

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
January 3, 2011

Present: Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, and Sean Rafter

Absent: Lois Kwantz, Seaver Leslie

Guest: Ed Polewarczyk

Don opened the meeting at 7:10pm. The minutes of December 6, 2010 were read and approved. Don reported that Jay Clement of the Army Corps of Engineers had met with Laurie and himself after the December 15 Midcoast Bypass Task Force meeting and suggested meeting with the WTC and other officials from Wiscasset in lieu of providing some of the information that Wiscasset had requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Don polled the members about the best times to meet and will report back to the committee after he communicates with Laurie and Jay to agree on a mutually convenient time and place.

Don then reported on the discussion at the Dec 15 Midcoast Bypass Task Force meeting. He said that there had been much consternation about the eagle's nest discovered on Davis Island that effectively made the N8c bypass route unbuildable. Some task force members, particularly Edgecomb, did not accept the US Fish and Wildlife Service's refusal to permit the nest to be disturbed. Gerry Audibert from MDOT had shown maps and explained the three route adjustments to N8c that had been considered in order to stay 660 feet from the nest as required by law. Gerry had said that none of the fixes to N8c were considered buildable due to their increased environmental impacts. Gerry had gone on to say that MDOT proposed to identify a buildable bypass route from among the remaining two route alignments N2a and N2f. He had said MDOT also wished to reconsider alignment N2h, which had been previously dropped from consideration.

Don said the task force then discussed whether to recommend dropping the planned bypass or to consider the other route alternatives. On a motion by Bob Faunce, Lincoln County Planner, to move forward to identify a buildable route the task force had voted 9 in favor, 5 opposed, and one abstention.

The Wiscasset Transportation Committee decided to recommend to the Wiscasset selectmen that they submit a letter to MDOT in support of the Midcoast Bypass Task Force majority decision. The committee reviewed and amended a draft prepared by Don of such a letter. By a vote of 3-0-0 they recommended the draft letter for the consideration of the Board of Selectmen.

The committee will next meet on Monday February 7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Jones, Chairman

DRAFT

Town of Wiscasset

January 4, 2011

David A. Cole, Commissioner
Department of Transportation
16 Statehouse Station
Augusta ME 04333

Dear Commissioner Cole:

At the December 15 meeting of the Midcoast Bypass Task Force, your department solicited public comment on the advisability of moving forward to identify a buildable corridor for a Route One bypass of Wiscasset village, or terminating planning for the project. The Wiscasset Board of Selectmen supports the majority position of the Midcoast Bypass Task Force to move forward to complete a bypass route selection.

In our letter of July 11, 2006 we asked you to remove the corridor alignment known as N8c from any further consideration. It appears that discovery of an untouchable eagle's nest within that alignment has done what you felt unable to do, and granted our request. There are a number of features of the remaining alignments that are extremely burdensome to Wiscasset. Never-the-less, despite the fact that Wiscasset as the primary host town will bear the greatest burden of human displacements and tax loss we urge you to move forward.

During the twelve years of the current bypass study, and despite strong community opposition to aspects of various alignments, Wiscasset has consistently supported the efforts of MDOT to provide mobility on the Route One corridor to sustain the economic vitality of the midcoast region. We accept the substantial burden that will mean for us. We hope that our neighboring communities will also step up and accept the burdens asked of them in order to restore mobility to US Route One.

On behalf of the Wiscasset Board of Selectmen, I am

Sincerely yours,

Laurie Smith, Town manager