meetings since the last Annual meeting, several of which were via Zoom. In addition one special meeting was held at the Mason's Island Yacht Club on May 23, 2020. During this meeting, attended by Bob Martin and Jeff Walker, it was determined that the MIPOA Annual meeting would be postponed and scheduled for a date in the future most likely on the same date as MIFD. We are pleased to recently welcome a new member to our board Bailey Briggs. After serving for many years Bob's Martin tenure is coming to a close. His leadership and wisdom will be greatly missed. Betsy Lebel, however, will be our new leader so we are in good hands as we look forward to our future endeavors. This past year much of our focus was on the management of MIPOA land including roads and rights of way. Some of this work remains unfinished and will continue to be on our agenda as we move forward.

Jeff Walker  
MIPOA Secretary  
20 June 20

#### Attachment 4: Report of the Welcoming Committee

MIPOA is pleased to welcome three new families to the island since our last report in May of 2019. Fortis and Candice Georgiadis purchased 1 Seagull Lane this fall. Jay LeClaire and Brian Robinson have completed the build of their home at 3 Chippechaug Trail. Chris and Christie Kent are now the owners of 5 Skiff Lane. Please let me know if you have new neighbors that I have missed. As a representative of MIPOA, I love to meet our new residents and provide them with helpful information about our island and surrounding area.

Martha Ficke

#### Attachment 4: Report of the Property Maintenance Committee

Property Maintenance Committee Report: There have been a few complaints about contractor signage. Note that the MIPOA Owner and Renter guidelines prohibit all signs, including but not limited to realtor “open house” and “for sale” signs, workmen’s signs (builders, renovators, painters, roofers, etc), and political advertising. These signs will be removed and disposed of. There continue to be incidents of vehicles heading to Enders that take a wrong turn and end up elsewhere on the Island. There have also been numerous complaints about the numbers of nonresidents on the private roads since the quarantine due to COVID-19 began. These problems have been dealt with by the addition of road signage as well as by increasing the number of hours and days of the traffic-control officers at the traffic-control kiosk.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy Lebel