

FAQ - WATERFRONT ACCESS at 31 INDIAN REST RD

1. Why do we want water access?

We are an island community, yet we have no public access to tidal water. This public waterfront would provide access for residents who aren't fortunate enough to have private access. Voters accepted the Comprehensive Plan at the 1989 Annual Town Meeting. It charges the Conservation Commission with finding waterfront access for use of all residents and developing a funding plan to acquire it. The Water Access Fund was created shortly thereafter and each year voters renew their commitment by voting to deposit all watercraft excise taxes into the designated fund.

2. How are water access sites chosen?

In 1990, a town wide evaluation of the shoreline of Arrowsic was conducted and possible sites were identified. Some of the considerations were all tide access for all boats, distance to a public road, projected development costs, impact on the neighborhood, impact on natural resources and availability as well as other considerations. At that time, it was noted that no "perfect site" exists in Arrowsic. In 2022, the Select Board created an ad-hoc Water Access Planning Committee (WAPC). The committee created a numerical rubric incorporating these criteria for the Conservation Commission to use in its evaluation of potential sites.

3. Why 31 Indian Rest Rd?

Currently there are three full-service public boat launches in the area. All are on the Kennebec River. Having access to the more protected Back River directly for carry-on watercraft will add to the waterfront access portfolio of the region. The Back River offers safe paddling conditions for canoers and kayakers, water fowling opportunities, connection to world class fishing as well as highly valued habitat and the creatures that use it. Purchasing public access will assure access for the current residents and guarantee enjoyment for generations to come.

4. How does the site score on the WAPC rubric?

It scores well; the water is accessible 4hrs each side of high tide. At the access point the marsh is consolidated to the channel and foot traffic can be supported by the channel bottom.

The property is accessed by paved town roads and the neighborhood is open to the possibility of a public access nearby.

The current owners are willing partners and describe the thrill their father would have knowing that the town were accessing the Back River the same way he got to his fishing boat moored in the river

The purchase price is attainable with existing Town assets.

Furthermore, various external funding sources have been identified for site development and it is expected some will be procured.

5. What will it cost to purchase the property?

*The final **purchase price is \$200,000**, and is possible with the proposed funding path.*

6. Has the market value of 31 Indian Rest been determined?

Realtors in town had valued the property at \$325,000. The owners asked \$280,000 and after due diligence the Town counter offered \$200,000. The owners have accepted the counter offer.

7. Is there lead or asbestos present in the house?

There is likely asbestos in some of the pre-1979 floor tile. The property has not been tested for lead.

8. Has the market value of 31 Indian Rest Rd changed with the known defects?

An additional comparison in Town is a property that sold the end of September: smaller parcel, smaller house, less water access and the interior condition is unknown, for \$360,000.

9. How would the Town purchase the property?

There will be \$85,000 available in the Water Access Fund and the Conservation Commission recommends selling the 6-acre parcel (M4-L4)

the Town land banked in the early 1990's for the fire station. Realtors have suggested that the Town could sell the property for \$120,000 or more. Further, the Town will be asked to authorize the Select Board to borrow up to \$200,000 for a duration of no more than 3 years. This drawdown loan would function as a bridge loan, so that the timing of selling the Town's property doesn't become a barrier to proceeding with the purchase of 31 Indian Rest Rd.

10. What would happen to the buildings that are on the property?

Many possibilities were considered. As part of the due diligence process it became clear that the house structure is not habitable without at least \$100,000 of upgrades to bring the building into code compliance. It is recommended that the house be removed as part of the site development plan. The garage is in better condition for its use and the decision as to its place in the site plan would be determined by a Site Development Committee. The fate of the barn would likewise be determined by the Committee.

11. Will the property be open to the general public?

That will be determined by the Town and may depend on the external funding sources (grants) that are used.

12. What is the Site Development Committee and who is on it?

The Site Development Committee would be a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission, Bob Ater has agreed to chair. Conceptually, it would be populated with a representative of the Conservation Commission, a representative of the Properties Committee, and two additional members-at-large from the community. There would be many public information meetings and points for public input before the development plan will be finalized. A management plan and funding path would be developed in tandem with the development plan.

13. What is the total cost of the Project: proposal purchase price, initial development costs as well as maintenance and management costs going forward?

The total cost of the project is unknown at this point. It will dependent on how the Town choses to develop the property and what infrastructure has to be managed. The Site Development Committee will be seeking public input

has it makes a plan that best addresses the needs of the Town. Various funding sources have been identified and it is hoped some will be secured to pay for permitting costs and site improvements.

14. How would the vacant lot be sold?

It would be up to the Select Board. Generally, a Town dispossessing real estate will publish a Public Notice to that effect describing the lot and conditions of sale. In the current real estate market, it is expected to sell within a few weeks of listing.

15. What other uses can the Town's vacant lot be used?

It was originally purchased as a site for the Arrowsic Fire Station. Shortly after its purchase the Frye property became available. It was decided to keep municipal services together in one central location and the Fire Station was built where it is now. Since then, the site has been considered for a Community Solar Farm and ruled out. Currently, there is no identified need for the property.

16. If the Town sells the lot, can the Town control how the lot is used?

The Town can choose to attach deed restrictions that move Town priorities such as aquifer protection or affordable housing forward. Any restrictions would likely reduce the sale price.

17. Which Committee will be responsible for the Stewardship and Management Plan?

The Conservation Commission is currently charged with stewardship of natural resources and creating Management Plans for Town recreational areas. Enforcement of ordinances resides with the Select Board. The Site Development Committee will create the plan which may include but not be limited to a permitted hours of use or parking ordinance. Ordinance language is passed at Town Meetings after a being reviewed by the voters through a Public Hearing process.

18. How will my property taxes be affected?

The effect is expected to be negligible if the vacant lot is sold to fund the purchase of 31 Indian Rest. The current parcel is listed as exempt on the tax roll. When sold, Lot M4-L4 would return to the tax roll as taxable as 31 Indian Rest becomes town owned and tax exempt.

19. Will the Town incur any additional liability expense if it purchases the property for water front access?

No, There would be no additional expense for the liability coverage. The planned venture is in line with a standard municipal operation, and acreage owned generally is not a rating factor.

20. Will the Water Access Fund continue to exist after the property is purchased?

Generally, the quitting of a designated account requires a vote of the Town Meeting and will be decided by the Town.

21. If I want to help fund the purchase of 31 Indian Rest Road, how can I donate?

As of early October, there have been \$15,000 pledged to the designated Water Access Fund contingent on the purchase of 31 Indian Rest Rd. If you too would like to make a pledge, contact Phine Ewing at phineewing@gmail.com.