

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Wednesday, October 10, 2018 – 7:30 pm
Town Hall Large Conference Room
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut
REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. October 15 Proclamation Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month: Hillary Hughes
3. Interview Amanda Duff for the ECDC (Nick Kitorides Ad-Hoc member until vacancy)
4. Re-Instating the Affordable Housing Committee
5. Refunds-Ridgefield Tax Collectors Office
6. Senior Tax Credit Discussion: Al Garzi (continuation of 6/20/18 discussion)
7. Peddler Ordinance-Discussion
8. Article 11 Ordinance
9. Ethics Rewrite
10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 8/13/18, 9/26/18
11. Selectman's Report

Public Hearing

R. Marconi called the **Public Hearing** to order at 7:31 pm.

R. Marconi stated tonight's agenda had Item #2-Elimination of the unbuilt portion of Sky Top Road from the Town Maps as a Town Meeting. R. Marconi clarified there was a previous vote and tonight was the Public Hearing and the Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 24th. R. Marconi asked for a motion to move Item #2 up to a Public Hearing.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to move Agenda item #2 Elimination of the unbuilt portion of Sky Top Road from the Town Maps up to a Public Hearing this evening. Motion carried 5-0.

Dave- Conservation Commission, confirmed Mr. Beylouni, property owner along Sky Top Road has been granted access to the area chained off. Signs and a chain will be across the opening to the undeveloped area to prevent motorized vehicles from entering. All emergency vehicles will have access.

R. Marconi opened floor for questions or comments. No Public Comment.

Public Hearing closed at 7:41 pm and the BOS Meeting commenced.

1. Public Comment

Kate Boucher, Lawyer at Locke Lord LLP, 473 Gardner Street, Manchester, CT formerly 179 Ivy Hill Rd, Ridgefield stepped forward to comment on behalf of Comcast. Kate stated Comcast applied for a permit eight months ago under the current Peddlers Ordinance.

2. Oct 15th Proclamation Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month: Hillary Hughes

H. Hughes thanked the BOS for their consideration of signing the Proclamation. R. Marconi stated he needed to edit down what was submitted on the basis it was too lengthy to have as a Proclamation. R. Marconi read the Proclamation for all present. B. Manners questioned for confirmation that the Proclamation was for pregnancies that are mourned and lost, not willing termination of the pregnancy. H. Hughes confirmed yes, the Proclamation is for babies who are stillborn or lost in infancy.

B. Hebert asked what were the actionable items Ridgefield could do as a community to support the goals of the Proclamation?

H. Hughes stated their first-born son was stillborn without any signs at 34 weeks. The biggest goals are awareness, education, and prevention. We are hoping that other families with this Proclamation will have more awareness that stillbirths are continuing. We hope we can educate more people with different warning signs and move along more research that needs to be done. Lastly support, recognizing this day set in the Proclamation as a community to be there for people, provide comfort for ones that have gone through this.

R. Marconi and all BOS agreed and signed the Proclamation.

3. Interview Amanda Duff for the ECDC (Nick Kitorides Ad-Hoc member until vacancy)

R. Marconi welcomed Amanda Duff and noted she was present with John Devine Jr. who recommended A. Duff consider joining the ECDC. R. Marconi read a letter from A. Duff expressing her interest in the ECDC.

S. Zemo stated he felt A. Duff was bringing a keen public relations specialty to the ECDC group and asked A. Duff to share with everyone what she might do from that perspective. A. Duff stated from a PR & Marketing standpoint I think all the Towns organizations are working towards common goals of elevating Ridgefield. I would like to streamline some of the efforts.

B. Manners and R. Marconi asked A. Duff if there's been any discussion of Boutique Hotels here in Ridgefield since she spent time in hospitality. R. Marconi noted A. Duff is from Madison, CT and asked if Madison has one. A. Duff stated yes Madison does have a Boutique Hotel and does see the need for something that fits the look and feel of Ridgefield.

M. Kozlark asked Amanda what other interests and passions she had, and will there be time for the ECDC? A. Duff stated she has a one year old, loves being outside and hiking especially going to Town events. Amanda also volunteers with Meals on Wheels requesting the walking route to take her daughter with her. A. Duff stated she has the time and is flexible with her schedule due to working from home and has additional support when needed.

B. Hebert stated all our boards are important and this one is especially important. The goal of the ECDC is to promote economic growth and keeping with the Town character. Beside Boutique Hotels what are the best opportunities here sustainable for economic growth? A. Duff stated any Town that can add arts elements is wise to do so. Amanda thinks promoting amongst my friends and social circle to get younger people involved is important.

B. Hebert questioned A. Duff if she has served on any other boards and why the ECDC? A. Duff answered she hasn't served on any other boards however feels she will be of value and wanted to give back to Ridgefield. A. Duff stated this is a long-term investment and trusts John Devine Jr. opinion in her joining the ECDC.

S. Zemo stated it was great that A. Duff and her husband decided to live in Ridgefield and from an economic development position why did they choose to move to Ridgefield? A. Duff stated she loves a small-town feel, has a desire for the arts, great restaurants especially Farm to Table cuisine along with her husband wanting some space. A. Duff stated Ridgefield offers something incredible where it is close to NYC, Public schools are fabulous, and the Town is safe with endless activities.

B. Hebert moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to appoint Amanda Duff as a new member of the ECDC. Motion carried 5-0.

R. Marconi stated Nick Kitorides is all in and available to help with the ECDC as Ad-Hoc capacity. There are no vacancies now however Nick works at the Chef's Warehouse in finance and is ready to help.

4. Re-Instating the Affordable Housing Committee

R. Marconi stated during the Schlumberger purchase time frame everyone on the AF Committee resigned feeling the BOS weren't aggressive enough with more affordable housing. The committee is still on the books and R. Marconi questioned would the BOS like to start interviewing people for this committee again due to some interest. B. Manners suggested keeping the number to 7 members instead of 9 as in the past.

S. Zemo stated the committee is important to have with certain parameters and would like to see their scope very policy perspective. The committee in the past has been effective with their policy and had lobbied for auxiliary in-law apartments.

B. Hebert added he would be a strong proponent to help people better understand what Affordable Housing all is about. There can be a lot of bad information out there. It can be very instructive to have this committee from a policy perspective stand point. They can articulate and put the correct information out. Due to so many components it would be very positive for the committee to study this, understand it and communicate what is really is.

M. Kozlark stated Dave Goldenberg was very passionate and a hard worker on the committee however to have others come forward with additional ideas would be a great addition to a new committee. R. Marconi stated other people have come in looking to help and have shown interest on this agreeing to move forward with advertising.

No Vote

5. Refunds-Ridgefield Tax Collectors Office

R. Marconi stated the refunds were received from the Tax Collectors Office. Most were due to automobile trade in or release of the automobile mid-year.

B. Manners moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to approve refunds requested by Tax Collectors Office in the total amount of \$8,430.06. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Senior Tax Credit Discussion: Al Garzi (continuation of 6/20/18 discussion)

R. Marconi reiterated there was a discussion back on June 20, 2018 to see if we wanted to make any modifications, increase tax credits, review deferments, and possibility of a tax freeze.

Al Garzi, Tax Assessor came forward and stated there were three programs in place now for people age 65 and over. As of July 2018, the State program for people with income under \$43,000 used to be funded by the State and is now State mandated that Ridgefield fund it. This costs Ridgefield roughly \$61,000 per year. The State has no intention of changing this and has passed the expense to the Towns. Our second program is the Regular Tax Credit with no means test of \$1,048 and the third program is the Tax Deferment. A. Garzi commented there was talk of freezing increases for persons 75 and older on the current program now which is about 1,000 people.

M. Kozlark questioned is the State requiring Ridgefield to give only to our residents or can outside Towns dip into us if they can't afford their numbers? A. Garzi stated no other Towns can take from us. We are required to only cover our residents. Every Town must pay their fair share.

S. Zemo stated at some point there could be consideration to get our bonding rate off the Tax Deferment since we are now just a conduit for this program. R. Marconi stated we don't bond now. S. Zemo agreed however considering this for the future enables us to have our capital costs covered with a bonding pool.

R. Marconi stated some people have come forward regarding caps on income. They have commented if they qualify for the Tax Credit, no matter the income level, why after all one has done for Ridgefield, giving back, paying taxes, out of principal why shouldn't they qualify? To some it can be insulting. M. Kozlark stated people could have the opportunity to take themselves out of the pool if they wanted. They've done well and don't need the credit. There are other's out there who need the credit and appreciate that it is available. S. Zemo agreed it is a very complex, socially economic conversation and at least we have noted these thoughts because of our overall budget issues.

A. Garzi stated he will come back with the annual cost and email all BOS.

No Vote

7. Peddler Ordinance-Discussion

R. Marconi commented there is an attorney in the audience tonight representing Comcast along with a letter presented to us. R. Marconi asked the BOS if they would like to continue a debate tonight recognizing this could be a litigated issue. B. Manners stated we should wait until we get an opinion from counsel. S. Zemo agreed best to discuss this at a future meeting.

R. Marconi commented there were others before Comcast requesting door to door that were declined. If we said yes now, we would have to go back to everyone. M. Kozlark stated one reason we have declined is due to the feed back we were receiving from our residents. They do not want people door to door soliciting.

R. Marconi stated we are charged with the health, safety and welfare of the people here in the Ridgefield Community. The 14th Amendment allows us to do this. S. Zemo stated we are not here to restrain trade. R. Marconi advised Kate Boucher that Attorney Alex Copp, Cohen & Wolf, P.C. will be the contact moving forward on this issue.

No Vote

8. Article 11 Ordinance

9. Ethics Rewrite

R. Marconi stated the Charter Revision reviewed and did a complete rewrite. The BOS felt it deserved more scrutiny relative to a section in it referring to “personal interests”. R. Marconi asked Jason, Attorney at Cohen & Wolf, BOS in Southbury, to look at the rewrite and give us his opinion as an Attorney and Board of Selectman. Many of us are involved in different charities and organizations and this would be a helpful point of view.

No Vote

10. Approval of Minutes 8/13/18 BOS Special Meeting, 9/26/18 BOS Meeting

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve as modified 9/26/18 BOS Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 4-0-1. B. Manners abstained.

B. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to approve as modified 8/13/18 BOS Special Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

11. Selectman's Report

- a. **Fracking**-Mr. Eisner, State of CT Waste Division, advised the State prohibits fracking waste being moved around the State today. There was however a provision for the Commissioner that needed to be done by July 2018 creating regulations "if" fracking waste was going to be allowed in the State guiding it's use, and regulations associated. The Commissioner did not complete that so fracking waste is prohibited but it can change. R. Marconi is in receipt of a Petition stating there isn't enough being done regarding an Ordinance. All BOS agreed to wait this out until more information comes through.
- b. **RACE**-Dr. Oko asked if the BOS would be okay if RACE wrote a letter to the Editor regarding their opinions on the possible separation of the Inland Wetlands from the P&Z. Since RACE isn't appointed positions all BOS agreed RACE is free to move forward.
- c. **WPCA**-There was an article in the paper regarding 63 million dollars with interest. If you are looking at the interest you also need to look at the 11.5-million-dollar grant. B. Hebert noted concern for misinformation in that article.
- d. **Schlumberger - BassamFellows** is having an opening cocktail party, 6pm, 11/15/18. All BOS have been invited. Discussion ensued that BOS would like the Citizens Committee to join them due to all their hard work.
- e. **Front of Town Hall**- We went to bid under State requirements due to our Grant received 3 or 4 years ago. The State required we start work by Sept 2018 or we'd be swept. Project went out to bid and we have 1 bidder. Two reasons: prevailing wage and a required 30% set aside which is paperwork needing to be filed stating 30% of the project must be performed by minority owned business. This has been an additional burden for bidders since they need to go through the CT Human Rights Organization. CHRO has legislature to then oversee the set aside work. They will be doing some pouring next week.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectman Meeting at 9:39 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Setaro