



**Town of Ridgefield  
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes  
UNAPPROVED**

**March 6, 2024 at 7:30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Present:** Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark, Sean Connelly, Chris Murray  
**Absent:** Barbara Manners

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

***Chris Murray motioned to add an item to the agenda: a discussion about recent State legislations, specifically Senate Bills 143, 207, and 5202. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

**1. Public Comment**

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, read a message on behalf of Debra Franceschini, 72 Spireview Road, about ECDC being added to the Friends of Ridgefield non-profit status. Ms. Franceschini wrote she is unaware of a committee or sub-committee with regular meetings, and expressed concerns about potential misuse of funds.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, voiced disappointment the attendance-related issues he raised at the last BOS meeting were not included on this agenda and requested it be added to the next.

Arnie Nielsen, 2 Rustic Road, expressed concerns about the list of Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force applicants and asked landscaping professionals be included. Rudy Marconi indicated the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force would be discussed at tonight's meeting.

Debra Franceschini, 72 Spireview Road, shared Greenwich has a similar leaf blower ordinance and facilitated conversations and hosted seminars on both sides of the issue, and recommended the BoS explore their approach.

Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, underscored Ms. Franceschini's point, sharing Greenwich hosted an expo with electric leaf blower demonstrations and landscaping professionals who currently use electric equipment. Mr. Giordano requested the BOS allow the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force to host events for educational and/or demonstration purposes.

## **2. Vendor Permit Renewal – Bridge Street Premium Ice**

Michael Cunningham, Owner/Operator of Bridge Street Premium Ice, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Cunningham shared this will be his fifth season, with the business growing each year, gaining more exposure, and doing both private and public events.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about transporting his trike. Mr. Cunningham confirmed he transports it using a utility trailer, and still uses the same trike.
- Rudy Marconi asked about conflicts with other vendors. Mr. Cunningham shared he is typically invited to events, has some competition, and has a good reputation in town.
- Sean Connelly asked about other staff. Mr. Cunningham confirmed he has no other staff.

*Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the vendor permit for Michael Cunningham of Bridge Street Premium Ice. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.*

## **3. ECDC – Cultural District Request to join “Friends of Ridgefield”**

Geoffrey Morris, ECDC Commissioner, and Daniel O’Brien, Chair, Historic District Commission, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Morris shared Ridgefield’s Cultural District was established in April 2021 and at that time, they established a subcommittee which meets every six weeks (State requires two meetings per year), and creating an archive of Town events, launching marketing initiatives, and writing grant proposals.
- Mr. O’Brien added the Cultural District would also be interested in raising funds from private foundations and individuals.
- Rudy Marconi shared typically a Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer are required for an organization to be considered to join the Friends of Ridgefield. Mr. O’Brien confirmed they have those officers: Glori Norwitt, Mr. Morris, and himself. Mr. Marconi asked Mr. O’Brien send an email indicating those officers and responsibilities have been assigned, then it would be added to the agenda for a future BoS meeting for a vote.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about the Cultural District establishing their own 501c3 in the future. Mr. Morris indicated they have no current plans to do so, but would consider doing so if the Cultural District receives regular grants and private donations.
- Ms. Kozlark asked about overlap with the Arts Council. Mr. O’Brien shared members of the Arts Council are on the subcommittee, as required by the State, and shared the Cultural District is intended to amplify the voices of all cultural assets of the Town.

## **4. Change of Government Task Force – Review of Formation**

Rudy Marconi shared the names of current applicants: Andrea Beebe, Steve Zimo, Todd Zagorec, Lester Steinman, Sue Manning, Rob Hendrick, Lloyd Prolle, Mike Rettger, Rebeca Mucchetti, Charles Robins, and Laurie Christiansen.

Mr. Marconi indicated some applicants are elected officials. Sean Connelly shared elected officials served on the previous Charter Revision Committee.

Chris Murray expressed concerns about people signing up because they want to change the Town’s government structure. Maureen Kozlark and Mr. Marconi shared this Task Force would be charged with researching different government structures that could be leveraged/implemented in the future, hold Public Hearings, and provide a recommendation to the BoS.

Mr. Marconi shared this Task Force was a request from the previous Charter Revision Commission, which originally was requested by the BoS to study the form of government.

Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, suggested an alternate name for the Task Force: "Form of Government Comparison Study for Small Towns less than 30,000 People." Mr. Connelly and Mr. Murray expressed support for this idea.

Andrew Sternlieb, 62 Ridgecrest Drive, suggested listing other forms of government to see what could be suitable.

Debra Franceschini, 72 Spireview Road, suggested the Task Force have an email address to receive community ideas and track correspondence, like the Charter Revision Committee. Ms. Franceschini expressed 9 members would ensure they still had a quorum if not all members could attend. Mr. Murray asked about having alternates. Mr. Marconi felt not for this Task Force.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, addressed Mr. Giordano's suggestion, suggesting the population of 35,000 instead of 30,000. Mr. Marconi confirmed 35,000 is the current definition of a small town. Ms. Beebe shared this could future-proof the Task Force's recommendation should the Town continue to grow. Mr. Connelly suggested the population not be indicated.

Andrew Sternlieb, 62 Ridgecrest Drive, shared Ridgefield's current form of government is much easier to access and be involved with than North Salem, NY, where they previously lived.

Mr. Marconi confirmed all were in agreement with nine members, and will ask Town Counsel to draft a charge, and requested the BoS send language suggestions.

Mr. Marconi indicated the charge for this Task Force would be included on the agenda for their upcoming meeting on March 20, then the interview process for members would begin.

## **5. Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force – Review of Formation**

Rudy Marconi asked about assessing an applicant's position on the issue to ensure the committee is balanced. Maureen Kozlark proposed a 3-3-3 composition, with three members each being for, against, and undecided/neutral. The BoS confirmed members would need to be Ridgefield residents.

Chris Murray expressed concerns about forming a Task Force before having a Public Hearing. Sean Connelly shared the Task Force would help ensure all voices are heard through public forums, providing input via email, and doing research about similar issues in other communities. Mr. Marconi confirmed there could still be a town vote, based on the recommendations provided by the Task Force to the BoS.

Andrew Sternlieb, 62 Ridgecrest Drive, shared non-resident expert witnesses could be invited for discussions, and expressed the importance of flexible, open-minded people on the Task Force.

Arnie Nielsen, 2 Rustic Road, asked about the Task Force charge including other equipment.

Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, suggested keeping the charge to leaf blowers.

A resident from Golf Lane, shared the Task Force should be tasked with listening to residents, drawing comparisons to other towns, gathering data, and giving suggestions.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, suggested since the leaf blower petition was withdrawn, this Task Force should be more of a noise ordinance exploration.

Mr. Marconi confirmed all were in agreement with nine members, and will ask Town Counsel to draft a charge, and requested the BoS send language suggestions and Task Force name ideas.

## **6. Tax Collector Refunds**

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the Tax Collector refunds in the amount of \$20,746.22. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **7. Legislative Housing Bills**

Chris Murray shared he recently went to Hartford for some housing committee meetings, and expressed concerns about Senate Bills 143, 207, and 5202, and their potential impact on Ridgefield. Rudy Marconi asked Mr. Murray to send the bills to the BoS for their review.

Mr. Marconi shared copies of Senate Bills 5390, 5391, 5334 and SB6 with Mr. Murray.

## **8. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **a. January 29, 2024**

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from January 29, 2024. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

### **b. January 31, 2024**

Maureen Kozlark recommended changing “aqua” to “aquatic” in the Parks & Recreation Budget discussion.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from January 31, 2024, as modified. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

### **c. February 21, 2024 – Executive Session**

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the Executive Session on February 21, 2024. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

### **d. February 21, 2024**

Ms. Kozlark suggested indicating the meeting broke for both a Town Meeting and Public Hearing on page 3.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from February 21, 2024, as modified. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **9. Selectperson's Report**

Rudy Marconi shared a thank you letter from the Center for Empowerment and Education.

Mr. Marconi shared he spoke with Legal Counsel, Jason Buxbaum, about the 2/3 meeting requirement raised by Kirk Carr at a previous meeting. Mr. Buxbaum confirmed if a member or commissioner does not attend 2/3 of the meetings, their seat is automatically considered vacant as soon as the Board, Committee or Commission's attendance record is submitted.

Sean Connelly asked about compliance on other Boards, Committees and Commissions. Mr. Marconi indicated he'd ask Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk, to review.

***Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:23pm. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***