



Office of Planning & Codes

Wiscasset Ordinance Review Committee Meeting Notes December 13, 2010

Members Present: Karl Olson, Pat Barnes, Doc Schilke, Jackie Lowell, Larry Lomison, Jeffrey Hinderliter (Town Planner).

1. Meeting Opens at 5:08 PM.
2. Agenda items discussed: Sign Ordinance (12/13/2010 Draft 3).
3. November 22, 2010 meeting notes approved

Jeffrey gives a brief update on the selectmen's ordinance workshop held on 7 December. He explains the selectmen decided to cancel the ORC's consideration of the Mass Gathering Ordinance because a checklist they recently adopted addresses their needs. So, our consideration of the Mass Gathering Ordinance is no longer necessary.

4. Signs. Jeffrey reviews the materials submitted to the ORC. He indicates there are two emails that we should review as part of our consideration. The ORC decides to resume our review of the ordinance beginning with section 9. The following was discussed:

- 9.1: Business directional signs around town (the black and white ones) - should we continue with the 31" x 7" size or increase it, possibly to 12"x48", which is the state size. Jeffrey indicates that people have said the signs are hard to see. ORC discuss the pros and cons of larger signs and decide to keep the current size.
- 9.2: This references a state standard and is associated with all business directional signs out of the downtown historic district.
- 9.3: ORC discuss the number of permissible business directional signs. The selectmen discussed this and thought the number should be increased from the current allowable 2, but there should not be too many. Jeffrey states there should be a max number allowed in the downtown then an overall max allowed. Why do businesses need the signs? Because they may be located on a road adjacent to a main road. Why do they need multiple signs? Because there may be multiple roads that lead to the business. Is there a restriction on the distance between signs? The only restriction that Jeffrey is aware of is the distance the business must be from the sign. Who installs the business signs in the downtown? Jeffrey thought it was the town and others thought it was the sign control officer but the ordinance states the applicant is responsible. ORC discuss the email from Joe of the Musical Wonder House. They discuss his thoughts about signage and feel that some of the ideas for multiple business signs are not appropriate for downtown- especially on the bridge and by Red's Eats. In fact they could be a distraction and cause traffic issues. A kiosk may be a better idea. ORC feel that most of Joe's comments are not associated with what they can write in an ordinance. ORC decide to allow a max of 2 business directional signs per business in the downtown and an overall maximum of 4 throughout town.

- 9.4: ok
- 10: ORC discuss Temporary Signs- what should the max square footage per sign be? ORC discuss sign size and this begins a discussion on what sign area means. According to the sign area definition, it includes the background whether opened or closed. This created some confusion on how it would be applied so the ORC decides to remove open and closed. Also, is one side of a 2 sided sign included in the count- yes only one side is counted. After further discussion, the ORC decide to apply 12 sq. ft. as the max
- 11: ORC discuss signs in the downtown historic district in particular where the downtown historic district is. Jeffrey says he thinks we have 3 options. 1. Use the description from the National Registry as the district is currently recognized; 2. Modify the National Registry district description so it runs along the coastline; or 3. Use the streets to describe the district. Bill Phinney indicates there is another option to consider that is the bypass and how this could create two separate areas in town. Jeffrey indicates it may be best to go with the downtown historic district as its currently defined (option 1) because this is easier and it follows along with what will most likely be a future overlay zoning district. One concern is some properties with no historical significance will have to conform to standards that are more related to historic properties. ORC decide to go with National Registry description, as is, to use as the downtown historic district description.
- 12: What does the 25% include? This includes an allowable 25% in additional total square feet per property. All signage would be affected by this.
- 13: Sign height is ok.
- 14: Jeffrey indicates the specific setbacks in 14.1 requirements came from state statute. The remainder is a mixture of his work and others. The ORC is ok with this.
- 14 (Sign Area): It is pointed out the section number should be 15. This is an important section because we need to figure out what the max permissible sign area is. At the previous meeting, several business owners thought max square feet should be determined based upon the linear square feet of the building face. ORC discuss this and feel they need an example of a linear sq. ft. formula to see how this may work before a decision on total allowable square feet is made. Jeffrey states he will have some information for the next meeting.
- 14.2: ORC discuss specific sign area and design standards. Jeffrey indicates the final numbers should be discussed once we know what the max allowable sign area is. ORC discuss Awnings and what the valance is and how the max % of area would be applied. Also, Canopy Signs are discussed and exactly what does the definition include- those structure over gas pumps? ORC decide to adjust the language in “Canopy” so it states total sign area and deletes ‘area of the wall on which they are mounted.’ Also, in the Awning standard ‘valance length’ is replaced with ‘sign area’. ORC decide to work on this once they decide on the max square footage.
- 16: Maintenance and Removal is ok.
- 17: Enforcement and Penalties is ok.
- 18: Appeals- Jeffrey discusses appeals and it his opinion that appeals do not need to be first heard by county court and it is the responsibility of the appeals board to first consider an appeal. Bill Phinney reads the ordinance standard that is under discussion and he indicates the way the appeals board has interpreted it is the court must hear it first. Jeffrey indicates he feels that is only the case when it comes to enforcement of a violation and not regular administration of the ordinance such as denying a sign permit. The ORC requests that Jeffrey seek clarification of this from the town attorney.

- 19: Validity/Severability is ok.
- ORC go back to the Sign Area section and discuss this some more.
- Jeffrey indicates that he wants to list the remaining sign ordinance items under consideration. The ORC discuss this and develop the following:
 1. Develop a formula that addresses as an example of what can be used for a max sq. ft. calculation based on linear square footage.
 2. Decide on a max square footage of signage per lot.
 3. Work on the Specific sign area and design standards A – N.
 4. Get opinion from town attorney in regards to who is responsible for hearing appeals.
 5. Work on pennants, flags and banners.
- **Recommendations:** Continue review of the proposed ordinance and consider the 5 remaining items.

5. Adjourn: 6:55 pm.