

Bucksport NEXT Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 5:45 PM
Bucksport High School Library
Facilitator/Scribe: Rob Carmichael

Attending: Paul Bissonnette, Jim Boothby, Rob Carmichael, Patrick Cough, Dawn-Elaine Danforth, Jef Fitzgerald, Hans Krichels, Jennifer Fortier, Jason Mitchell, Mike Ludwig, Milissa LaLonde, John Paul LaLonde, Susan Lessard, Dean Martin, Brook Minner, Linda Plourde, Rich Rotella, Ron Russell, Peter Stewart, Nick Tymoczko, Larry Wahl, Chris White and Leslie Wombacher. Also- Paula Kee submitted a *Wednesdays on Main* update via email.

1. 5:45 PM: Welcome
2. Introduction of participants
3. Rob Carmichael gave a brief overview of Bucksport NEXT.
4. Jef Fitzgerald volunteered to take notes and encouraged others to help capture salient points to be contributed when the draft is distributed.
5. Minutes to the October 1 meeting, approved by consensus, are posted to the website.
6. Group Reports:
 - Ron Russell gave an update on some projects including a Central Street building rehab, the Bridge the Gap Race planning and a project by Northeast Historic Films: participation in a statewide celebration of the 125th anniversary of John Ford's birth here in Maine. He is one of the most renowned Hollywood movie directors.
 - Leslie Wombacher shared efforts by the Chamber of Commerce to acquire the Verona Grange building on Main Street for office space and public uses. There will be an open house January 14. Frost Fest has been successful for years (weather permitting) but needs to be adopted by a new sponsor/organizer. *Takers?*
 - Jennifer Fortier said that Whole Oceans is transitioning from planning to building. The closing on the old mill site property should be soon. The appeal of the DEP permit approval from a Belfast resident has been motioned for dismissal. Sue Lessard added some insights on the appeal issue regarding standing of the appellant. Jen mentioned that Whole Oceans has begun to provide sponsorship for local activities including the Bay Festival race and an online aquaculture course by USM.
 - Jim Boothby related RSU 25 budget challenges for 2019 and educational connections with Whole Oceans.
 - Nick Tymoczko described a free after school program for BMS at the YMCA. He also gave updates on leadership training, youth sports and asked for helpers (with snow shovels) to be available to clean the ice rink after storms.
 - Dawn-Elaine Danforth talked about the Bucksport Bay Area Healthy Communities Coalition's planning and finances. Goals for 2019 include public transportation expansion, senior services and highway safety.

- Rich Rotella said that vacant buildings on Main Street are being filled with new businesses. The old flower shop will be an art/restoration center and the Rosen's building will be occupied by Port O' Call from Eastport. The Lighthouse Arts Center is working on options to remain open. An intern from RSU 25 will be helping Rich for the next few months.
- Jef Fitzgerald stated that the Planning Board is moving ahead with changes to the Land Use ordinance recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. The list of allowed uses in the Industrial District is to be expanded to accommodate plans for the mill site area. Adjustments to the Route One Commercial and Resource Protection Districts are also contemplated. The connection of Broadway to Route 1 via Park Street will provide a way to alleviate congestion and improve traffic safety.
- Dean Martin described the great success of the latest Fright Night and told about changes to the calendar of events at Fort Knox with ideas for collaboration. Plans for improving the site include LED lighting and new trails.
- Larry Wahl said the Historical Society is inventorying its collection as it plans to re-situate its building on Main Street. BACAS (The Bucksport Area Cultural Arts Society) has been quiet and needs to be re-invigorated. New members are welcomed.
- Hans Krichels reminded the group of its Facebook page and the "Spirit of Bucksport" photo gallery and asked for help administering both.
- Linda Plourde indicated that the Friends of Silver Lake is still active but has no news to report at the present. She suggested that the Chamber might bring back the practice of featuring an "artist of the month" at its new headquarters.
- Milissa LaLonde reported that Bucksport Heart & Soul is moving into the next step of its continuing community development efforts. On January 15, 2019 at 11:30 there will be a brown bag lunch meeting at the Bucksport Bay Chamber of Commerce office on Main Street. This meeting will see the birth of the Stewardship Group. Various civic groups and individuals are already hard at work on many of the 82 citizen-generated ideas revealed in the Heart & Soul process and in a study of alternatives to single-use plastic bags.
- John Paul LaLonde described a new mountain bike trail under construction and a revised hiking route up Great Pond Mountain spear-headed by the Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust. The bike trail, built with all-volunteer labor, is a first for our area. A grant is being sought for more construction of more bike trail.
- Brook Minner said that the Downtown group is planning events including the Bridge the Gap Race, a maritime film festival at the Alamo and coffee hours at local venues. Grants have been obtained to re-do the strategic plan, promote tourism and for upgrading equipment. Jim Boothby offered a great deal on some used PCs acquired by the RSU. Ron Russell added that maritime music will be a part of the film festival this year and suggested that the town recognize the 200th anniversary of Jonathan Buck's Birthday (February 20, 1719).

- Mike Ludwig described the role of the Eastern Maine Development Corporation in the ADAPT project and economic development for the region.
7. Susan Lessard, Bucksport Town Manager addressed potential roles for Bucksport NEXT members in the ADAPT implementation process, Wilson Hall and other projects.
 - The 2-year planning process of the mill site and vicinity is now being implemented.
 - The Whole Oceans project provided a focal point to which other aspects of the plan are related and are seeking to compliment.
 - The Committee begins its work January 9th using a spreadsheet of project priorities.
 - Bucksport NEXT coordination can help by determining common goals and finding ways to best take advantage of existing plans and resources.
 - The Wilson Hall dilemma continues. Hopefully an economical way will be found to save the historic structure with a new use that is beneficial to the community.
 - Maine Maritime Academy is poised to buy a lot at the old mill site for its maritime training center which will bring many new people to the area.
 - More demolition underway at the AIM site is making way for these projects.
 - The Bucksport Generation power plant's new status as a "black start" facility will solidify its value in the power grid with a long-term contract.
 - The loss of the "Thriving in Place" program has created a void that the town is looking to fill for seniors that need assistance with a variety of issues.
 8. Rob Carmichael re-capped the meeting with a list of action item take-aways. Items not already recorded above are:
 - ★ Community mentors are sought by the YMCA to work with students. Success stories involving previous failures are a good way to encourage youth.
 - ★ A Jonathan Buck Birthday observation should happen sometime this year.
 - ★ 2019 is (coincidentally) the "Year of the Salmon" See <https://yearofthesalmon.org/>
 - ★ The RSU 25 Robotic Club needs volunteer leaders.
 - ★ Jef will look into creating a "volunteer clearing house" function on the town website.
 9. Adjourned at 7:45 followed by informal discussion and networking.
 10. The NEXT meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 9, 2019.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jef Fitzgerald.

