

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
August 1, 2011

Present: Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz

Absent: Seaver Leslie, Sean Rafter

We opened the meeting at 7:05 with a review of the minutes from our last meeting in April. Cindy moved that the minutes be adopted as written. Don seconded and the vote was 3-0-0 in favor.

Bypass Discussion: Upon learning of MDOT's decision to abandon plans for a bypass in Wiscasset, our discussion for the evening was an effort to move forward with positive steps to help control traffic congestion through the village. We are relieved that the historic village area is listed on the National Historic Register because that definitely will help protect our downtown; however, we are concerned about the kinds of things that MDOT might attempt to force on us and we want to be sure that we, as a community, have a say in what and how things are done. Some suggestions in the past have been one way streets, prohibiting left hand turns, barriers down Main St., possibly demanding traffic control officers at the town's expense during the summer months, etc. Our belief is that since Route 1 is a state/federal highway and the state has denied a bypass, then the state should aid in the payments. A conference call to Commissioner Bernhardt was reported with his comment that the town needs to adopt interim measures to improve the infrastructure. We as a committee spent the rest of our meeting brainstorming to come up with possible solutions to help lessen the congestion. Our recommendations are as follows:

1. We believe that a roundabout at the intersection of Rte. 1/Rte. 27 at the town offices is something that should be explored further. Our feeling is that it would not slow down traffic on Rte.1 any worse then it is already being slowed and it would allow for traffic to flow more easily off of Rte. 27.
2. There should be a left-hand turn pocket created on the northbound side of Rte. 1 at the Middle St. intersection.
3. Explore the possibility of one-way streets on Middle and Water. We would suggest reversing the directions of the one ways from the last time this was tried. Cars would turn off of Main St. ONTO Middle St. as a one way and would have the option to come off of Middle St. in two different ways. On Middle St. north, cars could turn right OR left on Lincoln St. taking them either to Water St. or to Federal St./Rte 218. On Middle St. south, cars could turn right onto Bradbury St., which connects into Lee St. and eventually Rte.1 OR they could turn left onto Fore St. taking them to the waterfront and yacht club or back onto Water St. Water St. on both sides of Rte.1 should be one way headed toward Rte.1. We recommend this traffic flow because we believe that Water St. is narrower and more congested with pedestrian traffic, which often slows down or impedes motorists' attempts to turn into the street from Rte.1 further slowing the traffic flow. Eliminating two-way traffic on Middle and Water Sts. would address safety issues that arise due to parking on both sides of these streets. One-way traffic on Middle St. south could also provide additional spaces by allowing parking on both sides.
4. We would entertain the possibility of attractive, moveable barriers on Main St. between Middle and Water Sts. during the summer season to discourage jay walking and cross lane parking maneuvers.
5. We strongly recommend pushing MDOT to follow through with the plans for the Intermodal Facility & Parking area on Railroad Ave.
6. We recommend designating an area for larger RV's to park.

We moved on to a discussion of the use-of-traffic-officers trial currently in effect. We felt that they have been doing a good job of directing/pulling traffic through the downtown area. We did question having both officers gone at the same time for breaks and felt that at least the Water St. intersection should always have coverage. We also felt that the officers could make the pedestrian and side street vehicles wait a bit longer to cross Main St.

Don let us know that the selectmen were looking for a transportation committee member to sit on the interview committee for the new town planner. There would be two meetings of 2-3 hours in length in the evening. Neither Cindy nor Lois are available. Don agreed to ask Sean Rafter if he could serve and if not, then Don agreed to do it.

We adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM. Our next meeting will be scheduled as needed.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Kwantz