



Office of Planning & Codes

Wiscasset Ordinance Review Committee Meeting Notes September 13, 2010

Members Present: Karl Olson, Pat Barnes, Jackie Lowell, Doc Schilke, Jeffrey Hinderliter (Town Planner), Rick Lang (CEO). Bill Phinney, registered voter.

1. Meeting Opens at 5:05PM.
2. Agenda items discussed: Sign Ordinance, Temporary Sales Ordinance, Seasonal or Temporary Business Ordinance, Special Amusement Ordinance
3. August 23, 2010 meeting notes approved

Jeffrey provides the ORC with an update concerning recent action taken by the selectmen associated with the Village Waterfront Ordinance. Jeffrey states the selectmen decided change the VW ordinance by removing the parking standard and removing Castle Tucker from the district. Also, the selectmen decided to delay the November vote on the ordinance until the ORC completes more ordinances so they can be packaged. ORC states that the selectmen wanted to include parking standards, now they don't- why? The ORC also discuss the zoning of Castle Tucker including amending the entire VW district so it ends at the Yacht Club. Jeffrey states that he will place the VW ordinance with the Selectmen's changes on the next agenda but it appears the ORC can do little work because the selectmen have decided on what changes they'll accept. Also, the selectmen choose to delay the vote on the Shellfish Conservation Ordinance amendments.

4. Sign Ordinance. Jeffrey discusses the ORC assignment of reviewing the sign ordinance and looking at signs around town. He says that he is looking for feedback so he can create an amended sign ordinance for the next ORC meeting. Rick Lang, CEO, is here to discuss his observations of the ordinance.

- Total number of permissible signs needs to be listed
- What sizes should be applied?
- 'A' signs- how should they be viewed when determining total sign area and number of sizes allowed
- Mobile signs- confusing- maybe these should be entirely removed.
- Miscellaneous signs- what should we do with open signs, pennants, flags, card board/plastic advertising signs? Limit the numbers? Limit the time they can be placed? Limit the size and location?
- Temporary signs- this needs to be worked on to. It is important to define what a temporary sign is. What should the total allowable sq. ft. be?
- Multiple zones for signs? Possibly one for the Rt. 1 business district (properties abutting Rt. 1 from the Woolwich town line to the ice pond) and one for the village. Keep in mind the comprehensive plan recommendations. There should be different allowable sizes and numbers in each district.

- Digital signs/electronic- should these be allowed? How often do they change? State law regulates these types of sign so we are sure it conforms to it
 - Vending machine signs- should these be counted as separate signs? Should they be included with the total permissible sign area?
 - Political signs- we should limit size and numbers if state law allows the town to do this. Check the Brunswick ordinances for suggested language
 - Nonconforming signs- how should the new ordinance handle existing signs- especially those in violation? Can it limit at what point they need to start coming into compliance? Can we apply a time frame?
 - Business directional signs- there appear to be a number of problems concerning these signs- especially in the village area where the town has a special agreement with the state to self regulate these signs. There is a problem with the way the ordinance is written and the specific area the town can regulate under this special agreement. According to Rick, the agreement is applicable to the urban compact area and this area does not exist. The original agreement and reference map needs to be found- Rick is working on this. Some of the problems are the permissible numbers and location.
 - Real estate signs- realtors have begun putting up larger signs different from the conventionally sized ones. Should the new ordinance limit the size?
 - Fee schedule- currently, there is one flat rate for all signs. A new fee schedule should be developed based on the size and type of sign
 - We should consider including a separate variance for signs
 - Awnings that advertise- how should these be regulated? Should they be counted as signs?
 - What signage should be included? Should interior signs be counted?
 - How about the composition and context of sign- color, materials, background. How should we deal with this?
 - Need to consider the economic mix of the entire community- balance between the type of signs in different zoning districts
 - Definitions are very important- what is seasonal, temporary, etc.
 - Grandfathering- how should the ordinance deal with that? Should all signs, even known violations be grandfathered?
 - How will the ordinance deal with informational kiosks and signs associated with these?
- The ORC continues their sign discussion. Jeffrey states that he would like to create a draft ordinance for the next meeting. The ORC feels that they need more time to consider some crucial items such as total size, height, temporary signage, districts, lighting, electronic, etc. before a draft is prepared. Jeffrey indicates that he would at least like to develop a framework for the ORC to use. Jeffrey polls the ORC members to see: 1. their thoughts on the current ordinance and what needs to be changed; and, 2. their thoughts on signage as it exists around town. The following was offered:
- Doc: Rick has made some good points about the sign ordinance and signage around town. What we need to do is decide how the ordinance is organized. Regarding signs around town,
 - Pat: The sign ordinance statement of purpose needs to be much more practicable- something that relates to businesses. Regarding signs- some places have too many of them. Too many 'sales' and 'today only' type signs- it's not a good concept.
 - Karl: The ordinance needs to be organized. The town needs to define where it would like to go- ask the business group about it. Must think back to the comprehensive plan to see what this says about signage. We need more input from for commercial signs.

- Jackie: Business signs on Rt. 1 should have different standards than the rest of town. Signs like awnings and interior signs should not be counted when determining allowable sign area or numbers. Regarding signs- the heritage village has too many signs. The Shaw's, Dunkin Donuts and Atlantic Motor Car are nice signs.
- Bill Phinney: The character of the town is important- efforts should be made to preserve this when creating new sign standards. Signs should have some kind of historic value- something traditional. Other towns such as Freeport have successfully done this.

Jeffrey indicates that he believes he has enough information to come back with a draft sign ordinance and will leave some item blank so the ORC can decide what language is most appropriate. The ORC feels we are not ready for a draft because there are items the ORC needs to continue discussing. Jeffrey says that there is some pressure to create a draft sooner than later because results of the ORC's work need to be demonstrated. The ORC still feels we need at least one more meeting to discuss this before a draft is created. Jeffrey says that he can come back with a new ordinance framework, not a detailed or definitive as a draft- the ORC doesn't object to this.

5. Special Amusement Ordinance. Jeffrey explains the ORC will begin working on a Mass Gathering Ordinance to go along side of the Special Amusement Ordinance. This does not mean proposed amendments directly include existing ordinance language in the Special Amusement Ordinance. Due to time constraints, the ORC will work on this at a future meeting.

6. Other Business. ORC discusses the need to have their annual election of a chair. Because there are some members missing this evening, this item is tabled.

Adjourn: 6:58 PM