

Report of the President -- MIPOA 2025 Annual Meeting

MIPOA

For those who are new to the Island, MIPOA is incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut and is a voluntary membership organization of property owners within the Mason's Island Fire District. The primary purposes of MIPOA, as detailed in the Bylaws are to:

- 1) Enhance the enjoyment and welfare of property owners
- 2) To negotiate agreeable arrangements on behalf of property owners
- 3) To represent collective interests of members in various proceedings
- 4) To acquire and hold property, including roads and to manage maintenance and construction of that property.

To maintain the privacy of the roads on Mason's Island, MIPOA owns the roads. It oversees the maintenance of those roads by working closely with the Masons Island Fire District: MIFD. MIPOA also regularly communicates items of interest to its members and from time to time organizes community events and gatherings.

MIPOA Priorities / Concerns

In addition to day to day road maintenance, and ongoing communication with property owners there are several over-arching themes which have been the subject of board discussion in the past year.

- 1) **Sea level rise.** Simply put, we live on an island that is increasingly subjected to conditions that threaten accessibility. You've heard about steps we have taken to protect our own roads, and these will be ongoing, but we also need to be concerned with steps being taken by the Town of Stonington to secure access via the causeway. Good news on this front is that the town of Stonington board of finance, and now the voters, have approved a bond that includes over \$2 million to begin addressing the MI Causeway. We continue to have concerns about both the Causeway itself as well as the approaches.

In addition, sea level rise has also prompted the MIFD/MIPOA development of an Emergency Preparedness plan in case of a catastrophic event

2) **Building, construction and development.** Masons Island development has been going on at various rates for many decades. That said, the last few years have seen a dramatic increase in new home construction, tear-downs, and major renovation projects, and also an increase in the number of year round residents. While this process is inevitable, it creates issues of common concern to all of us. Board discussion in the past year around this issue include:

- a) How to be sure new construction does not adversely impact the roads and right of ways owned by MIPOA
- b) How to be sure deed restrictions unique to Masons Island, designed to preserve a unique environment are honored
- c) How to address traffic concerns and road impact that are the result of increased construction and development.

Increased role of Facilities Committee.

A major initiative impacting both of the above issues, is the increased role of the MIFD/MIPOA Facilities Committee (formerly known as Roads Committee). As discussed in the MIFD meeting earlier, the Facilities committee has been working closely with Rufus over the past year and will be formally assuming the role of Roads Manager effective with the new Fiscal Year. Rufus has graciously agreed to continue in an advisory capacity for the coming year. Major areas of concern for the Facilities Committee

- a) Regular assessment and inspection of roads and right of ways
- b) Oversight of maintenance programs / sub contractors
- c) Budget and spending recommendations to MIFD/MIPOA

In addition to the roads maintenance duties outlined above, the Facilities Committee will also

- a) Work with the Architectural Review committee to review construction and renovation plans as to their impact on roads and rights of way (primarily drainage, excavation and landscaping).
- b) Work with the Shoreline Protection committee to evaluate projects designed to secure MIPOA roads.

Thank yous

As you know, all of the MIPOA and MIFD boards and committees are made up of volunteers. One of the many unique aspects of this community is the willingness of individuals to step up and help manage and maintain the special environment here. I'd like to thank all the members of the MIFD and MIPOA boards for their hard work. I'd also like to give a special shout out and thanks to two board members in particular.

If maintaining our private roads, protecting the island from sea level rise, and managing development impact seems like a tall order....it is! As mentioned above, a key player in that is our newly defined Facilities Committee.

Fortunately our MIPOA/MIFD facilities committee is made up of two guys uniquely suited to the task. Bob Domurat and Tom Giola have decades of combined experience in municipal roads and facilities maintenance. They have stepped up big time to take over as Roads Manager and to help the boards address broader issues. They deserve a special thanks and recognition for their ongoing work and dedication.

Special Thanks. Finally, I'd like to give a special thanks to Rufus Allyn who has served as roads manager since our acquisition of the roads from MICO in 2007. Most of us have witnessed he and Roy diligently inspecting every inch of road on a near daily basis for many years.

Much of his work is behind the scenes where he has overseen the hundreds of roads-related repairs and projects over the years. When a tree falls, it is cleared instantly — when a pot hole appears, it quickly disappears, when snow comes, it's quickly is removed. We often take for granted the pristine look of our roadsides and common areas — it takes a knowledgeable, engaged, manager to stay on top of things and on this job Rufus has been outstanding. The transition of those duties to the Facilities Committee has been in the works for the past year.

Rufus Allyn has been active in that process, and has graciously agreed to continue in an Advisory Capacity for the next year. The good news for him is that homeowner complaints and comments will no longer go to his email and cell phone. There's a new email address that we will send out soon — that go directly to the Facilities Committee: Bob Domurat and Tom Giola.

Let's give a hand to Rufus for all his efforts as Roads Manager