



Town of Ridgefield
Public Hearing & Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
September 7, 2022 at 7:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Public Hearing:

For the allocation of \$232,978 of ARPA funds as approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance for reimbursement to the RVNA for expenses associated with the COVID Vaccination Clinic.

Mike Raduazzo, 195 Peaceable Street, asked how much money has been allocated from the ARPA funds to date compared to how much the Town has received.

Rob Hendrick, 17 East Ridge Road, asked if there is a deadline for allocation of the ARPA funds and what happens if the Town decides not to allocate all of it.

Jan Hebert, 58 Prospect Street, asked if other agencies that gave out COVID vaccinations also lost money.

Dan O'Brien, from the RVNA Finance Committee, commented that in many towns, it was the municipalities that provided the shots, whereas in Ridgefield it was the RVNA that provided the vaccinations.

R. Marconi provided a list of the allocations that have been made so far along with some pending requests. The deadline for allocation of the ARPA funds is December 2024 and the date by which the money must be spent is December 2026.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:46pm.

Board of Selectmen Meeting

R. Marconi requested to add an Executive Session to the agenda to discuss the Save the Sound lawsuit.

M. Kozlark moved to add an Executive Session for the discussion of and possible vote on the Save the Sound lawsuit as agenda item #8. B Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

1. Public Comment

Debra Franceschini-Gatje, 72 Spire View Road, asked about the next steps for the Affordable Housing plan.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, asked when the Main Street project will be completed and why the curb is only being replaced for a portion of the street.

2. Conservations Commission

a. Appointment – Benjamin Nissim

B. Nissim talked about the importance of the availability of outdoor space to his family, especially in recent years and emphasized his passion for nature which led him to work with a Nature Conservatory prior to his career in law.

The Board asked B. Nissim some questions including what is his specific interest within the Commission and if he has attended any meetings.

S. Connelly moved to appoint Benjamin Nissim for a two-year term as an alternate on the Conservation Commission. M. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

b. Draft Policy Review – Native Plants on Town-owned Property

Barbara Hartman, Roberta Barbieri and Kitsey Snow have been working on a Native Plant Policy for the Town of Ridgefield. The purpose of the policy is to allow only native species to be planted on town owned property and remove all of the non-native invasive species, which have a negative impact on our ecosystem. There were discussions about the pricing of native vs nonnative plants, why the policy lists both NY and CT invasive species and the reason for the Ballard Park exception.

The Town hired Jane Didona for the landscaping associated with the Main Street Project. Her plan includes all native species.

The Board of Selectmen will review the policy and provide feedback.

3. Set Public Hearing & Town Meeting – Use of unimproved portion of Spectacle Lane

Joe Mirra, who owns Lot 6 Wilton Road East, has requested use of the unimproved portion of town owned land on Spectacle Lane for a brook crossing. The original plan for the crossing is on Lot 6, however J. Mirra's engineer & wetlands consultant suggested crossing at the narrower part of the brook, which would be better for development as well as the brook and wetlands. The narrower section of the brook falls on town property.

Attorney Robert Jewell presented a map showing both the original approved plans for the bridge and the new requested location.

There was a discussion about the existing stone wall, which will be preserved and moved to make way for the bridge. R. Marconi asked why they don't use the existing driveway and

create a shared drive. J. Mirra commented that his clients do not want a shared drive and Attorney Jewel pointed out that in order to make a shared drive they would need approval from Planning & Zoning.

B. Hebert moved to authorize the First Selectman to sign an authorization letter to proceed to the Inland/Wetlands Board with the application for the use of a portion of Spectacle Lane for a driveway and bridge. B. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved to set a Public Hearing on October 6, 2022 and Special Town Meeting on October 19, 2022 beginning at 7.30pm at Town Hall regarding Spectacle Lane. B. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

4. Affordable Housing Discussion & Possible Vote

The Board of Selectmen have reviewed the Affordable Housing Plan that was revised by the Affordable Housing Committee. Some of their suggestions include removing the survey response chapters and the letters from BOS and P&Z.

A meeting to discuss the suggested changes to the plan will be set up with the Board of Selectmen and the Affordable Housing Committee. The goal is to reach a plan that everyone is comfortable with so that it can be submitted to the state as required.

No vote was taken.

5. Tax Collector Refunds

B. Manners moved to approve the Tax Collector Refunds in the amount of \$13,189.14.

M. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes

M. Kozlark moved to approve the August 17, 2022 Executive Session Minutes. S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

S. Connelly moved to approve the August 17, 2022 Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes as amended. B. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

7. Selectman's Report

Due to the drought, the Town had to purchase \$200,000 of water for the golf course to irrigate the greens. An application for dredging the ponds to remove the sediment that has built up over the years is in the pipeline.

The repairs for the basketball and tennis courts have been put on hold because the bids came in way over budget. The town will rebid and use that number in the budget for next year. The courts are expected to be repaired in the Spring.

The pickleball courts at Martin Park will be discussed and voted on at the September 20th

Planning & Zoning meeting.

The Town bonded approximately \$20 million with an interest rate of 3.34%. The Town received a triple A rating from Moody's.

The RVNA, Family & Children's Aide and Founder's Hall sent thank you letters to the Town for the contributions to their organizations.

The HRRA wants to change their voting policy so that each town has an equal vote. Currently the vote is based on population.

There are 7.52 acres of land on Oreneka Road that is still under the ownership of the Port of Missing Men. The Town will commence with foreclosure on the property for back taxes and do the research to find out who will assume responsible for it.

The September 11th Memorial Ceremony will take place Sunday at 6:30pm.

B. Hebert moved to go into an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a settlement for Save the Sound. M. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.