



St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association

**Report of Cathy Crouse, Board Chair**  
**Annual General Meeting – March 16, 2014**

**SMBSA Strategic Goals**

**1. Strategy and Planning**

**a. Strategic Plan –**

After our AGM on March 24<sup>th</sup> last year, when we celebrated our first ten years, we held a Visioning Workshop on April 27<sup>th</sup> to obtain input from members and stakeholders on the priority strategic directions for our next ten years. Bob Ziegler, our Past Chair facilitated the event and compiled the results. We have used the input to refine our strategic plan and to identify emerging interests on the horizon.

At this point I want to emphasize that SMBSA is a volunteer led and run organization, and our efforts are completely dependent upon people with passion, energy and time to devote the actions that we take. You do not need to be a board member to participate in our activities and we welcome the contributions of any individual who supports our goals. And for people who have no time, but have money to spare, we welcome memberships and donations to sustain our work.

**b. Fund Raising –**

During the past year we wrapped up a major renovation project for the house on Micous Island, funded through a \$10,000 Grant from HRM, \$10,000 from the Halifax Foundation and an additional \$5,000 of discretionary funding from Matt Whitman.

We held our 7th annual Islands Sunset Cruise, coordinated by Eileen Cody, which netted close to \$3,500 and welcomed our new corporate partner for this event, the Royal Bank branch located at the cross roads in Tantallon. We owe much thanks to Branch Manager Karen Corney and her staff team for their enthusiastic support for our Association and other community activities within the Bay area.

It has only been since last August that Anne Martell, one of our new Board members, brought forward the idea for the Bay Treasure Chest 50/50 Draw. Since that time she and her husband Harry Cook have worked tirelessly to research the lottery concept and obtain support from our Board and other community partners. We are very excited to be launching this initiative here today and I will leave it to the end of the meeting for Anne to infect you with her enthusiasm and fill you in on the details.

## **2. Communications**

- a. Ruth Ann Moger has continued to promote local activities through the bi-weekly One Minute Bay electronic events bulletin. If you are not signed up for this “go to” resource, simply provide us with your e-mail address and we will add you to the 600 others who value this free service.
- b. This past summer we extended our public relations by setting up and information booth at the Hubbards Barn Farmers Market on two Saturdays.

## **3. Island Strategy**

- a. Ella McQuinn our powerhouse fundraiser for the Troop Island campaign worked this year to finalize the stewardship agreement with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, the organization that now owns close to all of the land on the island. She and other volunteers have kept a watchful eye on activities and have implemented regular cleanups. You can continue to support Troop Island through contributions to our Endowment Fund – the Heart of the Bay Fund, held and administered by the Nova Scotia Community Foundation.
- b. On April 30 of 2013 SMBSA submitted an extensive submission to the Our Parks and Protected Areas public consultation and late in the summer we celebrated the announcement that the Province would protect an additional 7 crown owned islands in the Bay. There are now 12 of 31 islands under public or community ownership in the Bay, a ratio of close to 40%

## **4. Micou’s Stewardship (Ella, Eileen, Geoff, Mike Lancaster)**

An immense amount of time and energy is devoted each year to the maintenance of the historic house that SMBSA owns on Micous Island and the stewardship of the Island itself, which is owned by the Provincial Department of Natural Resources. The bulk of our annual \$15,000 Budget is devoted to this ongoing commitment.

Ella McQuinn is retiring from our Board this year and also from a role she assumed as the lead volunteer for Micou’s Island coordination. It will be hard to replace the depth of her knowledge and her passion for the island. For the second year we have had Mike Lancaster as our paid staff person for the peak season on Micous. Mike uses his education in forestry, his local connections, and his persuasive people skills to coordinate the roster of island stewards who occupy the house, mobilize and support work parties, and monitor the human impact on the beach and woodlands. The island is becoming more popular as a recreation destination and one day last summer Mike counted 175 people on the beach!

This year there are many additional people to thank, who volunteered their time and skills for our renovation project. Although I am not able to take the time to name them all today, there is one person who took the lead as our project manager, and devoted countless volunteer hours in addition to the modest compensation provided through our grants. I would like to express our deep appreciation for this effort to our Founding Chair, Geoff LeBoutillier and please join me in extending to him a round of applause.

## 5. Crossroads/Coastal Development

### a. Tantallon Village (Ella McQuinn, Bob Ziegler, JohnLeon)

In the continuing absence of new zoning by-laws to entrench the community's vision for development at the Tantallon Cross Roads, SMBSA representatives attended the public meeting hosted North West Community Council on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to voice our request that Cobalt, the development arm of Irving, adhere to the design and environmental principles encompassed within the community vision. When the Community Council approved the development at a subsequent meeting and the consulting company, Genivar, failed to approach us for further dialogue, the SMBSA decided to launch an appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, the UARB.

From Bob Zeigler: "The subsequent improvements to the Cobalt development were in part an outcome of the UARB appeal. Our intent has always to foster a collaborative approach to local development -- one that is *pro-wise*-development -- and the UARB appeal signaled to this developer and future ones, that we are serious about that. We cannot say that the appeal "brought Cobalt to the table" but it certainly added a financial incentive for them to do so.

SMBSA withdrew the appeal when we were confident that the developer was willing to enter into further discussion.

Ella McQuinn has played a central role to the continuing dialogue with both Cobalt representatives and Wadih Fares, the developer of St. Margaret Square. We were greatly assisted in these efforts by the architectural design contribution of Shelia Keating, who has produced a visual articulation of an integrated plan for the area from the corner of the crossroads through the St. Margaret Square. Matt Whitman has also helped to facilitate the dialogue.

The primary improvements have been influenced by our input:

- alteration of the building design from a box style to a pitched roof gabled style
- more walkways, and pedestrian friendly walkways
- inclusion of public space at the crossroads that encourages community gatherings
- water treatment and landscaping features that exceed minimum standards
- landscaping that will demonstrate indigenous and food producing plantings

Bob's comment that the patience of the volunteers who have taken the lead in this dialogue has worn thin many times over the past four years and we would welcome feedback from our members as to whether we have been too conciliatory on this issue. Please feel free to express your thoughts to us at any time either directly to Board members as individuals or to the general e-mail address: [community@heartofthebay.ca](mailto:community@heartofthebay.ca)

### b. Secondary Plan By-law Amendment

**Peter Lund to report on:**

- what has been achieved to include provision in the "Village Gateway Zone" for housing that is Affordable to Seniors, allowing up to a fourplex (four units) on 64,000

square foot lots without a Development Agreement providing the units are one bedroom plus den. This was based on further analysis of the watershed study results.

- Marcus Garnet of HRM has confirmed that HRM has eased the minimum lot size requirements for small and mid-sized multi-unit dwellings in the Village Gateway and Village Centre zones, based on discussions with one of his colleagues who was the project manager to the watershed study. These latest changes will help address the need for more housing choice, especially for seniors and young people.
- c. Transportation Working Group (Cathy) – Since May of 2012, SMBSA has been coordinating the **Chester to Chebucto Transportation Working Group**. In 2013 the group provided input to two submissions: the HRM Regional Plan Review in relation to the chapter on Transportation submitted in July and in October to the Metro Transit Five Year Service Plan. We also supported the GPI Youth program for their Youth Ride research project and the results of this project will be shared on Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at Paul's Hall.
  - d. Throughout last year SMBSA representatives attended a variety of consultations related to the **5 Year Review of the Halifax Regional Plan**. In addition to making our own formal submission we had the good fortune to be directly represented on the Community Design Advisory Committee by Geoff LeBoutillier. Geoff invested a tremendous amount of time to represent the Bay area and the interests of other rural communities in the region and was a particularly strong advocate for the concept green belting throughout HRM.

**Geoff will report that:** The SMBSA continues to be one of the major forces behind the OurHRM Alliance. It's been close to three years now that we have been working to affect the outcome of the RP+5 review, now over two years overdue. In representing our interests, I became the sole rural voice on the municipality's official committee overseeing the RP+5 process - CDAC, the Community Design Advisory Committee. Every two weeks for two years, schlepping into City Hall and fighting for the right! Suffice to say, the battle goes on. We had it in the bag, but at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and 59<sup>th</sup> minute, several councilors, representing the interests of certain developers, threw down the gauntlet on a multitude of fronts and once again we find ourselves, as with the original plan back in 2004-06, having to work doubly hard with colleagues on staff, on Council, and in the Alliance to keep the Plan moving forward."

## 6. Education (Scott)

- a. Micous Island Guide – We continue to produce and sell the Micous Island Guide and copies can be obtained at the meeting today. This colourful and interactive educational guide can provide fun for the whole family on an outing to Micous and is a great gift for a young person in your life. Scott Pelton, who developed the guide with Jennifer McKinnon, continues to lead groups of children on excursions to the Island.

- b. In the early autumn a grant enabled us to host 5 free guided workshops on Micous Island led by Mike Lancaster. The workshops were well attended and taught participants how to identify the trees and other flora on the island.

## **7. Global Climate Change**

- a. Transition Bay (Bob C.)

Bob Cervelli is the liaison from Transition Bay to the SMBSA Board, and we are always impressed with his monthly reports of the board range of community education and activities that Transition Bay has initiated. The topic of today's presentation on Our New Economy is of particular interest to the supporters of the transition movement's principles, which propose that ecological sustainability and community-based action are two of the main drivers of a viable long range economic future.

## **8. Watershed Protection**

- a. Water Resource Working Group (Tam Hill)

Tam Hill has been a Stewardship representative on the Water Resource Working Group which was very active in 2013 making submissions in relation to the Western Crown Land Planning Process, the Parks and Protected Areas consultation, and the HRM RP+5 Municipal Plan.

Also, from October through December 2013 Tam worked with 5 senior students from St. Mary's U. Environmental program doing water quality sampling in 3 SMB watersheds, using the WET-PRO kit. The students are still finishing up various aspects of their project and we will publish the resulting papers on paper on the SMBSA website.

- b. Five Bridges Wilderness Trust

We have remained represented on the Five Bridges Lakes Wilderness Area Council as well as the Board of the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust. We have shared their concern on the recent consultations regarding the Otter Lake Landfill and will be monitoring the resolution of the proposed changes to the original contract with the local community.

- c. SMB Community Forest Proposal (Geoff)

Last spring SMBSA participated in the Western Crown Land Planning Process and sent in a formal submission on April 19<sup>th</sup>. We were also pleased by the purchase of the Bowater Mersey lands by the province and excited by the possibility of a community forest being established in the St. Margaret's Bay portion of the former Bowater lands. Again, we have Geoff to thank for his leadership and extensive commitment of time to establish working partnerships and submit a proposal on our behalf.

Geoff will report that: Despite the disappointment of last October, one week after the provincial election, when, in one of the first acts of the new government, we were turned down, we are continuing to push the initiative forward through political channels. Mayor Savage has been particularly helpful. After several months of effort, now he, the Min. of DNR, the head of HRM Planning, two senior bureaucrats from NSE including the Min's EA, and I are to meet and hopefully map out a way forward. As you can imagine, the

ramp up to this summit has featured numerous conversations, correspondence, and maneuverings. The release of a draft Western Crown Lands Management Framework, for example, pursuant to last summer and fall's public consultations was an interesting feature of the rocky road to getting the SMBCF established, as was the shocking statement by the Premier regarding the more-than-doubled Northern Pulp allocation. The world of industrial forestry and its balancing act with other uses, in particular in the former SM District, is extremely complicated.

- Rusty Bridge
- Community Networking Conference hosted by the SMB Seniors Association