

WISCASSET HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
JULY 25, 2019

Present: Chair Susan Blagden, Phil DiVece, Pam Logan and Leslie Roberts

Chair Susan Blagden called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

1. Approve meeting minutes from July 11, 2019

Phil DiVece moved to approve the minutes as presented. Vote 4-0-0.

2. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items – none

3. COA for sign at 65 Gardiner Road, Little Village Bistro

Applicant was not present. Phil DiVece moved to table the COA to August 1. Susan Blagden said that the applicant had been contacted regarding the meeting and had paid the application fee. The applicant is in violation of the sign ordinance. Vote 4-0-0. (see below)

4. COA for fence at 45 Federal Street

Phil DiVece moved to accept the application as presented. Sherri Dunbar presented additional specific information on the fence planned for her property and an updated sketch including dimensions. She also presented a letter from a neighbor and said other neighbors had recommended approval. Phil DiVece confirmed with Dunbar that the fence at the rear of the property would not be visible from the street; the part visible from the street is 56 feet from the sidewalk. The type of fence is Primrose, high quality vinyl with a lifetime guarantee. The gate will be a section of the fence with hinges. Dunbar said that one couldn't tell from the street whether the fence was wood or vinyl. She commented on the poor shape of many wood fences in town.

Leslie Roberts said the Historic Preservation Commission had been discussing materials and was trying to shy away from vinyl. She said plastic tends to break down and is hard to maintain; wood is more appropriate. Dunbar maintained that there is nothing in the ordinance to say that the commission prefers wood. She added she couldn't afford a wood fence and had selected the best quality vinyl so that she would not have to replace or repaint in the next 20 or 30 years. She said it was indistinguishable from wood. Phil DiVece said he was not in favor of wood because it is difficult to maintain, and it was difficult to obtain good wood. He added that the fence was not along the sidewalk and agreed that no one driving by would notice. He said the applicant had done all the commission had asked her to do and there was no reason not to approve. Vote 1-3-0 (Blagden, Logan and Roberts opposed).

Speaking in opposition to the vote were DiVece, Dunbar, Sky and Michelle Wentworth, Judy Flanagan, Steve Christiansen and landscape architect Peter Wells. They cited the advantages of a vinyl fence over wood, the affordability of a vinyl fence, the lack of a list of approved materials, the initial purpose of the commission and the qualifications of the commission members to require a wood fence,

Susan Blagden said in view of the comments made there was a certain validity to the fact that the commission does not have an established material list and recommended that the commission

reconsider the vote. Phil DiVece moved to reconsider the application for a vinyl fence. Vote 3-1-0 (Logan opposed). Phil Device moved to approve the application for a fence behind 45 Federal Street. Vote 3-1-0 (Logan opposed).

3. COA for sign at 65 Gardiner Road, Little Village Bistro (see above)

Hunter Baccus, representing Tony Bickford, owner of Little Village Bistro, was present. The application fee was paid. Phil DiVece moved to approve the application of Little Village Bistro. Vote 4-0-0.

5. COA for garage at 2 High Street to replace demolished carriage house

The applicant was not present and had asked that the matter be postponed until August 15. Phil DiVece moved to move the application of Jan and Todd Haedrich for 2 High Street to August 15. Vote 4-0-0.

Old Business

6. Discussion of Bicentennial Participation

Leslie Roberts is on the Bicentennial Committee and will keep the commission informed on events. There is a meeting at the chamber office on August 7. Meetings at the Chamber building are open to all.

Steve Christiansen provided information from Chapter 20 Volume IV of the town history found at the town office vault on the separation of Maine from Massachusetts. He said voting began in 1816 and was 1/3 Federalist and 2/3 Democratic. There were 11,269 for and 10,347 in the district opposed to the separation. He also provided information on the names considered for Maine such as Columbus, Ligonias and A-i.

7. Discussion of acceptable material

Susan Blagden said so much of the previous discussion of materials was based on the cost, and the commission needed to do heavy research. Beginning proposals will be made on each section at the August 15 meeting. It was unclear if the materials list would become part of the ordinance. It was suggested that the commission be guided by the accepted list

8. Discussion of Ordinance Updates

Blagden said she hoped people would come to help with the updates to the ordinance. The approval process was reviewed beginning with the Ordinance Review committee, Planning Board public hearings and approval of the select board before a vote is taken at the June town meeting. Commission members will review ordinances of other towns.

Pam Logan said there will be violations of the ordinance until information is sent to owners in the historic district. More outreach is needed to realtors, and letters to the editor should be sent. She added that she had information on a grant that would help with repair of the town clock.

Phil DiVece moved to adjourn at 6:15 p.m. Vote 4-0-0.