



## **Proposal for Enhanced Security and Gated Access**

During previous Annual Meetings of the Association, the question of gated access to our community has been discussed. At that time, the Board decided to study the issue carefully and to present a proposal to the property owners for discussion prior to any decisions.

Your Board has studied the issues and concluded that gated access would have a number of positive effects on Middle Island:

- It would significantly reduce traffic volume, especially from non-BHI residents during the summer and holiday periods. Speeding and careless driving have been a persistent problem down the East Beach Drive straightaway, at the semi-blind curves at the entrance to Middle Island, at a similar curve near the private beach access, and along the gravel roads.
- It would significantly reduce traffic on the gravel roads (thus decreasing maintenance costs, reducing dust, reducing liability for road accidents, and improving safety).
- It would provide greater protection for the unique and fragile environment of Middle Island and the Maritime Forest Sanctuary.
- It would deter vandalism and littering on Middle Island.
- It would increase the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists on our roads.
- Combined with new signage, it would reduce the risk of accidents as pedestrians cross the road from the beach access parking area to the gate.
- In the opinion of some realtors, it would enhance property values on Middle Island.

We acknowledge that there are some potential negative effects as well, including the possibility that others on Bald Head Island would react negatively to our restricting access to our property. Appendix A is a draft public statement that the Association could provide, if the proposal were adopted.

We believe that the proposal under consideration by the Board balances these interests, enhancing Middle Island as a community while providing access to Middle Island under the auspices of the Bald Head Island Conservancy. We also believe the Board proposal addresses major concerns about safety and convenience that have been raised in other meetings. Finally, property owners would be able to use the same proximity card at the Beach Access Gate and the Bald Head Creek Dock gate, replacing the multiple keys currently in use. We welcome discussion of the proposal at the Annual Meeting.

## The Gates

The **Middle Island entrance gate** would be installed in the median strip at the entrance to Middle Island. The entrance gate would open when presented with either a valid proximity card or a valid temporary access code and would close automatically when the vehicle clears the entrance gate. The **Middle Island exit gate** would open automatically when a vehicle approaches the exit gate and would close automatically when the vehicle clears the exit gate.

The **Middle Island Beach Access gate** would be operated by a proximity card reader on the road side of the gate. Presenting a property owner's proximity card would release the electrical door strike. There will be an "exit" button on the beach side of the gate. No keys will be needed. If lost or misplaced, the lost card can be cancelled and a new proximity card issued – more easily and with greater security than duplicating keys.

The **Bald Head Creek Dock gate** would operate the same way the Beach Access gate operates, using the same proximity card for access.

### Convenience and security

The Board placed a high priority on minimizing inconvenience for Association members, for guests, for contractors, and for Village employees. An even higher priority is emergency access for public safety vehicles.

All gates would be opened using **proximity cards**.

- Two **property owner cards** would be issued to each lot owner. Additional property owner cards could be purchased by Middle Island residents or multiple owner properties. These cards would open the entrance, the beach access gate, and the Bald Head Creek Dock gate. They may be used only by the owner and by any guests of the owner *who are staying on Middle Island*.
- Property owners and the Board may identify contractors who work frequently on Middle Island and who would receive **contractor entrance gate cards**. As part of the proposed construction fee for new construction, a packet of cards would be provided to the primary contractor for use by employees and subcontractors and returned at the end of construction. Contractor cards would operate the entrance gate but not the beach access gate or Bald Head Creek Dock gate.
- **Public Safety, Transportation, Public Works, and Utility vehicles** would receive entrance gate cards. Public Safety cards would also operate the Beach Access and Bald Head Creek Dock gates.
- The **Conservancy** would have several entrance gate cards usable only by a Conservancy staff member leading a group tour or conducting Conservancy business on Middle Island and the Ibis Lake Preserve.

The Middle Island entrance gate could also be opened using a **temporary access code**.

- Each homeowner would have a **homeowner-specific temporary access code** that would be given to visitors.
- Contractors coming for a limited number of visits could also be given a **contractor-specific temporary access code**.

- New temporary access codes would be issued periodically, replacing the old temporary access codes.

**Public safety** would have several ways to gain access in an emergency.

- The entrance gate would have a **siren detector** that would activate the entrance gate.
- The emergency vehicles would also have a Middle Island access card for access without a siren.
- The fail safe option for public safety is to crash the gate with the emergency vehicle, but with both siren activation and public safety proximity cards available, that should never be necessary.

**Video surveillance** at the entrance to Middle Island and at the Cape Creek Dock and Boat Storage

- To deter vandalism and damage to the gate, a two camera DVR would be installed at the entrance, covering the gate area and the cameras themselves. Initially, recordings would be motion activated and would be kept locally on the DVR.
- To deter vandalism and damage at the remote dock location, a three or four camera DVR would be installed, providing surveillance of the dock area, the boat storage area, and the cameras themselves. Initially, recordings would be motion activated and would be kept locally on the DVR.

### **Management**

Keycard and temporary access code distribution will initially be handled by the Middle Island Property Manager and designated Board members. If there were sufficient interest, we may also consider contracting with Bald Head Association for keycard management, including the issuance of replacement cards and temporary access codes. An agreement including the Bald Head Association key service would allow Middle Island homeowners to authorize the Association to sign out both a cardkey and a house key to designated individuals, contractors, or service providers.

### **Public Access to Middle Island for Nature Tours**

Our agreement with the Bald Head Island Conservancy will help assure that the public has access to the natural beauty of Middle Island through participation in a variety of nature and photography tours.

## APPENDIX A

### DRAFT – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

#### **Proposed Public Statement by the Association about the Middle Island Roads and Gates**

Over the last several months, the Middle Island Property Owners Association has thought long and hard about how to best preserve Middle Island as a sanctuary while sharing its beauty with visitors to Bald Head Island.

As you know, the Middle Island Property Owners' Association has recently taken responsibility for the half mile of paved road and the 2 ½ miles of gravel roads. The responsibility for maintaining these roads falls entirely on our Association. Because substantial sections of the roads have only a 20' right of way, they cannot be accepted by the Village. Other sections are below the minimum elevation for Village roads and would require substantial rebuilding to meet Village standards. Finally, the gravel roads would have to be paved to be turned over to the Village. The roads on Middle Island will have to remain private roads, maintained by Middle Island property owners.

The roads are costly. Rebuilding the gravel roads this coming winter will cost more than \$320,000, over half the funds transferred the Association by the developer; maintaining the roads and setting aside road reserve funds will cost over \$50,000 annually, more than a third of our annual budget. The gravel roads generate dust which pollutes the air and settles in the forest. In addition, private roads create liability.

We have reluctantly decided that to serve as effective stewards of Middle Island, to protect its natural beauty, to improve the safety of our roads and docks, to reduce our potential liability for accidents on the private roads and docks we maintain, and to reduce the cost of road and dock maintenance, we will limit the use of our private roads to property owners and their guests, including contractors, service providers, and utility and public safety personnel.

This winter we will install gates at the entrance to Middle Island. We have worked hard to develop a plan that meets the needs of the many users of our roads.

- Property owners and guests staying in their Middle Island home will have proximity cards that operate the gates.
- Emergency vehicles will operate the gates using either a siren or a proximity card.
- Contractors, public safety, public works, utilities, and staff members will have proximity cards that will open the gates

We recognize the unique beauty of our Preserve and its appeal to other Island residents and to Island visitors. We are working with the Bald Head Island Conservancy to assure that individuals can enjoy Middle Island through a variety of educational opportunities and nature tours.