



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

**September 16, 2020 at 7.30pm via Zoom**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Present:** Rudy Marconi (RM), Bob Hebert (BH), Sean Connelly (SC), Barbara Manners (BM), Maureen Kozlark (MK)

**1) Public comment**

There were no public comments.

**2) 2020-2021 – Controlled Deer Hunt Approval**

5 Properties were unanimously approved by the Conservation Commission with agreement from the Deer Management Implementation Committee, for the 2020-2021 deer hunt.

- Shadow Lake (archery, shotgun, and muzzleloader)
- Laurel Lane (archery, shotgun, and muzzleloader)
- Linden Lane (archery)
- Silvermine Ridge (archery)
- Bobby's Court (archery)

After being asked questions by Ms. Kozlark and Mr. Connelly about the reason for the deer hunt, and the number of properties on the hunt list, Huntmaster Zandri gave some background to the Ridgefield annual deer hunt saying that at the start of the Deer Hunt program the deer population was at 76 deer per square mile. According to the current state count, the number of deer per square mile is around 40. An ideal population is 20 deer per square mile.

Ms. Kozlark asked if reducing the number of properties was impacting the number of deer taken in the hunt. Mr. Zandri said the impact was minimal. Mr. Connelly asked what the deer hunt achieved. Mr. Zandri said that the hunt is designed to cull the number of deer to prevent the deer population growing to numbers seen 10 years ago, as well as lowering the number of deer ticks in the area. Mr. Zandri also added that the deer population at the golf course was high and that he had been approached regarding hunting there this year. Mr. Marconi agreed that the golf course could be added to the hunt with further consultation from Frank Sergiovanni, chairperson of the golf course and Jim Coyle, chairperson of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Zandri mentioned the online State Deer report, which shows how many deer are killed every year per town.

Ms. Kozlark asked about the regrowth of the underbrush since the start of the deer hunt. Mr. Marconi said that the finding was inconclusive and said he would ask the Conservation Commission if this study had since been concluded.

Mr. Zandri said that printing of the notices regarding active deer hunt would be ordered, all adjoining property owners would be sent a letter regarding the hunt, there is minimal hiking on the properties being hunted, parking permits have arrived and that no special id. was required other than drivers license. Ms. Kozlark asked about the danger of more people hiking due to distance learning and suggested that the students are made aware. Mr. Marconi asked for extra signage to make people aware as well as notices sent by the school to parents regarding deer hunting in Ridgefield.

**Ms. Kozlark moved and Mr. Hebert seconded the motion to approve the 5 properties recommended by the Conservation Commission for 2020-2021 Controlled Deer Hunt. Motion carries 4-1, (Ms. Manners opposes).**

### **3) Storm Update – PURA Legal Review**

Mr. Marconi reported that he had received the estimate from the attorneys for litigation costs. \$25,000-\$45,000 per town. There are now four towns that are a part of the legal process - Bethel, New Fairfield, Newtown and Ridgefield. Mr. Marconi asked the BOS to establish a threshold amount, beyond which everything would be reviewed before continuing forward. He would like to present this to the other towns to make sure that whatever action is taken, all towns do it collectively and no town drops out without all towns agreeing.

The first invoice for litigation is around \$8,000 per town which includes all the initial filing: the intervener status, the elevation of the case to a contested case, as well as filing of the motion for immediate relief. All filings are on the PURA website, as well as all public testimony. Mr. Marconi said that the public will play a large part in PURA's decision and he once again requests public testimony to support the case.

Mr. Marconi discussed the case timeline: A decision on the case is expected around end April 2021, but penalties aren't expected until July, 2021. He explained that was why Ridgefield requested immediate relief that requires Eversource to have a liaison assigned to Ridgefield to give accurate information to allow us to keep our public informed; the assignment of an operations person to improve Eversources make safe assignment of trucks, to liaise with our emergency services (ambulance, fire and police) to make sure we can provide necessary EMS services; and the improvement of the Eversource IVR system - because their voice recording system failed during the aftermath of tropical storm Isaiah.

Ms. Manners asked how often the towns meet. Mr. Marconi answered that they meet weekly, but if there is a lull in action that meetings would be every other week. Ms. Kozlark asked about the towns budgeted amount for legal costs. Mr. Marconi said that the budget was

\$150,000 for the year and added that Ridgefield could afford \$30,000 for the litigation of the Eversource/PURA case.

**Ms. Kozlark moved and Mr. Hebert seconded the motion to recommend a \$30,000 threshold on legal costs in the PURA case against Eversource. Motion carries 5-0.**

#### **4) License Agreement - Damima Ridgefield Associates LLC**

Damima owns building C at 38 Grove Street. The area leased to R4 Technologies was not renewed in May. That was when Damima owner, David Kaplan came forward asking to lease that space. The fee of \$1,500 per year was increased to \$2,500 per year. The lease term is one year, renewable after review at that time.

**Mr. Hebert moved and Ms. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the license agreement between the Town of Ridgefield and Damima Ridgefield Associates LLC as presented. Motion carries 5-0.**

#### **5) Authorizing Resolution – State Homeland Security Grant Program**

Mr. Marconi said that it is the same agreement approve every year by the BOS, and asked that if every board member had read the agreement sent to them that they approve it.

**Mr. Hebert moved and Ms. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the resolution to apply to the State Homeland Security Grant Program. Motion carries 5-0.**

#### **6) Selectman's Report**

- Police undercover cars – 3 bids were received:  
Dodge Durango bid was \$21,464.  
Two bids came in for the Jeep Cherokee – one from Acme Automotive at \$16,380 and one from Pamby Motors at \$16,565. There was a difference of \$185 in bids.  
The board felt that it was important to support a local business because servicing would be local and any vehicle purchased from Pamby included free oil changes. Mr. Marconi added that a key component of the decision was that current service received from Pamby on town vehicles was exceptional.

**Ms. Manners moved and Mr. Herbert seconded the motion to vary the policy to award the bid to the lowest bidder and so to award the bid for a police under cover vehicle to Pamby Motors based on a desire to support local business during the Covid-19 crisis and the fact that servicing would be local. Motion carries 5-0.**

- Athletics: DPH urged the CIAC to put contact football at high school on hold in the state. Though Tiger Hollow is used by Ridgefield Youth Football on Saturday and Sundays to host many games during the season, high school football remains cancelled because the CIAC ruling covers high school football, not youth football. This affects scholarships and sports in general. No response has been forthcoming from the state department as to the

confusing nature of this ruling and what happens with other contact sports. The CIAC Sports Health Committee have said that the CIAC ruling states that high risk sports need to be reduced to a moderate risk.

DECD sector rules require all surfaces to be thoroughly cleaned before and after use and 6 feet of distance needs to be maintained between spectators. Ms. Kozlark asked who would police that. Mr. Marconi said that the town would not be issuing citations but this does not mean that people must stop practicing social distancing and wearing face coverings.

- The board discussed the use of Tiger Hollow bleachers for sports. Mr. Marconi said that due to the expense of cleaning the bleachers, they should remain off limits.
- Egregious violations of the Covid-19 social distancing rules and requirement to wear facemasks should be reported. Ms. Manners asked what the rights of storeowners are if someone refuses to wear a mask. Mr. Marconi said that a storeowner has the right to refuse somebody entry to their shop. Regarding public parks - removal is not enforceable for non-compliance to wear a facemask but requiring that person to remain 6 feet away from another person is enforceable.
- Vendor permits: Though the board has previously agreed not to grant any more vendor permits, there was a vendor permit application for 626 Danbury Road to sell hide. The vendor currently sells from a truck on Rt. 7. Mr. Hebert asked what the reason was to stop issuing vendor permit. Ms. Manners answered it was to protect local businesses renting space in town. The board agreed that vendor permits should remain on hold to protect local businesses.
- Ridgefield Garden Club: Mr. Marconi will request more cameras to be installed at Ballard Green, the Ballard Greenhouse and Ballard Park to curb the vandalism occurring there, and will follow up with the police chief. Mr. Marconi read a letter from the Ridgefield Garden Club chairwoman. This letter details the damage being done and noted that incidents of vandalism have been increasing over the past 18 months. Various recommendations were suggested which included sporadic police presence, additional cameras, additional signage, public awareness campaign in the form of press releases requesting residents be the 'eyes and ears' to help curb this vandalism. Mr. Marconi will conduct a follow up meeting with the garden club and the police chief.
- Highway Department personnel:
  - The search continues for a director of public works. A qualified candidate has been interviewed and an offer made, but the candidate has not accepted the offer yet.
  - Dave Buccetti was promoted to superintendent. Mr. Marconi thanked Mr. Buccetti for standing in while the search continued for a director of public works and commended him on a job well done.
  - Rich Morrel was promoted to the position vacated by Mr. Buccetti.

- A bill drafted by Sen. Saud Anwar proposes bold changes to Section 8-2 Zoning Regulations. If adopted these changes would remove the zoning decision from municipalities and give it to a regional body or the state; remove any reference to character of a town from zoning laws and abolishing 1 acre zoning among other regulations it aims to change. The BOS expressed various concerns regarding these proposed sweeping changes. A group of Fairfield county towns have come together to discuss this bill and have asked the COG to recognize their group. The Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission have drafted a letter to the state in response to this bill. Ms. Kozlark asked how the BOS could assist and suggested the BOS vote to support the group. Mr. Marconi suggested members of the BOS send emails to WestCOG in support of the group and agreed a vote would be a positive step. Ms. Manners added that desegregation is more than just a zoning issue because it encompasses education, transportation and other support systems, not just housing. Mr. Hebert asked why this bill is being rushed through by the state.
- Casagmo sidewalks: Though the Casagmo corporate body has said they will not maintain the sidewalks until they have been repaired, they cannot do that, maintenance is mandatory. Mr. Marconi said that repairing that section of Main Street sidewalk will be added to the work schedule to be completed before winter.
- Ms. Kozlark is on the Energy Committee and reported on the work being done on solar panel use. The committee has a representative from BOS, and BOF and request a BOE representative be on the committee.
- Ms. Kozlark reported on the progress of the WPCA project to upgrade the sewer plant. At the end of July the first incremental raise for the 10 year amortization of the cost of the project was implemented in the form of a small raise in sewer tax to the users. This amortization of the cost is designed to spread the cost and keep the curve flat. Mr. Marconi said that residents have asked for a deferment in sewer tax. Ms. Kozlark responded that deferment would simply mean a bigger payment in the future. Mr. Marconi said that if someone opts for deferment they would be accepting that a bigger payment was due at a later date. Mr. Connelly asked about the progress of the project. Ms. Kozlark explained that the WPCA is making accommodations to the businesses abutting the work zone, and that the sourcing of some materials were delayed due to Covid-19, but that the project was moving along well.

## **7) Minutes Approval**

**Mr. Hebert moved and Ms. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the BOS Meeting on September 02, 2020. Motion carries 5-0.**

- 8) Motion to adjourn. Ms. Kozlark moved and Mr. Connelly seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion carries 5-0. The meeting ended at 9:18PM**