



# Office of Planning & Codes

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## Wiscasset Ordinance Review Committee Meeting Notes November 22, 2010

Members Present: Karl Olson, Pat Barnes, Doc Schilke, Jackie Lowell, Jeffrey Hinderliter (Town Planner), Laurie Smith (Town Manager), people from the business community: Nancy (realtor), Bill (Avalon Antiques), Al (Big Al's), Joe (Musical Wonder House), Bill Phinney (Phinney Site Planning)

1. Meeting Opens at 5:04 PM.
2. Agenda items discussed: Sign Ordinance (11/22/2010 Draft 2).
3. November 8, 2010 meeting notes approved
4. Signs. Jeffrey states there are some people from the business community here tonight to comment on the most recent version of the sign ordinance. Jeffrey indicates there is a lot of new information in the ordinance the ORC has not discussed. But first, the ORC would like to hear public comment. The following was discussed:
  - Bill (Avalon Antiques). Bill discusses some of his pet peeves. He asks what the allowable total sign square footage will be. There should be a difference in allowable square footage when it comes to businesses on the commercial portion of Rt. 1 and the Village area. Maybe there should be standards that base sign size on the linear footage of the building face. The ORC needs to discuss this. Also, he stated that his business was found in violation of the sign ordinance because antique signs (not related to advertising Avalon) were being sold. These were considered signs by the town and violating the sign ordinance. He would like to see the ORC clear this up. The ORC thought these types of signs should not be included in the sign ordinance. Bill discusses the issue of grandfathering and how existing signs that aren't in conformance with the new sign ordinance will be treated. Will they need to come into compliance after a certain amount of time?
  - Laurie (Town Manager). Laurie discussed the selectmen's thoughts on signage including business directional sign allowable numbers, existing signs and how they will comply if a new ordinance is adopted, different standards for the historic area. Laurie states that Jeffrey will update the Selectmen on the ORC's ordinance progress at their 7 December meeting and recommends that the ORC members come.
  - Nancy (Realtor). Nancy discussed the signage standards for the downtown historic district and indicated the standards for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor businesses should be reconsidered. She thought that sign square footage should be based on the size of the building face. Also, she thought that larger real estate signs should be permitted. It can be difficult to market some properties with the smaller real estate signs. Jeffrey asks if she would object to the larger signs requiring a permit (the smaller ones are exempt) and she said no, she wouldn't object.

- Bill Phinney (Site Planner). Bill discusses his concerns with sign aesthetics. He indicates that he's concerned about the commercialized types of signs encroaching into the downtown historic district. The downtown signs should be a model for Rt. 1.
- Big Al (Big Al's). Al discussed his thoughts on signage including his belief that maximum sign size should be in proportion to the building face with an overall cap in total size. Something such as 2 sq. ft. per linear foot of building face.
- Joe (Musical Wonder House). Joe discusses his thoughts regarding the downtown business directional signs. He says that it can be very hard to read the signs. Finding anything in town can be tough- signs should be easier to see. How about common signs for businesses? Where will the downtown historic district be?

ORC begin their review of the ordinance.

- Section 3: ok
- Section 4: ORC make a few minor changes to the definitions.
- 5.1: ORC discuss how the new ordinance will deal with existing signs that become nonconforming signs as a result of the ordinance change. How will the town look with signs that conform to the old and new ordinances- it may look out of place. We should develop a standard that states signs must be in compliance with the ordinance standards by a certain date. What should this date be- 1 year, 5 years? It should be enough time so the sign owner can get the money to create a new sign. Something like "All signs shall be in conformance with this ordinance within 5 years of the date of adoption." The selectmen indicated they would like to see a time that all signs must be in compliance. The ORC decide to amend this standard so to add a time frame- 5 years.
- 6.1: ORC make minor adjustments to C and F.
- 7: ORC discuss comments from Bill (Avalon) regarding signage that is for sale and has nothing to do with advertising the business where the signs are for sale. ORC believes signs used as merchandise should be exempt and recommend addition of a standard to be sure they are exempt.
- 7: ORC discuss decorative banners, flags and pennants. Should they be exempt? Should they be considered temporary signs? How about flags that just say "open". With the exception of "open" flags, the ORC believes they should not be exempt and most likely would fall under temporary flags. Add open flags as a new standard in the exemption section.
- 8.6: ORC discuss the distance signs should be from street corners and what a safe distance is so they do not interfere with site distance. ORC settle on 30 feet.
- 8.7: Why must signs be within 1,000 ft. of the business building? This standard is from state statute.
- 9.1: ORC begin discussing Business Directional Signs- particular the white and black type in the downtown. Should we increase this size from 31" x 7" to match the state size of 12" x 48"? That may be too big. Maybe we should increase the font but leave the size the same. ORC decide to discuss this at the next meeting.
- **Recommendations:** Resume review (beginning with Section 9) of the sign ordinance at the next ORC meeting.

Adjourn- 6:57 PM