

Marrowstone Island Community Association (MICA)

Meeting Minutes

3/15/2021

Meeting was called to order by President Bud Ayres at 7:02 PM via Zoom technology. Online and attending in official capacity were Bret Black of East Jefferson Fire & Rescue (EJFR), Commander Don Emerson, USN Indian Island, and Julianne Stanford, Public Affairs Officer for USN Indian Island.

Acceptance of Minutes, Treasurer Report

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Carol Gonnella moved approval of the Minutes from the January meeting. Motion passed. Susan Petek gave the Treasurer's Report noting there is \$985 in checking and only 30 members at this time. She suggested that there be an effort made to recruit new members soon, perhaps in June.

Island Events

- Bud Ayres followed Susan Petek's mention of June with a brief discussion of the Strawberry Festival which, if it does occur, is currently scheduled for June 19 or 20. He has hopes of including more arts and crafts this year.
- There was no discussion of the photography exhibit as the concept has not been developed fully as yet.
- Patricia Earnest reported briefly on the Nordland Store: cleaning of the extensive smoke damage has been carried out. An Architect has been hired to redesign the space, including an area for the Post Office. The planned rebuild will include insulation in the walls. During the time of planning and construction, post office boxes have been set up at the Fire Hall and there is a delay while waiting for locks to secure these boxes; however, they should be available for use by end of the month. Bud Ayres noted that he believes the new post office space will be larger in the redesign which Earnest affirmed while noting that the design group is working with the USPS.
- There was brief mention by Bud Ayres of an upcoming event: the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Home & Kitchen Tour scheduled for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, April 23, 24, and 25. It will be online, with tours and seminars available, and sure to be a "fun" event. Tickets are \$25. Patricia Earnest inquired about how to get tickets. Carol Gonnella suggested people can contact her directly.

Committee Reports

- The Cemetery Committee report began by noting how pretty the area is in spring. At the current time, the committee has \$ 17,236 in its account with another \$ 12,644 in a CD so funds are available for necessary work to be done. The Committee would like to add Pat Patterson as a member as well as Cynthia Rowe. The action was approved.
- Richard related that he and others have been volunteers in supporting vaccinations, helping those without internet to get appointments scheduled, as an example. He mentioned there will be a bicycle race at the Hoh River on May 1 and supporting the Veterans Home in Forks.

- Mark Secord presented the report for the Friends of Fort Flagler (FFF) which organization is busier than ever. More importantly, Secord stressed the need for contacting representatives with regard to funding for Fort Flagler currently included in the state’s capital budget and emphasizing how important that funding is. Secord then noted that while a majority of MICA members are also members of FFFF, he encouraged those who are not to join. Membership is \$15 per year. A final note was mention of an event on April 24 in celebration of Earth Day – during which an effort will be made to eradicate Scotch Broom from the fort grounds. Kathleen Waldron inquired about the construction at Mystery Bay Park. The “Mystery Bay Hermit”, Andy Vanags died in 2019 and left funds to replace the picnic shelter in that park. John Gonnella and Ernie Baird will see that the timber frame structure is built and completed in September of this year.
- With regard to a Marrowstone Island Foundation (MIF) report on the Fire Hall, Bud Ayres asked that Chief Black inform the group as to current status of this effort. Chief Black:
 - noted that they are “moving forward as we are able”. Among other challenges, they have found that there are no records in the county for any of the buildings currently on the fire hall parcel. In addition, the formula for the percentage of structure resting on permeable soil is not met. The adjacent parcel has a forestry permit but it remains unclear “what we are able to do”. He emphasized the department’s appreciation for MIF support in this effort.
 - EJFR has seen a significant increase in chimney fires with colder weather. He encouraged all to get chimneys inspected and cleaned, if needed.
 - He noted that “our friends” on Indian Island have been great at responding and providing support at recent fires. Kathleen Waldron inquired about battery fires. Chief Black noted that these fires are not just on the island. Cordless power tools overheat as lithium is notoriously unstable and will overheat. He stated plainly not to leave charging batteries plugged in. Carol Gonnella then inquired if he meant cell phone batteries as well. His answer: it depends on the cell phone and, in general, he recommends that people do not leave items charging without a smoke detector in a living space. Jim Neurenberg offered that the chemistry of these items is complicated – how they charge, in addition to how fast and how hot – risk of a short circuit so there is need to be careful. He suggested limiting charging to 80%, not 100% and, again, to be careful. Chief Black agreed.
 - The Chief then turned to his pleasure in announcing that EJFR is proud to host the West Coast Firetruck Tacoma School. They have students registered from San Mateo, Santa Clara and will include truck work without water as well as firefighter training.

Speaker: Commander Don Emerson, Indian Island Naval Magazine

Bud Ayres introduced Commander Don Emerson, from the Indian Island Naval Magazine and his Public Affairs Officer, Julianne Stanford, to speak to MICA members about the installation’s history and current mission as shore-based infrastructure for Navy and Joint Allied Forces.

Commander Emerson began by commenting on how much he loves the relationship the Navy has with Marrowstone Island and how very important it is. He continued by sketching his career as a “helicopter guy”, having served in Japan, California and Virginia before coming to Washington State to take command on Indian Island. He then outlined the history of the island using a PowerPoint presentation that included historical as well as current images.

A brief overview includes the arrival of Captain Vancouver in 1792, who found that the area had been home to both the Chemakan and S'Klallam tribal peoples. By the 1860s, some settling had begun, often by Europeans. During World War II (WWII), the island naval support services 2 ships per day while today, it services 1 vessel per week on average. During World War II, the island manufactured submarine nets to protect Puget Sound as well as the West Coast. The location is ideal given the deep water available to the pier. At the current time, 160 people are on island during the day. Much of the island's infrastructure is pre-WWII and while it is in good condition, the installation is outgrowing it. Currently, 50 vessels per year are serviced which requires moving 40 tons of ammunition. The superstructure for loading/offloading ammunition, called Big Blue, is the largest Department of Defense structure as well as the tallest structure in Jefferson County. The objective for the island is to maintain parallel security barrier together with oil response craft. To this latter goal, the island personnel are prepared for on water oil spill and manage 9,000 feet of oil containment apparatus.

In 2018, the Magazine joined the Voluntary Protection Programs. The trends for the island have been in 2018-2020, there were three (3) reported mishaps with five (5) lost work days; ten (10) injuries where forty-three (43) lost work days. Emerson was pleased to note that island mishaps are 50% of the industry standard for industrial, explosive materials, traffic, concerns, etc..

It has been a point of pride, according to Emerson, that the island provides mutual aid to Marrowstone Island. The island's Engine 91 has earned lifesaving awards in town, offers the only Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) responders in Jefferson County as well as EMT and CPR staff, including those trained in "high-angle" rescue capabilities.

With respect to community engagement, Emerson noted that while some have been discontinued during Covid, the USN has been supported for the Wooden Boat and Rhody Festivals, the 5K Walk-runs on the island, as well as various job fairs. He encouraged people interested in what goes on at the Magazine to get on the press distribution list or to follow it on Facebook. He also offered the direct contact for his Public Affairs Officer: julianne.stanford@navy.mil.

As for the future, Emerson indicated that there is no planned further expansion or major operational increases. Internal construction will be related to aging infrastructure still onsite since having been built in the 1940's. The faster work environment strives to meet mission requirements. With regard to drone usage, the current DOD policies are a simple "No".

The fact of Indian Island is that it is a most unique facility on either the west or east coasts. And for Commander Emerson, the current and future MILCON projects for the Magazine are to "support mission needs." As he concluded his presentation, Emerson asked for questions.

Kathleen Waldron thanked him for the "many ways you support us: safety, compassion, the fencing to protect us from deer" but then asked what can be done about deer outside fencing, at risk from vehicles on the road. Emerson said he'd look at it, find out "what's possible". Chief Black inquired as to minimum staffing at the fire station. Cdr. Emerson suggest that he has only four (4) and all ride with truck responding to an alarm – unless they are working on the pier and then he cannot let them go. He noted while he does not have an ambulance, all are EMT qualified, dedicated and want to do the job. Occasionally, a smaller unit can go to those places where the fire truck and rescue vehicle cannot get but again, depends on if they're on the pier.

Bud Ayres asked about the Indian Island tours that were discontinued as a result of Covid. A number of people remain interested, how to set one up. Emerson replied the island is controlled with very clear policies – particularly during Covid. Julianne Stanford offered that it remains 'top of list' when "we are able to do so".

Another question from Ayres related to future planning for “sea rise.” Emerson responded that not a great deal as of now but they are thinking about best planning and he’ll “get back to you.” A final question from Ayres related to using electric vehicles: Emerson noted that he has to wait until “the policy” comes. At the moment they have some hybrids. He continued that “we only use vehicles a few years so may be able to change out the fleet that way.”

Jim Neurenberg asked about Navy SEALs, their activity with portable life generators. Emerson said he was “glad to support SEAL training as the cold, depth, unique environment and features of this area” are ideal for the purpose. In addition, it has minimal impact to “what we do here.”

Bud Ayres thanked Commander Emerson for his time and allowed a final question of him, asked by Jim Neurenberg: how often are positions rotated. Emerson replied that his are two-year orders, so he’ll be replaced after 2 years.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marijo Brantner

Secretary