



**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes**  
**UNAPPROVED**  
**March 15, 2023 at 6:30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Present:** Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly, Bob Hebert, Maureen Kozlark

**Absent:** Barbara Manners

**1. Public Comment**

Jerome Penn, 22 Comstock Court, voiced concerns that he and his fellow neighbors have regarding the proposed Deer Hunt Location at Comstock Court. Penn was told that the location had been approved already by a New Yorker visiting the neighborhood.

Locations for the 2023-2024 Deer Hunt have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen. The process of assigning hunt locations requires approval by the Deer Implementation Committee, followed by approval from the Conservation Commission and finally approval by the Board of Selectmen. Once locations are approved, a letter is sent to all residents in those areas prior to hunting season. Rudy Marconi suggested that Penn email Stefano Zandri, Huntmaster, and Jim Coyle, Chair of the Conservation Commission, about his concerns.

Brian Sherman, 18 Comstock Court and Golf Committee member, commented on the irregularity of the Deer Implementation Committee Meetings and lack of minutes posted to the Town website.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, commended the Charter Revision Commission on their hard work and dedication. In addition, Beebe asked what tonight's discussion on Inclusionary Zoning will be about.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, commented on his objections to the Inclusionary Zoning proposal.

Christine More, 63 Scott Ridge Road, commented that she has requested in the past and continues to request a full inventory of the existing structures in town that can be used for adaptive reuse.

- **Vendor Permit Renewal – Bridge Street Premier Ice Company**

Michael Cunningham, owner of Bridge Street Premier Ice Company, appeared before the Board to renew his Vendor Permit.

Cunningham talked about his growth over the 4 years he's been in business and his need to bring on his teenagers to help collect money and distribute change. Rudy Marconi commented that anyone brought in to help will need to go through a background check per town policy.

**Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the Vender Permit renewal for Bridge Street Premium Ice Company. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

- **Commission on Aging – Peter Bancel appointment**

Commission on Aging Chair Andrea Beebe and member Joe Ternullo attended the meeting in support of appointing Peter Bancel to the Commission on Aging. Bancel talked about his transition from living and working predominantly in Paris to working from home in Ridgefield while taking care of his mother. The challenges Bancel, who recently turned 65, has experienced while caring for his mother sparked his interest in the Commission on Aging. In addition, he has been teaching meditation at Founders Hall, which has given him an insight into the needs of the senior community. The Board asked about Bancel's ideas for the Commission, and how often he travels to Paris.

**Sean Connelly moved to appoint Peter Bancel for a three-year term to the Commission on Aging. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

## 2. **Pension Commission**

Chris Christiansen, Chair of the Pension Commission, appeared before the Board to discuss the Money Purchase Plan (MPP) and the Charter Revision Recommendations.

Rudy Marconi recused himself from the MPP discussion due to a conflict of interest.

The MPP vote has already been taken. The final step is a signature from the First Selectman. Christiansen went over the amendments that were made per the discussion in the last meeting. Rudy Marconi signed the amendment to the MPP.

Christiansen proposed on behalf of the Pension Commission that the role of the Pension Commission and Plan Administrators be more clearly defined in the Plan Document. The Plan Administrators are responsible for the day-to-day

administration. The Pension Commission is responsible for overseeing the investment activities and pension assets. The word administrative will be removed from the Charter in reference to the Pension Commission and the Plan Document will be updated to reflect the same language.

There was a discussion about creating an Administrative Committee that would oversee the Plan Administrators and handle conflicts that arise.

### **3. Commission for Accessibility**

Commission for Accessibility Chair Don Ciota and Social Services Director Tony Phillips appeared before the Board to discuss the ADA Transition & Self-Assessment Plan for the Town of Ridgefield.

Ciota gave an overview of the plan which was emailed to the Board. The plan, which is over 600 pages, can be found for download on the Town Website.

The key points discussed included:

- Documenting what has already been addressed and fixed
- Strategies to prioritize projects
- Setting a timeline for project completions and the importance of showing the Department of Justice that Ridgefield is working toward compliance.
- How to budget the items
- The need for an assigned manager to oversee the collection of data from the schools and the town.
- The requirements for parking lots and who's responsibility the upgrades fall under.
- Playgrounds – several have already been upgraded and the town has been awarded \$400,000 from a state bonding program to help with the remaining schools.
- ADA training for Town employees, especially those working directly with the public.

### **4. Economic & Community Development Commission**

Glori Norwitt, ECDC Chair, and member Jonathan Winn presented the Board with the idea of a digital “flyer” in the kiosk in front of Deborah Ann’s Sweet Shop. Each panel in the kiosk will be assigned by Deborah Ann’s to a local business for advertising.

The digital flyer would be controlled electronically, either through Deborah Ann’s Wifi or manually with a thumb drive. There were discussions about security, rules that should be implemented, and Planning & Zoning’s role in regards to regulation. Several concerns were brought up about illumination, losing the charm of Main Street, and setting precedence for future digital flyers.

The ECDC will consult with the Historic District and the Architectural Advisory Committee. The Board of Selectmen will also do some research and the topic will be discussed further.

## **5. Charter Revision Recommendations**

The Board of Selectmen discussed their suggestions for Charter Revisions which included:

- How often the Charter should be revised
- Moving the Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk to appointed positions
- The pros and cons of hiring a Town Manager vs a Town Administrator
- Creating a higher threshold for signature requirements for Petition Meetings
- Combining the Police and Fire Commissions into one Safety Commission or keeping them separate and creating a Fire Commission that is not the Board of Selectmen.
- Updating the language in 10-1-C regarding the Annual Town Budget Meeting to remove the section that allows a budget item to be deleted or decreased.
- The interchangeable use of the words agency and department throughout the charter– needs to be consistent.
- Requiring a Phase 1 Environmental study for any property donated to the Town or purchased by the Town.

Christine More asked if a member of a Board, Committee or Commission can switch parties during their term.

The Board of Selectmen will be added to the agenda for the Charter Revision Commission meeting to discuss their suggestions.

## **6. Inclusionary Zoning**

There were two Public Hearings to hear opinions on the recent Inclusionary Zoning proposal from the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Board of Selectmen did not submit their testimony during the Public Hearings and would like request another Public Hearing to have the opportunity to comment on new information that should be brought into consideration.

The Board discussed the idea of inviting the State Senators to discuss their thoughts on Inclusionary Zoning and provide feedback from Ridgefield's perspective. In addition, there will be a letter sent to the Planning & Zoning Commission requesting another Public Hearing so the Board of Selectmen can get their comments on record and address the new state bills.

**Maureen Kozlark moved to approve sending a letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission and select State Representatives regarding Inclusionary Zoning as outlined in the meeting discussion. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

**7. Ponds Edge Purchase Sale Agreement**

The buyers of Ponds Edge have requested a Town Meeting for approval before moving forward with costly permits, surveys etc. The language in the Purchase Sale Agreement will be updated regarding the hard stop of December 2023 for the WPCA project.

**Maureen Kozlark moved to set a Public Hearing on April 26, 2023 and a Town Meeting on May 10, 2023 for the Ponds Edge Purchase Sale Agreement. Bob Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

**8. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**Sean Connelly moved to approve the February 28, 2023 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting minutes as amended. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

**Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the March 1, 2023 Special Board of Selectmen Meeting minutes as amended. Bob Hebert second the motion. Sean Connelly abstained. Motion carries 3-0-1.**

**Sean Connelly moved to approve the March 2, 2023 Board of Selectmen Regular & Budget Meeting minutes as is. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

**Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the March 2, 2023 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting minutes as is. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**

**9. Selectman's Report**

State of the Town breakfast with the Chamber of Commerce is tomorrow morning. Marconi will be discussing the following items:

- Current and upcoming budget items
- Projects – Branchville & Main Street

Connecticut's program for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information

and referral, Counseling, Eligibility Screening (CHOICES) has honored Social Services Karen Gaudian and volunteers Joe Ternullo & Chris Christiansen for their exemplary work with assisting in Medicare enrollment. Because of their dedication, Ridgefield is the highest volume producing town in the area.

The Father's Club of Ridgefield would like to build a clubhouse on the Town owned property at the end of Halpin Lane, below the Volunteer Fire Department Barn, and behind the Guild of Artists. Rudy Marconi met with President Brian Armstrong to discuss the possibility. Before moving forward with the necessary testing and approvals, the Father's Club would like to know if the Board of Selectmen is open to the idea. The structure will be a small, roughly 1200 sq ft, prebuilt unit that is delivered to the property.

The Father's Club is a 501c3 who's focus is raising money for the community and volunteering to help those in need.

The Board of Selectmen would like to hear more about the proposed clubhouse before giving their blessing and will invite the Father's Club to present at a meeting. As with all land agreements, a Public Hearing and Town Meeting will be held.

**Bob Hebert moved to adjourn the March 15, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:03pm. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.**