

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
2 April 2007

Present: Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz, Sean Rafter

Absent: Seaver Leslie

Guests: John Van Orsdell, Poe Cilley, Paula Gibbs

Don Jones called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM. The committee reviewed the minutes from March 5, 2007. They moved to accept them without change; the vote was unanimous.

Don provided an update re: the following matters:

The Bypass Task Force: Bill Barnes, selectman, has been replaced by Art Faucher, town manager, as a member of the task force. Art Faucher is unable to attend our meeting tonight due to a previous commitment.

The Gateway 1 Region 2 Meeting: All the TC members with the exception of Seaver Leslie attended the most recent Gateway 1 Region 2 meeting in Nobleboro. Sean Rafter videotaped the meeting and it will air on a rotating basis on LCTV. He will make the times and dates available to the press so that it can be published for selectmen and the public to watch if they wish.

The Gateway 1 Steering Committee: This group which consists of representatives from each of the 21 towns involved plus other interested organizations like the SVCA met on March 28, 2007. At that meeting the group voted to adopt the final draft of scenarios written about the 3 projected possibilities of growth and development along Route 1. The three scenarios are labeled Full Wind reflecting a booming economy, Riding the Currents meaning continuing the current trends and Perfect Storm describing a stagnation of the economy. There were some changes, mostly to wording. The group used imaginary scenarios focusing on Searsport and discussed what they assumed to be the effects based on each of the scenarios.

Bypass Task Force: This group met to wrap up loose ends of the March 14, 2007 meeting in which there was a detailed discussion of the 5 proposed routes. They will probably not meet again until the DEIS (draft environmental impact statement) is issued by MDOT which is tentatively scheduled for a May release.

We then took up the major purpose for our meeting which was to discuss a proposal for a new bypass route. Don introduced John Van Orsdell of Boothbay Harbor to the committee and turned the floor over to him. John gave us some background about his reasons for a new proposal, focusing particularly on the unpopularity of the currently proposed routes. He has been working with a group of engineering/problem solving students to form this new route. He is proposing that MDOT develop Pottle Cove Rd., the point where the CMP lines cross Route 1 (next to Frugal Fashions) and then build a bridge along the center of the Sheepscot River to connect to the middle of the Davey Bridge. The route on land would be approximately 1 1/2 miles in length and the causeway/bridge span itself would be about 1.2-1.3 miles. According to Mr. Van Orsdell's calculations, this new route would be shorter than the other proposed routes; it would be less expensive, easier to build, less disruptive and take less time to do it; it would leave valuable properties on the tax rolls in Wiscasset. Mr. Van Orsdell believes that the people at MDOT are very interested in his proposal but that they cannot consider it UNTIL the comment period begins after the release of the DEIS. We mentioned that Wiscasset hopes to have small cruise ships and that a 40' sailboat would require a 60' clearance under any bridge. Mr. Van Orsdell informed us that he will be

presenting his proposal to the Wiscasset selectmen on April 17 and asked for us to support him. As the committee began discussion of the proposal, it became evident that there were many questions and concerns about the effect of such a structure on the view, the aesthetics and the history of Wiscasset as a seaport. Don expressed that personally he was concerned that the bridge would interfere with the view of the harbor and Jeremy Squam Island. Poe Cilley of Point East commented that one of the positives of the development at the old CMP site was PE's efforts to promote the concept of Wiscasset as a port town. This kind of a structure could be a hinderance to boating activities and would certainly "divide" the river and separate Point East from the town rather than unifying the two. There were also other concerns from the committee about the impact on mooring areas and lobstering, and the fact that this solution does not deal with traffic coming into town on Routes 27 and 218. Mr. Van Orsdell commented that we all have to weigh aesthetics versus other considerations and decide which is more important. He asked that we as a committee ask the selectmen to give his proposal some serious consideration and said that there would be visualizations available for the April 17th meeting with the selectmen. The committee thanked him for his time and efforts and agreed that we would be most interested in seeing the drawings.

There being no other business, we adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Lois Kwantz, Secretary