

Wiscasset Transportation Committee

Meeting Minutes

07-08-02

Attendance:

Alan Kaufman

Paul Mrozinski

Steve Jerrett

Michael Blagdon

Marguerite Rafter

Don Jones

Community Attendance

David Kinney

James Hammond

??? Press

- I. Quorum Check, Approved
- II. Review of Minutes of July first, Approved
- III. Northern Route Subcommittee Report,

Meeting Minutes

07-06-02

Attendance:

Michael Blagdon

Marguerite Rafter

Don Jones

Allen Kaufman

On Saturday July 6th, 2002 the Wiscasset Transportation, Northern Bypass Sub Committee agreed via consensus to support and forward the following to both the Wiscasset Transportation Committee and MDOT.

Of the routes remaining on the table, this Sub Committee would prefer a N2 variant. The Wiscasset community has responded favorably to the variations of N2. Further we also recognize that a large portion of the community would like to pursue a more Northern Route that crosses Route 27 above the Wiscasset High School.

IV. Action on Don's Proposal from Last week,

Having listened carefully to the public input at the June 26 public hearing at the High School, and discussed the bypass situation with people whose opinion I respect, I have decided to present a proposal:

- The June 11 referendum vote does not mean a majority of Wiscasset residents do not favor a bypass,*
- Planning money should not be spent to challenge the EIS prepared by MDOT. They will have hired experts to get it right. That it be correct is critically important to MDOT and FHWA. Let SVCA and them worry about it.*
- If we spend planning money, let it be on crafting a preferred route that meets the needs and requirements of Wiscasset.*
- Wiscasset must specify its needs and requirements.*
- I propose the following Wiscasset needs and requirements:*

1. **The bypass must not intrude into the Historic District.**
The Historic District is the best working definition of the village, and moreover it has legal weight.
2. **The bypass must not intrude into the educational campus.**
The educational campus includes the Primary School, the Morris Farm, the Recreational Center, and the High School.
3. **The bypass must become the principal arterial highway and be designated U.S. Route One.** *The key to maximum diversion of traffic is not its relative length, but its relative speed. The bypass must be a high-speed route without stops or reduced speed zones. It must become the route of choice for all through traffic, especially truck traffic.*
4. **The bypass must have access to and from both Route 27 and Route 218.** *It is important that there be an interchange with Route 218 to keep truck traffic from Windsor, Whitefield, Jefferson, Newcastle and Alna out of Wiscasset village. A Route 218 interchange could be forgone only if a convenient connection via the Route 27 interchange is built to and from Route 218.*

- *These four requirements form the basis for evaluating the acceptability of any proposed bypass route alignment.*

V. Non Build Subcommittee Report, **None**.

VI. Leadership Issues, There were several issues discussed within the Committee, largely spurred by Committee Head Paul M introducing Nigel Calder at the Select Board Meeting. There was a concern that this could be misinturpeted as the Committee accepting N8C as its preferred Route. There was discussion on the matter and Paul wrote a note that was sent to the Committee as follows.

Transportation Committee members,

Last tuesday, July 2nd, as I returned from a meeting at MDOT, I stopped at Town Hall to show the latest route alignments photo to Dave Kinney and distribute copies to the Selectmen. While I was talking with Dave in his office, Nigel Calder knocked on the door and Dave asked him in. He spoke with Dave about the expected discussion by the Selectmen that night on the letter from Commissioner Melrose in which the

Commissioner asks the Town to " instruct the Transportation Committee to work with MDOT to refine the non-build and N8c options so they can be properly presented to the citizens this fall."

As part of this discussion, Calder presented to us a series of maps that illustrate work that has been taking place over the last several years by the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association and Maine Coast Heritage Trust. This work deals with the acquisition of land and easements in Edgecomb and Newcastle on the eastern shore of the Sheepscot River. (Do you recall, at one of the first meetings of the Transportation Committee, I presented the Spring newsletter from Maine Coast Heritage Trust which contained an illustration of the "Sheepscot River Upper Estuary" and an article about "Whole Place Planning". We had brief discussion because the article did not specifically refer to the Estuary illustration, so we could only make assumptions.) Calder's maps represented this same area and it showed the progress being made by Maine Coast Heritage Trust in acquiring the land to make their goal possible. The maps illustrate that a big plan exists and there is a determined group of conservationists who are doing their best to preserve a huge parcel of land across the Sheepscot from Wiscasset. This plan illustrated to me that opposition in Edgecomb and Newcastle to an N1, N2, N3 and N9 etc. is not from a small group of citizens of those towns but from a large powerful group of conservationists with a very clear attainable goal. Residents of Wiscasset have said " why does MDOT listen to Edgecomb residents and not Wiscasset residents? " The residents of Wiscasset did not say anything while the conservationists were at work.

I asked the Selectmen to give some time to Calder at the Tuesday night meeting because he asked to present to the Selectmen the same illustrations that Dave Kinney and I saw earlier in the day. Unfortunately Calder was not given time to make the full presentation.

I felt that it was important for the Selectmen and the town's folks to see this " Whole Place Planning " that is going on while we consider a northern route. I am not aligning with anyone. I feel this information is critical to making an informed decision by the Selectmen. I also feel that it is important for the people of this Town to stop pointing their finger at the residents of Edgecomb as obstructionist in our Town's desire to have a route

go thru the Town of Edgecomb's lands.

I opened my statement to the Selectmen last Tuesday by stating that the letter from the Commissioner was well crafted and I stressed the importance of reading each word in that letter. The Commissioner referred to Edgecomb as our "essential neighbor". It is clear that Wiscasset needs Edgecomb's approval for a road in their Town. As time ticks away, Maine Coast Heritage Trust and SVCA will continue to acquire land and continue to be the major decision maker in the bypass debate.

If you all feel that we should meet tonight, I will be there....Paul

- VII. Car pooling arrangements for the interagency meeting tomorrow,
Arrangements were made between all participating Members attending.
- VIII. Other Business,
- IX. Date and time for next meeting,,