

WISCASSET HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES, AUGUST 22, 2019

Present: Chair Susan Blagden, Pam Logan and Leslie Roberts

The chair called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

1. Approve meeting minutes from August 1, 2019.

Leslie Roberts moved to accept the minutes of August 1, 2019 as amended. Vote 3-0-0.

2. Public Comment

Steve Barnatt, 24 Hill Street, asked if there was a specific time to complete an approved project. He plans to complete the project, which was approved by the commission, next year. He was advised there was no time limit if the project remains the same as that which was approved.

The chair read the Purpose and Establishment of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide a framework within which the residents of the Town of Wiscasset can protect the historic, architectural and cultural heritage of significant areas, buildings, structures, landmarks and sites in the Town while accepting compatible new construction. The heritage and economic well-being of the Town will be strengthened by preserving its architectural and historic setting, conserving property values in unique areas, fostering civic beauty, and promoting the use of historic or architecturally significant buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Wiscasset. The intent of this Ordinance is to assist property owners in maintaining the architectural integrity of historic resources within the Town. Once destroyed, these historic resources cannot be replaced. To prevent such losses, the intent of this Ordinance is to:

10.1.2 Protect, preserve and enhance the outward appearance and architectural features of structures within designated districts or designated sites or landmarks.

10.1.2 Prevent, without prior review, the demolition or removal of significant historic buildings or structures within designated districts or designated sites or landmarks and other significant design elements.

10.1.3 Preserve, protect and enhance the essential character of designated districts by protecting relationships of groups of buildings or structures.

10.1.4 Accept new buildings and structures in designated districts that do not displace historic structures or sites, and that are designed and built in a manner which is compatible with the character of the district.

10.1.5 Promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the people of the Town of Wiscasset.

Blagden said the ordinance is flawed and the Commission welcomed input with the amendments to the ordinance. She said the commission welcomes applicants who are planning to do significant work on

historic structures to come to the commission for advice and assistance before submitting an application.

3. COA for garage construction at 2 High Street

The applicant has advised that work has been postponed until next year and the commission will reopen the COA at that time.

4. COA for replacing windows, build a roof over front entry at Lincoln Lodge, 17 Fort Hill Street

Leslie Roberts moved to consider the application of the Lincoln Lodge. Bill Cressey, Secretary of the lodge, provided historic photos of the building. Cressey said the front steps are dilapidated and need replacing without change. In response to Pam Logan's question regarding ADA compliance, Cressey said he had spoken to the CEO and the steps will be made to code. A ramp already exists. There is no railing on the lower section of the steps but a railing matching what is already there will be added.

Cressey said shingles on the portico will match the color of the shingles on the main building roof. The current building has vinyl siding with wrapped aluminum trim. Leslie Roberts quoted the ordinance, "Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the material being replaced in design, texture and visual qualities." Cressey said the lodge was hoping to use vinyl as it looks the same. He added that the lodge had an older membership and it was difficult to do maintenance with only volunteers.

Jim Munson, Treasurer, said the lodge would like to use vinyl to match what is now in place. The iron railing is not historic and replacing it is costly. He said wood could be used, but that would require painting, vinyl would not. Pam Logan noted that vinyl is not historic.

Steve Barnatt said the type of material does not matter. He would rather see vinyl than decaying wood unpainted because upkeep is not affordable. Leslie Roberts said vinyl is not appropriate, it doesn't hold up, it starts to break down and gets funny-colored and can't be repaired, so maybe something more appropriate than vinyl should be used. Cressey said there was nothing in the ordinance prohibiting vinyl. He added that it was not fair to reject vinyl when there are all sorts of vinyl used in the town.

Steve Christiansen said the board had the same discussion with a previous applicant. The commission didn't like vinyl, but nothing says the lodge can't use vinyl.

Susan Blagden said that in the event of replacement, the new material shall match the material being replaced in design, texture and visual qualities. Vinyl is not the same texture as metal. The vinyl on the overhang is permitted because it matches what is existing on the building.

Susan Blagden asked whether the lodge had tried for grants. David Sawyer, Master, said he did not want the lodge to be hamstrung by taking a grant, and he is not pro-grant. In addition, the Grand Lodge does not have money available for things like this.

Leslie Roberts asked if the lodge would consider restoring the windows. Cressey said the problem is that the wind blows right through them. Interior storm windows were suggested; however, the upstairs windows have elaborate frames which would not accommodate interior storm windows. Exterior storm

windows would be aluminum. Cressey said he did not consider rebuilding the windows because they would have to be rebuilt again in five or ten years. Cressey said the new windows will look the same as they do now.

A concerned abutter said the commission was missing the point: The windows don't match now, so why save them. Logic should overcome emotion he said, and they should look at the new modern materials that can be used in an appropriate architectural manner. Pam Logan said the commission had to follow ordinance.

Susan Blagden offered as a compromise to allow the vinyl on windows not facing the street and repair the front windows. She said it would cost under \$500 to install interior storms.

Jim Munson said that the windows facing the street would still have to be rebuilt, so they might as well replace them with vinyl.

John Blagdon asked the commission to bear in mind that the lodge is an independent group taking money out of their own pockets, and it was sad to have to humble themselves to get something done that would be good for the town and for the Masons. He asked that the commission not put off the decision too long. Susan Blagden suggested that the commission settle the rail and the entrance and consider the windows at the September 5 meeting.

Susan Blagden said that since the building was vinyl clad, there could be an argument for replacing windows with vinyl.

Leslie Roberts moved to ask the masons for patience and to table the matter for two weeks until the September 5 meeting after the commission has had time to research the windows issue. The commission members were invited to visit the building. Vote 3-0-0.

David Sawyer said he was not interested in reglazing the windows, but he could put in two over two windows. He said storm windows were a great idea if the commission had someone to put them on and take them off.

Susan Blagden recommended settling the rail and entrance now and putting off the decision on the windows until September 5. Vote 3-0-0. Blagden said that the entryway is vinyl as is the building and it would look strange if the materials were different. She suggested looking into polymer for the railing at a comparable price and bringing a sample in for a final decision.

Leslie Roberts moved to accept the design of the portico and steps but wait for a sample of the railing. Vote 3-0-0.

Old Business

5. Update on steeple/town clock grant

Information on the building is needed for a grant application.

6. Discussion of acceptable materials, Secretary of the Interior guidelines

Information on saving windows and how long vinyl windows last is available. Research on aluminum windows is necessary.

7. Discussion of Ordinance updates, Castine HP Ordinance

New Business

Susan Blagden reported that 350 cards had been sent out and only those lacking an address were returned. The commission discussed a draft of a mailing to realtors with information on benefits and restrictions of living in a historic district to be given to buyers and sellers. It was suggested that twenty copies be sent to each office.

Leslie Roberts referred to Section 10.3.1.4 of the zoning ordinance which states that the Board of Selectmen may appoint other persons, not necessarily residents of Wiscasset, to serve in an advisory or consultant basis to the members of the commission. She recommended inviting experts such as Les Fossell or David Pope to speak. She will investigate the possibility and whether a fee would be required.

Leslie Roberts asked if the commission could ask for as part of the application three estimates, for replacement, replacement in kind or restoration. Pam Logan said the COA covers those subjects and she emphasized the need for the applicant to return the check list. Susan Blagden said it would benefit potential applicants to attend a meeting before their application is made to address potential issues with the commission.

Leslie Roberts asked the members of the press who were present if they would consider writing an article on the commission's work, restoring old windows, for example.

Adjournment

Pam Logan moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Vote 3-0-0.