

Polewarczyk speaks out against the bypass routes

By **CHARLOTTE BOYNTON**
Staff Reporter

Wiscasset Selectman Ed Polewarczyk told the board and members of the public at the selectmen's meeting Tuesday evening that he has difficulty understanding the willingness to allow the displacement of about 30 land owners for 100 hours of traffic congestion during the summer months.

"It appears to me that we are ready to blow them off, but thank God for the eagle's nest; we now have an opportunity to take another look at the issue."

Polewarczyk said.

"It appears we didn't care about the people that would lose their homes, but when the eagle's nest appeared it trumped us all. Take the homes and business of the people in Wiscasset, but we can't take the eagle's unoccupied nest. What are we thinking?"

"I am from away, I haven't lived with the bypass issue for 50 years, but I have experienced traffic congestion, and 100 hours of delays in one year is certainly not enough to spend \$100 million, take people's homes

and increase the taxes for the people of Wiscasset. I am concerned for the residents of Wiscasset, and the people whose homes are in the path of the of bypass routes."

Polewarczyk said, "I represent the people of Wiscasset, and I believe all the routes should be looked at again, including the southern routes. Wiscasset is bearing the burden of the bypass alone."

Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) Gerry Audibert attended the selectmen's meeting to speak on the

Route 1 traffic congestion and provide information that had been given to the Midcoast Bypass Task Force.

Audibert told the group for the year 2030, MDOT has estimated the economic impacts caused by congestion and safety, if they don't construct the bypass, would be about \$12.6 million per year.

According to the Route 1 Corridor study, in 2009 and 2010, traffic on Route 1 from Birch Point Road saw 110 summer hours of traffic delays

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occur. From Route 1 at Route-27 in Edgecomb, 90 hours of summer delays were reported.

Dan Sortwell told the board, "Regardless if there is a bypass or not, we are looking at 20 years before it is built. MDOT, Lincoln County, and the town of Wiscasset need to find ways to reduce the traffic with the existing route without a bypass.

County Planner Robert Faunce said there had been many ideas brought before MDOT in the past seven years, and they have tried to take the ideas and work with them. Faunce outlined some of those ideas, such as an underpass under Main Street, an overpass over Main Street that would require handicapped ramps, indicating there are no other alternatives other than a bypass.

Morrison Bonpasse from Newcastle, member of Route One Alternative Decisions (R.O.A.D), a group dedicated to solving Wiscasset traffic problems and viewing it from a regional and national perspective, did not agree with Faunce. "What he didn't tell you is the overpass would not need a handicap ramp, a simple elevated would be sufficient."

Bonpasse told the board the only reasonable solution to Wiscasset's traffic congestion is to improve the current Route 1 corridor. The proposed bypass routes are too expensive in terms of construction costs, and they take the homes of businesses and people.

Donald Jones, Chairman of Wiscasset's Transportation

Committee, requested that the selectmen endorse the recommendation of the Transportation Committee, supporting the Midcoast Task Force to move forward to complete a bypass route.

Jones drafted a letter to be sent to MDOT Commissioner David Cole on behalf of the town.

After reading the letter Selectman David Nichols said, "There is not a bypass route on the table I would vote for." Polewarczyk said he would like to make some revisions to the letter. Selectman Pam Dunning said, "So would I." Selectman Bob Blagden said "I would like some time to look the letter over with the changes."

The board decided to have their recommended changes given to the town manager before Thursday, and she would put them together for the board to decide on Thursday, January 6 at 6 p.m. during the budgetary goal workshop meeting that had been scheduled.

Health insurance eligibility

The selectmen adopted a Health Insurance Eligibility Requirement policy at their meeting.

The requirements include: "employees who are hired on a full or part-time basis and work an average of 20 hours per week on a year round basis are eligible for coverage; Elected officials, whose terms is of at least one

year's duration, regardless of the work schedule may be eligible for coverage; and appointed officials, whose terms are of at least one year's duration, provided they work an average of at least 20 hours per week, are eligible for coverage."

The town manager made it clear that eligibility for insurance coverage does not mean the employer is covering or sharing in the cost of the employee's health insurance. Eligibility only allows an employee to join the program at their own cost unless covered by the town's Personnel Policy or Union Contract.

Public hearing on USDA loan/grant

The selectmen held a public hearing on the town submitting a USDA Grant/loan application for \$100,000 to replace the sewer lines on Federal and Main street.

Two Wiscasset residents expressed their opinions at the public hearing. Dan Sortwell said, "Work is definitely need on the sewer lines." Another resident indicated since these are difficult times economically, the town shouldn't consider spending that amount of money if it didn't need to be done.

The Wiscasset Water District is replacing the water lines, and the town is considering replacing the sewer lines at the same time, thus having the

road torn up just the one time.

If the town is found eligible for a USDA Grant/loan the selectmen can decide at that time whether to proceed with a town meeting vote requesting authorization from the voters before moving forward with the project.

Time Tides

	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Fri. - Jan. 7	12:38	12:44	6:31	7:02
Height	8.7	9.4	0.6	0.0
Sunrise/Set	7:10	4:19		
Sat. - Jan. 8	1:17	1:24	7:13	7:40
Height	8.6	9.0	0.8	0.3
Sunrise/Set	7:10	4:20		
Sun. - Jan. 9	1:56	2:06	7:55	8:18
Height	8.5	8.6	1.0	0.6
Sunrise/Set	7:10	4:21		
Mon. - Jan. 10	2:36	2:50	8:40	8:59
Height	8.4	8.2	1.2	1.0
Sunrise/Set	7:09	4:22		
Tues. - Jan. 11	3:18	3:38	9:27	9:42
Height	8.3	7.9	1.4	1.3
Sunrise/Set	7:09	4:24		
Wed. - Jan. 12	4:04	4:30	10:19	10:30
Height	8.2	7.5	1.5	1.5
Sunrise/Set	7:08	4:25		
Thur. - Jan. 13	4:53	5:26	11:15	11:21
Height	8.2	7.3	1.5	1.6
Sunrise/Set	7:08	4:26		

Dec. 27 Dec. 21 Dec. 13 Jan. 4

Gold/Smith Gallery
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 41 Commercial Street, Boothba