

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MARCH 30, 2016**

FOUNDERS HALL CONFERENCE ROOM  
193 DANBURY ROAD, RIDGEFIELD, CT – 6:30 P.M.

### **REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES**

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

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

### **Agenda**

1. Public Comment
2. Proclamation: April Child Abuse Prevention Month
3. Interviews – Ridgefield Prevention Council: Elizabeth Mantione
  - Economic Development Commission: John A. Collins
  - Conservation Commission: Daniel C. Levine
  - Golf Committee: Michael Reilly
  - Parking Authority Interviews: Christopher Fusaro, Mark C. Seavy
4. Reappointments – Commission for Disabled: Grace Romero, Sharol Signorelli
  - Commission on Aging: Kathleen Brennan, Sheila Silverman, Dayna Lynn Sierakowski
  - Parks & Recreation Commission: Barbara Dobbin, Philip S. Kearns, David Michael Shofi
  - Friends of Ridgefield Board Members: Maureen Kiernan, Barbara Manners, Barbara Serfilippi
5. Vendor Permit Renewal: The Natural Scoop Kirstin Cerulli)
6. C-PACE Discussion: Rob Freeman
7. Board of Ethics Discussion – Conflict of Interest
8. EDC Initiative, Phase II – Approval of Funding from Contingency
9. Master Municipal Agreement Resolution
10. Selectman's Report
11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/17/16, 2/23/16 Special

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to add to the evening's agenda as Item #8a - Microburst Damage Clean-up Expenses, February 24, 2016. Motion passed 5-0. –**

1. Public Comment –  
Grace Romero, Commission for the Disabled, commented on the sidewalks on Main Street “look fabulous”.
2. Proclamation: April Child Abuse Prevention Month  
The following members of the Exchange Club of Ridgefield came forward to accept the Proclamation of April 2016 to be designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month: Nick Percival (Secretary), Jim Latt (Treasurer), Chris Miller, (Former District-CT-President) and Eric Siegel (also Former District-CT-President). The prevention of child abuse has been an ongoing program adopted by the National Exchange Club since 1979. R. Marconi read the Proclamation in recognition of the Town of Ridgefield's commitment to healthy, happy children and to help eradicate child abuse in our community, and the designation of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Ridgefield Exchange Club works through the Exchange Club Center in Stamford, CT. There are three other such centers in CT.

### 3. Interviews –

#### - Ridgefield Prevention Council: Elizabeth Mantione

Elizabeth (Tizzie) Mantione came forward to express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Prevention Council. R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Mantione. She attended an RPC meeting last month. She is a 16-year resident of Ridgefield with two children in the public schools. She has volunteered in the Farmingville School and the Ridgefield Library, and has served as a Girl Scout and a Cub Scout leader.

S. Zemo and B. Manners commented that this is a good match for Ms. Mantione. R. Marconi stated the parents need to play a more active role. This age-old problem of alcohol doesn't go away. M. Kozlark stated the principal of the high school stresses the need for community support. High School parents were alarmed when they received an alcohol awareness letter written with such force. R. Hebert thanked Ms. Mantione for coming forward to help with this alcohol problem in the schools and with the youth of our community.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Elizabeth Mantione to fill a vacancy on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

#### - Economic Development Commission: John A. Collins

John Collins came forward to express his interest in serving on the EDC. Arnold Light, Chairman of the EDC, was also present in support of Mr. Collins' candidacy. Mr. Collins stated he grew up in New Jersey and attended Fairfield University. He has worked with KPMG, and Time Warner in the accounting area. He is currently Vice President of Financial Services for a company in Westport. He has a special needs child and appreciates the services provided in Ridgefield for the education of this child. Mr. Collins commented on the difficult economic times in Connecticut right now. He stated he is a business-development person by passion. The new EDC team is being formed right now and he finds them an interesting group, passionate and with smart ideas. It is time to inspire younger people to step up and volunteer.

R. Hebert stated he has known Mr. Collins for many years. It is good to see someone like Mr. Collins volunteer. M. Kozlark asked Mr. Collins if he has any particular ideas about how the EDC should change its culture and get this "fresh start". He responded that the EDC needs to campaign for changes with serious business objectives. He will try to bring energy to the table.

B. Manners asked if there is anything in particular that he has in mind. Mr. Collins responded downtown is the essence of Ridgefield. It is our identity. We need to support our downtown merchants. Their coordination with the EDC is critical. S. Zemo stated there are downtown merchants here this evening. Glad to hear Mr. Collins feels it is important to support what we already have in Ridgefield.

**S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint John A. Collins to fill a vacancy on the Economic Development Commission for a one-year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

Alex Karsanidi, a member of the EDC, welcomed Mr. Collins to the EDC. There are two vacancies and Mr. Collins will fill one of the vacant positions.

- Conservation Commission: Daniel C. Levine

Mr. Levine came forward to express his interest in filling one of the Alternate positions on the Conservation Commission. R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Levine. He is a Broadway actor and serves as Artistic Director for the Ridgefield Playhouse and Cabaret Series. He stated he chose to live in Ridgefield because of the “incredible arts scene” in our town and because of the hundreds of trails, open spaces, hikes, and commitment to the preservation of land in Ridgefield – thus, his application for the vacancy on the Conservation Commission.

M. Kozlark commented on Mr. Levine’s many hours of volunteering for the Ridgefield Playhouse. He used to live in NYC, but now lives full-time in Ridgefield. Mr. Levine started a tutoring agency twenty years ago to support his acting career. It is now one of the largest tutoring agencies in Manhattan.

He is very interested in the Conservation Commission’s Ranger program and has some ideas to develop in connection with this program.

S. Zemo commented on Mr. Levine’s high level of energy. R. Hebert stated he appreciated Mr. Levine’s coming forward to volunteer again in town but with a different focus this time.

**M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to appoint Daniel C. Levine to fill the Alternate vacancy position on the Conservation Commission for a three-year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Golf Committee: Michael Reilly

Michael Reilly came forward to express his interest in serving on the Golf Committee. R. Marconi read the email received from Mr. Reilly. In January 2007, the BOS made a motion that the Golf Committee be made up of five members instead of the seven at that time. With five members, it was easier to have a quorum. The thought is to now change the membership of the Golf Committee back to seven.

Mr. Reilly expressed his enthusiasm about the Ridgefield Golf Course. He loves golf and he loves the golf course. He has served on the Golf Course’s Improvement Committee. He is a retired food & beverage professional, which has provided him with experience to share.

S. Zemo commented on Mr. Reilly’s skill set with his food & beverage background. There are no members on the Committee with that background and there are not current members either out of the Improvement Committee. Mr. Reilly has attended several Committee meetings.

M. Kozlark asked if there are any areas for which he suggests positive changes? Is there anything he is particularly concerned about? M. Reilly responded all the Committee members are very dedicated. He knows them all and he feels Frank and Tony do an excellent job. By expansion of the non-resident program, the membership has increased.

R. Hebert stated at least three people have expressed interest in serving on the Golf Committee. They need to all have interviews with the Golf Committee and we can then see what the Committee recommends.

R. Marconi stated we will invite Ed Tyrrell, Chair of the Golf Committee, to discuss with the BOS the proposed increase of the membership of the Golf Committee back to the previous number of seven. The BOS will decide on Mr. Reilly's application after the other candidates have been interviewed and after the decision has been made on the appropriate number of Golf Committee members.

- Parking Authority Interviews: Christopher Fusaro, Mark C. Seavy  
Christopher Fusaro came forward to express his interest in again serving on the Parking Authority. Since 2013 with an update of codes, the Parking Authority has been in limbo. The BOS is now attempting to oversee a new focus on the Parking Authority. Mr. Fusaro served on the Parking Authority from 2013 to 2015. He is technically a member of the Parking Authority and would like to be reappointed. He feels volunteering on the P.A. suits his lifestyle.

M. Kozlark stated Mr. Fusaro's experience will be of benefit to the new people on the Parking Authority. The BOS is hoping for days of smoother sailing and that we are over the "rocky road" days with the Parking Authority.

B. Manners stated the BOS is pleased that Mr. Fusaro wants to continue to serve. S. Zemo stated he appreciates Mr. Fusaro's willingness to work with the community and pass his knowledge on to the new committee.

**M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to reappoint Christopher Fusaro for an additional one-year term on The Parking Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

Mark Seavy came forward to express his interest in being reappointed to The Parking Authority. R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Seavy, in which he indicated he has enjoyed working with the merchants, property owners, and residents of Ridgefield. Our goal is to work together as a community. We will be a new group working with retail, and he stressed the importance of open dialogue.

**R. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to reappoint Mark C. Seavy for an additional one-year term on The Parking Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

#### 4. Reappointments –

- Commission for the Disabled: Grace Romero, Sharol Signorelli.  
Grace Romero came forward to express her interest in being reappointed to serve on the Commission for the Disabled. She has already served on this Commission for fifteen years. She wishes to continue to be of service to the community. She is proud of what has been accomplished with the sidewalks. The Commission strives to bring up public awareness of the needs for the disabled. Retail establishments need to provide access to their stores for the disabled.

B. Manners commented that Ridgefield is going to be doing a town-wide audit regarding disability access. She asked Ms. Romero if she sees a role for herself in this audit process. The answer is that those on the Commission can draw special attention to those areas that need improvements.

S. Zemo thanked Ms. Romero for her continued service to the community. Don Ciota, Chair of the Commission for the Disabled, pointed out Ms. Romero is their longest-serving member and thanked her for her years of service.

**R. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Grace Romero for an additional two-year term on the Commission for the Disabled. Motion passed 5-0.**

Sharol Signorelli came forward to express her interest in being reappointed to the Commission for the Disabled. She stressed that the Commission educates the people about the needs of the disabled. She stated the Commission works very well together. They help interpret the ADA law, help the Town understand the law and the timeline for compliance. Often “little things” can be done to make life easier for the disabled.

R. Hebert stated Ms. Signorelli’s personal story is very moving. She sees things that need to be done.

Don Ciota, Chair of the Commission for the Disabled, stated their group has taken up the issue of the Town-wide assessment. High school students can help with the assessment. The Commission has been involved with outreach. They can help with a list of priorities, the timeline and costs. We do have the choice as to what the Town wants to focus on first. We’d like to make Ridgefield a Gold-Standard town and provide appropriately and not for just children with disabilities, but for all ages.

S. Zemo stated the Commission for the Disabled brings energy to this project.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Sharol Signorelli for an additional two-year term on the Commission for the Disabled. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Commission on Aging: Kathleen Brennan, Sheila Silverman, Dayna Lynn Sierakowski

All three individuals have expressed interest in being reappointed for an additional term on the Commission on Aging. R. Marconi read the letters received from each. Ms. Brennan and Ms. Silverman commented on the Director for Seniors that they update every three or four years that lists verified services for seniors available in Ridgefield. They work hard to make this Directory “user-friendly”.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Kathleen Brennan, Sheila Silverman, and Dayna Lynn Sierakowski for an additional three-year term on the Commission on Aging. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Parks & Recreation Commission: Barbara Dobbin, Philip S. Kearns, David Michael Shofi

All three individuals came forward to express their interest in being reappointed for an additional term on the Parks & Recreation Commission.

Ms. Dobbin has served on the Commission since 2004. She has served as Chair or member on virtually all of the Commission’s committees and was on the Budget Committee for this current budget session. She is currently on the Special Services Committee and is working with Tony Phillips with “can you get there?” – ADA access to athletic and sports facilities.

Mr. Shofi has served on the Commission since February 2014. He currently serves on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, which includes responsibilities for facility and field use.

Mr. Shofi is an avid recreational person, coaches with his kids, and stated he enjoys being involved with Parks & Rec.

Mr. Kearns has lived in Ridgefield for 39 years and has been a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission since 2004. He is one year into his second three-year term as Chairman of the Commission.

B. Manners and M. Kozlark thanked these three individuals for all their many hours of dedication to the Parks & Recreation Commission. R. Hebert commented on his recent conversation with Paul Roche, Director of Parks & Rec, and that Mr. Roche spoke very highly of the Commission and its officers.

**R. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to reappoint David Michael Shofi, Barbara Dobbin, and Philip S. Kearns for an additional three-year term on the Parks & Recreation Commission. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Friends of Ridgefield Board Members: Maureen Kiernan, Barbara Manners, Barbara Serfilippi

B. Manners explained the need for the creation of a 501c3 for the Friends of Ridgefield Community Programs, Inc. to act as a flow-through when matching funds are made available for a community organization. A general ledger has been created for each account. They Directors have met with Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, and the new Treasurer, and have set up a procedure for verifying expenditures and whereby all the accounts are with the Town of Ridgefield. The Directors, Barbara Manners, Maureen Kiernan, and Barbara Serfilippi have requested reappointment for an additional one-year term.

**S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Barbara Manners, Maureen Kiernan, and Barbara Serfilippi each for an additional term as Directors for Friends of Ridgefield Community Programs, Inc. Motion passed 4-0-1. B. Manners abstained from the vote.**

5. Vendor Permit Renewal: The Natural Scoop (Kirstin Cerulli)

Kirsten Cerulli and Carin Crook came forward to meet again with the BOS and to renew their vendor permit for an additional one year. R. Marconi stated the Town had passed a moratorium on the issuing of new vendor permits.

**M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the renewal of the vendor permit of Kirstin Cerulli and Carin Crook for an additional year as The Natural Scoop, LLC, to sell commercially pre-packaged ice cream novelties. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. C-PACE Discussion: Rob Freeman

Rob Freeman and Nick Zuba came forward to explain C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy), an innovative program that helps commercial, industrial and multi-family property owners access affordable, long-term financing for smart energy upgrades to their buildings. They provide 100 percent financing for energy savings. There is no up-front cost to the building owner. They work with the Tax Collector, the Finance Department, and the Town Clerk of the municipality for which they have been approved.

The energy efficiency improvements are financed through a voluntary assessment on their property tax bill. Property owners pay for the improvements over time through this additional

charge on their property tax bill, and the repayment obligation transfers automatically to the next owner if the property is sold. Capital provided under the C-PACE program is secured by a lien on the property, so low-interest capital can be raised from the private sector. They provided a list of C-PACE Municipalities as of January 2016 – up to 121 municipalities.

R. Marconi indicated the need to share the information about C-PACE with Town Counsel. He also wants to contact nearby municipalities for their feedback and why they chose to be one of C-PACE's municipalities. A Public Hearing would have to be scheduled to discuss this proposal before approval could be granted.

#### 7. Board of Ethics Discussion – Conflict of Interest

Three members of the Board of Ethics, Bart Van de Weghe, Chairman, and Barbara Safran and Geoffrey Harrington, members of the Board of Ethics, came forward to discuss what Ridgefield's Charter says about the Board of Ethics and the procedure for the possible filing of a complaint. The Board of Ethics consists of five members, and four of the five members have to be involved for a complaint to be filed. Mr. Van de Weghe reviewed the "appearance" of a conflict of interest. Doesn't there have to be transparency?

B. Manners stated she never questioned Mr. Zemo's integrity. She feels that if it was for herself, she would feel an obligation to disclose any conflict of interest.

Mr. Van de Weghe read the Charter, Section 11, #5, in which it states disclosure of a financial or other personal interest. R. Marconi asked how does one define "personal?" Is it something that needs to be mentioned in the first place?

S. Zemo stated he is asking for clarification and this evening's meeting is not for a complaint as such. Mr. Van de Weghe indicated that a complaint has to be submitted in writing. The individual will then be asked to meet with the Ethics Board should there be any questions. This would be a confidential meeting. The advisory opinion will not be given in a public session. Any "personal" interest is any official action. The Charter involves conflicts of interest.

S. Zemo indicated that he will file in writing and "will take it from there".

M. Kozlark stated it would be helpful to introduce who is present at the table for a discussion and if there is any relationship with someone else involved in the matter under discussion. It is important to distinguish between the appearance of a conflict of interest and the potential of such. There needs to be recognition of a reality.

R. Marconi thanked the members of the Board of Ethics for their time.

#### 8a. Microburst Damage Clean-up Expenses, February 24, 2016.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the expenditure of \$21,537,000 as requested by John Pinchbeck, for microburst damage caused by the February 24, 2016 storm. Motion passed 5-0.**

#### 8. EDC Initiative, Phase II – Approval of Funding from Contingency

Arnold Light, Chairman of the EDC, stated the EDC is finally a “group together”. They want to move forward and have some action. He wants all the members of the EDC to have ownership of this proposal – SCRE Advisors Proposal for the Town of Ridgefield – Phase II.

The Town wishes to build on and implement recommendations from the SCRE’s Phase 1 report by focusing on retail recruitment and retention and parking. The success of this proposal requires the heavy involvement of the Town’s municipal leaders, members of many of the boards and commissions, landlords, retailers, and interested residents. Participants for the project will be divided into taskforces. One task force will focus on retail recruitment and retention with the goal of identifying and reaching out to potential retailers. The second task force will address parking concerns and propose implementable recommendations for both municipal and commercial application.

Laure Aubuchon and Penny Wickey, the two women of SCRE Advisors who conducted the survey and completed Phase 1 for the Town of Ridgefield, came forward to discuss proposed Phase II. They talked about the recent meeting regarding parking which was well attended by landlords, municipal people and retailers. A parking garage had been previously suggested but the survey said “no garage”. The Parking Authority is looking at how to deal with this parking issue. R. Marconi stated the character of our community is even more important than the parking issue. We need to look fully at all options before we do anything. This is a problem that has been studied since 1949. We have everyone on board and we need to tackle this problem “now”. We all have opinions but we need to get together as a team.

R. Hebert stated the cost of a parking solution will go to the taxpayer or a private partnership. Is there ever a shared cost for something like this? Westport did this. R. Marconi replied stating the Town collects tax dollars from the residents every year. If Ridgefield does not have foot traffic in our Town Center, we will lose the character of our Town and taxes will go down. In reality, a solution to the parking problem is a small investment.

B. Manners asked – why aren’t the merchants contributing to this? A public/private partnership was formed in 2000. S. Zemo stated that as a landlord, he would be willing to contribute one-half of the partnership. As a landlord, we are asked already to do planters, signage, etc. We want action and we want a plan. Merchants in town are struggling right now. The Town is struggling also.

R. Marconi stated people love our downtown. We need to protect the vitality of our downtown. We have both landlords and merchants that need to be involved in this project.

Penny Wickey stated we have had meetings and gathered lots of opinions and thoughts. There is no consensus. There is nothing bringing people together. The EDC needs to create a rallying cry – bring in a third party and come to a resolution. We need to jump start the process. We need to have a way to organize and propel forward. R. Hebert stated we are rebuilding the EDC. There needs to be support for a motion to move forward.

**M. Kozlark moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to approve the expenditure of \$28,000 from Contingency, contingent upon approval of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), for Ridgefield Retail Study, Phase II, by SCRE Advisors. Motion passed 3-0-2. B. Manners abstained and S. Zemo recused himself from the vote as he is a Downtown Ridgefield landlord.**

## 9. Master Municipal Agreement Resolution



**M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, of the Town of Ridgefield to sign the Agreement with the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation entitled “Master Agreement Between State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation and Town of Ridgefield for Readjustment, Relocation, and/or Removal of Utility Facilities on Highway Projects”. Motion passed 5-0.**

10. Selectman’s Report

- Friday, April 1, at 11:00 a.m. – RVNA ribbon-cutting for their new building at 27 Governor St.
- April 6 Board of Selectmen Meeting cancelled – the next BOS Meeting is on April 13. The Board of Finance is meeting tonight and tomorrow night – March 30 and 31, and again on Tuesday and Wednesday next week, April 4 & 6 – possibly also Wednesday and Thursday, April 6 & 7 if needed. April 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a Special BOS Meeting at 11:00 a.m. to agree on the wording to Bond Counsel. Any changes on capital have to come back to the BOS for our review.
- RVNA Health Fair – Saturday, April 9 at East Ridge Middle School.
- Filed on March 24 – tentative agreement between Ridgefield’s NEA and the Board of Education with a complete breakdown on salaries, benefits, etc. Copies will be provided to the BOS.

11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/17/16, 2/23/16 Special

The minutes of the 2/17/16 BOS Meeting were previously approved.

**R. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 23, 2016, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the meeting.**

**M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:15 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson