

**Town of  
Wiscasset**

**Business  
Plan  
for  
Economic  
Development**

December 18, 2000



*Stafford Business Advisors*

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## Stafford Business Advisors

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The Honorable Board of Selectmen  
Town of Wiscasset  
Wiscasset, ME 04578

December 18, 2000

Dear Selectmen,

You hired our firm in August 2000, under a five-month contract, to develop an economic development strategy for the town's future. This business plan outlines that strategy and is designed to be the initial step in a long-term effort to rebuild and stabilize the property tax base that was seriously affected by the premature closure of the Maine Yankee nuclear power facility.

From August to November 2000, Stafford has been seeking opinions from the Wiscasset residential and business community about various development ideas with the intent of building consensus around a plan of action. Public and private meetings, newspaper columns, speaking engagements, and surveys have been used to generate a serious dialogue about the town's needs and wishes. In addition, prospective businesses have been approached to measure their interest in particular sites and projects. From all this information, we have distilled the elements of this plan.

The business plan takes a comprehensive view of the development possibilities by including what might be accomplished in all areas of the town, not just on the more obvious development sites like Maine Yankee. Stafford recognizes that the timeline for various development suggestions varies widely, as does the impact of the various projects on the flow of tax revenues to the town. Some components reflect a substantial return to the tax base. Others may have a more neutral effect, but provide secondary benefits to the overall plan. We have rejected ideas that would need any significant financial investment from the town.

We believe that a plan with a broad view, addressing the concerns and priorities of multiple constituencies, is most likely to generate community support and a realistic commitment to getting the job done. Without support from all quarters, each separate component is weakened. Investors in future development projects will be

encouraged by the enthusiastic voice of a town that is united, open to new ideas, and welcoming in its message.

Recent history in Portland shows that the preparedness of a municipality can also impact the future of a project. For example, Idexx, the manufacturer of biotechnology products based in Westbrook, had been negotiating to re-locate its headquarters to the Bayside area of Portland – an area targeted for redevelopment. Their multi-million dollar plan included the development of a campus with about 400,000 square feet of new space for its hundreds of employees. After months of negotiations with the city of Portland, Idexx terminated negotiations, citing the “length and complexity of the development process.”

The Idexx example demonstrates the need for a smooth development process that is efficient, dependable and clean so that investors can make sound business decisions based on as much certainty as possible.

Stafford, based on its months of work with Wiscasset residents, hopes that this business plan is implemented with an attitude of how-can-we-integrate-you-the-investor into our town with reasonable speed, regulatory ease, a clear process and constructive help. With that spirit, we are convinced that progress will occur.

As important as the process of planning and consultation is, we are as eager as you to get down to work actually implementing the plan. We hope to be working with you next year!

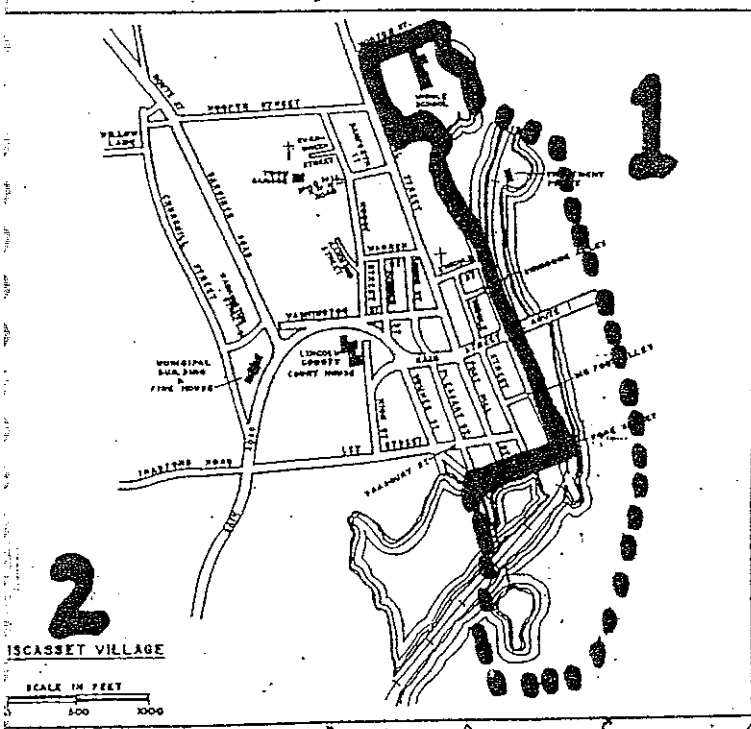
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith C. Foss". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Judith C. Foss  
Partner  
Stafford Business Advisors

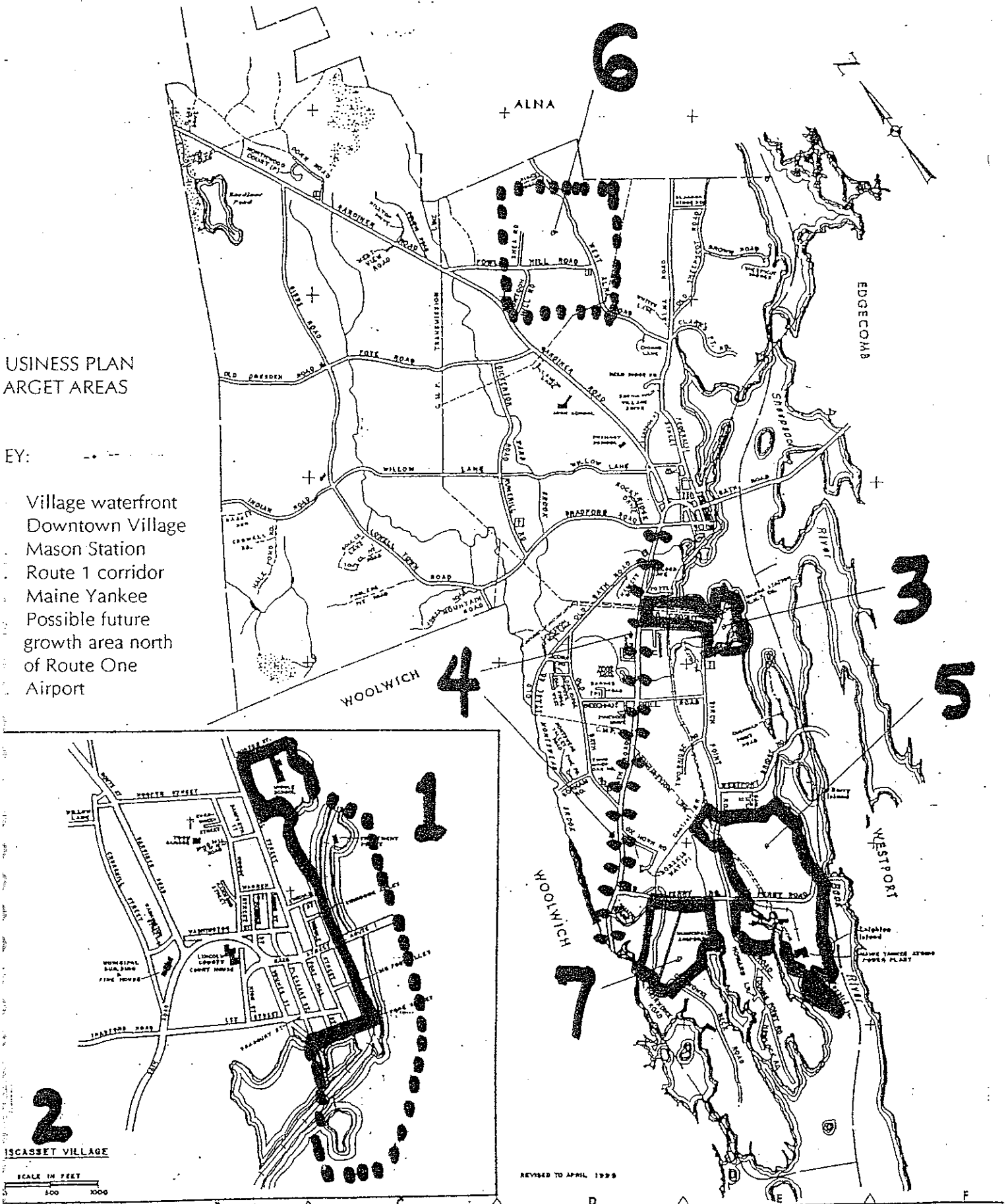
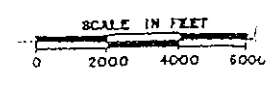
**BUSINESS PLAN  
TARGET AREAS**

- BY: ---
- Village waterfront
  - Downtown Village
  - Mason Station
  - Route 1 corridor
  - Maine Yankee
  - Possible future growth area north of Route One
  - Airport



JOHN E. O'DONNELL & ASSOCIATES  
AUBURN, MAINE  
1973

**WISCASSET  
MAINE**



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## Executive Summary

The Wiscasset Business Plan, the culmination of the first phase of the economic development process, is presented in macro- and micro-terms. Town-wide goals along with more segmented goals by geographic area are all vital components of an integrated whole. Acceptance of the Plan's totality is critical to generating broad public support for meeting the needs of potential investors. A broad-based implementation effort must be launched during the next phase.

One of the first tasks to be undertaken during the next phase is to create one-stop shopping for businesses interested in Wiscasset investment. The perception that there are too many town committees with overlapping responsibilities and unclear decision-making authority must be addressed. A streamlined town structure with a clear and efficient development process that is business-friendly is a powerful marketing tool for attracting investors. Stafford proposes to facilitate that streamlining process and become the one-stop shopping entity.

In preparing this Plan, Stafford Business Advisors had as one of its main goals to gain the support and confidence of the Wiscasset community. Along with pursuing business leads, we have worked to build credibility, trust and better communication among town residents, between the town and the existing business community, and between the town and potential investors. The results of that effort are incorporated in the Goals, Strategies and Business Attraction Priorities of the Plan.

The overall goals of the Plan are to:

- Have the Town of Wiscasset actively control its economic destiny, and in particular to control the redevelopment of the Maine Yankee site and possibly in future other major properties in the Town.
- Give Wiscasset the means to effect this control, through creation of a public-private partnership with regional businesses, non-profit and government agencies. Use this partnership to attract outside investment as an alternative to the use of Town reserve funds.
- Seek capital-intensive investments that stabilize and rebuild the property tax base of Wiscasset within 8 to 10 years. This assumes completion of the Maine Yankee site release plan by mid-2004.

- Ensure that future economic development is diversified, both in terms of type and location. Work for the economic health of the entire town, rather than focusing on a single development or a single site.

The goals by geographic area are:

Village Waterfront: Make the central village waterfront a tourist magnet and a major driver of the Town's tourism economy, with additional retailing and lodging centered around rail, tour boat and marina developments.

Downtown Village: (a) Preserve the historic nature of the village, both in terms of individual structures and overall ambience; (b) Enhance its role as a service and cultural center for the region's residents; (c) For visitors, make it a destination rather than mere scenery.

Mason Station: Make the site a focus for economic growth in ways that capitalize on its unique location and in ways that support economic development at the Maine Yankee site and elsewhere.

Route 1 Corridor: Develop for retailing, lodging and service businesses that are not appropriate for the historic village center, while maintaining the flow of traffic; a style and scale that is 'rural' rather than 'urban'; and that mixes developed stretches of the corridor with others that remain residential or undeveloped.

Maine Yankee: Control the redevelopment of the site so as to maximize the value of the site to the Town, region and state. Attract investments that, once the site is released, can rapidly develop the site into a major regional economic asset.

North of Route 1: Maintain the rural character of the area, protecting farmland, forests, wildlife and the water supply, while encouraging limited development (a) on Route 27 near the village and (b) on specific off-highway sites such as the Speedway, former Town dump site, and the Lincoln County recycling facility site.

Airport: Make the airport a net financial contributor to the Town; develop land on the south side of the runway for aviation-related commercial activity; and develop an intermodal park-and-ride facility for passenger rail and highway transportation.

If authorized by the Town of Wiscasset to implement this Business Plan, Stafford proposes to continue its current strategy during the second phase of the economic development process. That strategy, to be carried out by the same Stafford personnel out of its present office space, includes: a marketing plan; pro-active outreach to investors; public accountability; and an effort to streamline the development process.



## **Section 1: Plan Identification and Purpose**

The Wiscasset Business Plan is intended to help stabilize the town's tax base and is designed to create an aggressive, ongoing economic development effort to achieve that stabilization. The Plan very specifically targets all geographic areas of town and calls upon the efforts of many diverse groups to pull together to achieve its goals.

Over the years, because of the infusion of revenues from the Maine Yankee facility, the town of Wiscasset had no need to either pursue new sources of commercial tax revenue or to explore methods to achieve tax growth from current businesses and town-owned facilities. Without the pressure of finite resources, the town could afford to concentrate on areas other than economic development. The closure of Maine Yankee and the subsequent loss of tax revenues have focused attention on the need for a long-term growth strategy.

The abundance of tax revenues also allowed the town to drift along without requiring the involvement of current business owners and other town residents in establishing a consensus on an acceptable economic development policy. Without the driving need for more revenue growth in the past, a forum for expressing new ideas and sharing opinions did not emerge. In recent months, under the direction of the Board of Selectmen, Stafford has developed that forum for public opinion. The Business Plan reflects the information from that forum.

The Business Plan takes a broad, rather than a narrow, view of development potential. Stafford believes that multiple initiatives, directed at multiple geographic areas, will more likely become a successful strategy. Therefore, the Plan includes a vision for seven discrete areas of town (see Section 3). Each vision reflects our current thinking on the most advantageous and most widely-accepted plan for each area. However, we remain flexible and open to new investment proposals that may not have surfaced to date.

Stafford's strategy to implement the Wiscasset Business Plan is clear and well-defined (see Section 4). It will take the cooperation and support of many town residents and business owners to achieve the hoped-for results.

## Section 2: Market Research Components

Stafford implemented a public consultation process to gather opinions and ideas about economic strategies from Wiscasset residents and businesses.

### SURVEY

The thirty-four-question survey was widely offered to the community. It was provided to the three local newspapers and published in its entirety by the Wiscasset Newspaper in two separate issues, as well as in the Lincoln County News. Volunteers distributed it in neighborhoods and drop-off/pick-up spots were established in the Yellowfront, the Airport, the Wiscasset Town Office, and in Stafford's office as well as being available at various public meetings and functions. Stafford is pleased with the 157 completed surveys we received, many including comments and suggestions. Complete survey results and comments are included in the appendices.

A summary of the results reflects that, of the total respondents, 68% were Wiscasset residents who have lived in town from 1 year to 80 years. Fifteen percent of those who completed the survey own a business in Wiscasset, and 31% work in Wiscasset. Retirees represent 22% of the respondents, and 16% have children in the Wiscasset schools.

Different levels of support for several different development strategies were expressed:

- Recruiting high-tech, "new economy" employers – 79% support
- Recruiting smaller, diverse businesses – 78% support
- Growing existing businesses – 73% support
- Recruiting service businesses to support tourism, health care, and retirement living – 68% support
- Accepting any development that contributes significantly to the tax base – 50% support
- Recruiting large employers like MBNA – 49% support
- Recruiting 'heavy industry' that pays good wages year-round – 27% support

The option of doing nothing was opposed by 90% of those completing the survey.

When asked about developing passenger train service connecting to Amtrak as soon as the rail line is upgraded, 68% expressed support. The encouragement of the commercial use of rail freight was also supported by 64%. Development of the north (inland) side of town for commercial, industrial and/or residential use drew an even split between support, neutrality and opposition.

Very strong support was expressed for: waterfront development (76%), a park and/or trails along the waterfront (86%), a marina with facilities for visiting boats (91%), tour or excursion boats (90%), commercial activity at the Mason Station pier (85%), a dedicated pier for the fishing/lobster industry (83%), boat building and boat repair activities (83%), commercial use of the airport (67%), more shops serving local needs in the downtown village center (69%), and promotion of the downtown village as a place for tourists to stay rather than just pass through (61%).

## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Of strategic importance in both the sharing and receiving of public information were the six theme meetings held in the Municipal Building. The minutes of each of these meetings are included in the appendices. The first was held on 9/21/00 and was a general meeting, designed to set the stage for future meetings by determining the 'hot buttons' as defined by the participants. Most of these items were further discussed at later theme meetings.

The second public meeting highlighted the Waterfront. The lively discussion at this meeting emphasized development ideas and the development potential of a very attractive waterfront as well as the concerns that the waterfront maintains its historic value and public availability in any development.

The theme of the 10/05 meeting was the Downtown Village and the Route 1 Corridor. The majority of the participants emphasized the unique character of the village core and the desire to maintain and build upon this uniqueness as a valuable asset in getting people to come to Wiscasset to visit and to stay.

The discussions at the 10/12 meeting centered primarily on the Airport and its growth potential to prospective businesses. Although development ideas were considered for the Mason Station site, the airport and the concerns about the limitations of the Master Plan remained the primary focus.

The focus of the 10/19 public meeting was the inland, rural area of Wiscasset north of Route 1. The tension between maintaining the town's rural character and the individual's right to develop land was discussed. Support for protecting farmland, water and recreational access was strongly expressed, but there was also an openness to "clean" businesses on Route 27 and some development at the Speedway site.

The last public theme meeting was held on 10/26 with Maine Yankee as the topic and with Maine Yankee representatives as guest speakers. Eric Howes and George Campbell outlined Maine Yankee's preliminary development ideas and criteria. They welcomed public input on the process, as well as development ideas.

Stafford was pleased that the Wiscasset Newspaper, the Lincoln County News, and the Lincoln County Weekly covered these public meetings and reported the proceedings to the wider public.

## **PRIVATE MEETINGS**

The appendices include a listing of the various groups and individuals with whom Stafford met to ensure the maximum public input. In addition, Stafford established, with Sean Rafter's assistance, an email address that he also added to the Wiscasset web site. Stafford also hosted an open house, several business breakfasts, and maintained office hours in the office at the bank, and widely publicized our telephone and fax numbers. The local newspapers were very effective partners in keeping the public informed of our activities, as well as sparking interest and active participation in meetings.

## **OUTREACH TO INTERESTED BUSINESSES AND INVESTORS**

Stafford has been in contact with several potential business partners for Wiscasset even as public input was aiding in the development of a business plan. These companies are listed in the appendices and negotiations with them are ongoing.

## **Section 3: Description of Plan**

### **OVERALL GOALS**

- Have the Town of Wiscasset actively control its economic destiny, and in particular to control the redevelopment of the Maine Yankee site and possibly in future other major properties in the Town.
- Give Wiscasset the means to effect this control, through creation of a public-private partnership with regional businesses, non-profit and government agencies. Use this partnership to attract outside investment as an alternative to the use of Town reserve funds.
- Seek capital-intensive investments that stabilize and rebuild the property tax base of Wiscasset within 8 to 10 years. This assumes completion of the Maine Yankee site release plan by mid-2004.
- Ensure that future economic development is diversified, both in terms of type and location. Work for the economic health of the entire town, rather than a focus on a single development or a single site.

### **A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

Wiscasset needs to take its economic future into its own hands. However, no Town of 3,000 people has the capacity or the resources to take on a major project like the redevelopment of the Maine Yankee site alone.

Implementation of a pro-active strategy for Wiscasset's economic development therefore requires a vehicle – a non-profit legal entity – that the Town will sponsor and lead, but which will draw in other resources. There are many successful examples in Maine and elsewhere of such entities. They may be variously known as an Economic Development Corporation, a Board of Trade, a Port Authority or other titles. In each case, however, the key elements are the creation of a new legal entity that:

- Should aim to be self-sufficient, after an initial development period.
- Brings private investment and funding to support public purposes.
- Allows for partnerships between different levels of government – e.g., town, county, state and federal agencies.
- Gives the Town a degree of legal and liability protection.

- Gives economic development projects, which may be very long-term in implementation, a degree of protection from short-term political shifts.
- Can deal in confidence with investors.
- Is nevertheless responsible, through its Board of Directors, to the Town and its other sponsors.

We therefore recommend the creation of a Wiscasset Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC), a partnership of the Town with businesses, investors, foundations, and regional governments such as the Lincoln County Commissioners. The legal structure of such a Corporation must be decided with the participants who will join with the Town, but a suggested list of initial partners would include:

- The Town of Wiscasset, as the organization's sponsor and majority shareholder.
- Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) of Wiscasset, as the agency selected by the Federal government to administer and disburse economic adjustment funding for the transition of the Wiscasset area economy.
- Lincoln County – through the Lincoln County Economic Development Office, representing the County Commissioners.
- Sagadahoc County – through Mid-Coast Council for Business Development (MCBD) or another representative of the County Commissioners.
- The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.
- Wiscasset regional businesses. In particular, we would like to see WRBA or a new Chamber of Commerce organization play a significant role in the EDC.

The principal initial task of the Economic Development Corporation will be to negotiate for an exclusive, transferable option to acquire the Maine Yankee site from MYAPC, once the decommissioning is completed and the site released by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. With an option to buy the site, at the appraised value agreed between Maine Yankee and its regulatory authorities, the EDC will then assume responsibility for planning the development of the site on behalf of the Town.

The EDC is not intended ultimately to be a landowner. It is expected that, in the period (of perhaps several years) before full site release, the EDC's role is to seek investors and prepare a development plan, including gaining all regulatory approvals, so that at the time of site release the EDC can exercise its option and immediately re-sell the land to investors to proceed with redevelopment, or alternatively transfer the option on some or all of the site to such developers.

The key to maximizing the value of the Maine Yankee site *to the Town* is for the Town, with its private and public partners, to control the redevelopment process. We believe that the Board of MYAPC is willing to negotiate the sale of an option on the site to an Economic Development Corporation, *if* such an entity is formed that has both the credibility and the capacity to implement a redevelopment strategy that will benefit the Town, region and state. MYAPC's Board is primarily responsible for the safe and efficient decommissioning of the plant, and thereafter for the safe storage of the high level waste. It must therefore appropriately maintain control over activities at the site prior to release, and should have a say in planning for the redevelopment of the site after release. MYAPC will have an effective veto over the redevelopment process, as of course it does now. What will change under the EDC is that the Town will also have input, and will take the lead in planning and negotiating instead of being on the sidelines.

## GOALS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

### 1. Village Waterfront

Goal:

Make the central village waterfront a tourist magnet and a major driver of the tourist sector of the Town's economy, with additional retailing and lodging centered around rail, tour boat and marina developments.

Comments:

- A renewed focus on the waterfront as a driver of the Town's economy was one of the most strongly supported themes in our surveys of public opinion.
- Since the decay and removal of the *Hesper* and the *Luther Little*, the waterfront has lacked any focal point or image to differentiate it from that of other Maine coastal towns.

- Waterfront development – including transportation links such as trains and tour/cruise boats – is consistent with the Town’s history, but must be done in such a way as to complement the historic village behind the waterfront.

Strategies:

- Marina development, using private investment [*short/medium term*]
- A focal point and major tourist attraction for the waterfront, preferably unique, to replace the old ships – perhaps a restored narrow-gauge steam railroad? [*long term*]
- Intermodal transportation links – cruise / tour / ferry boat dock and seasonal passenger rail station. [*medium term*]
- Increased parking – Railroad Avenue [*short term*]
- Extension of walking/cycle trails north and south from the central village [*medium/long term*]
- Clarify and define: title to shorefront land, development ordinances and dredging permissibility. [*short term*]
- Explore funding for a dedicated fish pier, perhaps with facilities to serve as a regional ‘satellite’ extension of the Portland Fish Exchange. This fish pier could be located at any point along the Town’s waterfront.

Business attraction priorities:

- Small-scale retailing, food service and lodging; e.g., a brew pub.
- Marina developer/operator
- Tour boat operator, small cruise ship calls.
- Passenger rail connections – main line and possibly narrow gauge.

**2. Downtown Village**

Goals:

- Preserve the historic nature of the village, both in terms of individual structures and overall ambience;
- Enhance its role as a service and cultural center for the region’s residents;
- For visitors, make it a destination rather than mere scenery.

Comments:

- The village remains one of the gems of Maine, both as a place to live or to visit. Maintaining its historic character is essential, but this must be balanced with retaining its vital economic role in the town and region.



- In the past 10 years, the village has seen a decline in stores and services serving residents, and a rise in stores primarily serving seasonal visitors – especially art and crafts galleries and antiques dealers – and in legal and professional offices.
- The village contains only three or four sites that are possible candidates for larger-scale developments. Two of these are not on the property tax rolls: the Lincoln County Jail, and the Middle School. Both of these facilities have been the subject of discussion of possible moves out of the village center.

#### Strategies:

- Market the village as a visitor destination point with emphasis on existing village clusters – antiques, galleries, B&Bs – and on regional touring themes – antiques, art galleries, crafts, farms/foods, boatbuilding, etc. [*short term*]
- Utilize historic preservation as a marketing tool [*short term*]
- Establish a visitor information center – both physically (e.g., at the railroad station building) and on the Internet [*short term*]
- Pursue additional multi-unit housing – apartments, retirement condominiums, assisted living and nursing home facilities [*short term*]
- Plan for possible redevelopment of the Lincoln County Jail site, and its return to the property tax rolls, if the County funds a move to a new location within 5 years [*short-medium term*]
- Plan for possible redevelopment of the Middle School site, and its return to the property tax rolls, if Wiscasset schools are eventually consolidated onto one ‘campus.’ Appraise the site’s value if sold. [*medium to long term*]
- Work with higher-education institutions and the Wiscasset school system to attract vocational training to the Town because quality educational opportunities are important when marketing a town to potential investors [*short - medium term*]
- Consolidate pedestrian crossings and explore other measures to demonstrate that Wiscasset is doing its part in resolving the Route One congestion problem [*short – medium term*]
- Support efforts to build a by-pass or tunnel to resolve traffic congestion issues [*long term*]

#### Business Attraction priorities:

- Retailers who will serve local residents as well as visitors.
- Additional B&Bs, other lodging options

- Investors in retirement/elderly housing
- Health care providers

### 3. Mason Station

#### Goals:

To make the Mason Station site a focus for economic growth in Wiscasset, in ways that capitalize on its unique location and which support economic development at the Maine Yankee site and elsewhere.

#### Comments:

- Wiscasset should capitalize on the fact that Mason Station is the only point between Portland and Searsport combining access to deep water by rail.
- The site is owned by FPL Energy, which intends to maintain and operate the existing power plant for peak power generation in the medium term.
- FPL Energy is willing to entertain commercial proposals for use of parts of the site that would not interfere with its continued use of the generating assets.
- Maine Department of Transportation is willing to assist with the necessary investments required at Mason Station.

#### Strategies:

- Develop the site as a center for regional commercial marine activity. [*short to medium term*]
- Work with FPL Energy to attract investors to the site whose activities are compatible with continued power generation. [*short term*]
- Identify and work with investors who have the capacity to ultimately acquire the property from FPL Energy if and when FPL Energy chooses to sell. [*medium term*]
- Identify uses and potential investors for the power house building and pier area once generation ceases. [*long term*]

#### Business attraction priorities:

- Port/terminal operator.
- Barge-to-rail or rail-to-barge transload traffic.
- Bulk materials processing and distribution businesses.
- Marine services businesses, e.g. chandlers, brokers, stevedoring services.

#### **4. The Route 1 Corridor**

##### Goals:

To develop the Route One corridor for retailing, lodging and service businesses that are not appropriate for the historic village center, while maintaining the flow of traffic; a style and scale that is 'rural' rather than 'urban'; and that mixes developed stretches of the corridor with others that remain residential or undeveloped.

##### Comments:

- Wiscasset is too close to Cook's Corner to attract the 'big box' store developments that have clustered between Brunswick and Bath. It should not try to compete as a regional mall district.
- Nevertheless, many other retail and service business require significant amounts of space; parking; highway access and a high flow of traffic. Continued growth along the Route One corridor is therefore likely, and this is the best location in the Town for such development.
- It is important, nevertheless, not to allow a continuous strip of development to emerge from the Woolwich line to the village center. This would have negative effects on the Town's ability to grow as a tourist destination, as well as on the flow of traffic on U.S. 1.
- The scale and location of development on Route One will be impacted by uncertainty over the future location and timing of a by-pass or tunnel. Any by-pass, if built, will be limited-access, so will not function as a new location for business development. However, the diversion of traffic may reduce the attractiveness of by-passed sections of Route One for businesses requiring high drive-by traffic volumes.

##### Strategies:

- Establish a Route One Business Forum, including all frontage property owners, to build consensus and provide input on future developments.
- Work with the Planning Board, Ordinance Review Committee, and Comprehensive Planning Committee, to develop ordinances and guidelines for future development that are acceptable to the business community, that enhance – rather than detract from – the value of Route One frontage property, and that aim at creating the appearance of a high-quality retail and services district.

- Work with Maine DOT to establish rules for access and curb cuts that maintain the traffic flow on Route One, including the consideration of service roads, bridges, and other flow-enhancement strategies.

Business Attraction priorities:

- Growth of existing Route One businesses.
- Small off-highway business and service parks and set-back, multi-store retail developments, targeting residents rather than visitors.
- Overflow of antiques and gallery businesses from the village center.
- Additional lodging, set back from the highway.

## 5. Maine Yankee

Goals:

To control the redevelopment of the Maine Yankee site so as to maximize the value of the site to the Town, region and state. To attract investments that, once the site is released, can rapidly develop the site into a major regional economic asset.

Comments:

- Leaving the MY site fallow is not an option for the Town nor for the board of Maine Yankee. Both are committed to the site continuing to play a major economic role in the Town, region and state.
- The MY site's value lies in:
  - its size (800 acres), allowing both high-value developments and the set-aside of broad areas of protected 'buffer zone';
  - its proximity to seawater, railway, roads, air and the power grid;
  - its relative proximity to major urban areas and markets (compared, say, to Loring Air Force Base at Limestone, Maine).
- The Maine Yankee site is not likely to be fully released for redevelopment until mid-2004, although there is hope that some parts of the site may be released earlier.
- The site includes both 'brownfield' (formerly developed) and 'greenfield' (undeveloped) land. We define the brownfield land as the land south of Ferry Road, which includes the actual plant site and the future interim high-level waste storage facility, which will be retained by Maine Yankee.
- The brownfield portion of the site – roughly 150 acres to be released – is best suited to uses that will not be deterred by the proximity of the high-level waste site. This probably precludes most residential, tourism, institutional or office developments, but would not exclude

most manufacturing, materials processing, energy, or warehousing/distribution uses. Such developments require the highest level of investment, and therefore this portion of the site is likely, in future as in the past, to contribute to Wiscasset property taxes.

- The greenfield portion of the site includes approximately 200 acres at Eaton Farm which are intended to be protected from development; this area is a natural 'buffer zone' protecting future development near the plant site, just as it has fulfilled that role for the nuclear plant.
- North of Ferry Road is a site of over 400 acres that is essentially undeveloped, with the exception of access roads, power lines and the railroad. This site is well suited to a wide variety of uses, although planning for its use should be coordinated with the land south of Ferry Road. If Ferry Road is to see high-value investments, the adjoining land should include complementary but less intensive developments, and/or the conservation of land for 'screening' purposes.

#### Strategies:

- Gain control of the site and the redevelopment process, through the purchase of an exclusive, transferable option to acquire the site at appraised value following site release by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. This option should cover the entire site except the Eaton Farm section and the land retained for the high-level waste storage facility.
- Support release of the Eaton Farm property for conservation and education uses, to form part of a 'buffer zone' surrounding more intensive development. Release of the Eaton Farm land should be subject to clear commitments that uses of Eaton Farm will not obstruct development on the balance of the site.
- Identify prospective investors, evaluate their plans and partner with selected investors to develop the balance of the site.
- Investors will fund the activities of the Economic Development Corporation through payments to the EDC to acquire its transferable options on land at the Maine Yankee site.

## **6. North of Route 1**

### Goals:

To maintain the rural character of the area, protecting farmland, forests, wildlife and the water supply, while encouraging limited development (a) on Route 27 near the village and (b) on specific off-

highway sites such as the Speedway, former Town dump site, and the Lincoln County recycling facility site.

Comments:

- There is strong support for retaining the rural character of the Town, including farmland and forestland, and continuing the tradition of public access and outdoor recreation. This is an important asset for business attraction for the Town.
- The southern end of Route 27, near the village, appears to be evolving into a zone for professional and other non-retailing services – educational, medical, veterinary, banking, computer services and the like. This is a healthy development and should continue.
- The area including the Speedway, the former Town dump site, and the Lincoln County recycling facility, is well suited as a secondary growth area for both business and for housing in the Town, subject to water and sewer requirements. Any large-scale business recruited to this part of the Town would need to agree on financing extension of the water and sewer lines to service the area.
- Both Town-owned and County-owned land adjacent to the Lincoln County recycling facility may be suitable parcels for an enlarged Lincoln County jail; again, sewer and water issues will have to be addressed.
- The Speedway site is under-utilized as an asset to the community. It is currently being offered for sale. If it continues in its present use, additional uses of the site such as fairs, which do not conflict with the car races, should be attracted. Alternatively, the site could be suitable for redevelopment for cluster housing or apartments; or offices, research or other business uses that do not generate significant truck traffic. Such investments will have to address the sewer/water issue.

Strategies:

- Prepare an inventory of available land in this part of Town and its appropriateness for development or conservation.
- Work with the Speedway owner to market the site, either for continued recreational/racing/showground uses, or potentially for sale for office-type developments.
- Work with Lincoln County Commissioners and State agencies to finance the move of the County Jail, allowing the village site to be redeveloped and returned to the tax rolls.
- Work with the Planning Board and Ordinance Review Committee on ways to encourage cluster housing.

Business recruitment priorities:

- Additional professional services, especially in health care and financial areas, that would support a growing population of retirees.
- Office-type businesses (such as telemarketing) which need to start up ahead of the likely timeframe for release of the Maine Yankee site.
- Housing, especially higher-density developments such as apartments or cluster housing for the elderly, for close-in areas such as Huntoon Hill and the West Alna Road.

## **7. Wiscasset Airport**

Goals:

- To make the airport a net financial contributor to the Town.
- To develop land on the south side of the runway for aviation-related commercial activity.
- To develop an intermodal park-and-ride facility for passenger rail and highway transportation.

Comments:

- The Airport should be a key asset for business attraction to the Town. However, its value for all-weather business aviation is somewhat restricted by runway length. Another 500 feet of runway would greatly increase the field's ability to host business jet operations. While this cannot be funded in the short term, nothing should be done to make such a runway extension more difficult in the future.
- When passenger rail comes to the region – expected to be around 2004 – Wiscasset will need a year-round station site with extensive parking. We believe the best such location to serve the wider region (including the Boothbay peninsula and towns adjoining Wiscasset) would be adjacent to the Airport.

Strategies:

- Develop town-owned land on the south side of the airport runway for aviation-related businesses.
- Increase revenue to the Town from Fixed-Base Operator through increased utilization of the airport.
- Work with MDOT to designate the Wiscasset Airport as one of the expected three or four year-round rail stations to be built between Brunswick and Rockland. Such a station would primarily serve year-round residents of the region seeking transportation outbound to Portland, Boston, etc. An important secondary user group would be

visitors to, and potentially commuters to, businesses locating at the Maine Yankee property. The station should allow for additional transit users such as buses, vans, and taxis, as well as having extensive parking. This would serve a different function from a seasonal station at the downtown waterfront, primarily serving inbound tourists who would not require vehicle parking at the site.

Business Attraction priorities:

- Aircraft repair, servicing and operations businesses.
- Small-package distribution.
- Aviation-related manufacturing.
- State and private investment in passenger rail facilities.



## **Section 4: Management of Plan**

### **PERSONNEL, LOCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Wiscasset Business Plan is designed to be implemented by an economic development entity designated by and responsible to the Board of Selectmen. If endorsed by the Town of Wiscasset to continue in its role as economic developer, Stafford Business Advisors (SBA) proposes to remain in its present office (882-1119) on the second floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27. As it has been for the past four months, the office would be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday.

The professional staff of SBA who have worked and will continue to work (if selected by the Town) on the Wiscasset assignment include: Judith Foss, project manager; Christopher Hall, senior consultant; Sharon White, project coordinator; Kenneth Stafford, senior consultant; and Thomas Valleau, technical consultant. All have been active in this project and involved in the tasks of community outreach, consensus building, business attraction, and business plan development.

SBA has maintained complete records of all meetings held to date and has regularly updated the Board of Selectmen and the public about its activities. Some of that record is appended to this report. While it is understood that some critical negotiations with interested investors may require strict confidentiality, SBA believes that a process that is as open and transparent as possible will serve all parties, especially Wiscasset residents, in the most credible and effective manner.

### **COSTS**

SBA has submitted a budget for the year 2001 to the Board of Selectmen. That budget includes all items (Personnel, Travel, Promotional Materials, Internet Services, Office Rental and Office Expenses) required to implement the first year of the Business Plan. The travel costs include trade shows, site development/selection conferences, and visits with state officials, commercial realtors and potential investors who are outside the normal commuting route. The total annual budget is \$94,800, or \$7,900 per month.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### A. Marketing Plan

- Facilitate creation of a Greater Wiscasset Chamber of Commerce to reach beyond town's borders (to dispel notion that Wiscasset is too self-focused and too willing to work in a vacuum without concern for its neighbors).
- Create Economic Development Website with input from Webmaster Sean Rafter, town officials, business owners and residents.
- Research grants and prepare applications when appropriate.
- Attend targeted trade shows (e.g., high technology sector) and site selection conferences.

### B. Pro-Active Tasks

- Expand outreach to potential investors.
- Continue effort to establish an economic development corporation with CEI, state officials, and representatives of the business community.
- Continue to strengthen economic and political ties between the town and State agencies and statewide organizations.
- Solicit feedback from the statewide business community about development opportunities.

### C. Public Accountability

- Analyze public opinion on an ongoing basis by establishing a Citizen Advisory Committee and a Business Advisory Committee (including resident and non-resident business owners).
- Conduct monthly public meetings to inform residents about development opportunities.
- Submit monthly newspaper columns.

### D. Streamlining the Development Process

- Create one-stop shopping for investors (facilitate interaction between town officials and investors to create a smooth and predictable process).
- Develop a Tax Increment Financing policy for consideration by the Town.

- Encourage submission by March 2001 of an updated Comprehensive Plan to meet state guidelines.
- Encourage consistency of application and adequacy of zoning ordinances.
- Establish competitive bidding for use of public facilities.

# Wiscasset Economic Development Survey

Stafford Business Advisors, hired by the town of Wiscasset to help with economic and community development, has prepared this survey to aid in the preparation of an economic development and business recruitment strategy. Individual responses will be held in strict confidence.

- |                                                  |                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Do you live in Wiscasset? Yes No              | 5. Do you work in Wiscasset? Yes No                  |
| 2. If yes, for how long? _____ years             | 6. If no, where do you work? _____                   |
| 3. If no, where do you live?<br>_____            | 7. Do you have children in Wiscasset schools? Yes No |
| 4. Do you own a business in Wiscasset?<br>Yes No | 8. If yes, what are their ages? _____                |

*Which of the following possible strategies for business recruitment would you support or oppose for Wiscasset?*

(Circle your response)

- |                                                                                         |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 9. Focus on large employers such as MBNA.                                               | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 10. Focus on smaller, diverse businesses.                                               | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 11. Focus on high-tech, "new economy" employers.                                        | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 12. Focus on service businesses to support tourism, health care, and retirement living. | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 13. Focus on 'heavy industry' that pays good wages year-round.                          | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 14. Focus on growing the businesses we already have.                                    | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 15. Focus on any development that contributes significantly to the revenue of the town. | Support Neutral Oppose |
| 16. Do nothing.                                                                         | Support Neutral Oppose |

*Which of the following statements do you agree with?*

- |                                                                                                                                        |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 17. A bypass should be built as soon as possible.<br>[If you agree, where should it go? _____]                                         | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 18. Passenger train service, connecting to Amtrak, should be developed as soon as the line is upgraded.                                | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 19. The north (inland) side of town should stay mostly rural, with traditional land uses and public access for hunting and recreation. | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 20. The north (inland) side of town should be developed for commercial, industrial and/or residential use.                             | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 21. The waterfront should be a focus for economic development.                                                                         | Agree Neutral Disagree |

*Which of the following, if any, would you like to see:*

- |                                                                                                                    |                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 22. A park and/or trails along the waterfront ?                                                                    | Yes No                 |
| 23. A marina, with facilities for visiting boats ?                                                                 | Yes No                 |
| 24. Tour or excursion boats ?                                                                                      | Yes No                 |
| 25. Commercial activity at the Mason Station pier ?                                                                | Yes No                 |
| 26. A dedicated pier for the fishing/lobster industry ?                                                            | Yes No                 |
| 27. Boat building and boat repair activities ?                                                                     | Yes No                 |
| 28. Commercial use of the airport should be encouraged.                                                            | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 29. Commercial use of rail freight should be encouraged.                                                           | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 30. The downtown village center needs more shops serving local needs.                                              | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 31. The downtown village center should be promoted as a place for tourists to stay, rather than just pass through. | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 32. The antique and crafts trades should be supported, perhaps with major fairs or events.                         | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 33. I'd like to see a convention center, a major hotel, or a resort somewhere in town.                             | Agree Neutral Disagree |
| 34. Wiscasset should try to recruit more retirees to live here.                                                    | Agree Neutral Disagree |

And finally...

Please add your ideas, suggestions and comments about the directions the Town should take in economic development. Attach additional pages if necessary. Forms can be turned in to the Wiscasset municipal building, the Stafford Business Advisors office on the second floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta, or Yellowfront. Questions? Call Stafford Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 882-1119.

## TABULATED WISCASSET SURVEY RESULTS

157 Surveys completed

1. 68% (107) Wiscasset residents; 32% (50) non-residents
2. Range of years of residency: 1 to 80
3. Non-residents: Alabama to Woolwich; largest representation from Edgecomb (17) and Westport (10)
4. 15% (23) of respondents own a business in Wiscasset
5. 31% (48) work in Wiscasset
6. Non-Wiscasset workers from Alna to Woolwich; largest groups from Bath (16) and retired (35)
7. 16% (25) have children in Wiscasset schools
8. Ages of children range from infant to 18
9. Recruiting large employers like MBNA: 49% (73) support; 25% (37) are neutral; 26% (39) oppose
10. Recruiting smaller, diverse businesses: 78% (115) support; 17% (25) are neutral; 5% (7) oppose
11. Recruiting high-tech, "new economy" employers: 79% (114) support; 10% (14) are neutral; 11% (17) oppose
12. Recruiting service businesses to support tourism, health care, and retirement living: 68% (102) support; 23% (35) are neutral; 9% (14) oppose
13. Recruiting 'heavy industry' that pays good wages year-round: 27% (41) support; 32% (48) are neutral; 41% (63) oppose
14. Growing existing businesses: 73% (112) support; 22% (33) are neutral; 5% (8) oppose
15. Accepting any development that contributes significantly to the tax base: 50% (75) support; 22% (33) are neutral; 28% (41) oppose
16. Do nothing: only 1 person supports; 9% (14) are neutral; 90% (128) oppose
17. 53% (80) support building a bypass as soon as possible; 9% (14) are neutral; 38% (58) oppose; for those supporting a bypass, the most mentioned preferred locations are: northern route (15), Westport (8), southern route (6), tunnel (3) ((**Results from Wiscasset residents only were slightly different: 59% (61) support a bypass; 10% (10) are neutral; 31% (32) oppose**))

18. Develop passenger train service, connecting to Amtrak, as soon as line is upgraded: 68% (104) support; 14% (22) are neutral; 18% (27) oppose
19. Keep north (inland) side of town mostly rural, with traditional land uses and public access for hunting and recreation: 47% (71) support; 36% (54) are neutral; 17% (27) oppose
20. Develop the north (inland) side of town for commercial, industrial and/or residential use: 32% (46) support; 34% (49) are neutral; 34% (51) oppose
21. Focus on waterfront for economic development: 76% (115) support; 13% (20) are neutral; 11% (17) oppose
22. See a park and/or trails along the waterfront: 86% (122) agree; 14% (20) disagree
23. See a marina with facilities for visiting boats: 91% (136) agree; 9% (14) disagree
24. See tour or excursion boats: 90% (135) agree; 10% (15) disagree
25. See commercial activity at the Mason Station pier: 85% (122) agree; 15% (21) disagree
26. See a dedicated pier for the fishing/lobster industry: 83% (116) agree; 17% (23) disagree
27. See boat building and boat repair activities: 83% (116) agree; 17% (24) disagree
28. See commercial use of the airport encouraged: 67% (101) agree; 16% (24) are neutral; 17% (25) disagree
29. See the commercial use of rail freight encouraged: 64% (94) agree; 16% (23) are neutral; 20% (29) disagree
30. See the downtown village center with more shops serving local needs: 69% (104) agree; 20% (31) are neutral; 11% (17) disagree
31. See the downtown village promoted as a place for tourists to stay, rather than just pass through: 61% (94) agree; 23% (35) are neutral; 16% (24) disagree
32. See support of the antiques and crafts trade, perhaps with major fairs or events: 48% (74) agree; 31% (47) are neutral; 21% (32) disagree
33. See a convention center, a major hotel, or a resort somewhere in town: 35% (52) agree; 25% (38) are neutral; 40% (60) disagree
34. See Wiscasset try to recruit more retirees to live here: 45% (69) agree; 41% (63) are neutral; 14% (21) disagree

## SURVEY COMMENTS- WISCASSET TAXPAYERS

### BYPASS:

Underground walkway, pedestrian tunnel  
#55 routing maps attached  
I95 to Richmond to Rockland , Belfast  
No more bridges, widen Route 1  
Alternatives must keep undeveloped lands as open spaces  
Use Westport bridge  
Not south-high end monetary engine, rush hour not bad, crosswalks and lights,  
North could feed I95 eventually.

### MISCELLANEOUS:

Penobscot Indians – gambling casino  
Pizza Hut, McDonalds or Burger King, donuts, Wendy's , Hotels rather than motels  
Cut budgets and spending in Wiscasset  
Waiting to hear Stafford Ideas  
Make on-line businesses easier and cheaper  
Selectmen should not be paid – labor of love  
Underground utility lines  
Promote cluster housing to keep outside areas open, mostly for wildlife habitat  
Less spraying – cut down on chemical pollution  
Permanent July 4<sup>th</sup> committee needed  
Retirement housing needed  
Need professional non-political town manager

### DOWNTOWN VILLAGE:

Develop off-street parking  
Traffic problems put village at risk – need to protect historic (quaint) buildings/treasures  
Bakery, deli  
No more antique stores  
No hotels necessary – number of good B&B's already  
Need grocery - maybe in old bar on Water Street with Seasonal coffee shop downstairs  
Facing the waterfront  
Antique day open house similar to early bird sale

### WATERFRONT:

Private or municipal marina  
No subsidy for waterfront businesses

Renew aesthetic value -- relocate 2 master schooner museum from BBH and moor

Windjammers here when not in use and off season

Waterfront development hand-in hand with conservation/preservation of the waterfront

Limited opportunities because of wetlands and railroad unless go into river itself

#### MAINE YANKEE AND OTHER LARGE TRACTS:

-no noise or smell pollution

-family sports center -- golf, cross-country skiing etc.

-so side of Rte 1 -- hotel, golf, conf center rather than industrial

-buy land as it becomes available for ecological uses

-encourage resort development

-industrial mall/center with light industry, clean, quite and provides jobs for local workers parttime, work while children are in school

-North -- rte 27 industrial development

South -- residential construction, retirees

- North, make sure large landowners are contacted for input

MY -- get land donated to town for resale

-resort facility -- golf, marina hiking or retirement facility

-marine facilities, boat yard

-marine oriented industrial park. Boatyard could be the anchor with boatbuilders, repair facilities etc. target Mt. Desert builders being priced out of area.

-Samoset type resort, marina and conventions



## SURVEY COMMENTS – NON-WISCASSET TAXPAYERS

### TRAFFIC

Elevate Route 1 through town

Traffic not really a problem. Summer people are used to traffic congestion.

Use alternatives rather than a bypass.

Anti bypass comments, such as fix own problems.

Make Route 1 into 4 lanes, with a jersey barrier down the middle and limited crossing.

If a bypass, south.

Develop a regional transportation plan.

Eliminate the ped crossing at Red's, install a left hand turn lane for cars to turn toward Le Garage and the harbor when they come off the bridge, and put in a left turn lane at the post office.

Enforce the no left hand turn signs, at least during the summer.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Develop a regional land use and development plan.

Wiscasset is suffering from a loss of community spirit due to Maine Yankee and needs to re-establish it.

Don't change the small rural character of Wiscasset

Wiscasset shouldn't be so arrogant.

If Stafford really wanted comments they should have included an address with the survey.

Don't do anything to "distruct Wiscasset as it is today"

There are areas of Maine, like Wiscasset, which should be off limits for large developers.

Realize that the MY \$ are all dried up.

### DOWNTOWN VILLAGE

Nothing to do in downtown Wiscasset. The core functions are gone.

Should have a grocery store

Need parking areas near downtown.

### WATERFRONT

Small marina with fuel dock and pump-out station

Wiscasset along with Bath and Damariscotta should promote the three towns to the cruising community.

Recreational fishing

Develop as historical tourism

Encourage large tour boat to come twice each summer and have the Yacht handle 4 guest moorings for the town to be clearly marked for out of town guests only.

#### MAINE YANKEE AND OTHER LARGE TRACTS

Keep trying for a new power plant.

Mason Station site -- High-tech center but first need good services to support this.

## MEETING NOTES:

### GENERAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 21,2000

The meeting began with an introduction to Stafford Business Advisors and the scope of our first five months of work for Wiscasset. The participants introduced themselves and identified where they lived in town or whom they represented.

### HOT BUTTON ITEMS:

1. Access control on Route 1
  - Bypass
  - Gateway compromise – community developed
  - Zoning
  - Rail effort
2. Scope of waterfront development
  - Parking
  - Rail effort (also above)
  - Regional center
  - Positions – gentrification or more enterprises
  - Marina, boat services
  - Ferry service
  - Downtown traffic
  - Attraction destination
  - WWF
  - Industrial
  - Riverfront plan
3. Parochialism – whether Wiscasset should cooperate with neighboring towns – Westport and Edgecomb are close – by – for example, their concern for an industrial park.
4. Balance – don't go broke with school system – zoning, budget issue – conflict between population and economic development.
5. Salaried officials/town employees including school services provided/development/outsourcing.
6. Wiscasset operates as a center, but may not be in the future if things such as the bypass aren't done.
7. How do we get funding for various types of development – public/private partnerships – funding for specific projects.

8. Mason Station – uses; when available; encourage use of what's already there.

Other Ideas

Growth area – health

## WATERFRONT MEETING – SEPTEMBER 28,2000

Facilitated by Tom Valleau

Tom Valleau's introduction :

1. Kinds of marine businesses – niche potentials
  - a. Passenger vessels – cruise ships – what lines would be appropriate
  - b. Cargo vessels – not gigantic vessels
  - c. Commercial fishing
  - d. Recreational boating
  
2. Capital outlay – operating \$
  - a. Earned income from docking fees, per passenger fees, land rents etc.
  - b. Town – local component in grants
  - c. Maine DOT
  
3. Riverfront land use
  - a. Decision – marine or water development only ?
  - b. Zoning – permitted uses, conditional uses
  - c. If not marine only, what else – commercial/professional businesses
  - d. Residential
  - e. Open space – resource protection
  - f. Industrial land use
  
4. How to attract niche businesses
  - a. Facilities development, dock, gangway
  - b. Regulations that are welcoming
  - c. Go selling

Public Comments:

Question, cost/benefit examples, Tom used Portland- DOT and town debt serviced, town debt covered by services.

Negatives- no land for parking lot, mud flats,tides,lobstermen strong business upset by other vessels coming in , very difficult to separate

Town partnership – town owned or privately owned development – can't look at town for investment.

Railroad and water vessels – both passenger and freight – touring the river has not taken hold yet but the river is a valuable asset and it doesn't take a lot of investment \$ to do this.

White's Island – rebuild dock, swimming and recreational boating – can get in on it by becoming a member of the swimming club- take it from there by letting vendors ply their trade- could expand parking to Mason Station area – bike or foot path behind Mason Station – rebuild foot bridge- encourage people – trolley/bus.

Walking tours of Wiscasset – historic cruise lines want to know what attractions there are once they dock here.

Develop waterfront like Camden – mixed use small scale – fishing, restaurants etc.

Cruise ship experience – no facilities to use at night – opposition to noise on shore from town people.

If public ownership, appropriate charges for uses – competitive bid process or negotiate with group you want to come in- ( Per Tom, don't use 99 year lease or % of gross deals)

Passenger rail – long-term idea

Longer pier in the river

Zoning ordinances eliminate a lot of opportunities – would have to change zoning to enable – for example, can't have business over the water. Think the current atmosphere is good for changing ordinances and thinks that the development of the waterfront is the best hope to re-establish a town center for Wiscasset.

Is our reserve an impediment to getting grants ? Tom feels that it is not.

Current fishing - 5 from Wiscasset, 50 to 60 people all-together. \$3 to \$5 million marine activity right now (Harbor Master)

Oceanographic research

Marina – satellite operations from other marinas.

Deep- water location- points of land which are easily accessible – walk the shoreline- wetlands, clam flats- balance wins and losses – weigh what have to give up for \$ to get.

Maintain treasure and provide benefits for people who live here.

Harbor Master says lobster industry isn't going to grow any more here, probably will decline in # of people fishing, but not necessarily the # of fish. Said SW Harbor yields \$300,000 per year at a cost of \$60,000.

Mason Station site has potential on the water.

Harbor in Wiscasset – the half here is the deep half – should investigate joint investments with Edgecomb.

Paddling can be year around – taps and affluent clientele – outfitters, where could they launch etc.

Question – Did Cianbro have anything concrete on the waterfront. Judy said she would ask them.

Increase the utilization of the waterfront from the bridge to Mason Station.

## DOWNTOWN VILLAGE AND ROUTE 1 CORRIDOR – 10/05/00

Utilize the SWOT method:

S = strengths

W= weaknesses

O = Opportunities

T = Threats

Ground Rules:

This is not about the bypass.

Assume no bypass for some time.

What can/should be done now.

The village core and Route 1 are different but related topics.

Tonight's subject is economic development.

Boundaries of the Village – pond to midwater, north to the old jail

Tourist appeal and out –of – town magnets

Art gallery, Silver Spirit, diversity, both downtown and Route 1.

Places to stay:

20 rooms in B&B's

Sheepscot River Inn and Cottages

Motels – Schooner and Wiscasset Motor Lodge

Campgrounds

Bayview Inn, Cod Cove Inn

Retail

Big Al's

Antiques

Sarah's , Treats, Reds, Le Garage

Individually owned private businesses, not cookie cutter

Wiscasset Ford

Ames True Value

Strengths



Historic Village – valuable resource to preserve, intact and difficult to reproduce

Waterfront

Beauty

Linear distribution of businesses (Rte 1)

Availability of transport modes

Big Al's is a magnet

Images to visitors of uniqueness – “prettiest village in Maine”

Residential aspect – zoning

County seat

National recognition as a center for antiques

Library

Houses of worship

Downtown post office

Community center

Wiscasset's location – between Bar Harbor and the Boston & Manchester airports.

Slower paced than Boothbay Harbor

### Opportunities

Historic village

Location

Transportation – rail, airport and water if integrated

Information center – signs, radio accessed information – audio kiosk staffed or offer cell phone # and forward message.

Pamphlet – series

Kiosk – behind Sarah's

Me. Tourist bureau member as town

Internet – web site

WRBA info piece and web site.

Tunnels/underpass

1 view – more B&B's add to charm- more attractive than Samoset and other view let the market decide.

Available property – Rte 1 and Birch Point Road to develop out of sight of quaint village.

Gambling resort

Mini-Sturbridge Village

How info/programs are supported, reviewed etc. to all the citizens in Wiscasset.

Long term and short-term strategies to deal with build plans.

### Weaknesses

Downtown lacks retail needs, copy shop, grocery, butcher, pharmacy, and bakery

Lack of public transportation options and integration of transportation

Parking

Lack of family activities – golf course

Not enough public restrooms and closed in the winter

Conflict between pedestrians and traffic on Route 1 – speed limits and laws not enforced currently – safer.

Lack of historic district ordinances

### Threats

Possibility of out-of – control taxes

Lack of business leaders willing to play a strong role in the community

Frozen in time as historic village where people don't shop or work – losing role as regional service and not yet found role as tourist center, specialized, or living area, which make sense as vibrant village – no economic vitality

Ability to move through the village.

Apathy

Concern about over-building of jail – unprotected situations – lack of short-term ordinances.

Series of measures creating a Berlin will through downtown.

### Reasons to Live Here

Quality of life

Banks, churches, small village with sidewalks can walk on to services, Stores, village core

Simplicity – getting away from problems – more simple but still

Have conveniences of modern life.

People – hard working – honest labor

### Reasons to Stay

Look at homes and historic aspects of the village – appeal of the town

Antique shops

Respite

Good base for other historic parts of Maine such as Alna and Sheepscot

Geographic location – stop off point to Bar Harbor – great access point.

Diverse – islands, draw to Coast, geology of Maine, exploration.

AIRPORT, MASON STATION AND OTHER LARGE TRACTS –  
10/12/00

AIRPORT - Tom Valleau facilitated. His overview:

1. Kinds of things an airport can do and where Wiscasset fits.
  - a. Scheduled air service – Wiscasset not a candidate, not enough people to support service and Portland too close.
  - b. attract air cargo operations – would be a tough struggle for Wisc.
  - c. Business executives – corporate flying e.g. Maine Yankee
  - d. Air charters – air taxi
  - e. Personal use flying, clubs etc.
  
2. Municipal matters
  - a. Cash flow – should at least be breaking even if not prosperous
  - b. Make sure have adequate insurance
  - c. Based airplanes should be paying excise taxes to the town.
  - d. Strengthen alliance with fixed base operator – partnership for growth within reasonable time line. When renegotiate, allow time to really cover subjects.
  - e. Master plan – new hangers – if need new hangers, great idea for private developer with the town collecting property tax and ground rents.

Public Comments:

Uses airplane for personal use and would like to be in a hanger. Almost left a few years ago because the services were lacking and surfaces were not safe. Other airports have industrial parks right next to the airport and highway systems and attract businesses that need the airport. Urges Wiscasset to continue to look for options to expand as growth occurs and to stay with it. Think about banking land for future – can rent out to farmers in short term.

'97,98,99 Budgets showed how the airport could make a profit.

Need to notify abutters now that 5 to 7 years down the road will have a need to straighten the road.

Need a bigger hanger for the fixed base operator to do more high quality work.

Could get some of the light freight market if could get up to 4600 ft. runway. Light high-tech industry could be added too.

Complement – railroad and river in close proximity to airport. If MY is no longer there, get FAA to remove power lines.

Need an airport manager in addition to fixed base operator.

Master plan does not adequately address issues. In order to develop, need a facility to handle big aircraft and the length of the runway to 4600 ft. needs to be in the plan or it won't happen. Charter is possible, one used to serve the Coastal area. These are pivotal points for economic development and if not in the plan, will inhibit development. Master plan needs to be revisited, especially the length of the runway. Don't want to be tied in to a 20-year agreement that can't be changed.

Current RFP's for hangers to serve a need and bring more airplanes into the airport and also day people and weekend folks who spend a lot of \$ in the area.

Limited by the length of the runway. Insurance requirements want to see a minimum of 4000 ft. This is limiting current activity.

Chicken/egg -- runway with no market, can't get market without longer runway. Need airport to be marketable to get executives in.

Need a full fixed base operator. Need to be able to offer flight training, aircraft sales, charter, rent.

The existing hangers were put up at a small amount of \$ at a 99 year lease. The new hangers want the same things but this doesn't provide proper \$ to

Wiscasset. Need to get more than land taxes. The town should be cautious on leases, the FAA has regulations.

Grants aren't free money. It's your money being returned to us.

Airport is an appropriate area for growth. Clover-leaf space is available for a bypass.

Concern expressed about noise. Encourage the people to think differently, such as using email communications rather than a longer runway. Was told that a longer runway doesn't need to mean more noise because the take off is further down (from Chewonki) and higher up, and also the fixed base operator is trying to operate sensitively.

Support growth but don't want to adversely affect Eaton Farm or Chewonki – have to be very sensitive to these areas.

## MASON STATION

Bill to encourage research \$ for alternative energy at Mason Station. ( fed govt \$- get FP&L to apply). We would then get a few more years.

River – tidal flow power generation – wouldn't interfere with lobstering.

Tourist facility – property is fantastic – assuming can use property without the existing buildings – marina, lobster, trail to White's Island.

Development doesn't obstruct anyone's view. Access to water, rail, walkways – bringing people by foot into Wiscasset.

Would hate to see long-term heavy-duty industrial use there.

Dan Thompson described the clean-up experiences at a LCRA facility, which are similar to Mason Station. He has a lot of good information on this available for further review.

## RURAL NORTHERN WISCASSET – 10/19/00

### Public Comments:

Village – Downtown but also rural surrounds.

Approaches – Rte 27, Rte 218, US 1 North, US 1 South

Rural qualities important to “Prettiest Village”: historical town with cultural resources.

Protect water and farmland; small-town quality disappearing; no marketing.

Property owners should have right to develop.

Natural tension – Maintain town’s character vs. right to develop land.

Support for “clean” business on Route 27; good access to cities, Interstate.

Preserve Route 218.

No major development until bypass built.

Cannot move trucks across town; need coordination between industrial development and development of bypass.

Concern about commuters from development in Alna, Whitefield.

Trailer parks may need services.

Water/aquifer – must protect.

Ledge along Route 27 creates a problem for development.

Consider office park or call center at Speedway.

Concern with sprawl around bypass.

Sewer/water in southern section of town; expense of extending sewer and water to northern section a problem.

Residential expansion by ones and twos a silent danger; look at cluster housing.

Some land not in the Tree Growth program taxed as house lots even on undeveloped property with no roads.

Support agriculture, small farms, farmers’ cooperative.

Small organic farms an emerging niche.

Important to direct growth in this area to protect rural character.

Protect woodlots and access to land for recreation purposes.

MAINE YANKEE – 10/26/00

Stafford Business Advisors – Minimum Requirements for redevelopment of MY.

1. No use of the Town's reserve fund.
2. Keep MY land as part of town's tax base...
3. town is part of the decision making process.

Wiscasset's options:

1. Passive - influence development through ordinances.
2. semi-active – incentives (e.g. tax breaks); marketing assistance....
3. Active – form development corporation; control site.

Decision criteria – Use, impact, \$ size, acres, jobs, chances?.

Decommissioning process:

One –third complete, complete in 2004.

Reactor removed next year.

Partial site release possible in 9 to 12 months. End of this year hope to Submit application to NRC. This would make land available before 2004.

MY Pluses:

Deep water

Electric transmission in place.

Buildings

Airport and railroad nearby.

Wants to create new employment, tax relief to the economic impact of The loss on the mid-coast.

Best Practices – 4 Areas of Criteria

1. Strength of the developer and can the developer work with the community.
2. Viability of the project – how to use the capacity in the best way.
3. MY Prudence.
4. Meet community, town, and state etc objectives – community fit.



Eaton Farm use needs to be compatible with other developments.

Will look at all prior proposals as time goes on.

Are getting information in order for all those who might make proposals.

MY is NOT going to be a nuclear power plant.

Housing development is a possibility.

If had a real user of natural gas, potential, but not done on spec.

Telecommunications hotel (switching area, not an actual hotel)

10 years from now what possibilities does MY see:

Heavy use in dry cast area .

Business park development....

Open space development.

Research possibilities and other educational such as Vo Tech.

Schedule:

Get hand on what usable info they have.

Look at what has been offered before.

Target marketing- shouldn't you be looking at MY site.

Look at proposals.

What companies look for?

Taxes in overall business strategy. This is not the most important factor

Accessibility – including transportation...

Quality of available work force.

Quality of life.

Deal – resale, financing, and infrastructure needs and how match up.

Serendipity.

Maine Yankee Handouts are available to review.

## Identifying Options for Developing the Maine Yankee Site

### Background

Having operated since 1972, the Maine Yankee nuclear power plant was shut down in 1997. The plant and site are now being decommissioned in accordance with U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations and State of Maine oversight. As of this writing, the decommissioning process is about one-third complete and expected to be done in 2004. Except for a relatively small area required for the interim storage of used nuclear fuel, upon completion of the decommissioning process, the balance of the Maine Yankee site will be available for new uses.

### Site Description

Comprised of approximately 800 acres in Maine's mid-coast area, the Maine Yankee site is well-suited to host significant new commercial and/or industrial development. The site enjoys superior access to infrastructure systems, including:

- rail;
- tidewater ocean going barge capability;
- existing useable structures;
- excellent electric transmission;
- the Wiscasset airport; and
- the newly improved US Route One.

### Identifying Appropriate Development Options

The nine (9) electric utilities that jointly own Maine Yankee and its site are committed to identifying a bright, viable future for the Maine Yankee site – one which will bring new employment opportunities, tax revenues and economic activity to the mid-coast area. To this end, Maine Yankee management is initiating a site development process. This process is being facilitated by a highly qualified consulting firm and informed by the advice and counsel of an advisory panel comprised of 8 distinguished Maine citizens with expertise in commercial and industrial development, environmental considerations and local community needs.

### Role of the Advisory Panel

The advisory panel held its first meeting in mid-October. George Campbell of PA Strategies, a Portland-based consulting firm, is facilitating the panel's work. Mr. Campbell is deeply experienced with major economic development projects in Maine, having served as a city manager, state economic development director, state transportation commissioner, and consultant to numerous Maine businesses and industries.

Working with Maine Yankee management and staff, it is expected that the panel will:

- provide guidance as to the information needed to begin seeking development proposals;
- provide advice regarding criteria for guiding the selection of site development options;
- provide advice regarding the development and implementation of a program to solicit appropriate development proposals; and
- assist in evaluating development proposals received and preparing appropriate recommendations to Maine Yankee.

The panel's work will also entail examining the experiences of, and lessons learned from, other major site development efforts such as those at the former Loring Air Force base in Aroostook County, the former Pease Air Force base in New Hampshire and other closed nuclear power plant sites.

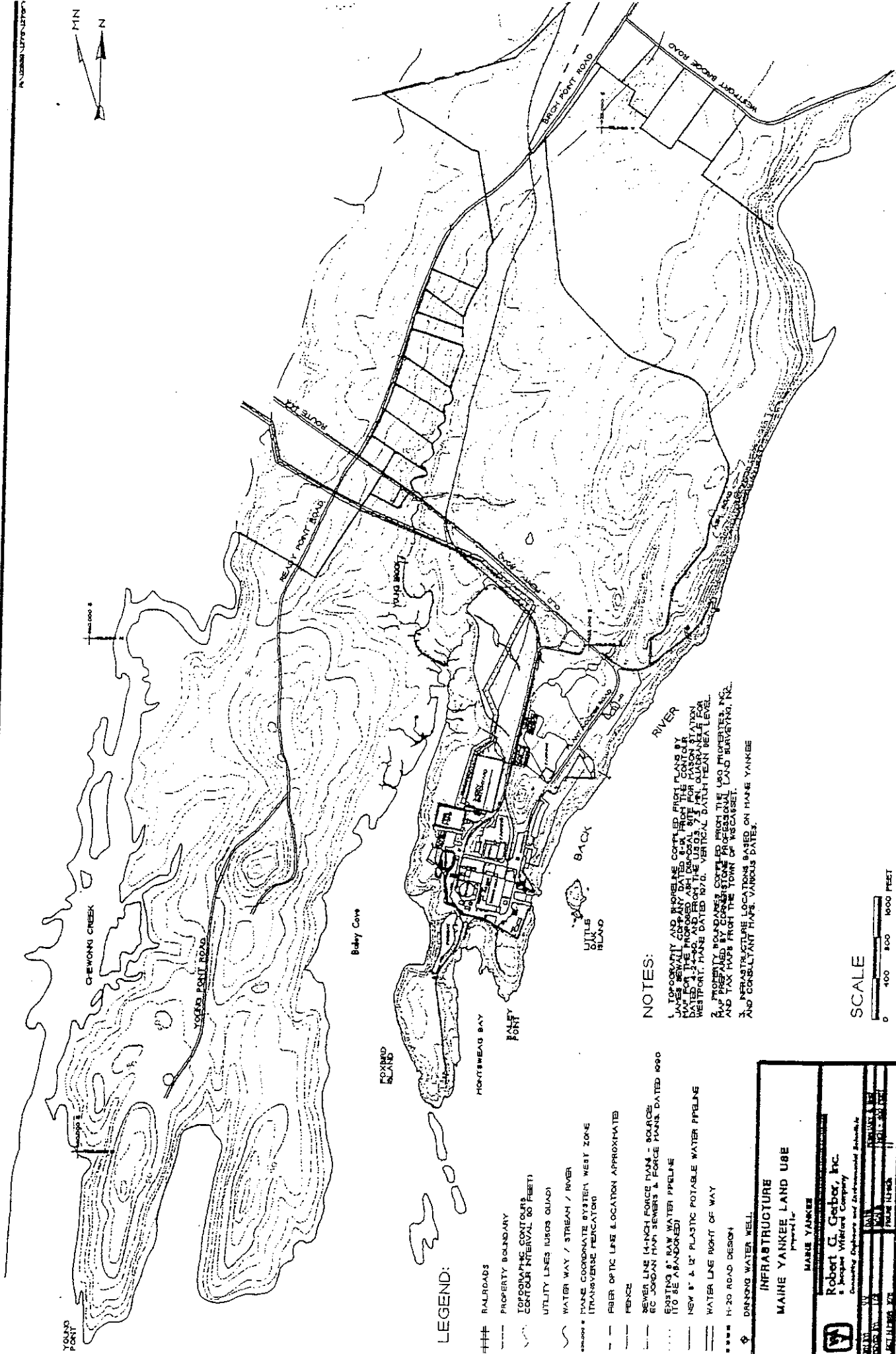
### **Special Consideration of the Eaton Farm Area**

One piece of the Maine Yankee site – approximately 200 acres known as the Eaton Farm area – will receive special treatment by Maine Yankee in terms of future uses. This will be consistent with a 1998 settlement before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), in which a host of interested parties reached accord with Maine Yankee with respect to decommissioning costs and related issues. Under this settlement, the Eaton Farm area will be donated by Maine Yankee to a non-profit environmental organization or school to provide public access, environmental education programs, and a nature preserve. Maine Yankee solicited and received several proposals for the property and is developing an approach for moving this initiative forward as the rest of the site development process gets underway.

### **Community and Public Involvement**

As Maine Yankee's site development program progresses in the coming months, a significant effort will be made to coordinate and consult with public agencies and community interests. Discussions and liaison activities will take place with state officials, local officials, and the general public in the mid-coast region. In particular, activities will be coordinated with the Town of Wiscasset's economic development consultants, as well as the Lincoln County economic development director. In addition, the panel will sponsor one or more public forums to explore site development issues, priorities, and opportunities.

FIGURE 2: MAINE YANKEE SITE



LEGEND:

- === RAILROADS
- - - PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- TOPOGRAHIC CONTOURS  
CONTOUR INTERVAL 50 FEET
- - - UTILITY LINES (WOOD GUARD)
- ~ WATER WAY / STREAM / RIVER
- MAINE COORDINATE SYSTEM WEST ZONE  
(TRANSVERSE MERCATOR)
- - - FIBER OPTIC LINE LOCATION APPROXIMATE
- FENCE
- SEWER LINE 14-INCH FORCE MAIN - SOURCE:  
SC JOHAN PUMP STATIONS & FORCE MAINS DATED 1990
- EXISTING 8" RAW WATER PIPELINE  
(TO BE ABANDONED)
- NEW 8" & 12" PLASTIC POTABLE WATER PIPELINE
- WATER LINE RIGHT OF WAY
- H-20 ROAD DESIGN
- ◇ DRINKING WATER WELL

NOTES:

1. TOPOGRAPHY AND SHORELINE COPIED FROM PLANS BY JAMES NEWELL COMPANY DATED 8-14 FROM TITLE CONTROL DATED 4-1-60 AND FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS DATED 1957. VERTICAL DATUM MEAN SEA LEVEL FOR WESTPORT, MAINE DATED 1972. VERTICAL DATUM MEAN SEA LEVEL.
2. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES COPIED FROM THE 100 PERMITS, INC. MAP PREPARED BY CONRAD STONE PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYING, INC. AND TAX MAPS FROM THE TOWN OF WESTPORT, ME.
3. INFRASTRUCTURE LOCATIONS BASED ON MAINE YANKEE AND CONSULTANT HAVE VARIOUS DATES.

SCALE



**INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**MAINE YANKEE LAND USE**

MAINE YANKEE  
Robert G. Geber, Inc.  
Joseph Wilford, Inc.  
Consulting Engineers and Environmental Scientists

PROJECT NO.	1001
DATE	NOVEMBER 1991
SCALE	AS SHOWN
PROJECT LOCATION	MAINE YANKEE

INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WITH WHOM STAFFORD HAS MET:

Marguerite Rafter

Peter Rines

David Bertran

Bob Clunie

Susan Blagden

Stuart Wyman – Wiscasset Code Enforcement Officer

Bill Watson

Janet Morgan – Librarian

Steve Kornacki – Snow Squall B&B

Tom Hibbert – Sheepscot River Inn

Al Cohen – Big Al's

Bob Blagden

Stanley Lane – Westport Second Selectman

Norma Dreyfus – Friends of Coastal Preservation

Woody Freeman – Road Commissioner

Greg Shea

Karl Tarbox

Tom Stetson

Chuck Applebee

Seaver Leslie

Anne Leslie

Prior Morrell

Lee Carleton

Jennifer Carleton

Don Jones

Dan Thompson – Town Planner

Michael Emmons – Police Chief

Mike Muchmore – Wicked Good Aviation

Ann Walco – Wicked Good Aviation

Bob Faunce – Land Use Planning Consultant for Lincoln County

Dave Allan

Terry Moore

Victor Anderson

Bill Curtis

John Nichols – Nichols Property Management Inc.

Douglas Kennedy – Village Car Care

Gordon Huber – Huber's Market

Bill Quinn – Bill Quinn Antiques  
Priscilla Hutchinson – Priscilla Hutchinson at the Coach House  
Dana Conners – Maine Chamber of Commerce  
Frank Fasset – Wiscasset Ford  
Chris Almasi – Roy Farmer Associates  
Roy Farmer – Roy Farmer Associates  
John O’Connell – Superintendent of Schools  
Mary Brewer – Wiscasset Newspaper and Boothbay Register  
Paula Gibbs – Wiscasset Newspaper  
Tim Reed – Lincoln County Weekly  
Greg Foster – Lincoln County News  
Bob Kalish – Times Record  
PA Strategies  
Maine Yankee  
Florida Power and Light  
Safe Handling  
CEI  
Paul Harrison – Lincoln County Economic Development  
Don Hudson – The Chewonki Foundation  
WRBA  
Cianbro  
CMP  
Diane Kew – DECD  
Steve Levesque – DECD  
John Melrose – DOT  
Rob Elder – DOT  
Cheryl Rust – Le Garage  
Mary Jane Dillingham – Sarah’s  
Linda Stetson – Stetson Financial Services  
Jim Benedix – Benedix Enterprises Inc  
Bill Phinney  
Dave Kinney – Town Engineer  
Lincoln County Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Land Use Committee  
Planning Committee  
Waterfront Committee  
Senior Center  
Firemen  
Selectmen Meetings

**WISCASSET NEWSPAPER COLUMN – 8/31/00**  
**Submitted by Judy Foss of Stafford Business Advisors**

The firm of Stafford Business Advisors (Chris Hall, Judy Foss, Ken Stafford and Sharon White) is honored to be working on economic development for the Town of Wiscasset. Sharon will be staffing our office on a regular basis, and Chris and Judy will also be active and available.

In the few weeks since we started this project, we have already met with many Wiscasset residents, in groups and individually. We are working hard to gather *your* ideas about what you want for your town, and we want to hear from everyone who wishes to share an opinion.

Between now and late November, it is our goal to define, as much as possible, a consensus of opinion on the economic future of Wiscasset and to translate that consensus into a viable plan. To reach out and be inclusive in finding that consensus, we will be using several strategies.

In addition to visiting with various Wiscasset groups and individuals, we will be hosting a general meeting in mid-September and then a series of meetings between late September and early November on specific topics such as the Waterfront, the Downtown Village and Tourism, Traditional Land Uses, Transportation, the Airport, and Mason Station. In late November, we will present our initial draft plan so that everyone can have input before it is finalized. We will also be circulating a survey so that you can be heard on a variety of issues. Please take the time to respond to this survey.

There are many differing opinions in Wiscasset about how best to revitalize the economy. Until recently, the town had no worries about tax revenues. But now, as in most Maine communities, the decisions get more complicated and more controversial when resources are scarce. Our job is to find the areas of agreement in Wiscasset, developing an economic plan that incorporates those areas of agreement, and finding the best way to move forward in a positive, collective way. We also know that, as in any other town, there are areas of disagreement – but everybody we have talked to so far, regardless of their opinion, starts from the standpoint of a genuine love of, and concern for, Wiscasset as it goes through a period of transition.

Some themes that have broad acceptance have already emerged from our discussions:

1. Stabilize the tax base.
2. Move traffic more efficiently.
3. Protect the open spaces and keep careful control of development in the more inland areas north of Route 1. People like having undeveloped land close to town for hunting and outdoor recreation.
4. Preserve the Historic Downtown and improve parking.
5. Bring economic vitality to the waterfront – it has significant unfulfilled potential, but uses must be balanced between tourism, recreation, fishing, and commercial use.
6. Utilize the Airport to its full potential. It should not be a drain on the Town.
7. Realistically assess the future of the Maine Yankee site and Mason Station. Re-powering is a long shot.

We will use these widely accepted goals to frame our activity over the next few months.

Our office is upstairs in the First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27 and is open from 8:30 to 4:30. We invite you to stop in or call our cell phone at 249-9890 (we're still waiting for phone lines to be installed, because of the backup of work from the Verizon strike!).



COLUMN – 9/14/00

Submitted by Judy Foss of Stafford Business Advisors

One thing we have learned from our first month in town is that there is no shortage of energy or strong opinions in Wiscasset! We hope to meet with, or reach by survey, everyone who wants to share an idea about the economic future of Wiscasset. When our business plan is presented to the Selectmen in early December, it will reflect what we have heard from you.

We began distribution of a survey last week to seek your opinions about how to best approach the economic future of Wiscasset. We hope all of you have taken or will take the time to complete the survey because it is very important that we get a broad cross-section of ideas. We have established a team of neighborhood volunteers to distribute the survey so that we reach as many of you as possible. If any of the questions on the survey move you to want further discussion of an idea, please stop by or call (882-1119) our office.

Starting September 21, and for the following five Thursdays, we will host meetings at 7 p.m. at the Wiscasset Town Hall. The first meeting will be a general discussion of business attraction priorities and will give you an opportunity to speak out on any issue you consider relevant to our task of developing a business plan for the town. The following meetings will focus on various areas of the town to assess what types of businesses provide the best fit and could be accommodated in those locations.

The second meeting on Thursday, September 28, will focus on the Waterfront and its potential for new commercial and recreational opportunities. On October 5, our topic will be the Downtown Village and Route 1 Corridor, looking at how to balance historic preservation with economic development.

The three final meetings will be:

- October 12 –Mason Station, Airport, and other large tracts of land that could potentially support additional development while retaining current use.

- October 19 – Rural northern area of Wiscasset, focusing on the preservation of farms, forestry, outdoor recreation, conservation measures, and appropriate commercial development.
- October 26 – Maine Yankee (Although any decision about re-use of this site is not within our purview, local opinion about potential commercial development there is important to the elected leaders of Wiscasset and to the owners of Maine Yankee.)

Along with our work on building a public consensus about an economic plan for Wiscasset, we are following up on leads about businesses that have expressed an interest in coming to town. We are also pursuing some ideas about expanding the business niches (e.g., tourism, antiques, water-related commercial activity) that are already established in Wiscasset. However, we are moving cautiously in this area because we do not want new development to get ahead of the economic planning process.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of your opinions. Please take the time to fill out the survey, attend the public meetings, and call our office so that we can incorporate your ideas into the business plan for Wiscasset's future.

**WISCASSET NEWSPAPER COLUMN – 9/28/00**  
**Submitted by Judy Foss of Stafford Business Advisors**

Last week, Stafford Business Advisors (Chris Hall, Judy Foss, Sharon White and Ken Stafford) talked with over 100 people in Wiscasset in our effort to build a consensus around a business plan for the town's economic future. Along with several individual and small-group discussions, we spoke with about 70 people at the weekly Senior Center dinner. Doc Schilke graciously offered this opportunity for us to reach many interested residents of Wiscasset. Several of those in attendance completed our survey and shared their opinions about improving the tax base.

We also held the first of six consecutive Thursday night meetings (7 p.m. at the Town Hall). A dozen people shared their views in an animated and informative discussion about how to shape Wiscasset's economic future. We set out to focus on areas where there tends to be more disagreement than agreement so that the work to be done in defining a consensus is clearly understood.

Areas where participants believed there are strong differences of opinion included:

- How to mitigate traffic congestion while waiting for a decision on a by-pass – especially access control on Route 1.
- The cost and scope of Town services. Influencing this is the perceived decline of Wiscasset as a regional service center.
- How far to cooperate with neighboring towns and regional efforts – not just in planning but also in education.
- The tension between economic development needs and employment or population growth – both in terms of pressure on the town budget for services such as education, and in terms of labor shortages for existing businesses.
- The scale and type of development appropriate for Wiscasset's waterfront.

On the other hand, there were also areas where the participants saw general consensus:

- The need for more parking downtown.
- A desire to support and expand current business activity.
- The need for new investments to augment the town's tax base.

- A desire to restore downtown Wiscasset's role as an economic service center.
- The likely need for expanded health care and especially elder care services for an ageing population.

We encourage you to attend the future meetings. The dates and topics for those meetings are:

- September 28 – Waterfront (our colleague, Tom Valleau, who was the Waterfront Director in the City of Portland for many years, will moderate this meeting)
- October 5 – Downtown Village/Route 1 Corridor
- October 12 – Mason Station, Airport, Raceway
- October 19 – Rural area north of Route 1
- October 26 – Maine Yankee (representatives of Maine Yankee will be on hand for this meeting)

We are very impressed by not only the number of completed surveys we have received, but also by the quality and thoughtfulness of comments included on many of those surveys. It is clear to us that while the overriding concern of Wiscasset residents is to restore the tax base, an important goal is to maintain the town's historical and maritime character within the economic development plan.

We will be distributing and collecting surveys until mid-October. As we've mentioned before, copies are available at our office (2<sup>nd</sup> floor, First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27), at the Town Hall, and the Yellow Front. Call our office (882-1119) or stop by (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday) if you would like to discuss the survey or get a copy. Thanks to Sean Rafter, we can also be reached by email at: [stafford@wiscasset.net](mailto:stafford@wiscasset.net). He has added a reference to Stafford Business Advisors on the town's website.

We appreciate your interest and involvement. It is much easier if we hear the pros and cons of any idea before, *not after*, we draft the business plan in November.

**WISCASSET NEWSPAPER COLUMN – 10/12/00**

**Submitted by Judy Foss, Stafford Business Advisors**

Three of Stafford's six public meetings and dozens of discussions with Wiscasset residents have been held. We're well on the way to our goal of getting back at least 200 completed surveys. By the end of October, we will have completed the first phase of our project – researching public opinion on various development options to find a consensus in creating a business plan for Wiscasset's economic future.

Our second phase – pursuing leads about potential business investors who have expressed interest in the town – has actually been occurring along with our research. We have been tracking down every rumor about a business that might be interested in Wiscasset. Some rumors have proven to be fantasy; others show some promise. To be effective, this business attraction effort should always be ongoing. In the past, with the large infusion of tax revenues from Maine Yankee, there was no need for – and little interest in – reaching out to new businesses. Now, the need to attract new property tax revenue sources is apparent.

We will begin the final phase of the current project – actually writing the business plan – at the beginning of November. Then it's your turn again in early December to express your reaction to the draft plan before the final report is prepared. Your ideas and opinions are welcome and encouraged at any time throughout this process.

As we zero in on some concrete proposals for the business plan, one particular issue deserves some comment. Traffic congestion on Route 1, which is widely perceived as a barrier to economic growth by both current and potential businesses, is an issue of immediate concern to us. The traffic problem has been discussed for decades with no solution to date. Now we have the Topsham Bypass and new Sagadahoc bridge moving traffic more quickly up the Route 1 Corridor, only to be snarled in Wiscasset.

Some people still argue for more time and more study of the traffic issue. They even oppose asking the people of Lincoln County their opinion about a bypass in a non-binding referendum this November. Are they afraid that the

answer will be a resounding "Yes!", as it was 10 years ago with 79% of the people expressing support for a bypass?

Some limited economic growth can occur in Wiscasset without a bypass. One thing is clear to us as we talk to business prospects. Even investors who are interested in sites such as Maine Yankee, which is outside the congested area, express concern about the seasonal transportation problem. Restoration of vitality to the historic downtown and to the waterfront will not happen until the traffic bottleneck is addressed.

Stafford is writing a reasonable, achievable business plan that addresses all areas of town. But we will only set goals that are consistent with realities. Results can only occur if the barriers are removed. And we want the business plan for promoting economic growth in Wiscasset to have a chance – not sit on a shelf collecting dust while yet another traffic study is undertaken.

Please remember to attend, if possible, the next three public meetings at 7 p.m. at the Wiscasset Municipal Building:

- **October 12 – Mason Station, Airport, Speedway**
- **October 19 – Rural areas north of Route 1**
- **October 26 – Maine Yankee**

Our office is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27. Call us (882-1119) or stop by (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday) if you need a copy of the survey or want to discuss an issue. The last day for returning the survey will be Friday, October 27. We can be reached by email at: [stafford@wiscasset.net](mailto:stafford@wiscasset.net).

**WISCASSET NEWSPAPER COLUMN – October 26, 2000**  
**Submitted by Judy Foss, Stafford Business Advisors**

Stafford Business Advisors has been very impressed with the quality and quantity of ideas that have been expressed by Wiscasset residents at our weekly public meetings. We have listened carefully to what you do want, what you do not want, and to what you would tolerate in our efforts to encourage more business investment in Wiscasset and to restore some of the tax base that has been eroded by the closure of Maine Yankee. Your input to the economic planning process has been invaluable as we build a comprehensive vision for the future of the town.

Our meetings on the Waterfront, Downtown Village, Mason Station/Airport, and the Northern Rural area have all generated sound advice and positive, thoughtful suggestions. The business plan we are preparing for Wiscasset will reflect those ideas. Potential investors will be encouraged by the fact that the residents of the town have played a role in creating the plan and, therefore, will be receptive to their business investment.

Some general themes have evolved from these public discussions:

- The Waterfront should play a much greater role in the town's economic future, as it has in the past. Ideas with strong support include marina development and commercial port activity.
- Assuming that the near-term plans of Florida Power and Light Company are for continued peak power generation, the use of the Mason Station site could be expanded to include compatible commercial activities like a barge-to-rail distribution operation.
- The historic value of the Downtown Village must be preserved, not only for quality of life reasons, but also for its marketing value to the tourism industry. A marina could play a role here, to attract visitors by water in addition to those arriving on Route 1. To become a destination point for tourists, Wiscasset should also look toward expanding the number of Bed and Breakfast rooms and supporting the cluster of antique shops.
- The Route 1 entrance to Wiscasset should build on, not detract from, Wiscasset's historic image. Design guidelines (not excessive restrictions) that are acceptable to the business community should be considered so that the value of everyone's property is increased.

- The need is great for an interim operator to provide uninterrupted service to shippers on the railroad while the search for a permanent operator is conducted. We have been actively involved with the Department of Transportation in securing that temporary operator, and we expect an announcement this week.
- Traffic congestion in the Route 1 corridor must be addressed in the long run by the creation of an alternative route. In the short-term, Wiscasset might consider the consolidation of pedestrian crossings in the Downtown area to indicate its willingness to share in the solution.
- The rural character of the area north of Route 1 should be protected from both residential and commercial over-development. However, there is an appropriate area for development in the vicinity of the Transfer Station and the Speedway. There is also the potential for new uses of the Speedway site, but investors would have to be willing to finance the necessary infrastructure (sewer and water).
- Once Maine Yankee is able to release land south of Ferry Road that is not required for long-term storage, industrial redevelopment on that site should be pursued. The existing use of the site, and the future continued use for nuclear waste storage, make this property most appropriately used for industrial redevelopment. Environmentally-friendly industries that can use rail rather than truck traffic, such as steel or glass recycling, should be explored.
- Maine Yankee land north of Ferry Road may be considered for a mix of uses, including business park development targeting manufacturing or office jobs; residential developments; and protected buffer zones between different uses.
- The opportunity for future runway extension at the Airport should be kept open. The present runway length is about 600 feet too short for safe, all-weather operation of many business aircraft, which limits its economic development value to the region.

These themes have surfaced at our public meetings and will be further developed in our business plan for Wiscasset. That plan will be ready for review by the Selectmen and the town in December.

Stafford's office is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27. Call us (882-1119) or stop by (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday) if you want to discuss an economic development issue. We can be reached by email at: [stafford@wiscasset.net](mailto:stafford@wiscasset.net).



**WISCASSET NEWSPAPER COLUMN – November 30, 2000**  
**Submitted by Judy Foss, Stafford Business Advisors**

As Stafford prepares a business plan for presentation to the Board of Selectmen and the public on December 5, we are continuing to work with interested business investors and with town residents who have ideas about economic development projects. New ideas are always welcome in our planning process.

The complete results of the public economic development survey that was distributed and completed in September and October will be included in the business plan. However, we thought that a sneak preview of those results might be of interest to you. Therefore, we present an overview of the opinions expressed by the 157 people who took the time to fill out the survey. We thank them for their efforts.

Of the total respondents, 68% were Wiscasset residents who have lived in town from 1 year to 80 years. Non-residents who responded live as close as Woolwich, Edgecomb and Westport and as far away as Alabama. Fifteen percent of those who completed the survey own a business in Wiscasset, and 31% work in Wiscasset. Retirees represent 22% of the respondents, and 16% have children in the Wiscasset schools.

Different levels of support for several different development strategies were expressed:

- Recruiting high-tech, “new economy” employers – 79% support
- Recruiting smaller, diverse businesses – 78% support
- Growing existing businesses – 73% support
- Recruiting service businesses to support tourism, health care, and retirement living – 68% support
- Accepting any development that contributes significantly to the tax base – 50% support
- Recruiting large employers like MBNA – 49% support
- Recruiting ‘heavy industry’ that pays good wages year-round – 27% support

The option of doing nothing was opposed by 90% of those completing the survey.

The bypass was supported by 53% of all respondents, while support was somewhat higher for Wiscasset-only residents. A northern route and Westport Island were the two most frequently mentioned locations for a bypass. When asked about developing passenger train service connecting to Amtrak as soon as the rail line is upgraded, 68% expressed support. The encouragement of the commercial use of rail freight was also supported by 64%. Development of the north (inland) side of town for commercial, industrial and/or residential use drew an even split between support, neutrality and opposition.

Very strong support was expressed for: waterfront development (76%), a park and/or trails along the waterfront (86%), a marina with facilities for visiting boats (91%), tour or excursion boats (90%), commercial activity at the Mason Station pier (85%), a dedicated pier for the fishing/lobster industry (83%), boat building and boat repair activities (83%), commercial use of the airport (67%), more shops serving local needs in the downtown village center (69%), and promotion of the downtown village as a place for tourists to stay rather than just pass through (61%).

Above are the highlights of the survey results. For the past few months, Stafford has sought the opinions of the Wiscasset residential and business community about various development ideas with the goal of building consensus around a plan of action. We will certainly incorporate the opinions expressed in the survey into our business plan for the town.

Stafford's office is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta on Route 27. Call us (882-1119) or stop by (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Thursday) if you want to discuss an economic development issue. We can be reached by email at: [stafford@wiscasset.net](mailto:stafford@wiscasset.net)

## Wiscasset's future discussed at WRBA 'after hours'

Judy Foss of Stafford Advisors was the featured speaker at a Wiscasset Regional Business Association (WRBA) After Hours social hosted by the Cod Cove Inn in Edgcomb Nov. 9.

Attended by approximately 35 local business people, the event allowed Foss an opportunity to discuss recent progress made by Stafford Advisors to help shape Wiscasset's future.

"When we first came to town we found some disagreement about what would be best for the area's future," Foss said in her opening remarks. "So, we went out and discussed the issues with a number of individuals, and feel now that we've been successful in bringing consensus to our efforts," she said.

Acknowledging the loss of Maine Yankee to the town's economy, Foss said, "You start to think differently when you lose a major employer and a major part of your tax base."

But one of Wiscasset's greatest assets, according to Foss, is one that will never be lost - the town's history. "The historical character of Wiscasset is a very important

marketing ingredient to the downtown area," Foss asserted.

However, history and character must be balanced with other issues facing Wiscasset, according to Foss. "The whole tone that a town sets for access to development is a key to success," Foss said, adding that, "We're looking at the whole town, and the potential there."

The After Hours social was attended by a number of notables, including Marguerite Rafter and Senator Marge Kil Kelly. It was hosted by Marian DiPietro, the new owner of Cod Cove Inn. Her background in hospitality and catering paid delicious dividends to her guests, as they enjoyed an eclectic selection of appetizers and beverages.

LCN 11/16/00

November 2, 2000

Lincoln County Weekly

# MAINE YANKEE CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

tion of new ordinances; be semi-active, by offering incentives and obtaining marketing assistance, or take an active role in redevelopment, form a development corporation and control the site by making a proposal to Maine Yankee.

He estimated the site would be released in three to five years, which was confirmed by Maine Yankee spokesman Eric Howes.

The decommissioning process, which began in 1997 and is expected to be complete by 2004, is one-third complete, according to Howes. Currently Maine Yankee is removing equipment from the site. Howes estimated that the Eaton Farm area of the Maine Yankee property might be released to a non-profit organization as early as next August.

Noting the Maine Yankee board members are "not site developers," Howes explained former Department of Transportation Commissioner George Campbell and a team of development consultants have been brought in to manage site redevelopment.

"He knows how to get things done," Campbell said of Campbell.

Campbell said his main goals are to create new employment, create a new tax base, and give economic growth to the area.

"We know that we need to look at the best practices throughout the country," said Campbell.

According to Campbell, when Wiscasset or Maine Yankee looks at potentials for site redevelopment, the groups must keep in mind the most

important areas of economic development. They must examine the strength of the development, the potential development's community relations, and investigate the viability of the project.

"We're certainly open to any idea, any thought," said Campbell.

Campbell said he thought a natural gas plant could be a possibility for site redevelopment. Other potential uses for the site could include a business park, software company, vocational school, research and development firm or educational park, he said.

According to Campbell, it is too early to speculate on what business or businesses redevelop the site, but not too early to begin the development process.

# Maine Yankee airs site redevelopment

BY TIM REED

WISCASSET — Stafford & Associates hosted a meeting Oct. 26 between Maine Yankee representatives and residents to exchange ideas and discuss an economic development plan for the company's 800-plus acre site.

"The core of what we'd like to get tonight, is your views on what you'd like," said Stafford economic developer Chris Hall to residents in attendance.

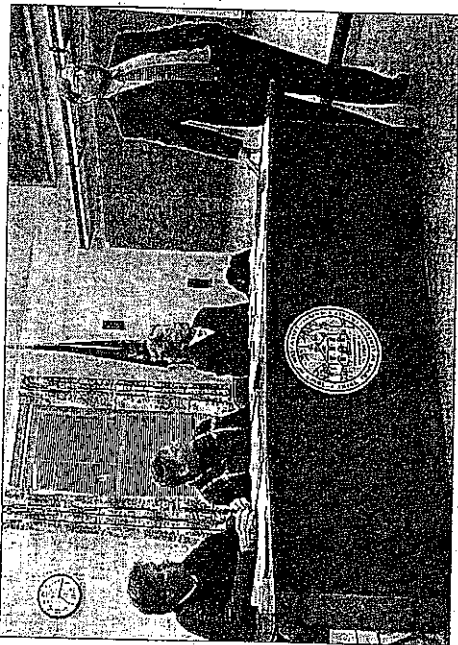
Hall, who, along with Stafford Associates, has been working on Wiscasset's economic development since August, outlined what information the group had obtained through meetings with community members.

According to Hall, the town of Wiscasset's minimum expectations are that the town will use none of its reserve monies to redevelop the site; it would want the Maine Yankee land to remain part of the town's tax base; and town officials would wish to remain a part of the decision-making process. Resident Karl Jarboe said he would not be opposed to using reserve monies for redevelopment if a return could be assured. Many residents present agreed.

Hall said there are only three roles the town of Wiscasset can take in dealing with Maine Yankee: redevelopment. The town can either be passive and influence the redevelopment of the site through adoption.

SEE MAINE YANKEE ON PAGE A11

**"We're certainly open to any idea, any thought"**  
— George Campbell



Stafford & Associates' (from left to right) Chris Hall, Sharon White, and Judy Foss listen to Maine Yankee spokesman Eric Howes as he outlines the decommissioning process in an Oct. 26 meeting. TIM REED

LOW  
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# Me. Yankee...

Continued from page 1

"We are trying to get it to a place where when it's ready for a new use, it would be available for that," Howes said.

Development committee named Howes introduced George Campbell, a development consultant hired by Maine Yankee to coordinate development issues for the entire property.

Campbell is a former state commissioner of transportation, a past director of economic development for the state, city manager for a number of municipalities and a former mayor of Portland. Campbell told the audience he will not be involved with decommissioning issues.

To assist him in the process, Campbell detailed a committee he assembled on Maine Yankee's behalf. The committee includes Southern Maine developer Joseph Bouias, Loring development officer Brian Hamel, current head of the State Chamber of Commerce Dana Connors, Nature Conservancy of Maine director Kent Wommack, DeLorme CEO Gordon Pow, Dist. 16 Sen. Marge Kilkeilly (D-Wiscasset) and Maine Yankee chair Gerry Poulain.

"The key to the process is to listen to a lot of good ideas," Campbell said. "We're not trying to work within a vacuum."

Campbell said the committee will consider all inquiries for the site. Inquiries will be prioritized based on the strength of the proposed development, the viability of the proposal, how the proposal would meet community standards and if the proposal will bear the scrutiny of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, which still holds jurisdiction over Maine Yankee property.

Campbell said he will look for proposals that will create new employment opportunities in the area, serve as a source of tax revenue and otherwise add to the local economy. Wiscasset resident Don Jones asked what provisions would be made for ensuring the future developer of Eaton Farm would not actively oppose development of the rest of the site.

Campbell replied compatibility with future developments could be written into the sale contract if necessary. He added that Maine Yankee is under no time frame to dispose of the site.

"It may take a year to get it (Eaton Farm) out from under the license," Campbell said. "Maine Yankee may decide not to sign off on it until plans are crystallized for the rest of the site."

Campbell answered an inquiry about his vision for the future of the site, saying he would take a "wild stab at it."

"What I see in the next 10 years

with appropriate infrastructure improvements and investment, I see a heavy use investment of equipment and facilities," Campbell said. "What kind of business that goes in there would really depend on the market."

Campbell said he expected the area around the current plant site will be open for some type of industrial use. While there will be a "zone of control" around the dry cask storage facility, approximately seven and a half acres of the current power plant site will be available for use.

Campbell said he expected his work to be completed and new development established on the site within the next 3-5 years. Marketing activities will probably not begin in earnest until spring 2001, Campbell said.

"It will take less time than the Big Dig and less time than the partial site release," Campbell said.

Stafford Business Advisors managing director Chris Hall related the findings of Stafford's informational hearings to date. Stafford will be evaluating future development proposals for Maine Yankee property based on a set of narrowly defined criteria established by the residents, Hall said.

Those requirements range from a minimum, keeping Maine Yankee's land part of the tax base and not using the tax surplus funds to fund development of the site, to Wiscasset taking an active approach to redevelopment.

The active approach could include tax incentives for businesses considering the site or Wiscasset possibly forming its own development company. In the latter case, Wiscasset could control the site and exercise control over what kind of development takes place.

According to Hall, the town as a development company could buy an exclusive option on the site and line up investors ready to begin work the moment the site is released from Maine's Yankee's license.

Inquiries will be ranked on a scale of financial investment, the potential impact to the town in goods and services needed, the use of the size, the size of the development, and the number of jobs a development would create in the area.

On another development note, Hall said in light of the recent bankruptcy of Maine Coast Rail Road, Stafford has lined up two other freight carriers and asked them to bid for the railroad.

Hall said the Dept. of Transportation is slated to announce the awarding of \$32 million in funds to develop a passenger railway up and down the coast.

The DOT will not award funding to a report prepared for the selectmen update a rail system without a

freight carrier in operation on the tracks Hall said.

"The DOT is still in line to make the award," Hall said. "If no operator is along the line the award will have to be pushed back. Having a freight operator along that line is essential to having that line operating."

Stafford managing partner Judy Foss said the company would have a report prepared for the selectmen in December.

## Maine Yankee outlines strategy for site development

By Sherwood Olin

Decommissioning activities at the Maine Yankee nuclear power plant are expected to continue into 2004 but plant officials are already moving forward to make a way for redevelopment of the Wiscasset site. Officials outlined a strategy for the development of 800 acres of property owned by the power plant, for members of the community attending an Oct. 19 information gathering meeting hosted by Stafford Business Advisors.

Recounting activities to date, Maine Yankee spokesperson Eric Howes said decommissioning is approximately one-third complete. Workmen are removing all equipment from the defunct plant in preparation for the demolition of the buildings. A dry cask storage facility is being constructed on site to house the spent nuclear fuel.

Of the 800 acres of property that were formally the Maine Yankee complex, company officials have agreed to donate the 260 acre parcel known as Eaton Farm to a non-profit

See ME. YANKEE, page 14

# Rural Area Should Stay Rural, Stafford Is Told

By PAULA GIBBS

Converting the Wiscasset Speedway to a pig farm, a housing development, or an office complex were some of the ideas tossed out last Thursday in a fifth roundtable discussion set up by Stafford Business Advisors.

The topic was the future of the northern, rural part of town and what residents want (or don't want) to happen in the future. The meeting drew out 40 people, one of the most well attended roundtables to date.

The Prettiest Village In Maine has tried its designation not just because of the historic downtown area, but also because of the "healthy rural area" surrounding it, Seaver Leslie suggested.

"Two thirds of the town is inland and undeveloped," Stafford's Chris Hall told the group. "Our job is to come up with a business plan for the town, and we have to look at every option. Should we advise that this part of the town stay as it is, or are there appropriate ways to develop it? Our job is to find out what people want for this huge tract of land."

"There's a huge economic benefit in having it stay open space - there's an economic value in this. There's also value in making parts of this for different use. How do we want this part of town to go?"

Hall posed a hypothetical question: "What if someone comes to town and wants a thousand acres of land and

will employ a couple hundred people?"

"It depends on what the business is," one resident responded. "If it's a chemical plant, forget it. Route 218 should be preserved as a rural stretch along the river. Development should be off Route 27. And it should be a clean use."

Judith Sutter suggested economic development and the building of a bypass "should go hand in hand." Sutter decried how Federal Street has changed in the 30 years she has lived there. "Cars go 50 miles an hour," she said. "It's a nightmare."

Hall suggested the traffic has increased on that road because the number of commuters has increased.

Longtime Wiscasset town secretary Betty Johnson told the group she had lived on Route 1 for 41 years before moving recently, and in that time "the cars have gotten bigger, the trucks have gotten bigger, and the RVs have gotten bigger."

"Those people up in Augusta don't know how hard it is to get a quart of milk," she said.

Don Jones suggested "It would be very difficult to deliver water and sewer services to the northern section of town. We have them in the southern section," he said, referring to Route 1.

How the land is developed is closely related to what hydrogeological studies show, Leslie said. "We

must protect our water."

Denis Hebert said he was on the town's comprehensive planning committee when residents voted to extend water and sewer lines on Route 1.

"It would be very expensive to extend these to the northern part of town," he said. "Looking at the comprehensive plan would be a good starting point. A lot of work by a lot of people went into that plan. I hope a half a dozen people won't change this. There should be a vote."

Hebert also noted that land that is zoned rural can be developed in a number of different ways.

"In a rural area you can do pretty much whatever you want - you can have a rendering plant if that's what you want."

"When we talk to developers," Hall said, "and we show them the Maine Yankee land, and they say 'show me something else' - we need to know if you people want us to present other sites. I'm hearing tonight you don't want to change this - you want to preserve it as a rural area."

"The speedway is for sale," Hall continued. "It's in a rural area. It could be sold tomorrow. How should this be developed?"

"MBNA made an inquiry in 1994 about the speedway," said Karl Tarbox, "and they were told the town wasn't interested. One of the valuable things about tonight's discussion is we want to find out what would be acceptable."

"Based on our conversations with MBNA, they are unlikely to expand to the west," Hall said. "They see a bigger labor force available to the east. But let's say someone else was interested in putting an office park there, how would the town react?"

"I guess I would look at it with mixed emotions," West Aina Road resident Lee Carleton said.

"It might make a good pig farm," said Al Cohen, owner of Big Al's on Route 1, a comment that drew chuckles from the group.

Not such a far-fetched idea, suggested Hebert. "If you've got 200 people driving by your house (to an office complex) or if you create a housing development there, it won't help us with our tax problem," he said. "A pig farm could be a perfect thing next door."

Later in the meeting Choppie Tarbox's suggestion that the speedway might make a good cemetery was greeted with applause.

The group also talked about how to support existing uses of the land in the northern section: forestry, agriculture, recreation, campgrounds, and auto salvage.

"Probably three fourths of the land is in tree growth," Hall said. "About five per cent is developed and about 20% is open fields. Is that balance about right?" he asked.

"It's about right," responded Second Selectman Joan Barnes.

One resident suggested the town "needs to advertise the land that's available for raising horses and dairy farms."

"Agriculture isn't encouraged in this town," he said. "It should be."

"The town doesn't have a strategy for supporting any industry," Hall said.

"What can the town do to support continuing use as woodlots," Hall asked.



CANDIDATES TRICK OR TREAT Senator Marge Kil Kelly (D-Wiscasset) and House District #56 Candidate Chris Hall (D-Bristol) show off their vampire teeth at a Halloween party hosted by Laurie Fitzpatrick and Lynn Drisko.

Hebert suggested a change in the tax structure.

"This isn't something the town can do," Hall said. "The state constitution says all land must be treated equally unless there are specific exemptions."

"Our town planner has suggested there should be tax breaks for businesses with vision," Karl Tarbox said.

"Where should future housing growth be?" Hall asked.

Hebert suggested cluster housing, with smaller lots and a common area. Bill Gardiner suggested there's nothing new about cluster housing - that the village is in fact, cluster housing.

"Wiscasset has cluster zoning," Jones noted. "It hasn't been used that much. But maybe we could use some incentives in the village by reduced

lot sizes and tying houses into the sewers."

Another resident suggested the town promote development of housing for the elderly and assisted living.

Stafford consultant Judy Foss asked the group, "What will you tolerate out there? What's off the table?"

"I won't tolerate anything that's going to damage that part of town," Hebert said. "That's why the water and sewer lines went down Route 1."

"It seems to me you're saying 'set the extension of water and sewer as a condition for development,'" Hall said.

The next roundtable will be tonight, October 26 at 7 p.m. at the municipal building, and will focus on future use of Maine Yankee.

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# Stafford Business Advisors discuss northern corridor of town

By Donna Waterman

At a packed meeting Oct. 19 at Wiscasset Town Hall, Stafford Business Advisors' Chris Hall led the group in an open and lively discussion about future plans and visions for the northern part of Wiscasset from Old Bath road up through Rt. 27 and 218, excluding the downtown area, up to the Old Jail.

any adverse affect it might have on Wiscasset. A number of Federal Street residents expressed their concern about the traffic there now. Many pets have been killed by speeders and having their road be an approach to a business would compound the problem. Concern about the water and sewer use was discussed. Presently the sewer line goes to the high school on Rt. 27 and the apartments of Rt. 218. Should a business move in, water and sewer needs must be addressed.

Leslie indicated that water tests were done on Willow Lane. There is a good aquifer from the Old Bath Road to the town and good channels run from Ward Brook which at one time was the source of town water.

Nancy<sup>2</sup> Graham has a small organic farm off Willow Road. She sells eggs, raises rabbits and grows herbs. "People need to let others know there is land that is suitable for growth. Agriculture is not encouraged in this town and it should be," she explained. But if there is significant growth and truck fumes, she will not feel she can use the term "organic" any longer. What should the town be doing to support the use of land as wood lots or the farmers working the land? There seemed to be a general feeling that the town doesn't have a strategy for supporting the northern residents.

Hall described the growth in Lincoln County. Since 1995 the county has grown at the rate of 2 percent per year. The general feeling is that with the expected

considered the "inland" part of town, this area includes a good part of the rural properties in Wiscasset. Asking the question, "What is the character of the Northern part of the town," Hall opened the discussion. How should the county be addressing housing issues? One suggestion was to look at clusters of housing in which several houses are built near one another with the use of common lands for the residents. Recognizing that growth is inevitable, should Wiscasset be attracting developers for cluster housing?

protect it's character.

Bill Barnes spoke up saying he doesn't think property owners in the northern area should be kept from developing. Barnes, a farmer and said his land is divided into parcels by the town for tax purposes. Each parcel is charged as if it were a house lot even if he has no intention of building on them and there are no roads leading to them. He suggested that if parcels are a part of an area such as his, they shouldn't be taxed as if they are house lots. It would be one way for the town to support farmers like Barnes if it hopes to retain the northern part of the town as it is.



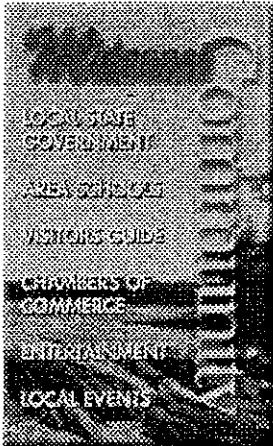
Foss and Chris Hall leading the Stafford meeting in Wiscasset

explained that Stafford's job fold. First, they need to find out what the people want. Realizing that two-thirds of the town is undeveloped and rural, the economic value is apparent. While no specific plans, it's up to the town to decide what type of development is desirable and what is not. For instance, a developer was at the Race Track as a potential site for an industry or, if it is in Wiscasset's best interest to know what type of business the town would be interested in having. Presently the uses of the northern area of town are 75 percent wood lots, 20 percent open fields and 5 percent agriculture along with a number of campgrounds. Overall, at the meeting centered on the northern part of the area. Telemarketing companies such as MBNA would be a business that could fit well into the northern part of the area. It is to address the inevitable growth in such a way as to minimize

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# news

## Wiscasset working to build trust and tax base

*BOB\_KALISH@TimesRecord.Com*

10/12/2000

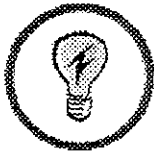
WISCASSET — Every Thursday since mid-September and continuing until the end of this month, a meeting is held for residents to meet and talk with the town's new economic developer, Stafford Associates.

The series of meetings, some of which have attracted enough people to fill the municipal building meeting room, are part of the consultants' strategy to gather as much information as they can by Nov. 1 so they can spend that month writing a business development plan.

"Our mandate from selectmen was to have a business plan by December, and we're on schedule," said Judy Foss, a Stafford Associates economic developer.

But that schedule is demanding. Foss and her colleagues, Chris Hall and Ken Stafford, appear in constant motion. If they are not speaking to a group of firefighters or senior citizens, then they are tracking down the latest rumor about a big corporation that wants to take over the Maine Yankee site.

To help them discern what the people of Wiscasset want, they have devised a 34-question survey that asks residents whether they would prefer large or small businesses to move into town, whether or not a bypass should be built that would route traffic around downtown, and what kind of facilities they would like to see on the waterfront. Such a survey, when tabulated, will give the group some answers instead of abstract ideas and half-truths.



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"There are so many rumors in this town," Foss said. "And so many things have happened here in the past few years, that a lot of people don't trust each other. There is a sense of paranoia we have to overcome."

Three years ago, Wiscasset was hit by the sudden closure of the Maine Yankee nuclear power plant, which paid a large percentage of property taxes. It was through the largesse of Maine Yankee that Wiscasset, with a population of about 3,000, has a five-member police force and a community center with an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a school system that was the envy of surrounding communities.

"In those days," Foss said, "the town did not need to make the tough decisions other towns have had to make. For 25 years they didn't have to make a choice between sewers or raising the property taxes. Now we are here to help replace and restore a tax base, to get some investment into the infrastructure."

Foss said there are two main goals: One is to make Wiscasset a destination point for tourists. This would involve focusing on the waterfront, the historic downtown area, and inter-modal transportation possibilities. The second goal is to track down all businesses that have expressed interest in Wiscasset.

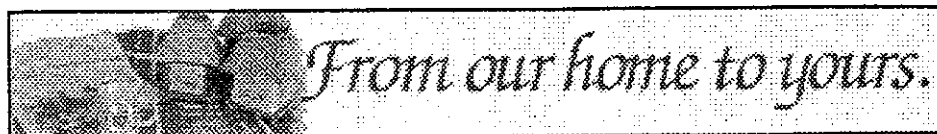
"The Maine Yankee site is obviously important," Foss said, "and there have been businesses and companies that have expressed interest. We work closely with Maine Yankee and let each other know what we are doing."

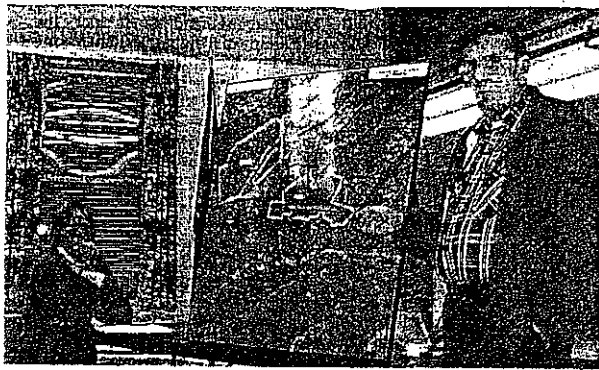
Maine Yankee recently announced the creation of a special board to help in the effort to find a use for the site.

"That is a good step," Foss said. "What we would like by December is a time frame on the Maine Yankee site. Something concrete."

Foss cautioned the town they probably won't find one tenant for the Maine Yankee site, or one business to move to town, that will make up completely for the loss of Maine Yankee as a major tax revenue source.

"That's not likely," Foss said. "What we hope is that with a business plan in hand the town can attract several businesses that will take advantage of what is here and together add to the revenue stream."





Airport development is crucial to future economic growth of Wiscasset and area, according to Bill Curtis, right, former chairman of the airport committee. Judy Foss of Stafford Business Advisors listens to Curtis at last Thursday's meeting. (Greg Foster photo)

## Runway proposal flies in face of master plan

By Greg Foster

The 20-year master plan for Wiscasset Municipal Airport, not yet finalized, was the focus of debate last week regarding the length of the runway, which some officials say should be changed before the plan is signed.

As it now stands, the master plan does not call for any lengthening of the runway, based on projected use by the Dufresne-Henry engineering firm of Portland which created the plan.

However, airport devotees like former airport committee member Phil Simpson say the current 3400-foot runway should be 4500 feet.

"If it is not shown on the airport layout plan, it should be before it is signed," he told people gathered last Thursday for the fourth in a series of public meetings Stafford Business Advisors has been holding to gather input for a business plan for Wiscasset.

Simpson said that business people today prefer to travel by air, and that Wiscasset would receive many of them if the runway is longer to accommodate aircraft for which insurance companies require a minimum 4000 feet.

Lee Carelton of Wiscasset also urged the town to revisit the master plan. "If we let the plan as is, we're stuck with it for 20 years," he said.

This year there is a 30 percent rise in air traffic over the previous year, according to Mike Muchmore of Wicked Good Aviation, the company which currently operates the airport facilities.

When work on the master plan began a year ago, the economic development picture for the future of Wiscasset had barely got off the ground. However, with Stafford Business Advisors, which the town has hired for consultation, the picture seems to be changing.

One abutter Ingrid Albee of Chewonki Road voiced her objections to the idea of lengthening the runway because of environmental effects on the Chewonki Foundation and surrounding properties.

"A longer airport runway means bigger planes and does that mean more noise?" she said. "I would like to encourage you to think differently."

Simpson argued that planes would be higher above the Chewonki area and would take off farther down the runway. "Noise abatement procedures can be developed," he said.

Also, Judy Foss of Stafford told Albee the consulting firm has spoken with Chewonki Foundation officials and has considered the historical and natural resources of the surrounding area, as well as development feasibility. "Our goal is to increase the tax base but we also recognize what treasures there are," Foss said.

Stafford senior consultant Tom Valleau is Portland's former transportation director and thus has expertise in airport development. He praised the town's facility. "The Wiscasset airport is a development tool," he said. "That's what community airports are seen as. I think the community has a facility there to be proud of."

Although Valleau said the airport is not intended for scheduled service, he also considers it adequate for possible use as a base of operations for corporate air fleets, such as Maine Yankee or General Dynamics.

Attracting air freight companies would be a struggle, but attracting charter companies would be more plausible in his estimation. He also suggested the construction of more hangars as a project for the private sector to underwrite with the town, leasing the land to entrepreneurs, he said.

Valleau urged airport operators and the town to get together starting now rather than waiting until the last minute to negotiate terms for its operation in order to extend the lease for three years.

Pilot Eric Thompson of Nobleboro recommended that the town bank land so that it will have it for further development of the airport for the next 50 years. Also, Bill Curtis, former airport committee chairman,

showed people on a map what plans have been proposed for expansion. He suggested letting abutters know what is in the offing seven years down the road.

### Mason Station use

Reuse of Mason Station for industrial or other purposes received attention with some residents in favor of doing something with the property while being skeptical about refurbishing it, because of costs involved.

Town Planner Dan Thompson said he met someone associated with a similar electric facility outside of Austin, Texas which was done at a total cost of \$9.5 million. It was necessary to remove asbestos and biological waste at a \$7.6 million cost. It is now converted to use as a hotel.

A rail-barge combination operation at the site with current owners Florida Power and Light is one suggestion Tom Valleau offered.

"We have met with FPL officials, but it is probably too premature to speak publicly about," he said.

Bill Curtis spoke about alternative forms of energy, such as use of tide water, to generate electricity. Currently, Mason Station is used about 500 hours per year as a peak electric plant. Owner FPL has indicated it plans to continue its use as such for about three years.

Tom Stetson also sees Mason Station as a place for research for alternative forms of energy.

One resident, Bill Watson, has a proposal for use of Mason Station for a Maine-made products pavilion.

### Railroad update

Foss discussed the news of the Maine Coastal Railroad Corp. ceasing its rail operations in December, because of lack of sufficient finances the state Department of Transportation required in its negotiations for lease renewal.

She said her firm met with DOT Commissioner John Meirose, who discussed with them the process of open bidding for the operation of the rail line which serves several freight customers and includes the passenger excursion service from Wiscasset and Newcastle.

"We have been asked to set up a meeting with potential operators and the selectmen and we will be getting the parties together," she said. The DOT is responsible to provide an interim operator for the freight service part at least, according to DOT spokesperson Ed Hanscom.

GCN  
10/18/00



# Maine's prettiest village, real or artificial?

By Greg Foster

The third in a series of public discussions on Wiscasset's economic future last week zeroed in on the village area and Rt. 1 businesses, raising questions about whether the nature of the downtown area has declined to something artificial. At the same time the village's strength as an historic spot was affirmed.

Some residents expressed regret that the downtown, in contrast to towns like Damariscotta, has lost its nature as a place where locals can buy all their necessities.

Chris Hall of Stafford Business Advisors, hired for economic development consulting, asked the gathering if they feel it is becoming like the beautiful, clean villages built in Czarist Russia to hide reality.

"Wiscasset (village) could become a place frozen in time in which nobody lives or works or shops," he said. "That is not a criticism of antique businesses. I don't think the antique businesses are being run at the expense of old businesses."

Wiscasset has achieved national recognition as being a center for antiques, according to a local antique dealer.

What is Wiscasset Village's purpose, people asked, to be solely a tourist attraction for income from brief stays or is the town trying to attract people to stay longer, and even decide to live in the town. Will people want a "regular" downtown, in that case, yet be receptive to some amenities that attract outside business as well? Such questions are prominent in the minds of several people engaged in the discussions.

Some people described the present downtown area as a place no longer used by them as residents were it not for a few places like the bank, post office and a couple of businesses still there. They feel downtown has become a mecca for wealthy tourists with its antique and other exclusive shops.

When Pendleton's Market closed along with a few other businesses like the hardware store on the corner where Sarah's Cafe is and the breakfast nook on Main Street, which burned a few years ago, there was a real change downtown.

Local people can no longer walk to the corner grocery from nearby

residences and buy food. Pendleton's also served as a bakery and pharmacy for a good part of the town, meeting-goers recalled.

However, Wiscasset residents last Thursday seemed to be well aware they are good things about the village on which to capitalize but which need protecting. "We have a great place and should do everything to preserve it," Paul Mrozinski said.

Lee Street resident Bill Phinney agrees with Mrozinski. "I am critically concerned by the lack of protection." Under current ordinances, there is little restriction for new developments in the area from his home next to the pond to the waterfront. Currently he fears an extension of the jail.

"The reason I came to Wiscasset was the character of the village," he said.

Also agreeing with the need for more limitations on new development, Steve Konacki, owner of the Snow Squall Bed and Breakfast, said, "Here we have a historic district that's clearly at risk." Konacki feels any new development should be in keeping with the image of "Maine's prettiest village".

However, in the endeavor to preserve the historic nature of the village, the town should not be captive to its history, Hall said. He also discussed the reality of Wiscasset's losing its role as a regional service center.

There was also a limited amount of discussion about the magnets on Rt. 1 that draw people to the area, such as Big Al's.

This week's public discussion Stafford Business Advisors are leading on Thursday at 7 p.m. at the municipal building will center on Mason Station, Wiscasset Municipal Airport and other large tracts of land that could potentially support additional development while retaining current use.

Next week's meeting on Thurs., Oct. 19 will concern the rural northern area of Wiscasset and the preservation of farms, forestry, outdoor recreation, and conservation measures, as well as appropriate commercial development.

3N 10/5/00

# Waterfront Future Spurs Ideas For Multiple Uses

By JOHN MEO

Stafford Business Advisors' first five meetings on Sept. 21 gathered as much interest as the dress rehearsal for a wedding. The second meeting at Wiscasset's waterfront on Sept. 28 attracted much more attention.

Stafford brought along Tom Valleau, the former transportation director for the city of Portland. He worked with both the seaport and the waterfront of Maine's largest city.

Valleau compressed his remarks into a 20-minute presentation, covering four major questions:

- What are the kinds of marine businesses that port cities get involved with?
- Where does the money to attract and retain businesses come from?
- What is the best way to utilize waterfront land; or, what is the best mixture of applications?
- How do you go about attracting businesses?

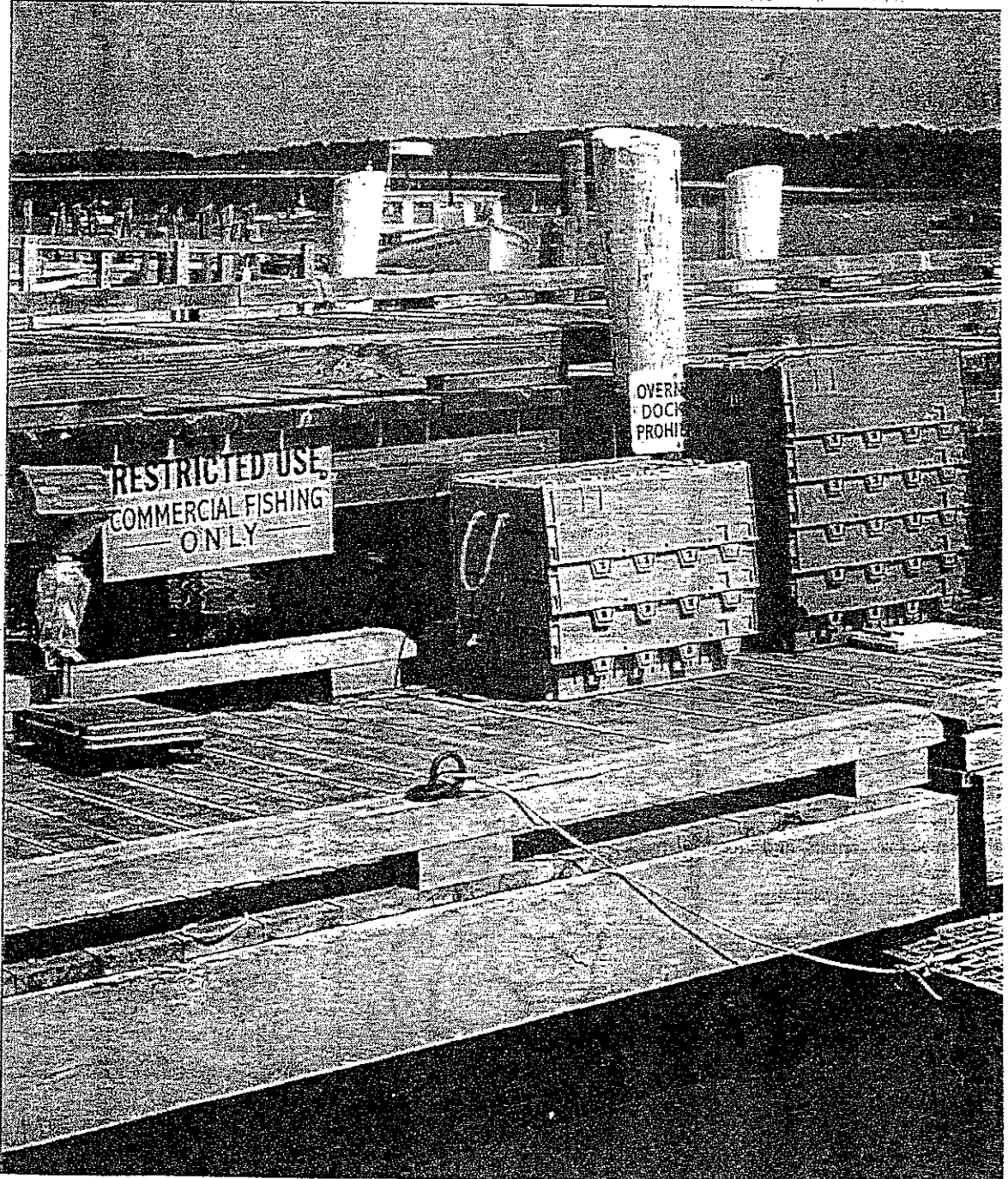
"I look at [waterfront] development from the perspective of ships and transportation," said Valleau. "This is our niche."

He noted four examples: cruise ships, cargo vessels, commercial fishing, and recreational boating, as the most likely businesses to fit into Wiscasset's economy.

Valleau then moved to the question where the funding comes from for mooring facilities to house the new businesses.

"The best source is earned income," he said, meaning docking fees, rent, and other charges to businesses for using the property. "That can be a fairly robust source of income," Valleau continued, "but I would say the fees wouldn't be huge right off."

A second source, Valleau said, is the town. He said that under any circumstance, the town would be expected to put up some amount of money, perhaps equal to the amount put up by the investors.



A RECENT CHANGE in use of the floats in Wiscasset reserves several for commercial fishing or (Paula Gibbs Photo)



The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) is a major source of funding, according to Valleau. Most of the money is supplied by the federal government, he said, "but it essentially wheels through the state."

"Riverfront land use gets everybody crazy," Valleau continued, identifying five different applications for the area:

- Reserving the land for marine use only
- Business and professional development
- Residential use
- Resource protection-open space-no development
- Industrial

"You have a long linear waterfront on which I could see three or maybe four sectors," said Valleau. He said the area near the bridge would be the central section. A mix of applications could be placed there.

To the south could be heavy commercial and light industrial and the north would be reserved for low density residential and open space.

The key to attraction, said Valleau, is to create a business-friendly atmosphere through construction, zoning and sales.

When the meeting was opened to questions, one of the first was, "What is the cost versus the benefit of such developments?" A large portion of the funding for the Portland project was contributed by MDOT, with approximately \$1.5 million coming from a bond from the city, said Valleau.

Revenue generated was approximately \$300,000 from Prince of Fundy Cruises, \$50,000 from public parking, and \$3,000 came from individual docking fees on a per ship basis.

Discussion shifted to the possibility of bringing in cruise ships and which

## "Wiscasset is as fit and capable as any town to get grants." - Tom Valleau, responding to Dan Thompson's view that Wiscasset hasn't been eligible for most grants.

ones would be appropriate for the harbor.

"Little lines want to go to the places where the bigger lines can go. But first they're going to ask, 'What can the passengers do?'" said Valleau.

Marguerite Rafer noted that at one time cruise ships did come to the harbor but they "just stopped coming."

Bill Sutter said it was American Cruise Lines that used to visit but "they were left with a bad taste in their mouths." He said that there was much resident opposition to the noise caused by passengers during the evening. Additionally, the bathroom facilities on the docks were reportedly closed because the town could not properly police them.

Sutter added that he has recently received a request from American/Canadian Cruise Line for more information on docking in Wiscasset next year.

Charter Commission member Karl Tarbox asked about competitive bidding for potential investors of the docks. He also asked how to go about receiving an adequate return on investment.

Valleau made a few recommendations, including staying away from lease-buybacks and long term lease agreements.

Sutter said that Wiscasset's zoning has been the biggest detriment to development. He said that once the zoning is changed, land will become more valuable.

and capable as any town to get grants," he said. "But keep in mind getting a grant is like getting a date. You have to be prepared to get rejected a few times."

Tarbox asked Stafford to include a list of grants Wiscasset is eligible for in their report to the town. He said it would be "a great service to the town" to do so.

Valleau admitted that for all of his suggestions, he "would be surprised if the Wiscasset waterfront produced a huge windfall."

"But go and find out who's in the business. Sell yourself, but don't be greedy."

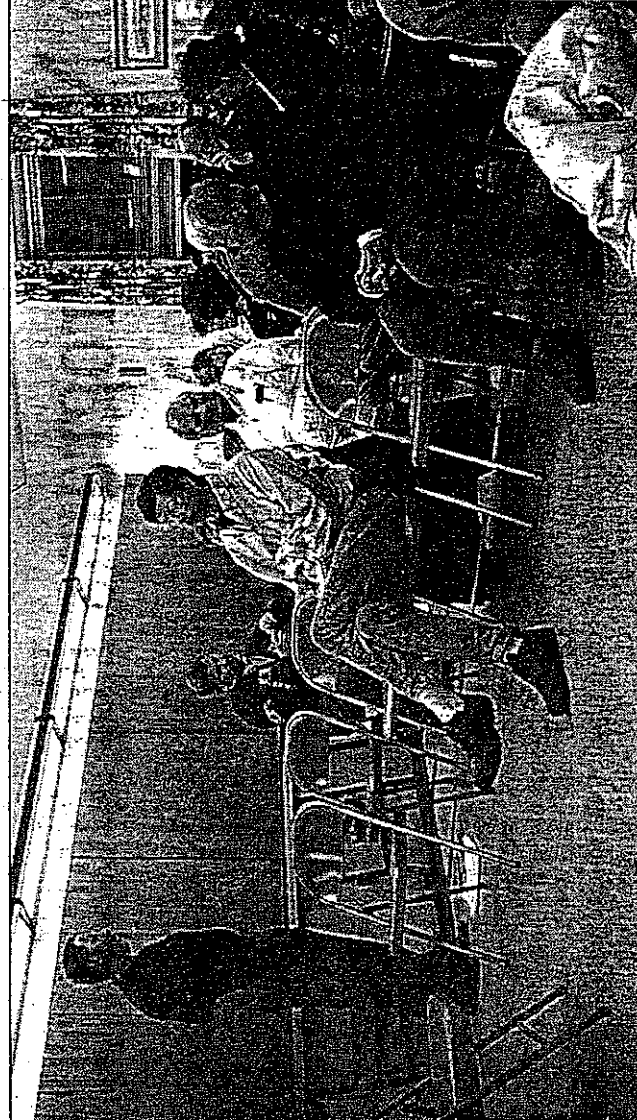
Whatever is done, said Judith Sutter, it needs to be done soon. "Wiscasset needs immediate tax relief. If my taxes are \$5,000 or \$4,000, I'm not going to be here long. \$2,500, maybe even \$3,000 is the limit."

"Changing waterfront zoning is very, very difficult," Valleau noted. "It has to be very carefully thought through before allowing someone to go build something over the water."

Other questions directed at Valleau included whether the \$15 million reserve fund that Wiscasset has is a detriment to getting grant money.

Valleau said it isn't, but it does depend on the type of grant. Tarbox said Dan Thompson, the town's consultant on planning, has said in the past that Wiscasset hasn't been eligible for most grants.

Valleau said, "Wiscasset is as fit



**WATERFRONT CONCERNS:** Tom Valleau, left, former Transportation Director for the City of Portland listens to resident concern regarding the Wiscasset Waterfront during Staff for Business Advisors' regularly scheduled Thursday meeting at the town office. The meeting was a remarkable improvement from the previous week. (John Meo)

LCN 10/5/00

# Wiscasset probes prospect of waterfront development

By Greg Foster

How will an economic update for Wiscasset's waterfront impact the town finances in the short term, long range? What will change mean? Such questions are in the minds of several residents as clearly seen in an animated brain-storming session last Thursday focusing on waterfront development.

"The community is in a phase of change where it no longer can cover its heads in the sand," commented Harbor Master Bill Sutter. "We're going to have to bite the bullet and say we're not going to have what we had in 1950 but what should we be in 2007?"

To help find answers, Tom Valleau, senior consultant for Stafford Business Advisors, which the town hired for economic development consulting, offered several suggestions out of his 35 years of urban and project planning experience.

"You have quite a waterfront in terms of length and acreage," Valleau, Portland's transportation director for 18 years, told the people gathered for the second in a series of five public meetings.

But there are three conditions he argues Wiscasset will have to meet if it is going to attract out-of-town business. Development of transportation facilities is one of them. Land use regulations that are welcoming to new businesses is another.

A third condition he listed is going out and selling the town. "That is what most towns don't like to do," he said.

Valleau recommended dividing up the waterfront into three main sections: the central portion near the bridge for commercial uses, the south end for seafood enterprises and north of the bridge toward the sewage treatment plant as open space.

He also enumerated various marine-oriented business niches the town could develop, including three main types of boating trade: cruise ships, cargo vessels and recreational boating.

For the smaller cruise lines especially, there is an attraction because of the scenic value of the trip up the Sheepscot River, Valleau said. However, he mentioned that one of the drawbacks for all three types of boating is the changing flow of the tidewater every six hours.

Portland initially barely broke even with its waterfront commerce plan and eventually was able to operate on a small surplus of \$50-100,000 per year, Valleau said.

From the Prince of Fundy cruise ships Portland received \$300,000 per year for rental fees; other cruise ships, a total \$150,000 per year and cargo ships, \$50-60,000 per year, according to Valleau.

"It takes a lot of revenue streams to work," he said. He told people that

besides income from the boating enterprises, the community itself should be willing to contribute a portion of the funds and much funding is available from the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

Valleau admitted that it does take time to develop the waterfront as a viable source of income but for the long haul can be important to the local economy.

Making it attractive and accessible for businesses to come to Wiscasset's waterfront for a base of operations is one thing; the community should take a look at before seeking business in his estimation. "Riverfront land use is the first question that might come up," he said. "Should the land use regulations reserve land for marine development only?"

In other words, are the town ordinances relative to the waterfront business friendly? "Are the regulations welcoming?" he said. "If you are interested in sections, create regulations for them that encourage and welcome."

Also, facilities have to be developed for businesses to come to, Valleau said.

### Responses, ideas

Stafford consultant Judy Foss challenged the representative cross-

See WATERFRONT, page 6

## Waterfront...

Continued from page 1

section of local residents in attendance Thursday to find areas they can agree on in order to come up with a collective with which to move forward. Foss is former head of the Small Business Administrator's governmental affairs, public finance, taxation and public administration practice.

Several people directly concerned with the waterfront like Harbormaster Bill Sutter and waterfront committee member Ken Cooper, were vocal about their sentiments regarding new developments and how they might affect existing businesses such as the lobster fishing business.

Cooper expressed strong objections to having any large cargo vessels coming up the river because they pose a threat to lobster and fishing gear. "The last time an oil barge came up the river, the lobstermen lost a lot of gear worth hundreds of thousands of dollars," he said.

Sutter, however, is not optimistic about the lobster trade in the first place, even though Valleau suggested a satellite fish exchange at the waterfront. "I don't see the lobster industry being able to increase any more than it is. Probably it is going to decline," Sutter said.

A partnership with Edgcomb is one thing he considers might be fruitful, since Wiscasset has the deep half of harbor while there could be good moorings on the Edgcomb side.

He also suggested the idea of making access to kayaking on the river and to promote it as a tourist attraction. "Kayaking is a year-round thing, and it taps a fairly affluent clientele," he said.

In reference to the downtown area, Sutter also said the town no longer has a regular business district that provides for the necessities of life and referred to the town as a community going through changes.

Another resident Tom Stetson offered a vision of renewing the

recreational use of White's Island, reactivating the swim club that once existed there and having boat landings and moorings for small boats as an attraction.

He suggested a foot bridge from Mason Station to the island and a parking area near Mason Station from which shuttle buses, rickshaws or bicycles could be used to transport people to the village as a way of alleviating downtown traffic.

Judith Sutter expressed concern that any waterfront development will bring income mostly in the future but will not fulfill immediate economic needs. "We need immediate tax relief. We can't afford to pay \$45,000 in taxes. We're not going to be able to live here," she said.

Responding to Sutter's comments, Judy Foss said, "We see the urgency. There are a lot of perceptions of what things can happen and what can't." She also told Sutter that Stafford is making contacts with various businesses that have expressed an interest in Wiscasset.

Stafford consultant Chris Hall previously stated that his firm is not looking for a quick fix to Wiscasset's financial ills but rather a variety of solutions that together will bring both some relief short term but especially for the long haul.

The next public meeting is this Thurs., Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. at the municipal building focusing on the downtown and Rt. 1 and looking at how to balance historic preservation with economic development.

On Thurs., Oct. 12, discussion will center on Mason Station, the airport and other large tracts of land that could potentially support additional development while retaining current use.





**SEARCHING FOR A COMMON GROUND:** From left are Tom Stetson, Town Planner Dan Thompson, Chris Hall, Judy Foss, Deb Pendleton, and Sharon White. They group, along with several others, took part in Stafford Business Advisor's first weekly meeting which are being held on consecutive Thursdays in the hearing room at the town office. (John Meo Photo)

## Stafford Searches For Wiscasset's "Hot Buttons"

By JOHN MEO  
 Stafford Business Advisors' first scheduled meeting Thursday night

**WHAT:** Stafford Business Advisors' 2nd Meeting  
**TOPIC:** The Waterfront, moderated by Portland's former waterfront director, Tom Val-leau  
**WHEN:** Tonight, Thursday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Hearing Room, Wiscasset Town Office

was a disappointment in terms of turnout.

About a dozen people showed up to participate, including First Selectman Ben Rines, Town Planner Dan Thompson, and a handful of citizens who are common faces at most of Wiscasset's meetings.

But the discussion of those few people was another important step for Stafford as they continue to piece together the town's business plan.

Stafford's Judy Foss, opened the meeting by asking what the most controversial issues in Wiscasset are,

and what arguments could be made in support of either side.

Such topics were referred to as "hot buttons" and were listed as follows:

- Access/mobility along and on Route 1;
- The scope of waterfront development; how much, how soon, what kind, and where;
- Wiscasset's "parochial" attitude, cooperation/inclusion, of neighboring towns in future plans;
- Budget concerns — how best to balance population growth and economic growth;
- Present town services, current level of town employees — should these be cut back to reduce future tax increases?

Only two of the topics were discussed in any detail but one, the waterfront, will be revisited at this week's meeting, which will be moderated by Tom Val-leau, former Portland waterfront planner.

Thomas Stetson, a Wiscasset resi-

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 1

dent and employee at Bath Iron Works, said the town should seek available state or federal funding as a "shot in the arm," to get things going developmentally.

Chris Hall, another member of Stafford's team, responded "We're looking at a range of state and federal funding possibilities." He indicated that some programs may be available through CEI, but it is a matter of matching a particular project to the appropriate "pile of money."

"I absolutely accept that we need state or federal assistance to get things going," he said.

Both Don Jones and Thompson said they think the Route 1 corridor study needs to be completed before any concrete plans can be established.

"The bypass study is crucial," said Thompson. "We've got to get the corridor study done and done right." He called the recent installation of the pedestrian island and angled parking in the downtown area a sign of positive progress.

"A lot of little things getting done could be very attractive [to investors]" he said.

The waterfront was the second and only other topic the tiny group discussed in the hour and a half Stafford allowed the meeting.

There was much talk about making the downtown area and the waterfront a destination for travelers who may be deterred by the traffic or a lack of interesting activities.

Hall said tourism is an important piece of the town's economic puzzle, although Rines disagreed, adding that Wiscasset residents don't consider tourism a major part of the town's economy.

Hall said that there are four types of tourists:

- Those who barrel through town.
- Those who gawk but don't shop and stay.
- Those who shop but don't stay.
- Those who stay but don't shop.

He said the town should try to attract the higher rung [wealthy] types, saying "You want the rich people to stop and stay." These are the "up-market" tourists, he said.

Ken Maguire, of WW&F Railroad supported revitalizing the narrow gauge railway and using that to entice people to come to the town; again, to make it a destination point.

He argued that the railroads, as a recreational vehicle, would give Wiscasset a unique focus, one it lost with the absence of the schooners.

Another school of thought is to reopen a passenger line into and through Wiscasset, creating an alternate method of bringing visitors to the town while cutting down on the amount of highway traffic. The Maine Department of Transportation has given strong support to alternate methods of travel, foremost among them being the railroad.

Typical of any conversation concerning tourism, a question of parking came up, and with that, the issue of the middle school.

Last week's selectmen meeting with the school board inspired renewed consideration to adding a wing to the primary or the high school for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, and using the land the middle school now occupies for public parking.

While Jones disagreed with the idea that parking is a problem, Rines reiterated his words from the selectman meeting, "I don't think the town's people are in the mood for a large capital expenditure at this time."

The construction of a new middle school, the existing one is about 50 years old, has already been rejected by the town's people twice, and is unlikely in Rines' opinion.

Stetson suggested creating a boardwalk-type setting down on the Birch Point Road where tourists could stop off and stretch as an alternative to sitting in traffic.

He suggested pools, mini-golf, and other recreations to cater to the "blue collar" family that may be passing through. Stopping, he said, may inspire them to get something to eat or go shopping downtown. Providing a railway from that area, or a bicycle/walking path from there to downtown could be added incentive for extended visits.

Deborah Pendleton said that high tech business, such as high speed internet access or anything computer related, was the way to go. She said that Stafford should look to improving opportunities for the local worker before it seeks big businesses and attracts new people.

While much of the conversation concerned the downtown area, Rines pointed out that it's important to look at the needs of the town outside of the downtown village as well.

# Wiscasset Senior Center

By DOC SCHILKE

I thought the summer went fast, but where did September go? As I started the column this week I realized that next week is October and we have

not set up the menu for the new month! Therefore you will have to come to lunch and/or dinner to find out what will be served.

I was happy to see so many stayed

after dinner last week to discuss Wiscasset economic development with Chris Hall and Judy Foss from Stafford Business Advisors. There were many real good questions. If you have not filled out a survey, please do so soon. There will be some forms available at the Community Center and you can leave them at the front desk when you are done. Stafford hopes to have a final plan ready to present to the Selectmen and the town in December. Don't wait until then to voice your opinion.

Although we have had a number of great after dinner speakers and entertainers, in general the have not been that well received as a weekly activity. Therefore we are stopping active recruitment of after dinner speakers. We will still have the Wednesday evening dinners but there will be entertainment only in special occasions. We are planning some special events for after dinner around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Stay tuned!

Also no one volunteered to be a "detective" to plan where the Senior Center goes from here. There were a few suggestions made and these will be pursued. Otherwise we will just maintain the meals, the bridge and sew-and-chat groups, and the occasional outing or trip. These have been successful and perhaps they can be enhanced.

I was unable to attend the last trustee meeting but the trustees carried on very well without me. A big thanks goes to Wallace Hart who chaired the meeting in my absence. Also recog-

nition goes to Jo Johnson for the table decorations. These are always very nice but more people than usual mentioned that the ones last week were extraordinary.

Our long awaited trip to Isleboro will take place on Tuesday, October 3. This is a great time of year to take a sightseeing tour to one of Maine's close islands. See Val for more details. On Wednesday evening, October 4, the Community Center will have an Open House. The staff has put a lot of work into changing and rearranging, to bring more functionality to the building. Take a few minutes and see what they have accomplished. It is great!

Activities For The Week  
(Reservations Please! Call 882-8230 at least 14 days in advance for meal reservations.)

Monday, October 2: General membership meeting after lunch.

Tuesday, October 3: Morning departure for Isleboro trip. Bridge 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. High score on Tuesday, September 19, was Alice Kilgour with 3450.

Wednesday, October 4: 5:30 p.m. dinner. 7 to 10 p.m. Community Center Open House.

Thursday, October 5: Lunch, followed by Bingo, bring two prizes.

Friday, October 6: 1 to 3 p.m. Afternoon Sew and Chat.

## Business Advisors Launch Website

Sharon White, manager of Wiscasset's economic development office staffed by Stafford Business Advisors, has announced the firm now has its own website.

It is [stafford@wiscasset.net](mailto:stafford@wiscasset.net). The firm was recently hired by the town to come up with an economic development plan and is in the process of collecting information through interviews and survey forms.

A series of meetings is also planned to get public input from citizens. These will include: Sept. 21, business priorities; Sept. 28, the wa-

terfront; Oct. 12, future re-use of the Mason Station generating plant; Oct. 19, rural and farming issues; and Oct. 26, re-use of the Maine Yankee site.

W/N 9/21/00

# Possible Wrongdoings Still Haunt Current Board

By JOHN MEO

Stafford Business Associates gave their first monthly report to the Selectmen Tuesday amid a ping pong commentary from Karl Tarbox and Prior Morrell concerning questionable past business practices of the town and what should be done to right possible wrongdoings.

Both Tarbox and Morrell stated that while first Selectman Ben Rines has done much to bring the town's practices into the light, what went on in the past must be brought to light as well so it can be put to rest.

"We want a new way of doing business in this town," said Tarbox.

Rines disagreed with the need to resurrect the past, saying, "This is the town now," then added that a new way of business is exactly what the town is trying to establish.

Judy Foss, of Stafford, who was charged with the bulk of the presentation, listed the dates and times for the upcoming meetings to be held in the hearing room. She then noted a few options that Stafford considered feasible at this moment and asked for public input as to whether they should be pursued.

Such options include:

- More accommodations for tourists to make Wiscasset a destination, such as hotels or bed and breakfasts
- Marine-related activities, such as cruises
- Introduce a systematic marketing scheme for the antiques shops and history of the town
- Increase usage of the waterfront
- Establish a fish exchange
- Increase commercial and passenger use of the railway
- Open a steel recycling plant

She said the Maine Yankee site could potentially be used for light industry or manufacturing but heavy industry was unfeasible because of poor highway access.

"We recognize every one of these [suggestions] have problems," she said, but noted that each one has potential as well.

She looked to Rines for approval but he gave none, saying, "I'm not going to direct you one way or another." He said that Stafford was hired to act independently of the town's influence.

Morrell voiced skepticism over the re-usage of the Mason Station due to the contamination that may be present.

He suggested that perhaps a 80/20 split of cleanup fees be arranged with Florida Power and Light, before the

town considered taking over the plant, but Foss said she thought even that arrangement was too generous.

Rines said it would have to be an awfully good deal for the town to pick up Mason Station in its current condition.

When asked how accurate Stafford expected the results of their recently published survey to be, Foss answered:

"We recognize this is not a scientific approach. A survey is always subject to happenstance but we're encouraged because we found a lot of interest in the community." She said that Stafford has taken on a neighborhood approach, bringing the survey door to door. "Word of mouth helps, as well," she said.

Tarbox asked whether Stafford had targeted specific businesses, such as MBNA or Envisionet.

Foss answered; yes, but Stafford had to wait on the town's approval for such a move.

Tarbox additionally noted that he was pleased to see Stafford had re-moved itself from "the total fixation on Maine Yankee." He said it is his opinion, and the opinion of others, that Maine Yankee being the last best hope for economic development in Lincoln County is ludicrous.

## Meetings schedule:

- Sept 21 General Topics
- Sept 28 Waterfront
- Oct 5 Downtown area/Route 1 corridor
- Oct 12 Mason Station/large sites
- Oct 19 Rural north
- Oct 26 Maine Yankee

going," Hall said. There is \$33 million in state and federal matching funds allocated to the update of the line from Brunswick to Rockland to bring it to 57 mile per hour travel standards, according to Hall.

Responding to a discussion of the pro and cons of re-firing Maine Yankee and Mason Station, Hall said that as long as the potential is there for a power plant it might be used for that purpose. "I'm open to proposals for continued use of the power plant (Mason Station)."

However, Hall has reservations about their continued use as power plants. "I'm extremely skeptical about any re-powering of either plant," he said. "I'm not sure it's worth expending a lot of energy going down that path."

Among concerns one resident has about any new company is having to "put money going to fund its establishment. If someone wants to come, we welcome their tax dollars, but we don't want to hear anything about any town funds going to the plants," Prior Morrill said.

Chairman Ben Rines said in response, "You don't have to worry."

Morrill also stated concerns about the town having the cleanup of Mason Station including oil spills, asbestos, and equipment for any potential company locating there as opposed to a company that buys or sublets it doing it themselves. "And for us to have it donated to us would be a headache and a half, no way," he said.

He suggested that the unused electric plant could be used for a casino. "There is no casino in northern New England," Morrill said.

Stafford will be having a public hearing Thurs., Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. at the municipal building as a time for residents to offer input into what they would like to see in the way of economic development in the town.

The firm will use the input to come up with a business plan for the community, according to Foss.

There will be three other meetings to follow on Thursday nights each week at the same time and location. The second will be related specifically to the waterfront development. The third meeting will pertain to the downtown and Rt. 1 and the final one will deal with Mason Station, airport and large

tracts of land available for light industry or business.

Foss mentioned in passing that the Wiscasset Raceway is currently on the market for sale.

Other business

Selectmen announced that Dave Kinney, who recently resigned his position as town engineer, airport manager, and transfer station supervisor, has agreed to stay on while the board continues to look for applicants for the job. Rines said that so far the board has received only three applications.

Bill Rines, sewer treatment plant supervisor, received a favorable response to a suggestion of switching from regular phones to cell phones at the 28 pumping stations to cut down on costs. He said it would represent an annual savings of \$5416.

Currently the town has to pay \$795 annually and the initial cost of installation would be \$6100 for 28 phones. Chairman Rines said he thinks it would be worth trying. The plant supervisor also reported that bids will be opened Sept. 26 for pumping station number five.

Wayne Applebee, newly appointed Wiscasset Community Center director, reported that the center has installed new software to facilitate membership listings and financial reports. Credit card sales are now possible at the center through Gardiner Savings Services and soon it will be able to accept monthly drafts from customers.

He also reported that there are 160 youths involved in the soccer program this year and that the center is making use of its own playing field for the games.

Applebee said that donations might be made to the center's scholarship fund in memory of the late Doug Coobet, former school committee member who died recently and whose memorial service was held at the center.

Selectmen appointed Lori Lapointe as the new aquatics director to fill the vacancy created when Applebee became director.

Selectmen also voted to declare this coming week, Sept. 17 through Sept. 23 as Constitution Week in Wiscasset in response to a request from the national organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This year is the 213th anniversary of the drafting of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

A Special Town Meeting

At next week's board meeting on Tues., Sept. 19, there will be a round table discussion on the Wiscasset Middle School status and future with the budget and school committees. There will be a public hearing at Junction location.

See STAFFORD SURVEY, page 4

## Wiscasset consultant talks with business prospects

By Greg Foster

Potential new business contacts marketing what the town has to offer are in the making with Stafford. right now is another finding the firm Business Advisors as the catalyst wants to pursue along with the idea including talks this week about the of greater commercializing of the possibility of a smelting operation airport and waterfront including a for recycled steel for Wiscasset, satellite fish exchange and barge July Foss of the firm announced transportation to Mason Station. Foss also said that the use of the Tuesday that the economic rail system is another avenue that developing group hired by the town needs exploring for both commercial to spark economic development and passenger service, as well as scheduled to meet with Cianbro other uses than re-firing of Mason Corp' of Pittsfield to discuss future Station.

Her business partner Chris Hall elaborated on the status of rail service being a viable potential for the area. He said there might be one or more rail service providers interested in operating on the line from Brunswick to Rockland or connecting with Portland from Amtrak which is preparing to have service from Portland to Boston in the near future.

"I know of at least one operation, more tourist accommodations and if given the opportunity, could have service up and running within six months, but that is not going to happen until after Amtrak gets at the waterfront.

See STAFFORD, page 15

A more systematic approach to

LCW 9/14/00

# Economic survey distributed

BY TIM REED

WISCASSET — Stafford & Associates, Wiscasset's first economic development counsel, distributed an economic survey to residents last week to identify ideas and opinions for study.

According to Chris Hall, a Stafford & Associates member, the

survey will help the firm generate socioeconomic statistics.

"It's an important part of our process. We need to try to understand what the majority thinks," said Hall.

He said the survey is available at the firm's Wiscasset office in the First National Bank of Damariscotta building on Route

27. Stafford & Associates, established in 1989, was hired by selectmen Aug. 8 after the elimination of 18 other possible candidates: The firm has been contracted by Bar Harbor in 1999-2000, Tremont in 1999, Cherryfield in 1998, as well as Searsport and Bucksport in 1997. The firm's contract with Wiscasset stipulates a \$40,380 payment for economic development services provided from Aug. 9 through Dec. 31.

The firm is currently meeting with community members, making preliminary contacts and has even nudged the Maine Yankee Advisory Board, by urging them to incorporate consultations with the town and county before making business-related decisions. Next month the firm plans to catalog the surveys, publish results and continue to hold public meetings.

Hall said he has been pleasantly surprised by how cooperative everyone has been.

"I am very pleased that people have been very frank and remarkably considerate. People have been very supportive," said Hall. "I hope we can continue to have an open dialogue within the town."

The first public informational meeting was Sept. 12 during the Wiscasset selectmen's meeting.

## Open House Monday

Stafford Business Advisors, hired by Wiscasset to promote economic development, will hold an open house Mon., Sept. 11 from noon to 2 p.m. The firm recently opened an office on the second floor of the First National Bank of Damariscotta building

of Wiscasset 27, 400 feet on the Gardiner Road (Route 27).

Anyone interested in providing comments and suggestions about the future growth of the town, or in learning more about what the firm hopes to accomplish is welcome to attend.

WN 9/9/00



# Editorial

## Here's Your Chance

The survey form below offers a chance for everyone -- including non-residents of Wiscasset -- a chance to say how The Prettiest Village In Maine should grow and change, or maybe stay the same, in the coming years.

Specific questions are asked about big and small businesses, tourism, transportation, the waterfront, the downtown, and other issues. In addition, Stafford Business Advisors, hired under a contract with the town to work on economic development, asks respondents to include whatever other information they think is relevant on a separate sheet of paper.

A lot of ideas have been tossed around in the last year about what should happen to promote economic development in an effort to stabilize the diminishing tax base from Maine Yankee, the closed nuclear power plant. Now we have an organized, concerted effort to find out what people want. The more people who respond, the better idea we'll have of what future directions are supported by those who work and/or live in the area.

So here's a chance for everyone -- not just the few people who attend weekly selectmen's meetings, or the ten percent that attend annual town meetings, to sound off.

Think about the ideal Wiscasset. Be creative, be practical, be outrageous, be interesting, but most of all, be counted -- take 30 seconds to fill out the form and, if you do have some ideas, spend another half hour jotting these down on a separate piece of paper.

- Paula Gibbs

WYN 8/31/00

# Economic Developers Making The Rounds In Wiscasset

*The magic bullet will not solve everything. Diversity is the key. That means a whole lot more than carrying out the wishes of the individual.*

*Chris Hall*

By PAULA GIBBS  
Wiscasset residents need to be told what the possibilities are for their waterfront. Harbor Master Bill Sutter said Monday night...

By JOHN MEO  
Please, separate yourself from the Town Planner, said Planning Board Chairman Vic Anderson as Stafford Business Advisors partner Chris Hall prepared to make a presentation to the planning board Monday night.

should take by way of economic development. Wiscasset is going through a transition. It is becoming a normal town where resources are scarce, he said. It is vital, therefore, for Stafford to understand different points of view. To identify consensus and legitimate disagreements by having a series of meetings...

There are businesses out there that look for wide open towns, but don't think Wiscasset is those types of businesses," he said. "I don't want to raise expectations but by October we may have a potentially meaningful investor. E December we hope to have an idea of the fit for business in Wiscasset. In from working around the state to know of some specific companies right now, but we want to give a public a chance to say yes or no."

you've done so far on public consultation on the waterfront, how you could help us steer that meeting, and how we go about contacting all the people who should be at that meeting," Hall said. Sutter responded, saying, "We did exactly what you're talking about," referring to two recent workshops on the waterfront. "A lot of people in town may not understand what is possible along the waterfront," Sutter said. "The useable section of the waterfront is extremely finite. Referring to land where the Mason Station generating plant is currently owned by PPL Group. Sutter said that area "could become another Samoset South," referring to the

view of recent events, beginning with the signing of an economic development contract with the town nearly three weeks ago and leading up to the present. The present has largely involved meetings with local special interest groups, committees, and individuals in Wiscasset who have an opinion on which direction the town

That means a whole lot more than carrying out the wishes of one individual," said Hall, adding that it was his opinion that "the magic bullet [a single cure-all] will not solve everything."

He added that while Stafford wants to keep as much of the process in the public eye as possible, there are some things that need to be kept quiet. "It's no secret that when attracting potential investors that there are several things that you can't do: the neighborhood politics that some people expect. Committee member Art Ethier asked how big of a hindrance the unknown status of the bypass is to Stafford's attraction strategy. He specifically cited the possibility of a business establishing itself in Wiscasset and then having the bypass built through its back yard. Hall responded, "That's one helluva headache but we try to make the best of it." He said that perhaps a good way to avoid a possible conflict is to bring businesses that wouldn't be affected, such as a certain portion of the high tech industry and hauling companies.

Hall explained that the firm will schedule a series of public meetings starting next month on various topics, including one on the waterfront. "I'm here tonight to see what

Chairman Don Jones said he is "worried" that people are

the process becoming illegitimate brushed under the carpet. We have to have a business plan that is credible and that involves consultation with everyone."

You have our full attention."

## Stafford To Make First Presentation September 12

First Selectman Ben Ruess announced Tuesday night that Stafford Business Advisors will make their first presentation to the town at a selectmen's meeting on Sept. 12 at 7 p.m.

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Continued to page 20



# Waterfront

Continued from page 1

'waterfronted out,' referring to the last two workshops that were not well attended.

"We haven't had the educational process we need," Sutter said. "If you're going to show up just to listen, you're going to fail."

Hall said he hopes to bring in one of the firm's consultants, Tom Val-leau, for the waterfront meeting. Val-leau was waterfront director in Portland for many years.

"Portland is, of course, a much bigger place, but they were facing the same kinds of competing issues Wis-

casset is facing," Hall said. These include how to balance issues like development and growth with issues like conservation and aesthetics, as well as the needs of different users of the waterfront, including commercial and recreational boaters, he said.

Hall said he has talked with representatives of both Maine Yankee and the Mason Station. Referring to the Mason Station, Hall said, "We assume the economic use for the generating plant has a finite life."

"We all need to understand there may be some significant clean-up there," Hall said. "There may be an avenue for the town to partner with the state on this. The town has to decide whether it wants to have an active or a passive role -- both are legitimate," he said.

"If the town *does* take an active role, the town would have to have a nonprofit economic development entity, controlled by the town, which is not subject to the vagaries of the changes in selectmen every year -- something that will give stability for the next 25 years. Right now, I'm not arguing for either route," Hall said.

"My assumption is the town will want a mixed use along the waterfront -- we're not going to just have a bicycle path from the sewer plant to the nuclear plant," he said.

Some of the plans proposed in the past for the waterfront, described as "visionary," were, in fact, "way out," not taking into account practical matters like property values," Sutter said.

"It's important to differentiate between what's vision and what's fantasy," Hall said. "You can have a vision, but to accomplish the reality, you need a lot of planning and a lot of hard work."

## Commercial Floats

In other business Sutter announced that signs have been installed on five floats designating them for use by commercial fishermen only, following action taken by the selectmen last week.

## Floating Trees

Committee member and fisherman Mark Damon offered to tow a floating tree, which is currently tied to a mooring, into the town docks so that it can be cut up and taken away.

## Mast and Boom

The members of the committee hope to have a proposal ready for the selectmen by December on installing a mast and boom on the waterfront. Although it would be funded by the town, Damon said he has talked with 15 fishermen who say they are willing to put up \$200 annually in exchange for using it and other waterfront facilities. At an approximate cost of \$6,000, the equipment could be paid for in two years, after which it could become a source of revenue for the town, he said.

# Economic developers open office on Route 27

BY TIM REED

WISCASSET, N.H. — Stafford & Associates, opened the doors to their new Wiscasset economic development office on Aug. 23. The new office is located in the First National Bank of Danverscotta building on Route 27. Chris Hall, of Stafford & Associates, said he was very excited about the new office space and could not wait until it was fully functional.

Stafford & Associates, established in 1989, were hired by selectmen Aug. 8 after the elimination of 18 other possible candidates. They have been contracted by Bar Harbor in 1999-2000, Tremont in 1999, Cherryfield in 1998, as well as Searsport and Bucksport in 1997. The firm's contract with Wiscasset stipulates a \$40,380 payment for economic development services provided from Aug. 9 through Dec. 31.

According to Sharon White of Stafford & Associates, the firm has not completed the move to their new office, but has been meeting with members of the community since they began. White believes these preliminary "one on one" meetings are the groundwork for Wiscasset's economic foundation.

"They're a lot of people that will

only talk to you one-on-one... because they're afraid they're not articulate," said White. "These people have ideas. They're a lot of ideas that are going to come from people."

In addition to the one-on-one meetings, Stafford & Associates plan to publish a survey to obtain public opinion on issues that affect Wiscasset's economic growth.

They also plan to hold six public meetings (the first to be held in September) to discuss their progress, before presenting their plan at a special town meeting in December.

White said she believes the firm must adhere to the process and refrain from speculation before the town meeting.

"We don't know what we're going to come up with, every place is different," said White. "You first need to know the needs of the town... It's not just a report."

According to White, the firm has already begun to discuss Wiscasset's economic future with business associates and past clients. She said feedback has been good.

"We hope that by our December report, a company will be in an introductory stage of interest in doing business in Wiscasset," said White.

The Stafford & Associates development office is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. ■



Wiscasset resident Prior Morrill (far left) met with Stafford & Associates, from left to right, Judy Foss, Chris Hall and Sharon White. TIM REED

Lincoln County Weekly 8/31/00

# Economic Development Office Opens Munday

By PAULA GIBBS

The town of Wiscasset's first economic development office opens Monday, Aug. 21 in the First National Bank of Damariscotta building on Route 27.

The announcement was made this week by Chris Hall, managing partner of Stafford Business Advisors, a Portland-based company selected last week by the board of selectmen. The firm signed a contract for slightly over \$40,000 for a time period from August 9 to December 3. Staffed by former Maine Coast Railroad owner Sharon White, the

office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Hall said the current strike by Verizon has prevented the installation of a phone line at the site, so calls may be made to the Portland office at 1-800-955-8299 until the phone work is complete. Hall's extension is 31 and Judy Foss can be reached at extension 32.

Hall said since the day after the firm was hired, he has been consulting informally with people around town. Based on those conversations a series of public hearings will be set up on topics of interest to people. These will be held during September and October, he said.

According to the contract signed with the town, the firm may be hired to do further work after December. The contract says, "It is the intention of the selectmen and Stafford that this initial contract period should lead to a more extended engagement. At the end of the contract period on Dec. 31, 2000, continuance is contingent upon:

- "a satisfactory review of progress by the selectmen;
  - "authorization of expenditure by a town meeting;
  - "execution of a new engagement letter and scope of work."
- Responsibilities for Stafford, as outlined in the contract, include the following:

- "Open, staff and operate an economic and community development office in and on behalf of the town;
- "Through this office, promote and diversify the town's employment base and property tax base, through business retention, business expansion, and business attraction;
- "Plan and execute business attraction activities with the objective of recruiting new investment in the town in fields that are compatible with existing business and the community's values and ambiance;
- "Advise the selectmen, town officials and the public on matters relating to economic and community development and related issues;

- the siting of future growth & related zoning ordinances;
- "Identification of infrastructure needs and expected impacts development on town service revenues and expenditures"
- "Suggested guidelines regarding the possible provision of incentives to investors, such as TL (Tax Increment Financing) business park infrastructure, programs for recruitment and training.
- "Potential sources of grant funding and other forms of support for the town's efforts;
- "A process for continuing put input and consultation as strategy is implemented;

- "Meetings with Maine & Co. company, the Department of Economic and Community Development; Coastal Enterprises, Inc. Lincoln County Commission Lincoln County Economic Development Office, Midco Council for Business Development; and other parties working for economic development a business attraction, to ensure Wiscasset is incorporated in their plans and activities;
- "Producing and disseminating promotional materials;
- "Providing input to select town planner and other official
- "Contact and follow up with potential interested investors Wiscasset;
- "Monthly reports to selectmen beginning in September."

- "Coordinate the town's economic development activities with those of Lincoln County, the state of Maine, and other government and nonprofit agencies, with the objective of making Wiscasset a high priority for those other entities' activities."
- In addition, the contract includes a description of the "Scope of Services" to be performed which includes "preparing and implementing a public consultation process to gather opinions and ideas about economic development strategies from Wiscasset residents and businesses." This will include public hearings designed to "identify areas of consensus and differences; needs and desires of property owners most likely to be affected by economic changes; and establish the views of the business community on which types of inward investment to the town present opportunities and which pose threats."
- In addition, the firm will meet with Florida Power & Light and Maine Yankee "to establish the likely procedure, time frame and valuation criteria for the expected future disposal of their properties in the town."
- Finally, the firm will prepare a report on their findings and outline a three-year strategy for the town covering such areas as:
  - "Retention, support for, and growth of existing business;
  - "Priorities and strategies for the attraction of new business investment;
  - "Recommendations regarding

# Tarbox Lauds New Developers, Still Critical Of Law Firm

By PAULA GIBBS  
Karl Tarbox complimented Wiscasset's Board of Selectmen for the second week in a row on their choice of an economic developer, but continued his criticism of involving the Pretti Flaherty law firm in matters he says they were not specifically hired to handle.

In an informal discussion at the end of Tuesday night's selectmen's meeting both Tarbox and Prior Morrell, who regularly have something to say about town government, maintained the law firm was hired, according to minutes of the town meetings, to resolve a Maine Yankee dispute, but ultimately got involved in a range of other issues. Shortly after Ben Rines was elected the town's new First Selectman in March, he ended the contract with the firm.

"I'd like to compliment Stafford Business Advisors, our new economic development firm. They're been fanning out into the community and talking to everyone. It's almost too good to be true. If Pretti Flaherty had done that, they'd still be here."

Morrell described what the three selectmen (Bob Blagden, Bob Pontau and Roy Barnes) did last fall was take money "for a dedicated purpose" and turn it into "an open ended legal slush fund." Townspeople voted at the annual town meeting to increase the

appropriation for legal services to help the town in reaching a tax settlement with Maine Yankee.

Roy Barnes, the only selectman still on the board responded, saying, "I don't know why you elect us if you won't let us do our job."

First Selectman Ben Rines said he wasn't on the board at the time, but, "There's plenty of room for honest disagreement" about how the funds were used.

Responding to Barnes' comment, Tarbox said, "I really do think you thought you were doing the right thing for the town at the time, but I still think it was mishandled."

Tarbox then went through a long list of incidents which he said occurred during the time the law firm was working for the town, including:

- "Dan Thompson (a consultant hired to do planning and economic development) pulling me into his office and telling me to back off on the Charter Commission, that there were 'outside forces' at work here; I never did find out what the outside forces were;

- "getting a threatening phone call at my home;

- "the town hiring a lobbyist, who wrote a business plan which ended up at Maine Yankee, a plan the taxpayers paid for but were never allowed to see;

- "documents relating to the selectmen's opinions about using the town's \$15 million in reserve funds which were found in a photocopying machine in a Pittsfield library;

- "discussions with Cianbro about recycling steel at the Mason Station;

- "attempts to hire another lobbyist, Christine Burke, to work on the bypass;

- "the selectmen being told in October the town wasn't getting a gas plant and one town official saying 'All Hell will break loose if Wiscasset finds out we're not getting a gas plant,' then Thompson claiming we didn't know until March we weren't getting the plant;

- "attempts to squash efforts to have a Charter Commission. Rines asked him about the threatening phone call. Tarbox said it was made to his home about the same time Alton Ciancette died in a plane crash in January. He said the caller told him to back off on his efforts to form a Charter Commission.

- Roy Barnes responded to the long list by saying, "The only time we talked to Cianbro was about the de-commissioning at Maine Yankee. I don't know what you're talking about as far as all this other stuff goes."

Tarbox repeated his claim that he thinks the selectmen had the town's best interests at heart when they hired the law firm, but "the real problem was there was a whole culture of secrecy about everything, which backfired in the end anyway."

Tarbox also criticized Thompson for trying to get the town to hire a firm he (Thompson) was involved with called Center For Consensual Democracy. Thompson has resigned from the board, but his wife is now a board member, according to Tarbox.

Rines confirmed that Thompson had approached him about hiring the firm, but said, "We're not going to hire them."

Chuck Applebee, a member of the Charter Commission and former superintendent of the wastewater treatment plant, praised the current board of selectmen, which includes, in addition to Rines and Barnes, Joan Barnes, saying, "Wiscasset selectmen now are keeping the public informed. You're keeping a firm handle on what's going on."

Morrell also had high praise for the current board, saying, "I like all three of you. I voted for all three of you. I just assume that my selectpeople are accountable, so when funds have a dedicated purpose, I expect them to spend the money on that."

# Town Hires Stafford Advisors For Economic Development

By PAULA GIBBS

It was probably the closest thing to a lovefest Wiscasset's selectmen have ever seen. At least in recent months.

Since First Selectman Ben Rines took over last March, critics of town government have made nearly weekly criticisms of how town government is being handled.

With the exception of Prior Morrell's criticisms on the town's investment strategy and washing cars in the fire station parking lot, the meeting focused on praise for the selectmen's choice of an economic development firm and good news from the town's community center.

Although word had already leaked out last week that the town wanted to hire Stafford Business Advisors for a six-month fee of \$50,000, the news apparently didn't hurt the proposed deal. The official announcement that the firm was hired and the contract signing was the first item on the agenda at Tuesday night's meeting.

Rines thanked Al Cohen and Bill

Curtis, two Wiscasset residents who helped the selectmen in the selection process. He also thanked Chuck Applebee who helped out with some research.

Principals in the firm are Ken Stafford, president; Christopher Hall, managing director; Tom Valteau, senior consultant, and Judith Foss, senior consultant. All four attended the meeting for the contract signing.

Karl Tarbox, who last week was thought to have found out who the town was hiring by writing down license plate numbers in the town hall parking lot, was the first to praise the selection of the firm. Earriet this week Tarbox said, "for the record," it wasn't writing down plates that led him to Stafford, but rather a comment that "Chris Hall's firm is getting the contract" made by a CBI employee at an open house last week, coupled with a visit Judy Foss paid to his mother's yarn shop last week during which she said she had met with the selectmen on economic development.

Referring to her visit, Tarbox said, "Judy didn't know what she started when she walked into my mother's yarn shop."

"I like everything I'm hearing here tonight," Tarbox said. "I like hearing that finally, three years after Maine Yankee closed, we will be coming up with a business plan for the town."

Chris Hall spoke briefly, saying the firm will conduct "a lot of consultations with residents. We'll have a lot of public meetings in this room to find out what the community wants."

"I realize we won't get consensus on everything, but we'll find out where there are areas of agreement, where there is disagreement, and come back in December with a plan.

"We will be developing strategies for attracting new businesses and for retaining current businesses." Hall said the firm will also be producing materials to mail out to groups and to respond to inquiries made about the town.

Hall said they will also "work on

getting Wiscasset connected to groups like Maine & Co., CBI, and the state's Department of Economic and Community Development.

"Up until now, Wiscasset hasn't been on the radar screen," Hall said.

Tarbox also praised Rines' efforts, saying, "You have really taken some good steps forward -- opening up stuff for bids, opening up town government, and hiring an economic developer. If it keeps going this way, you'll be known as the person who turned this town around. I'm more optimistic tonight than I have been in years."

## Investments And Car Washing

Morrell questioned the selectmen about the town's policy on car washing at the firehouse. Rines said it is his understanding that firefighters have been allowed to wash their own vehicles in the parking lot "since the day the building opened."

Morrell said he saw former First Selectman Larry Gordon washing a

**Continued on page 20**

# Stafford

Continued from pg. 1

car there on Saturday. Rines said Gordon is a member of the fire department.

Morrell also questioned why the town uses the words "the town's goal is to maximize safety" in describing the management of the town's trust accounts and not the word "investment" as well. He said the town should talk to investment advisors about whether the town should use some or all of its 10 percent allowed under state law to be invested in stocks instead of all of it in bonds as it is now.

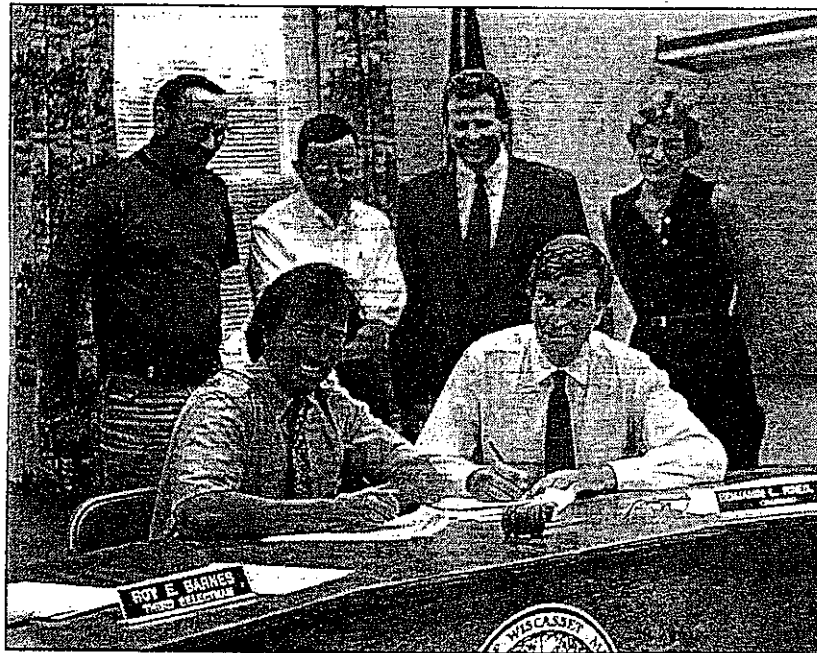
Rines said he checked with the towns of Falmouth and Cape Elizabeth and both towns invest totally in

bonds. If the town took as much as \$1.5 million, which would be 10 percent of the \$15 million it has, "I wouldn't want to play around with this in the stock market without asking the taxpayers first," he said.

## Community Center

Wayne Applebee updated the selectmen on the community center, noting that attendance at summer camp was at an all time high and that program revenues are steadily increasing.

There are plans to make the lobby area more of "a cafe type area" with tables and chairs and expanded refreshments.



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** comes to Wiscasset: seated, left First Selectman Ben Rines with Chris Hall; standing, left to right, Third Selectman Roy Barnes, Tom Valleau, Ken Stafford, and Judy Foss. (Paula Gibbs Photo)

# Stafford firm calls for Wiscasset business plan

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Three weeks into a contract with the new firm Wiscasset has hired to spark economic development has apparently borne some fruit already with new business prospects on the horizon and a plan to ready the town for new enterprises.

Chris Hall of Stafford Business Advisors, speaking with the planning board Monday, discussed a three-tier process the group has to help revitalize the community economically in order to restore its tax base over a two to three year period.

"You have to have a business plan that is credible to business investors. They want to know where the town is coming from," he said.

Hall told the board his consulting firm may have a business prospect by early October and that it has been in contact with Florida Light and Power Co. and a number of potential companies in relation to use of Maine Yankee and Mason Station power facilities. "As soon as something has a realistic chance of happening, I will let you know," he said.

"But it can't be done through megaphone politics folks may have been used to in the past," Hall said. He told the board conversations with business prospects will be in private until they are firmed up.

"Wiscasset is going through a transition where it is becoming a normal town," he said. That is the kind of time when politics comes to the forefront, whereas before everything was going well and the economy was stable until Maine Yankee's closure.

"We are trying to identify areas of consensus and areas of disagreement," Hall said. "There are going to be areas of disagreement."

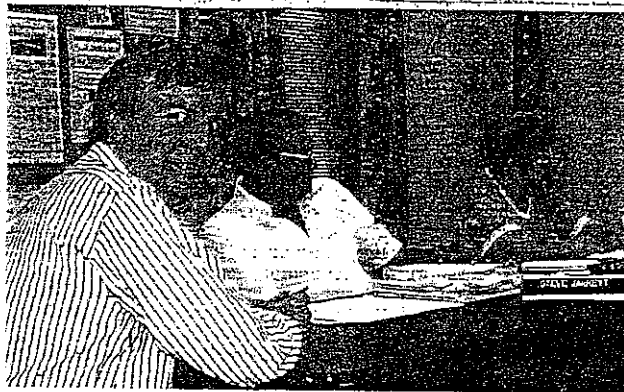
The Stafford group is a business operation which has contacts all over the state and outside, according to Hall. It has done consulting work in various towns in the state, and also does consulting for various state agencies, such as the Department of Transportation.

Currently the firm has hired Sharon White, former president of the Maine Coast Railroad, to manage an office it has opened at the First National Bank of Damariscotta's branch on Rt. 27 to maintain a presence during the week, Monday through Thursday.

The three-tier process Hall referred to will eventually lead to the town's establishment of its own ongoing self-sustaining entity to handle economic development. "We are not looking to create ourselves a job," he said. "There will be a lot of public input that will go forward without Stafford."

The first tier Hall listed is talking one on one with people who have strong opinions about what should be done. "We are not an extension of the town planning office," he said. "And we try to listen to everyone and to avoid passing judgment."

The second tier is a public consultation process involving



Economic development in Wiscasset is the topic planning board members Steve Jarret, middle, and Tat Mitchell discuss with Chris Hall, left, of Stafford Business Advisors, recently hired to look for new business and industry for the community. (Greg Foster photo)

discussions with various groups throughout the town; such as the planning board and including eight public meetings between now and November.

For the first meeting, the firm plans to have as a time for the general public to offer ideas for economic growth for the town. The final meeting will act as a final time for public input before finalizing an overall business plan.

The six meetings in between the first and last will involve public discussions of six main aspects of the community that are current assets and which may be built upon.

- Waterfront development, including expansion of uses and facilities.
- Historic village core, entailing a discussion about the right balance between tourism versus services for local people year-round.
- The northern part of town, which is rural farming area: "Are those things as important as people say they are or are there appropriate areas there for economic development," Hall asked.

Wiscasset Municipal Airport. "We understand there is a certain amount of controversy about it," he said. "It should be a revenue generator and not a loss."

Tourist industry, as a whole, involving a discussion about prospects for hotel-motel resort developments and attraction of a retirement presence.

"We will feed the opinions into a plan," he said. "To do that we need to contact people involved in particular sectors besides publicizing in the newspapers."

Hall said the firm also wants to have a questionnaire printed in the area newspapers about the various aspects of the town.

Part of the job of the firm, for which the town raised \$50,000 in March for a six-month period, will be to make contacts with the various agencies.

"We're going to work with every entity concerned with economic development and we plan to be in

their face to make sure Wiscasset is a priority," he said. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease. They pay attention to communities out there demanding that attention be paid to them."

Planning board member Steve Jarrett said he would appreciate having the firm inform the board if there are any town ordinances that make it unattractive for businesses to move to Wiscasset.

Following the discussion with Hall, the planning board discussed various town ordinances and prospective changes to them.

Members also spoke about the new ordinance review committee and how it will continue to function in conjunction with the board. "We don't want to get into a situation where people bypass the planning board," Art Ethier said.

