

**MAINE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2003**

A meeting of the MCDA General Membership was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fort Fairfield on Friday, June 6, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. Attendees were:

Mike Baran	Tony Levesque
Joella McBreairty	Ron Harriman
Carolee Hallet, Mars Hill	Cathy Harriman
Daniel LaPointe, Van Buren	Linda Baran
David Wylie, Caswell	Walter Waite, Province of New Brunswick
Maureen Akerson, Limestone	Joanne Saulner, Province of New Brunswick
Don Keiser, Houlton	
Leo Trudell, Fort Kent	
Mary Walton, Caribou	
Jim Brown, Presque Isle	
Jim Gardner, Washburn	
Cindy McPherson, Mapleton, Castle Hill, Chapman	

1. **The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by our host, Tony Levesque.**
2. **Review Minutes of April 25, 2003 Meeting:** It was brought to the members' attention that the April 11 meeting minutes had not yet been approved and the April 25 meeting minutes were not completed. Notes were taken at the April 25 meeting and were to be incorporated with the President's notes. As of this date, however this has not been completed. Michael Baran moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 11 and table the April 25 meeting minutes; seconded by Jim Brown. The vote was unanimously in favor.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Ron Harriman presented the Treasurer's Report as follows:

Beginning Balance:	\$15,010
Dues Rec'd:	150
Expenses	(<u>47</u>)
Ending Balance:	\$15,113

Joella McBreairty moved to approve the Treasurer's Report; seconded by Michael Baran. The vote was unanimously in favor.

4. **Review Correspondence:** There was discussion among the members regarding the luncheon costs. Following a brief discussion, Joella McBreairty moved to submit the costs for today's luncheon to MCDA for payment; seconded by Mary Walton. The vote was unanimously in favor.
5. **Update from DECD:**
 - a. **2004 CDBG Program Statement:** Mike Baran reported on the following:
 - * The Rulemaking process is on-line. He urged anyone who had comments to provide them as soon as possible.

- * Changes:
 - 1) The Community Planning Grant will be changed to two rounds of application per year.
 - 2) The Economic Development programs will roll back into one program. (There were three programs: Business Assistance, Economic Development Infrastructure, and Regional Assistance Fund for a total budget of \$5,000,000)
 - 3) The Economic Development Infrastructure (EDI) program will move back into the community development division rather than economic development.
 - 4) OCD is doing away with the loan program.
- * The Draft summary should be out at the end of the month. Please see attached timeline.
- * Section 8 Housing Quality Standards Workshop will be held July 9, 10, and 11
- * The following workshops are also scheduled for sometime this fall: (a) Recertification for CDBG Grant Administrators, (b) Septic System Certification, (c) Level II training, (d) Plumbing Certification, (e) Life Safety 101, and (f) grant writing.
- * InforME is in the process of updating OCD's website to include more up-to-date information
- * OCD is looking at creating a Community Enterprise Program that would replace the Micro Loan Program. This program could be used to do something similar to the Façade Improvement Program used in the Downtown Revitalization projects.

b. 2003 CDBG Programs and Applications: Mike Baran reported on the following:

- * OCD received 16 public service applications; four projects were funded
- * There may be some extra grant funding available. Mike Baran suggested that perhaps OCD could look at existing applications and fund one from each category until all of the grant funds are obligated.
- * Dick Ireland of the USDA Rural Development Office in Presque Isle reported on the status of their 1) direct loan programs. There is sufficient funding in the loan program at this time. However, there is insufficient funding in the 504 grant program. Applications are currently being submitted under hardships.
 - 2) Multi-Family Program, there is no money available at this time.
 - 3) Water and Sewer Programs: This program has been very successful this year. As a matter of fact, Maine is #1 in the nation as far as grants received.
 - 4) Community Facilities Program: There are no grant funds available in this program, but there is an abundance of money in the loan program.
 - 5) The Business and Industry is handled by the State and there should be ample money in this program as well.

- 6) NMDC is trying to get the entire County of Aroostook designated under the Empowerment Zone. Currently, there are only three locations in Aroostook County that are designated as empowerment zone areas. The funding for programs that are located in the empowerment zone do not come out of RD's local or state budget. There is funding set aside under the national allocation specifically for empowerment zone municipalities.

6. Presentation on New Brunswick Community Development Programs by Walter Waite, Program Manager for New Brunswick Environment and Local Government:

The two major programs that the Province focuses on are Downtowns and Water/Sewer programs. The community development programs are separated into the rural areas and urban areas. Mayors of each municipality are responsible for the administration of rural areas.

- 1) Downtown Projects: The Province's current involvement with downtowns is the revitalization of an umbrella of 29 downtowns. New Brunswick receives funding for the downtowns under a local assessment of taxes. An Assessment Branch is charged with the assessment of downtowns based on the assessed value of property. The tax assessment is used to hire staff. Staff in turn applies for government funding to promote the downtown. New Brunswick also has funding through an environmental trust fund that is used specifically for downtown beautification projects. The process of tax assessment became active in 1981.

A Façade Program that was funded 70% government and 30% business owner was a very successful program, but has since been done away with. There is a possibility that this type of program will be funded again in the future.

New Brunswick has a similar problem of sprawl in many of their municipalities. They have many vacant storefronts. They are working with municipalities to keep their downtowns open and active. One important factor in accomplishing this task is to upgrade the water and sewer infrastructure and try to pull business back into the downtown. Mike Baran explained Public Law 776, which states that if a community does not have a census designated place designation, a municipal sewer system, or a designated MDOT urban area, they must have a comprehensive plan in place if they are to receive public facilities or public infrastructure funding.

Dan LaPointe of Van Buren briefly described their Main Street Maine Program. Van Buren believes in the concept of taking small steps toward the development of their Downtown rather than large steps. Van Buren applied for this designation last year, but was unable to obtain the designation. This year, they have received a partial designation and will be again applying for full designation next year. Under the partial designation, the Town is working at hiring a Downtown Manager. Developing a downtown is similar to a mall. Without a Mall Manager, business would not be successful. This is also true of a downtown.

- 2) The TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Program was borrowed from the Americans. TIF funding for housing development is being reviewed by the Province.
- 3) Water/Sewer Projects: This is the Province's top priority. They have a problem with e-coli in the drinking water supply. Of a budget of \$163 million, \$90 million has already been spent on water and sewer projects. They are spending 40% of this budget in the urban area because 40% of the problem (equal to 35,000 people) is dumping raw sewage into the Bay. Those issues are in the process of being resolved. If municipalities known to have problems of this type do not apply for funding, the Province will ask the municipality to apply for funding to resolve the problem.

7. **Other:** Joella McBreairty distributed a draft copy of the E-Newsletter.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Submitted by,

Joella R. McBreairty
MCDA Secretary