**Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission**

Minutes, 11/3/16

Present: John Reinhardt, Richard Thompson, Wendy Donovan, Susan Blagden, Gordon Kontrath

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm

2. Consideration of October 6, 2016 minutes

The minutes were accepted with no changes 5-0.

3. Certificate of Appropriateness Review

a. 14 Warren St – Garage project. Approved as presented 5-0

b. Library, 21 High St – requesting preliminary approval for new roof. The applicant wanted to gauge what sort of roof the committee would approve before soliciting bids. It was discussed that a standing seam metal roof would not be appropriate, and Al suggested looking into metal roofing that has the appearance of shingles. The Commission voted to deny the application for standing seam metal roof, 5-0.

It was also noted that the Commission was not asked to review the changes to the walk at the library because they had received approval for the project before our ordinance was passed.

c. 31 Fort Hill St – requesting approval for reconfiguring the window layout previously approved due to upgraded window selection. Passed 5-0.

4. Discussion with Ernie Martin, MDOT

Susan commented that public comment and questions should not be discouraged. Richard stated that he hoped that Mr Martin would be willing to stay to respond to public comments. Richard wanted to find solutions to problems, not repeat comments, and to see how well we can compromise.

Mr Martin asked for the meeting with the Commission because we are a critical piece of the project. He said he needs to listen to what’s important to us. He would like to bring in someone from Hallowell or Ogunquit (where recent MDOT projects have been completed) to speak to us.

The question was raised about use or re-use of the existing granite. Mr Martin stated that the existing granite would be moved and re-set wherever possible. The granite could also be used in other areas in the downtown.

Al stated that the design should have the least impact on the appearance of the downtown as it stands today, and emphasized the need for compromise.

Mr Martin stated that there is currently no cost to the town for the project. There will be maintenance costs, but not $50K as has been reported. Regarding parking, he said that MDOT is currently looking at ways to accommodate handicapped parking and deliveries, but that most of the RT 1 parking will be removed. He also stated that no final decisions have been made on the project to date.

Members of the public were invited to comment at this time. Celeste Edwards noted that we lose our specialness if we change our downtown. Pam Logan asked for clarification on who will pay for historic embellishments, and noted that parking has existed on Main St since the 1800’s.

Kim Dolce asked why the removal of parking is set in stone, and expressed concern with both the parking decision and the costs. Mr Martin noted that Option 2 (removing the parking) was selected by the town, and mentioned the challenge of balancing the needs of a major state highway with the historic aspects. The state is responsible for the costs from curb to curb, and physical items would be covered by the state.

Bill Sutter noted that both cost and removal of parking are issues. The referendum was non-binding. The project is funded in the 2019 work plan, so it is not currently funded. We need to confirm what property belongs to the town and what belongs to the state.

Richard commented that it sometimes seems like it’s “me against DOT” or “me against the town”. He referred to the letter the Commission sent to the residents in the historic district. MDOT’s main concern is the major highway.

Al noted that if the town had voted for option1, we would not be having the parking discussion.

5. Other business

The letter to the homeowners has been sent, and some addresses need updating. We have received a mixed response – some people welcomed being in the historic district while others had concerns. This is a good opportunity for us to educate residents on the benefits of the district and the importance of the ordinance. We would also like the letter to be sent to local real estate agents.

We have had multiple applications for the open seat on the Commission. The Selectmen are taking the opportunity to interview the applicants, and would like to include the head of the Commission in the process.

We are waiting to hear back from the state regarding the CLG process, and Ben will follow up.

Public comment: Bill Sutter noted that neither his house nor the old Jail is included in the historic district. He asked where he could find a district map. Ben noted that if buildings are missing they can be added. Bill also mentioned that when the historic district was originally created, MDOT objected due to the presence of Rt 1 in the district.

Richard informed us that the site visit of the Maine Art Gallery that was scheduled for 11/7 had been cancelled.

The next commission meeting will be Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 5:00 pm.