**Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission**

Minutes, 3/2/17

Present: John Reinhardt, Wendy Donovan, Gordon Kontrath, Richard Thompson, Jim Kochan. Susan Blagden arrived late.

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm

2. Consideration of minutes

The minutes from February 2, 2017 were accepted with corrections 4-0 (Richard abstained).

The minutes from February 16, 2017 were accepted 3-0 (Richard, Jim abstained). Steve Christiansen pointed out that his name was misspelled in the 2/16 minutes – see attached correction.

3. Certificate of Appropriateness

The application for a COA for 158 Federal Street (addition of a deck) was approved 5-0.

4. Other business

Jim moved to pursue the “other business” section of the meeting before the workshop. The motion was approved 5-0.

The Advisory Committee to the MDOT project has invited the Historic Preservation Commission to meet with them on Monday, March 27.

Richard noted that he was shocked at the imbalance of the February 27th MDOT meeting. There was an extensive presentation by MDOT and almost no comment from the Advisory Committee. He was appalled that a member of the committee had to ask to be on the agenda, and was told that he could not speak. The Committee is there to exchange ideas. It was not initially supposed to have selectmen in charge but was chaired by a selectman, which does not allow for a balanced exchange. The group is not asking meaningful questions or objecting in any way – objections were not allowed to happen.

Ben stated that the Committee was set up to help the town with the MDOT project. A lot of time will be spent on MDOT making presentations. The Town manager has been facilitating the meetings, but was not able to be present on 2/27. Ben is hopeful that our meeting with the committee will be productive. They need our input on design considerations. The meeting is not meant to be adversarial.

Susan said that however we feel about the committee as individuals, we should be “in the position of Caesar’s wife.”

Gordon noted that the committee was supposed to be made up of people from different areas of town, who have input in the process. The committee can’t expect input from the Historic Preservation Commission without first giving us information.

Susan stated that the Commission needs to clarify its position. She is concerned that MDOT is taking control of what we can do on our side streets.

Jim pointed out that the project does not just involve re-routing RT 1 through town. It will have a major impact on the Historic District. The plan is already different from what was blessed by the town.

Richard said that if the person who asked had been allowed to speak, there would have been a conversation that would have been helpful for our commission to hear.

Gordon stated that the MDOT opted to push the Feds out of the project due to the historic restrictions. They will do what they want to do.

John is concerned that the Advisory Committee has decided to have no chair.

It was suggested that all Commission members review the town’s comprehensive plan before the meeting on March 27 and think about issues we would like to see discussed. We will craft a position for the 3/27 meeting at our meeting on 3/16.

5. Ordinance workshop

Ben mentioned that he needs to have changes to the ordinance finalized by the March 16th meeting so the ORC has time to review them. Currently no public hearings have been held, but the changes we have made so far have been sent to the ORC.

Jim recommended deleting the applicant’s name, phone # and email from the posted notice. The notice should be no smaller than 11x17, and must be posted 2 weeks before the public hearing. It will include a note that sketch plan information can be reviewed at the town planning office.

Fee recommendations:

For a minor project (not requiring board review) – no fee

For a major project, requiring board approval - $10

For a review that happens after the fact - $300 (same fee as if a proper building permit is not acquired)

The next commission meeting will be Thursday, March 16 at 5:00 pm.