

**Wiscasset Transportation Committee**  
**June 7, 2010**

**Present:** Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz, Seaver Leslie, Sean Rafter

**Guests:** Ed Polewarczyk (candidate for selectman); J.W. Oliver (reporter, LCN), Chip Huber

Our meeting opened at 7:15 pm with a review of the minutes from April 5, 2010. They were approved with minor spelling corrections in paragraph #2 and #4 and changing the full name of the FHWA; A = Administration, not Agency and W needs to be inserted as part of highway. The vote was taken with 4 members present - 3 yeas, and one abstention (due to absence). Our fifth member arrived after we had taken the vote.

**Army Corps of Engineers Recommendation:** We began discussion of the ACE's action and recommendation regarding the bypass. We were very disturbed by the ACE's choice of N8c, the long bridge over the harbor, as the one that they could approve since they find it to be the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). Sean suggested that we go over the ACE's head and communicate directly with our senators and representatives in Washington so our discussion focused on that direction. We spent a bit of time venting about the ACE's decision. There was strong feeling that 5 years worth of work was simply ignored by the ACE, that they bypassed all our efforts. Seaver stated that it was his understanding that during the process of the PAC (public advisory committee), the FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) had been at the table for the beginning discussions. Don stated that the FHWA and ACE were behind-the-scenes players and that he was aghast at the ACE nullifying the work of the Mid-coast Bypass Task Force which had been at work for nearly 3 years hammering out some kind of an agreement that the towns and people in the region could live with. The task force worked long and hard to find how and where to cross the river and where or even if we would have full interchanges. The question that was finally asked at one of the last task force meetings was "does any member of this task force oppose N2a as the bypass route?" No one stepped forward to oppose the route selection. While there were people who still did not like that choice, they agreed not to oppose it in order to come to some kind of consensus since that was what MDOT needed and was looking for in order to move forward with the process of presenting a route to the ACE. The transportation committee expressed frustration with the board of selectmen's refusal to submit a statement to the ACE regarding the N2a choice; we felt that they did not help support what Wiscasset's task force members believed to be the best route for the town of Wiscasset. We hope that, if we write a letter of rebuttal to the ACE, MDOT and our senators and representatives, the selectmen will endorse it. Seaver stated that he feels that we should focus our efforts on getting organized to push for the kind of bypass that we were promised and that we would like to see, that is, a "parkway" and **not** a highway.

**Wrap-up task force meeting/public hearing:** There will be two meetings held on June 22, 2010 to review the ACE's choice of N8c as the LEDPA and to address the concerns of Wiscasset residents as to what this all means and what the next steps are in the process. The preliminary meeting of the Mid-coast Bypass Task Force will happen from 4:30-6:30 pm and the public hearing will be from 7-9 pm. Don will let us know about the locations for those meetings as soon as he knows. We may have the opportunity to comment on design features to make the eventual bypass more palatable – things like a lowered roadway, lots of vegetation, noise abatement, and other things to make it a pleasant driving experience as well as less objectionable as possible to abutters and to the town of Wiscasset as a whole.

Sean made a motion for Don to write a draft of a letter to be sent to our national delegation in Washington, expressing our reaction to and concern about the decision that has been made by the ACE. Our concerns are about the wisdom of the choice itself and their lack of respect and consideration for the whole process of consensus building that the Wiscasset stakeholders took part in as members of the Mid-coast Bypass Task Force. Lois seconded the motion; the vote was 4-0-1 (abstention). We would like to be able to discuss the draft at our next meeting in July.

**Railroad Station:** Chip Huber, resident of Wiscasset and owner of property on Birch Point Rd. attended our meeting to make a presentation proposing the building of a commuter railroad station on his piece of property. He brought charts and diagrams to show the buildings on the property that might be used as the station itself and to suggest parking areas and possible picnic/recreational spaces, etc. He included suggestions for access and egress to the property. We thanked him for his time and effort and told him that we would need to digest and discuss his proposal. We briefly talked about the issue and decided to discuss it further at our next meeting.

We adjourned at 9:10 pm, agreeing to meet again in July to review the draft that Don will prepare regarding the ACE's LEPDA choice for the bypass route.

Respectfully submitted by Lois Kwantz, Secretary