

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – BOARD of SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING – DECEMBER 19, 2018

TOWN HALL LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 3:30 pm

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

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

Agenda

1. Route 35/ Danbury Rd Development

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 3:30pm

R.Marconi wanted the BOS to have an open discussion about the potential of further expansion of the recently P&Z approved Route 35/Danbury Road housing development. The current plan in motion calls for a 30 unit housing development which will operate on its own septic system. Although the property in question is not within the sewer district, the developer would like to consider tying into the existing sewer line. Rudy Marconi wanted to make sure that the public understood that the parks and rec center as well as Founder's Hall are both connected to the sewer line. The developers plan would be to add an access road from the Parks and Recs current entrance from Rte. 35. The access road would lead to the approved 30 units, plus he is proposing to add an additional 45 - 50 age restricted units. Martin Hansdhy the developer would like to add a second project with additional units, totaling 84 units. Under State statute 8-30g the local zoning officials cannot deny permits for affordable housing unless there is a threat to public safety and health.

M.Kozlark addressed her main concern that when she was initially elected to the board a similar concept for development was presented to the Board of Selectmen with the same idea of tying into the sewer line. At that time Maureen voted to not approve that project out of the concern that this would set a precedent for other developers who would want to also request connecting to the sewer line for future developments.

B.Manners expressed that she does not like the look of 84 units at the entrance of the Town of Ridgefield, lining route 35. She said that this is not how she has envisioned Ridgefield, and feels that this development would take away from Ridgefield's small town charm.

Marti Hanshy the developer was given the opportunity to present his projects and his reasoning for the location and current plans. He initially looked at these four parcels of land totaling 10 acres about 2 years ago with the idea of developing units similar to Sunset Lane.

The idea is that due to the location next to the Parks and Recs Center and Founders hall these units would serve as a great opportunity for a senior community park seeing how affordable senior housing is in huge demand. As a long time resident of the Town of Ridgefield Mr. Handshy expressed that he is not willing to proceed with any developments that the town is not in favor of. These four parcels running along Route 35/Danbury Road run from North to South. Mr. Handshy feels that in most circumstances utilizing the sewer as opposed to a septic is most favorable. The buildings on these parcels would be 3 floors high and the developer would also add a traffic light at the entrance of the parks and recs road to allow for proper traffic flow. In addition, sidewalks would also be added in to allow for easier access walking to and from town. Mr. Handshy advised that they were dedicated to making this project visually appealing from the curbside offering to place 15 ft hedges along the road to partially shield the viewing from Route 35/Danbury Road.

B.Herbert feels that there are many good points being made. He thinks that conceptually the project presented by the developer is a nice transition into the town of Ridgefield. From his recent conversations with in town relators, it is understood that seniors want to downsize and live in town where they can easily access amenities. Mr. Hebert agrees that this location is ideal for a senior community and is confident that the developer will respectfully meet the needs of the town.

Mrs. Rebecca Muchetti, Chair of Planning and Zoning, wanted to clarify that the POCD does not look at specific locations in town that are best suited for age restricted and affordable housing developments. The POCD looks at locations from a planning perspective and reviews the areas of town best for overall development. She agreed that from a planning perspective, this area is proper for this type of development.

Jim Robinson – Town resident whose property abuts the current plan approved by P&Z was present and spoke. He stated that he and his family will be the most effected by Marty Handshys housing development. Believes Marty is a good business man and is the best developer for this lot despite his disappointment with it being in his backyard. He also stated that if the project is not approved, he will be looking at a similar affordable housing project for his property.

S.Zemo recommended that the developers redo the current plans to construct the buildings in another direction (east to west) to be more visually appealing from the road. Suggests that the loss of money and time would be beneficial in the long term.

R. Marconi moved to adjourn at 4:45pm, R. Hebert seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Escribano