



**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes**

APPROVED

March 17, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Bob Hebert, Sean Connelly, Barbara Manners, Maureen Kozlark

1) Public comment

There were no public comments.

2) Appointments & Reappointments

- a. Sharon M Kent – Appoint to the Affordable Housing Committee

Mr. Marconi read the letter Ms. Kent wrote to the Board regarding her background and qualifications. Ms. Kent shared a bit about her interest in the Committee and also what she hopes to accomplish by joining. Ms. Kent commented that one of the challenges the Affordable Housing Committee has is convincing people that density housing will not necessarily hurt property values. The Board members were then given the opportunity to ask Ms. Kent questions. The topics included local zoning vs statewide zoning, the need for more affordable housing in Ridgefield, and limitations the Town faces due to deed restrictions. Mr. Goldenberg expressed his support in having Ms. Kent join the committee.

Ms. Manners moved to approve the appointment of Sharon Kent for a four-year term on the Affordable Housing Committee. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

- b. Ellen Burns & Jessica Wilmot – Reappoint to the Parking Authority

Due to a conflict, Ms. Wilmot could not attend the meeting. Ms. Wilmot and Ms. Burns requested the reappointed to be rescheduled for next BOS meeting.

- c. Don Ciota – Reappoint to the Commission for Accessibility

Mr. Ciota gave a brief presentation which provided an update on the current project the Commission has been overseeing. The project is a town wide self-assessment, which will assist towns with identifying areas that need to be brought into compliance. Mr. Ciota answered a few questions from the Board which included his opinion on current and new

Commission members and what area he feels currently needs the most focus from the Commission.

Tony Phillips, the ADA coordinator for the Town, spoke about the need for more members on the Commission and asked the Board to help spread the word.

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the reappointment of Don Ciota for another two-year term on the Commission for Accessibility. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

3) Vendor Permit Renewals

a. Bridge Street Premium Ice Cream – Michael Cunningham

Mr. Cunningham shared that he has a renewed energy and excitement for this year's season, after being completely shut down during 2020 due to COVID. Mr. Cunningham discussed the different ways he promotes his business and the COVID safety protocols he has in place for the upcoming season.

Ms. Manners moved to approve the vendor application for Bridge Street Premium Ice Cream. Mr. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

b. Chez Lenard – Michael Principi

Mr. Principi talked about his struggles with the business during COVID and how things are starting to improve and that he hopes will continue to improve with the increase in vaccinations and warmer weather. There was a discussion about COVID protocols, the comfort levels of customers during the past year, and the use of Vemno in addition to accepting cash. Several Board members expressed their support of Mr. Principi and his long standing business.

Mr. Connelly moved to approve the vendor permit for Chez Lenard Hot Dog stand. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

4) Verizon Lease

The new Verizon lease includes a six month termination clause, which cannot be changed because it would involve a huge restructuring of contracts at the corporate level. There was a discussion about whether this clause was in the last lease or not. The Board discussed the likelihood of Verizon pulling out of the lease. Mr. Marconi pointed out that the tower is in a prime location and one that multiple companies would want due to the height of the tower, which is reason to believe it is very unlikely that Verizon would terminate the lease.

Ms. Manners moved to approve the Verizon lease. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

5) COVID Update

Mr. Marconi discussed the vaccination percentages as well as the surge in positivity rates and the possible reasons for it. Ridgefield will continue to run its vaccination clinic at Yanity Gym through May 27th. The Town has experienced a loss of revenue from using Yanity Gym as the vaccination center, but this is allowed in the rescue plan and the Town is expecting to receive relief money from the State. There was a discussion about the amount of funds the Town expects to receive and what they might be used for.

Mr. Marconi discussed the cancelling of the Memorial Day Parade and the 4th of July fireworks and how restrictions are loosening as we head into the summer months. Mr. Marconi talked about the different smaller scale events that are being looked into in place of the parade and fireworks.

Mr. Marconi gave praise to all the amazing volunteers that have given their time at the Yanity Gym vaccination clinic and also commended the CERT Program and RVNA for the wonderful job that have done with the clinic.

No motions were made.

6) PURA

The Town received the final bill for PURA. The total amount is now up to around \$37,000 which is \$7,000 higher than anticipated. Mr. Marconi discussed the generated costs from a few current and new cases against the Town, adding that legal costs this current fiscal year have been higher than expected. Ms. Kozlark commented that she does not think the Town should spend any more money on PURA. Mr. Marconi agreed.

No motions were made.

7) Selectman's Report

Karen Martin, the Town Planner, has reached out to Mr. Marconi to ask if anyone from the Board would like to sit on the Committee that will review the POCD and begin working on implementation for the areas the Board of Selectman has been assigned. Mr. Hebert expressed interest.

The Miss President election is scheduled for March 21, 2021 at 4pm via Zoom. Miss President is a program designed to help build self-esteem and public speaking skills among young women between grades fourth and eighth. Mr. Marconi talked about how great the program is and encouraged everyone to tune in if possible.

Mr. Marconi gave an update on the decrease in the budget for health insurance, workers comp and LAP. The Board discussed the amount of savings within different departments. The Board of Finance will be holding upcoming meetings to discuss revenues and capital, which may include the money the Town is getting from the Government.

Ms. Kozlark provided an update on WPCA regarding the discontinuation of the Route 7 sewer plant and how it will affect usage. There will be a special meeting of the WPCA on Monday to discuss. The Town owns the property and there will be a Town meeting at some point to discuss what to do with the property.

No motions were made.

8) Motion to Adjourn

Ms. Manners moved to adjourn the BOS meeting at 8:34pm. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.