

Wiscasset Waterfront Committee Minutes

Monday February 19, 2001

Present: Donald Jones, Chairman, David Brown, D. Kenniston Cooper, and Joseph Piccirillo

Guests: Judith Foss and Chris Hall of Stafford Associates

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm. New member Joe Piccirillo was welcomed. A quorum was present. The minutes of the January 8th meeting were approved without change. Ken Cooper arrived late and asked if future meetings could begin at 7:15pm rather than 7pm. There was no objection. There was no report from the Harbormaster who was not in attendance.

The committee again discussed the lack of response from the selectmen on eight recommendations of the committee since October 16. The chairman recounted his conversation with First Selectman Ben Rines about waterfront issues. Ben told him that the selectmen had been very busy with the town's financial crisis, but that they would plan to meet with the Waterfront Committee in April. The selectmen have decided not to forward the Waterfront Committee budget proposals to the Budget Committee, or to propose any new waterfront spending, including the mast and boom, to the town meeting. According to Ben, the selectmen intend to order the Ferry Landing float removed before ice becomes a problem in the river. Ben also indicated that he would talk to the town engineer about a structural assessment of the pedestrian pier, and that there is probably enough money in the waterfront account to do some of the things the Waterfront Committee is recommending.

The chairman reminded the members that there is a public hearing scheduled for Feb 22 to consider, among other things, the changes to the Port and Harbor Ordinance recommended by this committee, and urged all members to attend. Judith Foss also reminded the committee that a public hearing with the Maine Department of Transportation is scheduled for Feb 28 to discuss possible downtown traffic changes this summer. She felt that the results of this meeting could be important to the economic health of Wiscasset, and urged all members to attend.

Chris hall lead a recap and discussion of the joint meeting on Feb 5 between members of the Planning Board, the Waterfront Committee, and Ford Reiche, CEO of Safe Handling, Inc. of Auburn about a possible rail to barge intermodal facility in Wiscasset. There was agreement among the members that the concept of Wiscasset becoming possibly the second largest port in Maine should be vigorously pursued. Ken Cooper expressed concern about possible opposition to increased barge traffic by the lobstermen. Chris Hall suggested that increased port activity might necessitate upgrading to a full-time harbormaster. The increased costs of port administration might be funded with port fees based on tonnage.

Judith Foss asked the committee if they were willing to work with Stafford Associates to put together a master waterfront economic development plan. The members were unanimously supportive, and it was agreed to proceed to try to pull together something to present to the selectmen in the next few months. Chris Hall ended by asking the members to carefully consider what, if any, limits should be placed on waterfront developments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm. The next meeting will be on Monday March 5, 2001 in the map room at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted
Donald Jones, Chairman