

Wiscasset Historic Preservation Commission

Minutes, 6/8/17

Present: John Reinhardt, Wendy Donovan, Gordon Konrath, Susan Blagden
(James Kochan absent)

1) Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm

2) Consideration of minutes

Susan moved to approve the minutes of the 5/4/17 meeting, Al seconded. Passed 4-0

Susan moved to approve the minutes of the 5/16/17 meeting, Al seconded. Passed 4-0

3) Certificate of Appropriateness review

a. 112 Federal St – Tax Map U03-Lot 01: replace windows and door on porch to match the rest of the home. The applicant is using vinyl replacement 2/1 windows (similar to what has been used on the rest of the house) and adding a steel door for security (repurposed from another location in the house). The front steps will be replaced, matching what exists. Susan moved to approve the COA application as presented, Al seconded. The motion passed 4-0

b. 65 Gardiner Rd – Tax Map U04-Lot 023: 12'x 20' addition to the south side of the property to create a new entrance, small addition on the north side for a walk-in. Siding, roofing, windows, and existing door to be replaced. Susan moved to approve the COA as presented, Al seconded. The motion passed 4-0.

4) Discussion of CLG with Megan Hopkins of Maine Historic Preservation

Megan provided a packet of information to go along with her presentation. The town would be certified as a CLG, not the Preservation Commission, so the select board would need to be on board. She has reviewed our ordinance and says it only needs a few minor tweaks before we could submit. One of the major benefits of becoming a CLG is the availability of grant money – approximately \$80K is available yearly for CLG use, and there are currently only 10 CLGs in the state. These grants are not matching funds. There would be yearly training required, and a yearly report to Maine Historic Preservation and to the National Park Service.

Our ordinance would need to be updated in a few areas. We would need to use the National Register criteria (association, persons, architecture, and “dirt” – things that can be learned from what’s in the ground, archaeology). We would need to add a line for surveys, which can be paid for with grant money. The changes to the ordinance would need to be in place in order to apply for CLG status.

There is a CLG training in Bangor on 9/15. It will include a COA/design review exercise, and a session on promoting preservation to the public.

There is a tax credit available for income-producing properties. The tax credit is 20% at the national level and 15% at the state level, 35% total. There is also a 15% tax credit available for small projects, and this credit can be applied to mixed-use properties. Al asked if there was a

tax credit available to homeowners, and Megan said that was something she has been researching. Any tax credit would come from the municipality, not the state.

5) Public comment

There was no public comment.

6) Other business

Susan asked about the email the commission received from the town regarding MDOT communications. Ben explained that any communication that any commissioner has had regarding the MDOT project needs to be printed and delivered to the town office. Meeting minutes are already on file with the town, this is only for emails on which Ben was not copied. Any communications need to be turned in by June 30.

Susan brought up the letter from the town manager of May 8th regarding the proposed repeal of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Susan pointed out that nothing can be done to repeal the ordinance until the annual town meeting, assuming that repeal is an extreme form of amendment. Ben stated that according to the town lawyer, a town meeting can be set at any time as long as there is proper public notification.

Ben suggested that our report should include the number of COA's delivered so far (24), as well as the benefits of having the historic district and any future benefits, such as grants that we could get once we become a CLG. We should focus on the positive.

It was decided to set an additional meeting this month to draft our report. John asked all members to brainstorm the benefits individually and bring the ideas to the next meeting.

Our next COA applicant is a new construction at the corner of Lee St, and Rt 1. We will also need to hold a public hearing, which we scheduled for the July 6th meeting. The owner is OK with the possibility of multiple meetings to discuss the project, but would like it to happen as soon as possible.

We also need to hold a public hearing on our requested amendments to the ordinance, which will not be on the next town warrant. Ben recommended working on our "defense package" first, and then working on any amendments. Al pointed out that one of the amendments we had requested allows for property owners to sign off on other representation at COA reviews, which we have allowed on a few occasions including the earlier review in this meeting.

A working meeting was set for Thursday, June 29 at 5pm to discuss the benefits of not repealing the Historic Preservation Ordinance. John asked for a list of COA applicants so we can ask for their comments. At the next meeting we can also re-confirm John as commission chair and choose a new vice-chair, provided the select board approves the applications submitted.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm

The next commission meeting will be Thursday, June 29 at 5:00 pm.