**Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission**

Minutes, 12/1/16

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 November 3, 2016 minutes

The minutes were accepted with no changes 5-0.

3. Certificate of Appropriateness Review

 a) 4 Fort Hill St, U01-113 – Applicant was not present. The review was tabled until such time as the applicant was able to attend. Richard noted that this was the second request where this applicant has not appeared.

 b) 21 High St, U01-143 – Library roofing project. Estimates were provided by the applicant for different roofing material options, along with documentation supporting the use of metal roofing. The Library cannot use asphalt shingles due to the lack of proper soffit venting which leads to ice dams and leaking.

 Wendy noted that that there are precedents for metal roofing to have been used in that time period, which makes the case for the possibility of a metal roof. It is our responsibility to act as stewards of the historic district.

 Al stated that the applicant has done due diligence in researching materials and determined which costs are prohibitive. Moisture problems will degrade library materials which are irreplaceable.

 The applicant stated that the building already has metal roofing on one of the bays.

 A member of the public commented that ice dams can also be taken care of using proper insulation and heat coils.

 Richard commented that the applicant’s finger-wagging was not necessary as we were mostly on her side. The problem is not black and white. The Commission is neither the “roof police” nor the “fence police” and we are not out to get people. We are educators. The best case scenario is that the public comes to us first for guidance. The applicant has presented a reasonable middle ground.

 John asked if the applicant had spoken to the abutters. Susan declined comment as she is directly across from the property.

 Ben noted that the hardship exemption in the Ordinance only applies if the application has already been denied.

 John stated that the Commission was trying to advise. There is the possibility that the addition of a metal roof would intrude on the historic value of the neighborhood and that is his only concern. We are volunteers trying to do the best for the historic district.

 Al moved that the Commission accept a standing seam metal roof for the library building as written in the application. The color will be matte black. The vote was 3-1 in favor of the application, with Susan abstaining.

 David Cherry requested that the Commissioners focus on the work of the Commission and not knitting.

 James Kochan, 31 Fort Hill St, commented that his property was the first to go through the Certificate of Appropriateness review process. They put together an extensive packet for their review, questions were raised and it took 3 tries to get everything approved. Not enough credit was given to the Commission for their hard work. The Library proposal would have been denied anywhere, and the Commission made the right call.

 c) 14 Middle St, U01-101 – George Freeman. Project is to repair walls of the shed that goes between the ell and the main house. Absence of gutters has led to rot in the sills and the siding. He would like to remove the aluminum siding, replace the rotted wood, and replace siding with clapboards to match the existing.

 Susan commented that the property will be improved by removing the aluminum siding, and that this is a responsible way to protect buildings in our town. Susan moved to approve the application. The question was raised about the aluminum storm windows. The applicant stated that the rest of the house has aluminum storms and so he was planning to continue in that vein.

 John asked if the applicant was planning to restore the house back to 1766. The applicant replied that he was planning to do repairs as needed rather than restore all at once.

 Al asked what siding would be used, and was told the plan is to remove the aluminum siding and replace clapboards in kind. The gutters are vinyl. The request is to first repair the shed, and then to remove all of the aluminum on the house.

 The application was approved 5-0.

 Judy Flanagan noted that the agenda and meeting time for this meeting did not appear on the town website, and that meeting minutes and agendas should be turned into the town office. Ben stated that he receives minutes and agendas, and that server problems have prevented him from updating the website.

 d) 144 Federal St, U03-007 – Habitat for Humanity, Mark Primo. This was characterized as a “pre-application”. The property is under contract, to be divided so they can build 2 additional affordable homes. The applicant was looking for clarification on the ordinance. Currently this is a 2.8 acre parcel with and existing home. The minimum lot size is 20,000 s.f. With less than 100’ road frontage, must the buildings be set back 100’ from the road?

 It was stated that it is important to maintain the rhythm of buildings and spacing on the street. The locations of buildings on the lots should be in keeping with the texture of the rest of the district.

 Ben stated that after speaking with the codes officer and with the state, Article 2 does not apply, and the setback requirements should comply with the adjacent properties.

John asked if the applicant had spoken to the abutters. The applicant said he wanted to have a better idea of what he could build before he went to the abutters. They are currently not locked into a house design. They will be single family homes, with no limit to family size, but homeowners will be chosen using certain criteria.

 Ben recommended that at the time of formal application it will be a public hearing, which will take care of the abutter notification.

 Susan moved to table the application until it is complete, approved 5-0.

4. Historic Preservation Ordinance Review

 Ben stated that this agenda item came as a result of our meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday. The ordinance has worked pretty well but can always be made better. He wanted to gauge the group’s feeling as to whether tweaks were needed. He suggested that he could email out other town ordinances for us to review and discuss at our next meeting.

 John would like to have COA applications given to the commission sooner. He takes affront at the suggestion that applications should get instant approval.

 Susan suggested a change to 10.5.2.2, to change the time period to 60 days. Ben suggested a time frame before the meeting (10 days or 14 days). Susan approved of the suggestion of 2 weeks before the meeting.

 Al stated that there will be times when we need to do research in order to have good answers, and wanted to be sure we had access to all of the historic records we would need. Susan stated that all records are available (including records before Maine became a state). Ben said he can show us what other communities do, including having multiple meetings per month, or different ways to set up time frames, or to let Stan and Ben have more of a supportive role.

 We have not heard back from the state with their feedback on our ordinance. Our ordinance draws heavily on the one from Castine, which is good since they area a CLG.

 Susan also commented on 10.6.1.1, regarding notices to applicants, property owners and abutters. She would like to add a requirement that the property owner notify other property owners within 200’, to include all people within sightlines. Ben suggested 250’, which is the same number the planning board uses. This can lead to a large list of abutters, and we would hate for it to become cost-prohibitive. Notification would not have to be done via certified mail. It would be the responsibility of the applicant to notify property owners. Legal notice in the paper is not considered sufficient.

 James Kochan suggested a poster-sized notice, provided by the town, could be posted on the building for a certain length of time at the time of application.

 Ben noted that we need to create a statement to present to the Selectmen. Susan suggested holding a special meeting just to discuss recommendations to the ORC and budget recommendations to the Selectmen. Tuesday Dec. 13th was the date proposed.

 Richard liked the idea of having a separate meeting just to review COA’s, possibly meeting every 2 weeks.

 Ben said we should start thinking about if we want to get an inventory of contributing and non-contributing buildings. He suggested an inventory of Village 1 & 2.

5. Other business

 Richard asked if we are responsible for being proactive, reporting to Ben if we see something that goes against the ordinance. We do not have enforcement authority, but the codes office does. As a private citizen we can bring items to codes enforcement.

 John wanted to commend the commission for our patience during one of the applications this evening. He was offended by the “ranting and raving” of the applicant. Richard thanked John for defending his herd.

The next commission meeting will be Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 5:00 pm.