

# **Peaks Island Home Start Receives Conditional Rezone**

## **Portland City Council Approves Three Affordable Homes in Peaks Village Neighborhood**

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PEAKS ISLAND –

Paula Coward who has applied to live in one of the new houses to be built in the village area of Peaks Island is a step closer to seeing her home a reality. “I feel this is a great opportunity for a great new chapter in Peaks housing. Living on an island has its own set of challenges bringing energy resources to the island. Building a new energy efficient green house would greatly benefit the island. My family has been renting year round on Peaks for two years now and I am certain that Peaks is the right place for us. We've struggled to find affordable housing that did not require additional work and energy efficient updates. I strongly support the Luther Street project and feel it would provide a great opportunity for year round families to stay on the island and invest in the future of our community.”

The Portland City Council voted unanimously July 19 to grant a Conditional Rezone allowing the renovation or replacement of an existing house at 18 Luther Street, Peaks Island and the construction of two new homes on the property. The project organizer, Home Start, is a volunteer 501(c)(3) island based organization formed to create and maintain affordable housing opportunities for residents of Peaks Island. The Luther Street project will rehab or replace the existing home as a rental, build two new homes as a rent-to-own and ownership opportunity. All three highly energy efficient buildings will be offered as affordable housing to community members of modest means.

To guide the process and proceed to completion, HOME START assembled a team of professionals led by Project Director, Bill Walsh, Principle of Walsh Engineering, who has been responsible for applications, site design and permitting, and the site plan review process. Bill Floyd, President of Genesis Community Loan Fund, provides technical and financial advice and assistance. Jamie Broadbent of Kaplan Thompson Architects designed the proposed efficient homes with Keiser Homes of Oxford Maine who will build these modular homes and ModSource of Oxford Maine who will deliver and construct them on site. The plans specify a high level of energy efficiency and Maine sourced materials and products. Deed restrictions placed on each property will ensure affordability into the future and a Selection Committee independent of HOME START is reviewing applications from hopeful residents.

Currently HOME START is seeking a \$350,000 grant from the *2010 Affordable Housing Initiative for Maine Islands*. This new \$2 million Maine Housing program will provide grant awards for housing that meets a demonstrated need in the year-round island

communities of Chebeague, Cliff, Frenchboro, Great Cranberry, Isle au Haut, Islesboro, Islesford, Long, Matinicus, Monhegan, North Haven, Peaks, Swans, and Vinalhaven.

The grant funds may be used to create new rental housing or substantially rehabilitate existing properties which will ensure an appropriate rate for one rental and one rent-to-own after 15 years for residents at 80 to 120% of average median income. These two houses will complement a single home ownership opportunity financed by Maine Bank and Trust for a similar qualifying family. Funding for the grant program comes from tax-exempt bond proceeds from the Maine Energy, Housing, and Economic Recovery Program. These bonds are scheduled to be repaid with funds from the state's share of the Real Estate Transfer Tax.

Going forward, the Luther Street Project expects approval by the Planning Board of the Site Plan with MaineHousing grant monies and the construction loan available in September. Given success with the Planning Board and MaineHousing, prefabrication will occur in October with installation in November or December. There could be three families in place by the start of 2011.

The 18 Luther Street proposal will go back to the City Planning Board for a site review process and final approval.

For more information about Home Start, please visit <http://peaksislandhomestart.org>. For more information about the *2010 Affordable Housing Initiative for Maine Islands*, please visit <http://www.mainehousing.org/>.

Attached, is architect Jamie Broadbent's rendering of the proposed new Luther Street homes and the existing house.

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