Mason's Island Fire District Monthly Meeting
September 16, 2025 – 5:30 PM
Mason's Island Yacht Club

1. **Call to Order**

    a. President Scott Parry called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. Board members Kevin Riley (Vice President), Ricardo Kleinbaum (Clerk), Ethan Tower (Treasurer), Catherine Deichmann, Kristin Foster, Tom Giola, Jeff Miceli, and Nancy Taylor Ross were present. Also attending were Lou Allyn (MICO) and Stonington High School students, Stephanie and Harvey. Dave Ludwig (Tick Committee rep.) and Bill Taylor (Tax Collector) were absent.

2. **Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes**
    a. None.

3. **Approval of Previous Minutes –**

    a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the August 2025 monthly meeting minutes after agreement to make the following changes to the published draft Minutes:

        i. **Living Shoreline Road Protection (Section 5 (b)**: Clarification in point I that the Town of Stonington was not invited to submit a full proposal for a National Coastal Resiliency Fund grant.

        ii. **Distribution of Enders Island Decals/Traffic (Section 6. (a):** Additional language: Second sentence to section (i), entire Section (iii), revised wording in Section (iv) and the last sentence to Section (v).

    The motion carried.

4. **Treasurer's Report – Ethan Tower**

    a. Ethan referred to the previously circulated financials, noting the release of the $8,434 sedimentation control bond, related removal from the balance sheet and collection of 99.21% of property taxes by the Town.

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5. Committee Reports

a. Fire & Safety Committee – Jeff Miceli

i. Jeff noted 4 incidents in August including one emergency medical service call at the Yacht Club and a power line burnout on Hickory Ledge.

ii. In connection to the Seagull Lane deck barbecue fire reported in the August minutes, Jeff advised that he is working with the Mystic (and other) Fire departments to ensure that firefighters have knowledge of the precise fire hydrant locations. Kristin recommended that we include fire hydrant locations on the website, and Tom stated that he would update the existing road map to identify the hydrants.

iii. Jeff reported that the scheduled Emergency Planning public meeting has been delayed due to scheduling issues and the need for additional information from Captain Schneider. Board members agreed on the importance of rescheduling the meeting in the near future. Catherine offered to assist with organizing the meeting.

b. Tick Committee – Dave Ludwig (absent)

i. Scott reported that Fran (former Board member) has resigned from the committee. Jeff agreed to serve on the Committee as a product advisor, supporting Dave's operational work.

ii. Ethan relayed two issues from Dave: 1) concerns over the reduction in the number of bifenthrin (synthetic) treatments to one from three; (preferable to cut back to two treatments in order to evaluate the impact of the reduction); 2) amending the annual survey to include a question on whether homeowners have observed changes in the volume of ticks. Ethan recommended releasing the survey in the fall instead of the winter.

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iii. A discussion followed on the criteria for modifying treatment frequency. Jeff pointed out that Scott Williams' recommendation for a single fall application could work but was not necessarily predicative. Jeff plans to contact Scott Williams again and also the University of Rhode Islands Tick Encounter Center.

c. Living Shoreline Road Protection – Kristin Foster

i. Kristin reported that MIPOA received a notice from the Army Corps of Engineers approving the "rocks in the water" plan, as redesigned by Lou Allyn of the Mason's Island Company (MICO). According to Kristin, work on the section 404 permit would need to begin on Dec 16, 2026 with completion a year later. This was one of the three requirement permit applications, alongside applications to the Stonington's Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) for a Coastal Area Management (CAM) review, and to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

ii. Kristin said that recent monitoring on the coastline showed no significant erosion experienced this season on the cusp area, excluding the marsh to the South.

iii. Kristin will notify the Fish & Wildlife Foundation in a required semi-annual report that we will not proceed with the project, despite previous funding of $116K. She added that the reason is the current lack of landowner permission.

iv. Kristin announced plans to plant twelve addition switchgrass bushes on the shoreline, following damage of smaller flora in recent storms at a cost of $326 (Board approved at the August meeting).

d. Traffic Control - Catherine Deichmann

i. Catherine reported on the police request to share video footage at the Guard House (in relation to the August 30 arrest of a man who reportedly hit a pedestrian on the Causeway.)

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ii. Catherine confirmed that for the rest of the season the guard house would be staffed on weekends with coverage ending on Columbus Day, Monday October 13.

e. **Nominating Committee – Catherine Deichmann**

i. Catherine reiterated that three Board position terms end at the end of the current 2025/26 fiscal year (Jeff Miceli, Scott Parry, and Ethan Tower.) Jeff and Scott stated they would like to be considered for nomination to another three year term. Ethan said he is undecided.

f. **Facilities Committee – Tom Giola, Bob Domurat (absent)**

Referring to the monthly Facilities Committee report, Tom provided updates on tree trimming, water line upgrade options, road marking and signage, the Roads Manager transition, and road & driveway permit applications as they relate to MIPOA right of way and ordinance exceptions.

i. **Tree/Shrub Trimming** –Tom described the process of selecting vendors for tree removal and trimming along roads, right of ways and the pond scheduled for September 25. As part of next year's budget process, he plans to request proposals from Pacheco to remove trees that are growing over the pond in response to the MIPOA Pond Committee recommendations. Scott suggested the Pond Committee should draft a proposal explaining the rationale for tree trimming, and potential impact on the conditions of the pond.

ii. **Water Line Upgrades** - A meeting was scheduled for September 18 with Connecticut Water to discuss the feasibility of having the utility company upgrade water systems on several roads (Allyn's Alley, Hickory Ledge, Mallard, Old South) ahead of road repaving, according to Tom. He added that if the utility refuses to replace the lines, consideration should be given to placing a "moratorium" requiring Connecticut Water to repair a large section of road, instead of a patch, if there is a water line break within a specified period after MIFD repaving.

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iii. **Road Markers & Safety** – Tom reported that road line striping (at intersections and over speed bumps) is planned on September 19. He shared a map with the Board.

Tom requested Board input on whether to add stop bars, (painted road markings). Tom said that Bob Domurat recommended painting stop bars at all 42 intersections, at a cost of $100 each. (There are currently 20 stop bars painted on the roads and 4 stop signs without stop bars.) Citing industry standards and practical implementation, Tom believes that major roads, like Chippechaug, should have stop bars at most, if not all, intersections. Tom also described the option of placing of chevron arrows on the surface of speed humps to increase visibility and help avert property damage. Tom stressed the importance of consistency, uniformity, and safety with other Towns.

A discussion ensued on the appropriate standards for maintaining and adding road markings. Ricardo raised the issue of the heavily trafficked Chippechaug and Schoolhouse intersection. Board members were divided as to whether one or more stop signs (Northbound and Westbound) should be added to the existing two stops at the location. In considering additional signage and road markers, Kristin and others expressed concerns about transforming the community into a "suburban" aesthetic.

Kevin and Ricardo commented on the prevalence of natural sight line blockages (tree and bush lines) at multiple intersections. Scott said these can be easily addressed by trimming.

Ethan pointed out that since MIPOA roads are privately managed, there is no need to conform to standards in other communities. He argued that dead end roads and those with little traffic should probably not have stop bars and signs added. Ethan emphasized that the aesthetic falls under MIPOA's scope, and that they should be consulted.

The Board concluded that it would recommend to MIPOA to paint stop bars at all existing stop sign locations, support the placement of one stop sign at Chippechaug and Seagull, and

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consideration of additional stop signs at the northbound Chippechaug location at a later date.

iv. **Planning & Zoning Discussions** - Tom summarized his discussion with Candace Palmer (Zoning/Inland Wetland Enforcement Officer and Clifton Iler, (Town Planner) regarding coordination of permit application filings. Tom said he reached an understanding from the departments to receive copies of all P&Z + wetland enforcement applications. He agreed to share Facilities Committee review comments. Ethan asked about enforceability in situations where construction outcomes diverged from plans.

Tom's conversation with the Town officers also covered plans to repave roads. Tom learned that as of October 1, 2025, most exemptions to CAM filings were expiring, and thus all road projects involving change of grade or drainage will require filing a Municipal Coastal Site Plan Review with the Planning and Zoning Commission.

v. **Money Point Drainage** - Tom provided an update on the Money Point road design options as described in the August meeting minutes. The Board agreed to spend $4.2K from the drainage budget to edge the grass and shoulder in an effort to lower the road, as opposed to the more expensive options of raising the road or creating an improved low point at this time.

vi. **Driveway Permit Applications** - Tom asked for Board input on several open and pending driveway permit applications, specifically one situation where the applicant's plans involved the reallocation of a portion of MIPOA right of way property to establish an off street parking pad with apron and driveway dimensions outside the published standards. Tom noted that the existing standards specify allowance of only one paved driveway apron per lot (10 to 16 feet wide and 10 feet deep).

vii. A Board conversation followed on the parameters for authorizing the use of MIPOA-owned right of way property, granting exceptions to existing Ordinance language, and securing consent/input from neighbors. Several Board members felt

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strongly that neighboring property owners should have the opportunity to weigh in, and agree to exceptions to the standard. Tom noted that in his capacity as a member of the Facilities Committee, he would recommend that a MIPOA Board decision would be the preferred avenue in these cases.

viii. **East Forest** - Tom also explained that we still have not received site design plans for 28 East Forest, that is currently under construction.

ix. **Funds Reallocation** - Ethan recommended deferring decisions on reallocating $120K (as approved by taxpayers for the "Rocks in the Water" shoreline road protection project) until a Special Community Meeting is convened in late winter. The funds could potentially cover road repaving and Yacht Club Road repairs, according to Tom and Ethan. New estimates may be needed.

6. **Unfinished Business**

a. **Enders Island Stickers – Scott Parry/Ethan**

i. Scott summarized the discussion on this topic at the August meeting, stressing that Enders Island is being selective with the issuance of decals, i.e. screening out non-regular visitors. He added that not recognizing stickers could impact traffic flow and that MIYC members have the right to receive stickers, and are not asked to return the stickers.

ii. Ethan countered that the liberalization of the existing policy creates an imbalance within the community, and places into question the utility of guards. He emphasized that any change would have to involve MIPOA, as the entity having established the policy.

b. **Proposed Facilities Agreement Addendum**

i. Scott discussed the draft he circulated before the meeting to amend the Agreement, consistent with approval from MIFD

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voters at the annual meeting: 1) allow MIPOA to appoint the Facilities Committee to carry out the work of the General Contractor, and 2) a waiver of insurance coverage for the Facilities Committee and its members but not subcontractors.

ii. After a short discussion, the Board agreed to have an outside contract lawyer review the document.

7. New Business

a. Future of MICO deed restrictions

i. Scott Parry invited Lou Allyn to discuss the idea of having MIFD adopt a new ordinance in response to MICO's plans to no longer enforce most of its deed restrictions (which do not apply to all District properties.)

ii. Lou summarized the interactions between MICO and MIPOA earlier this year. He noted that Scott had suggested that in lieu of transferring the restrictions from a deed, consideration should be given to enacting MIFD ordinances.

iii. Lou reviewed the table (copied below) listing the existing MICO deed restrictions along with his recommendations for future treatment: retention by MICO, MIPOA enforcement or application of Town of Stonington standards. Board members discuss the importance of retaining setback requirements (5 ft currently).

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Mason's Island Company
Comments on Deed Restrictions September 12, 2025 MIFD/Deed Restrictions

This is a list of the restrictions in deeds of land once owned by the Masons Island Company and how each might be removed from Company right to enforce. There may be other restrictions in older deeds.
The restrictions are as numbered in the MICO Restrictions and Covenant – Southern Area.

Restriction #	Topic	Proposed Category	Comments
1	Buildings	Drop – the Town applies	
1	Lights	MIPOA Guidelines	
2	Approval of Plans	MIPOA Guidelines	To include water runoff
3	Use of buildings	Drop –the Town applies	
3	Only dogs and cats	Drop – the Town applies	
4	Setbacks	Drop – the Town applies	How important is 5' on either side of a lot?
5	Septic tank	Drop – the Town applies	
6	Planting of trees	MIPOA Guidelines	Not on MIPOA property
6	Trimming for safety	MIFD ordinance	
6	Trimming for private view	MIPOA Guidelines	
7	Right of first refusal	MICO retains	
8	If ever a public street	Drop – the Town applies	
9	Boundary markers	MIPOA Guidelines	
10	No storage of boats	MIPOA Guidelines	
11	Approval of fences	MIPOA Guidelines	
12	No obligation to enforce, etc.	MICO retains	MICO waives all rights to enforce except Right of First Refusal

iv. A discussion followed on the value and feasibility of creating a special zoning district. Several board members noted the importance of retaining jurisdiction over existing setback requirements, and also to prevent adoption of Town standards that might change the historic character of the community. Ethan stressed that it would be up to the Town (not MIFD or MIPOA) to establish a new zoning district. Tom reported speaking to the Town Planner who recommended hiring an attorney to secure a quit claim deed from MICo, and also to secure express written support from homeowners with deed restrictions before considering the change.

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v. A discussion followed on the next steps: 1) the timing for MICO to file a quit claim with the Town announcing withdrawal of the deed restrictions; 2) addressing current legal implications, namely MICO's exposure to civil litigation for non enforceability pending a formal quit claim filing; 3) what consultations, if any, would be needed with taxpayers ahead of any decision.

b. Website – Scott solicited feedback on the design and content of his website proposal. He noted that launch of a new MIPOA website should be synchronized with the MIFD product.

8. Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 5:30PM

Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm. It was seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ricardo J. Kleinbaum – Clerk, Masons Island Fire District

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