

Mason's Island Fire District BOD Meeting
Masons Island Yacht Club
October 13, 2020

Attending: Ethan Tower, David Krupp, Bill Taylor, Kristin Foster, John Parry, Tom Flaherty, Scott Parry, Lee Hisle, Tom Cooke, Rufus Allyn, and Alex Ellison. Jean Anderson was also present to speak to the status of the Mason's Island Tick Control Program. Chris Ficke attended the last portion of the meeting to provide information about the Pond Survey. President Ethan Tower called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum was present.

Clerk's Report: M/S/P approving the minutes from the September 8, 2020 meeting.

President's Report – Ethan Tower:

- a. Emergency Calls – Ethan reported that there was 1 call in September, for a total of 12 this year.
- b. Traffic Report – Ethan stated that the traffic data percentages continue to track the trends previously observed. He added that the first 2 weekends in October were busy as expected and that October 12th traffic was light.

New Business: Tick Tax – Jean Anderson: By consensus of the Directors, this item was moved to the beginning of the agenda. Ms. Anderson reviewed a document entitled "MIFD Report – Mason's Island Tick Control Program" dated May 28, 2020, a copy of which is attached hereto. Ms. Anderson noted that for 2020, 61% of properties participated in the tick control program, down from the historic average of 65%. She also noted that there were four reported cases of Lyme disease in 2019 which, while higher than recent years, was still significantly lower than the eleven cases reported in 2008 when the program began. Discussion ensued about the efficacy of the program, including the deer treatment system already in place on the island. Ms. Anderson recommended that the tick program be included in the MIFD budget and tax rate going forward to facilitate greater participation in the program. She added that residents could continue to choose which service to use (the two providers currently available are SeaScape Lawn Care Inc. and BioTech Pest Control) or they could opt out. Discussion ensued concerning the details of implementing a "tick tax," including the effect on the MIFD mil rate of adding the program, whether the scope of the program would include entities other than private households, whether the services provided to resident should be put out to bid, and the likely need for regular communications about the importance of participating in the program going forward. The Board noted that the change could not be implemented until 2022. Board members also discussed the benefits of conducting a public hearing on the proposal to include

the program in the MIFD budget. John Parry offered to work with Ms. Anderson to prepare an outline of how the program might work if included in the MIFD taxes and budget.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Taylor reviewed financial reports dated October 8, 2020 including the MIFD Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2021 and the MIFD 2020-2021 Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual report (attached hereto), noting that the Fire District had received additional tax revenues with about \$3,000 outstanding in deferred taxes. Payment has been made for the installation of the signposts. Costs to date amount to \$10,680 of the \$12,000 budgeted, leaving room for the purchase and installation of one more post. M/S/P approving the Treasurer's Report.

Unfinished Business:

- a. **Street Signs – Lee Hisle:** Lee confirmed that all posts have been installed and that a signpost cap needed to be replaced on the East Forest post. Rufus Allyn was asked whether he wanted a new signpost for Cormorant and he elected to keep the existing sign. Lee explained that mulch around the bases of the posts was added to reduce mud and added that he has extra supplies for post maintenance.
- b. **Shoreline Erosion – Kristin Foster:** Kristin Foster informed the Board that Cate Moffett had joined the working group and that there was one other prospective member. Kristin noted that she had obtained information from individuals involved in a “living shoreline” project off Fenwick which has been approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and DEEP and that the project was now underway. The first step for such a project is to develop a design (which requires surveying and development of a site plan) and obtain permitting for the design (both of which require up-front funding). The second step is to obtain funding for the project itself. Surveying is underway on Chippechaug, and next steps would include obtaining landowner approval, after which DEEP can be engaged. Kristin added that design costs are likely to be \$50,000 with construction costs potentially up to \$500,000. Kristin talked about potential funding sources. Moving forward, a landscape consultant will be required. Bill Pryor is getting in contact with the Town Engineer and Jim McAuley is contacting the Army Corps. Jon Jones is participating in meetings on behalf of the Yacht Club. Discussion ensued concerning the potential need for planning for the rest of the island. While many studies currently exist for the Stonington shoreline, Board members noted that existing studies do not address the impact of erosion and/or flooding of Chippechaug Trail, but studies were done for the town about solutions for the causeway.
- c. **Future of Old South Road Property – Rufus Allyn:** Rufus stated that the road has been cleared and that emergency vehicles would be able to travel the road. Rufus is not planning to sell the road to MIPOA at this time.

- d. **Report of the Committee on Traffic Volume – John Parry:** John reported that MIPOA has recommended to put the report on the website. John is completing a final edit and will post the report. Ultimately the report would go to vote at the annual meeting. M/S/P approving the posting of the report on the website with an announcement to residents regarding the report and requesting that comments be sent to John.
- e. **Contract with Mystic Fire District – Scott Parry and John Parry:** Scott and John have not received anything yet from the Mystic Fire District.
- g. **Traffic Control Plan for 2021 – Ethan Tower:** The Board was presented with two plans, one from Ethan and a second prepared by Tom Flaherty, both of which were discussed in detail and are attached hereto. Topics of discussion included the goals of the plan, the potential role of the Stonington police, potential changes to the guard house to improve safety and efficacy, the addition of more cameras and the most effective signage. Ethan asked that any additional ideas be sent to him.
- h. **Appointments – Ethan Tower:** Ethan reported that MIPOA has decided not to participate in a joint Safety and Security Committee. There was nothing further to report at this time.
- f. **Pond Survey – Chris Ficke:** Chris reported that SOLitude would do a survey to find the worst spots in the pond (most likely at the northeast end) and come up with alternative treatments. Dredging would be the most effective but is expensive and there are too many rocks for raking. He noted that MIFD is currently paying \$5,000 per year for herbicides which are not beneficial. Chris stated that an aeration/"bubbling" system has been shown to help accelerate decomposition and deter algae, which could be a significant help. It would also help to avoid the use of chemicals and could improve the ecology of the pond. The cost would be \$9,000 for the bubbler plus the cost of electricity. Further information will be provided on this option.

New Business, Continued:

- b. **Stickers – Ethan Tower:** Ethan reported that MIPOA is drafting a policy for the use and distribution of stickers.
- c. **Drainage – Ethan Tower:** Ethan reported a concern about the potential impact of Japanese Barberry – an invasive bush – on drainage behind the Anderson residence on Money Point Rd. The plants provide a habitat for mice and are extremely difficult to remove. One Board member reported that spraying the plant could be an effective way to get rid of it. The plants are creating a run-off issue for a drainage swale on Masons Island Company land. The Nature Conservancy may need to be involved in finding a solution.

MIFD Meeting Calendar: The next meeting is scheduled for November 10, 5:30 pm at the Masons Island Yacht Club.

Meeting Adjourned – 7:33 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Cooke