

## Mitchell Field Boat Launch

Voters will be asked at a Special November Town Meeting to authorize the Select Board to borrow up to \$1,150,000 to complete the funding for the construction of a boat launch at Mitchell Field. The Town Meeting will be held by referendum. Voters can vote in person on November 5<sup>th</sup> at the Community School (the same date as the presidential election) from 8am to 8pm or by absentee ballot starting on October 7. Those interested in an absentee ballot should contact the Town Clerk's Office.

Development of a boat launch at Mitchell Field has been a priority of the Town ever since the Navy turned the property over to the Town. Shortly after the Town took ownership of the property, it developed a master plan for the use and development of the 100 plus acres. The adopted 2007 Master Plan proposed the development of an all-tide boat launch on the north side of the causeway and a parking area including spaces for vehicles with trailers at the existing paved area uphill from the bandstand. When the Master Plan was updated in 2019 it included the following with respect to the boat launch: "A new "all-tide" boat launch should be developed on the north side of the causeway suitable for launching and retrieving both pleasure boats and small/moderate size commercial vessels. The facility should include floats and related facilities."

The Mitchell Field Committee initially worked with a marine engineer to develop conceptual plans for a Town dock at the end of the causeway and a boat launch on the north side of the causeway. The Town eventually focused its efforts on a boat launch along the north side of the causeway and developed a conceptual plan for a dual lane, all-tide launch at that location. The Town applied for and received two Small Harbor Improvement Program (SHIP) grants from Maine DOT (Department of Transportation), one for the boat launch and one for boating facilities. When the Town focused its efforts on the boat launch, these grants were combined into a consolidated project to increase the funding for the boat launch. As the project moved through final design and permitting, delays were encountered and construction costs especially since the pandemic have increased dramatically resulting in the need for additional funding.

### **The Proposal**

The consolidated boat launch project involves the construction of a twenty-foot-wide, dual-lane launch that will extend beyond the low tide line. The ramp will be constructed with concrete planks and will have floats along one side. An access drive will be constructed off the north side of the existing causeway. There will be a turning circle at the head of the access drive to allow vehicles to turn around to back down the ramp. The design of the circle has been tweaked to increase the radius to accommodate larger commercial boats. In addition to the ramp, the project includes connecting the gravel

road built during the demolition of the pier to the waterfront so that vehicles going to the launch will not go by the bandstand, beach and other areas with pedestrian activity. The existing concrete pad uphill from the bandstand will be expanded to provide trailer parking. The project also includes some minor improvements to the causeway to allow the future installation of a ramp and floats.

### Costs and Funding

The current estimated project cost including engineering, permitting, construction and construction oversight is almost two million dollars which is a substantial increase over previous estimates. This estimate includes an inflation factor based on construction in 2025 and a twenty percent contingency due to the uncertainty created by fluctuating construction costs. The cost estimate also includes the payment of a wetland impact fee when construction proceeds.

To date, the Town has appropriated \$492,500 and Maine Department of Transportation (DOT) has awarded the Town two SHIP grants totaling \$357,250 for available funds of \$849,750. Expenditures to date, primarily for design and engineering, total \$85,313 with the State responsible for contributing \$42,654. Maine DOT has informed the Town that Harpswell needs to decide if it is moving forward based on the new estimated project cost. If the Town moves forward, then the State will continue to provide the full amount of the grant funding. If the Town does not move forward with this planned design, then the Town will have to repay Maine DOT what it has contributed to date.

### Funding Gap

<b>Estimated Project Cost</b>	\$2,000,000	
<b>Components</b>		
Construction	\$1,852,000 *	
Engineering: Design & Permitting	\$92,742	
Engineering: Construction Monitoring	\$53,833	
	<u>\$1,998,575</u>	
<b>Revenue Sources</b>		
Town appropriations	\$492,500	
State Grants	\$357,250	
	<u>\$849,750</u>	
<b>Funding Gap</b>	\$1,150,250	
Voters are being asked to Bond Up to \$1,150,000 to fund the project		
Note: Construction includes a 20% contingency, cost escalator for construction, and permit fee		

The engineering design and permitting work for the project are essentially complete. Engineering for the construction monitoring phase is anticipated to cost an additional \$54,000. The estimated cost for completing the construction of the project including the cost escalator and contingency is \$1,852,000.

The referendum article allows the Select Board to borrow up \$1,150,000 if necessary to construct the boat launch and the related improvements. The anticipated bond repayment schedule would be over a 10-year period with interest expected to be about \$242,000. The first full year of interest and principal payments would be approximately \$156,000. If that amount were to be added to the 2024 tax rate it would translate to an increase of \$0.06 to the tax rate, from \$6.36 to \$6.42.