

## **Tisbury selectmen debate flags and signs for businesses By Janet Hefler June 15, 2011**

### **"Open" country**

In answer to Mr. Coogan's question about whether flags also fall under the signage bylaw, Mr. Barwick said he recently discovered they did.

Someone asked him whether an establishment on State Road that displays a flag that says "Open" was in violation of the bylaw, he said. Mr. Barwick checked with the Planning Board, which agreed that based on the bylaw, such a flag is considered a hanging sign and subject to restrictions based on location.

"If someone wants to display an 'open' flag that is less than eight feet in size, they can apply for a permit and get one," Mr. Barwick explained.

He subsequently asked Daniele Dominick, owner of the Scottish Bakehouse, to remove the "open" flag she displays on her sign on State Road.

"The issue, as I understand, is that because I'm in a residential community, I have less allotment for a sign," Ms. Dominick said at the meeting. She questioned why she is allowed a three-square-foot advertising flag, while someone in the business district is allowed an eight- to nine-square-foot one.

"Could she have an eight-foot American flag?" Mr. Kristal asked.

"Daniele's business is located in a residential zone, where signs are limited to three square feet," Mr. Barwick replied. "She can fly any other size national flag."

"Is there a country called 'Open'?" Mr. Kristal retorted.

Long-time community activist Harriet Barrow said she thought the issue seemed arbitrary.

"If you can have an American flag as big as this building, it is certainly more distracting than a sign that says open," she argued. "As long as an American flag is not in the category of hazardous or unattractive, who is to say that 'open' is distracting? On top of which, I think it's good that businesses in Tisbury have the opportunity to say look at us, here we are, please come and visit us."

Mr. Kristal pointed out that removing "open" flags from businesses in the middle of June is bad timing, because people will be wondering if they are indeed open."

Little House Café co-owner Steven Carreiro said he thought his establishment and its flag out front is at the root of the problem.

"I'd like to know who dug up this bylaw," he said. "It seems a little foul to me. Somebody's got an agenda."

Mr. Israel encouraged him and Ms. Dominick to petition the Planning Board for a bylaw change.