

Wiscasset Transportation Committee
October 3, 2005

Present: Don Jones, Chair; Jo Bryer, Cindy Fischer, Lois Kwantz, Sean Rafter

Absent: Seaver Leslie

Guests: Bob Faunce, Carol Morris

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM. Don Jones introduced and welcomed the committee's newest members, Jo Bryer and Cindy Fischer. He also introduced our special guests for the evening: Bob Faunce, the Lincoln County planner, and Carol Morris, a consultant for MDOT on the Gateway 1 project. Bob will be trying to attend all official Gateway 1 meetings in the 5 regions. Don explained that the transportation committee (TC) is now in a new phase. We will continue with our regular duties in an advisory capacity to the board of selectmen regarding transportation issues within the town of Wiscasset, but we are also now the Gateway1 town response panel (TRP).

Before moving on to our business for the evening, Don took a moment to express the regret that all of us on the TC and that many members of the Wiscasset community are feeling over the loss of Marguerite Rafter who passed away in September. Don referred to Marguerite as a "powerhouse" within and for the town of Wiscasset in so many respects. She was one of the primary movers in having the downtown declared a historic district and she worked tirelessly on many committees, most recently the comprehensive planning committee as well as the transportation committee. Marguerite was a passionate advocate for an appropriate bypass around the town and Sean Rafter, her son and one of our committee members, reported that, she requested her ashes be driven over the Wiscasset bypass when it finally becomes a reality. This comment brought a smile to many of our faces since we well remember Marguerite stating that this was her wish if she were to die before a bypass was built. Our heartfelt condolences go out to her family. We will all miss her very much.

Before moving on to Gateway 1 business, the TC reviewed the minutes from the July 11, 2005 meeting. They were accepted as written with 3 in favor and 2 abstentions (not members of the committee at that time). Carol Morris then began her presentation with an overview of what is to be studied, some of which has already occurred. This overview was summarized in a handout entitled Gateway 1 Task Overview - Initial Town Response Panel Meeting, 2005-2006. It includes what we, as a region along the Route 1 corridor, hope to achieve and how the TRP is to be involved. She passed out a lengthy document entitled Scope of Services for Gateway 1-Corridor Preservation Plan, which describes the services the consultants have contracted to provide to the MDOT. All the tasks to be accomplished are listed in this. The public involvement includes 21 towns along the Route 1 corridor starting with Brunswick and ending with Prospect. Land use, which falls under the individual towns' purview, and transportation, under the state's purview, are covered in the study. Carol gave an overview of what had occurred during Phase 1 of the study, which began with each town identifying its issues and concerns. All the towns agreed that Route 1

and its issues are bigger than any one town. The majority of the towns also identified the following as common concerns: #1 - speed; #2: - preservation of historic downtowns; and #3 - the conundrum of how to balance the beauty and openness along the corridor with the fact that Route 1 is also where development is most likely to occur.

Carol then requested that our committee think about who we would like to nominate as a member and an alternate to be on the steering committee for Gateway 1. These individuals would also be serving on the regional committee, which consists of the towns assigned to a particular region. Our region consists of Wiscasset, Edgecomb, Newcastle, Damariscotta and Nobleboro. The steering committee will consist of one member from each of the towns involved (for a total of 21) plus non-voting representatives from MDOT, FHWA??? and the State Planning Office, etc. However, in order to make policy and obtain funding, MDOT and FHWA must be in agreement with the goals and plan established by the steering committee. It is critical that the towns' representatives to the steering committee remain open-minded while representing their town's opinions and best interests. The individual must also be careful to not promote his/her own personal agenda. It is the job of the steering committee to come up with a plan that can be "sold" to all the towns or the project won't "fly". Carol handed out a schedule that lays out a general idea of the time frame for meetings of the three committees: the TRP's, the regional committees, and the larger, corridor-wide steering committee. Bob Faunce stated that his role is to stay on the periphery of the various regional teams and to work as an advisor.

Carol then assigned our TRP a task. She wants a visual assessment of our piece of the corridor, preferably a total of 20 photos - 10 things that we like about Wiscasset and 10 things that we do not like. In order for us to perform this task, she handed out cameras to each of us. We are to turn the cameras back in to the town office, preferably Jeff Hinderliter, the town planner, along with a "log sheet" that describes each picture - whether it is good or bad and why. Carol suggested that we try to make our comments about the "bad" photos constructive in perspective. We then entered into a general discussion of the multiple pieces of "things" happening along the Route 1 corridor. Carol explained that there is a difference between things that are in the "planning process", like Gateway1 and things that are in the "project process", like the bypass. Transportation funding is in crisis at this moment with budgets being cut and no increases available for projects that are already part of an approved pile. Therefore, in order for MDOT and the FHWA to proceed with any project now, there must be a consensus among the towns involved. As far as the Wiscasset bypass goes, the next step is the presentation of the draft EIS (Environmental Impact Statement), hopefully by year's end, and then the discussion begins all over again. The commissioner has said that he will not meet with any towns individually at this time but will meet with all the towns only at the time the draft EIS comes out. For those who are interested and/or able to attend, there will be a regional forum at the Waldoboro VFW on October 26th from 9AM-3PM to discuss the DOT's planning process. Charles Colgan will be the keynote speaker and the topic will be the "impact of BNA's closure on the region's transportation, socio-economics, etc."

At this time, the committee decided to go ahead with the nomination and election of our representative and alternate for the regional and steering committees. Don Jones was nominated as the representative and Sean Rafter as the alternate. The committee voted unanimously to elect these individuals. Don then concluded with a reminder to the members to get out there and take their photos, and to talk up the TRP with various Wiscasset community members in order to encourage expanding the number of members on the transportation committee/transportation response panel. We adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Kwantz, Secretary