

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
March 9, 2009

Present: Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz & Seaver Leslie

Absent: Sean Rafter

Guests: Anne Leslie, Wiscasset Representative to Gateway 1;
Travis Pryor, Engineer for Wright-Pierce

We opened the meeting at 7 PM and began immediately with the update and report from Travis Pryor regarding the Railroad Ave. project. Travis focused on answers to our questions from last month about providing an off-loading area for the back side of the businesses on Water St. and providing a safe pedestrian walkway. New on the latest drawings are a 300' train platform, about 4' off the ground and about 8-10' wide. They have also added a handicap accessible ramp, a commercial loading zone, and a small building with 2 restrooms and a ticket booth/small store space. Travis explained about breaking up the project into at least 2 if not 3 phases so that the cost for the project would not overwhelm the board of selectmen and the townspeople. Phase 1 would involve upgrading the road (Railroad Ave.), forming 1 row of parking (closest to the railroad tracks), making handicap parking available and possibly bus parking. A rough estimate put that part of the project at around \$200 thousand. Phase 2 (possibly 2 & 3 if we break it up into smaller pieces) involves the building, the second row of parking, the retaining walls, possibly more parking in the back. When asked, Travis stated that Wright-Pierce had allowed about \$170 thousand for construction of the building with the ticket master's space/store/bathrooms. Some of the committee questioned whether that was too high an estimate and commented that we should try to use a local builder for the job. Given the tough job market, there might be a bargain to be had from someone who was anxious for work. While the location of the proposed building is closer to the water than would be allowed for a residence, there is precedence for a looser interpretation with a building like we are proposing. Travis also told us about the possibility of obtaining the railroad platform and ramp currently in Brunswick. They are in the middle of construction of a new building for a railroad station and mixed use and will be looking to get rid of their current "structure". The committee agreed that it would be wonderful to see at least Phase 1 of this project completed in 2010 in time for Wiscasset's 250th anniversary celebration. We should continue to keep in touch with MDOT about the Brunswick platform and also some possible funding since the goal for this project is to have this become an inter-modal transportation center. This whole project may fit in with some of the new developments around Gateway 1. Travis will send more complete info about the project via email.

We next addressed both the January and the February minutes. We voted 4-0 to accept the January 5, 2009 minutes as presented. The February 9, 2009 minutes were accepted in a 3-0 vote with one abstention (Seaver Leslie because of being absent from the February meeting).

Anne Leslie reported on new developments being discussed at the latest steering committee meeting for the Gateway 1 project. She, Jeffrey Hinderliter, and Arthur

Faucher attended. The group is talking about possibly creating a “corridor entity” that would have voting powers over various projects occurring within the Gateway 1 corridor. The group is wrestling with “what form” this power sharing entity should take. Would there be one vote per town? How would funding be dispersed? How would this entity affect local zoning and ordinances? Are there state incentives for towns that sign on? punitive damages for those that don’t? So far disputes have been peacefully resolved but this is a whole new direction.

Paul Godfrey, Carol Morris and Evan Rickert want to launch this program by July; the current contract runs out in late June. They are hoping to have \$2 million for capital improvement projects – environmental, economic, etc. They are hoping for a technical advisor/administrator for a 3 month period – July/August/September. One of the major goals in the development of the Gateway 1/Route 1 corridor is to keep people close to transportation sites in order to avoid commuting. They also want to preserve scenic views, maintain the capacity of the highway and have people live closer to where they shop, work, etc. There is a lot of work to do to show towns that they will gain benefits that can override the loss of autonomy. This technical advisor/administrator would be there to advise and help towns plan projects and apply for funds. The money source would be some Federal, some stimulus, etc. The structure for overseeing Gateway 1 would be as follows: Executive Committee, Board of Directors, Sub-regional Committees and a Corridor Commission. Seaver observed that despite attempts to control development within the Route 1 corridor, our comp plan will protect us and support our ideas and intentions concerning development.

We voted to adjourn at 9:08 PM after a long and information-filled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Kwantz, Secretary