

Islesboro Island News Article 2-2-20

Islesboro Economic Sustainability Corp - Momentum Builds

The Islesboro Economic Sustainability Corporation is established and beginning to tackle its mission.

We are in business to transform the generosity of the community into the essential services and businesses we need to have a vital, full time community. We work in partnership with local entrepreneurs, to help create new on-island jobs and attract new families. Our plans include providing information, small-business expansion loans and direct involvement in infrastructure projects. In some measure this is not a completely new thing. We can all think of success stories where the island has brought effort, entrepreneurship and money together to make critical things happen. What's different and new is that we hope to build a repeatable, self-sustaining business model that can deliver success stories over and over.

Step one in our mission is building a consensus on exactly what Islesboro's essential businesses and services are. This yearly consensus informs us on what the community feels is important. We will do this via a short island-wide online survey and then meeting with community organizations and business owners to review the results. Please take a moment to fill in your thoughts. The web link to the survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2LTHR7X>

All our funding will come from private non-taxable donations and leveraging economic development funding available from private foundations, the state of Maine and the federal government. The corporation will operate without property tax funding or support – property tax neutrality is a key founding principle.

We began fund raising in late December and now have visibility to over \$1M in contributions and pledges for 2020. We owe a big thank you to all the generous people who believe in Islesboro's potential and then stepped up to help finance Islesboro sustainability. We have set a goal to be able to say that everyone in the Islesboro community supports the IESC mission and has made a contribution whether a few dollars or a significant gift. If you'd like to help finance our work, please make a check out to the Town of Islesboro and note that it's for the IESC. Send your check to the Town of Islesboro, PO Box 76, Islesboro, ME 04848.

Our leadership is an island-based volunteer board, appointed by the Select Board. Current members include Tom Tutor, Roger Heinen, Gabe Pendleton, Bonnie Hughes, Glad Jones, Lois Chiles and Janet Anderson. We have met three times to put the necessary operating foundations in place and recently, begun actual work. As an example, we have met with all the stakeholders who are considering the future of the Island Market. What role the IESC plays in that transition is an ongoing active discussion topic for us.

Our objective is simply to connect entrepreneurial people, financing and hard work to create a more sustainable community. We will work to help anyone who has a good idea and wants to dig in to make it happen. Because the IESC is a business, assistance will be studied and focused - not a grant or a gift.

All our meetings are open to the public. Please plan to stop in. Times, agendas and locations will be posted on the Islesboro Facebook group, on town bulletin boards and sent via the town's email list. For more information, check out our website www.sustain04848.com. You will find some governance documents, meeting minutes and other information. Please feel free to email your questions, comments and ideas to info@sustain04848.com.