

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
May 7, 2007

Present: Don Jones, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz, Seaver Leslie and Sean Rafter
Guest: Art Faucher, Town Manager

The meeting opened at 7 PM. After reviewing the minutes from the April 2, 2007 meeting, the following corrections were made: the spelling of "available" and the configuration of 1^{1/2} in paragraphs 1 and 3.

The Van Orsdell Proposed Bypass: Sean brought to our attention that his discussion with Van Orsdell about the negative issues around a bridge through the center of our harbor apparently resulted in an adjustment in Van Orsdell's proposal to feature a tunnel in place of the beginning part of the bridge. Sean also pointed out that John Van Orsdell has established a "college for creative thinking" and he is presenting this bypass proposal as their idea, not his own. The \$300K fee that he is seeking from MDOT if they use this new idea would go to help establish the college, not for John's own personal gain. Seaver commented that this new proposal is similar to the C1 route from years ago and he wondered if John was aware of that. Seaver also asked if it is 100% true that, if there is no community support for a route, NOTHING will happen? The response was that if we can find some route that would get majority support, then it is more likely to get built. We discussed whether a tunnel in the water is actually easier to build than a bridge and less expensive because it would use pre-cast concrete sections. Don suggested that Van Orsdell's proposal may become part of the public comment period with MDOT after the DEIS (draft environmental impact statement) is released but that Dale Doughty and Ed Hanscom of MDOT need to "disavow" their support of this idea so that the public is not misled into thinking that MDOT is now entertaining a new route at this time. The release of the DEIS has been moved to July, BUT??? The question was asked about why the "fear" of an interchange on Route 218 if the bypass went that direction; we believe that much of it stems from a fear that there will be explosive development in Alna if an interchange made it easier to travel to and from that town. It was pointed out that the development on the north side of Clark's Point with homes to be valued in the \$400-700K range is well on its way. Roads are in and tennis courts are planned, etc. Don pointed out that the planning board has no legal reason to deny or delay permits as long as the developer meets all requirements. We wondered if this development creates more pressure for the N8c route.

Gateway 1: The kiosks for the Gateway 1 information are now out there. They consist of glossy pictures and lots of words describing what Gateway 1 is all about. It was at the Wiscasset Community Center this past week and now is in Damariscotta. It is supposed to return to Wiscasset in June at the municipal building, the library and the polls. There will be a Steering Committee meeting on June 27th with discussion about whether to ask each of the 21 towns to sign a

new contract regarding Gateway 1.

Discussion with Art Faucher: After an introduction to the committee members, Art got right to work with providing us information about his efforts and concerns around transportation issues in Wiscasset. His first order of business was to apprise us of what he had done so far about the condition of Route 1 south of the village. It was last coated in the fall of 1998 during cold weather conditions at a time when “tack” had become optional. Since it was never applied prior to resurfacing, the preparation work was not properly done resulting in the roadway falling apart already. Art invited Rhonda Fletcher, district engineer for MDOT, to ride on Route 1 with him and she admitted that the conditions were very bad. Currently, MDOT has plans to lay a surface coat on Route 218, which does not really need it yet, and on Route 1 for 1 mile from the Woolwich town line north. Art has asked if they could divert the funds for 218 and the 1 mile section of 1 and use it instead on Route 1 between Bradford Rd. and Dunkin Donuts. Art also mentioned that there are projections of a complete redoing of Route 1 through the downtown sometime in 2009/10. Sean Rafter made the following motion with a second from Seaver Leslie:

The Wiscasset Transportation Committee moves to ask MDOT to divert surface mix funds currently set aside for resurfacing 1 mile of Federal St. and 1 mile of outer Bath Rd. from the Woolwich town line to be used instead to resurface Route 1 from Bradford Rd. toward Shaw’s for 2 miles. The committee voted in favor of the motion, 5-0.

Art also reported that he will be meeting with the Maine Eastern Railroad and will be inquiring about using Railroad Ave. for parking purposes. It has also be pointed out that there needs to be a platform that meets ADA (Americans with Disabilities) standards. Also, the railroad has ruined a tree down at the public dock area where they currently sell tickets. Don commented on the pile of rock sitting on the entrance to White’s Island, stating that this is technically part of Pleasant Street and so should not be there. However, the committee felt that, since there is currently no legal access to White’s Island via the foot bridges, it is a moot point at this time. We also expressed the hope that someday there will be a footbridge from Point East to White’s Island and then into downtown.

There continues to be a problem with the West Alna Rd where it washed out a while ago. Water continues to flood the roadway periodically and Art believes that this is because the culvert that was installed was not the correct size. Hopefully something can be done to correct this situation.

Since it was getting late, we voted to adjourn after thanking Art Faucher for sharing his time and information with us. We set June 4, 2007 for our next meeting, if needed, and adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Kwantz, Secretary