**Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission**

Minutes, 5/16/16

Present: John Reinhardt, Gordon Kontrath, Wendy Donovan, Jib Fowles, Susan Blagden

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm

2. Consideration of April 7, 2016 minutes

The minutes were approved 4-0 without changes (Jib abstained).

3. Discussion of MDOT Route 1 plans

John asked for opinions from the rest of the commission on the proposed DOT plans. Susan favors doing nothing. Wendy favors option 2, although she agrees with the concerns regarding maintenance and deliveries. Jib prefers options 1, saying that the removal of parking spaces would turn downtown into a ghost town. Al stated that option 1 preserves most of the downtown ambience. He also suggested that we may need to ask the governor to intervene. Ben stated that it’s a complicated issue and that all of the proposed plans have larger implications. He is hopeful that the town will decide on either option 1 or option 2, and stated that now is a good time for the town to reflect on what works and what doesn’t and to address those things which aren’t working.

4. Discussion of Certified Local Government

For the Commission to become a Certified Local Government, it would require review and approval by the town selectmen, due to the possibility of matching funds becoming available. At the next commission meeting, Ben will have a power point presentation detailing the steps required to become a CLG. We should all review the handout that was given out at the last meeting which also details those steps. It was noted that we will have a stronger argument for the CLG to present to the selectmen if we have already sent a letter to property owners before we go before the selectmen.

5. Letter to property owners

Certain properties are not on the current property list, and it still needs updating. Ben presented a draft of a letter to property owners for the commission’s consideration. Susan said that she would like to see a simpler and friendlier letter, offering the commission as a resource for property owners, and keeping the next to last sentence of the first paragraph of Ben’s draft:

“In an age when communities increasingly look more like each other with the same chain stores and restaurants and the same type of suburban residential development spreading across the landscape the preservation of historic resources becomes a critical element in allowing our community to be identifiable from those around it.”

The commissioners were asked to work on a draft of a letter for the next meeting. The letter should include a link to the Historic Preservation Ordinance on the town website, rather than a hard copy of the ordinance.

6. Other business

John noted that he had been approached by a resident who was unhappy that a neighbor had installed solar panels on their historic property. The town has an ordinance regarding solar panels, but they don’t seem to be covered by our warrant at this time. Any revisions to the warrant would have to be approved by the selectmen.

Al agreed to look into the information on the Wiscasset MDOT project website regarding becoming a member of the Section 106 review committee.

The next commission meeting will be Thursday, June 2, 2016 at 5:00 pm.