

PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – FEBRUARY 4, 2009

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 P.M.

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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

In attendance: R. Marconi, A. Bodner, B. Manners, D. Masters

Absent: J. Plock

Public Hearing

*Notice is hereby given that a **Public Hearing** will be held on February 4, 2009, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to receive comments on the proposal to receive an easement from Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. for highway purposes on property consisting of approximately 3,900 sq. ft. along 801-83 Ridgebury Road on the west side of Ridgebury Road.*

Board of Selectmen Meeting Agenda (immediately following Public Hearing)

1. Charter Revision Commission Interviews: Kelly Labritz, Heidi Namiot
2. Building Code Board of Appeals Interview – Paul Payne
3. Resolution for Refunding (Kevin)
4. Reappointment : Building Code Board of Appeals (Peter Coffin); Historic District Commission (John Conners); Tree Committee (David Andry, Nancy Boersma, Bill Molyneux)
5. Wear Red for Women Proclamation
6. Approval of Tax Refunds
7. Selectman's Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/12/09, 1/21/09, 1/29/09

Public Hearing

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:35 p.m., and read the Notice for the Public Hearing to receive comments on the proposal to receive an easement from Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. for highway purposes on property consisting of approximately 3,900 sq. ft. along 801-83 Ridgebury Road on the west side of Ridgebury Road. Copies of the map depicting the area under discussion were distributed. The purpose is to remove the sharp corner in the road and straighten out the curve. Boehringer Ingelheim will incur all expenses involved and will grant the easement to the town for no fee. The meeting was opened to the public for comments.

Dennis Peters, 910 Ridgebury Rd. – indicated that his property is just north of the easement under discussion. Boehringer Ingeleheim has acquired properties in this area. Mr. Peters raised the question as to what are the plans for the future for this back entrance to Boehringer's facility? Mr. Peters prefers Ridgebury Rd. the way it is with the "S" curve. The tight corner slows down the traffic. This BI back entrance is currently used only for cars and pedestrians. The removal of the sharp curve in the road would open up the road to trucks making the turn into Boehringer's back entrance. Is this the ultimate plan? R. Marconi responded that his conversations with Mr. Hardeman, Director of Facilities, have not indicated any additional plans for this back entrance other than straightening out Ridgebury Rd. Mr. Marconi is not aware of a history of accidents at this sharp curve. In 1995, the name of the road was changed from N.

Ridgebury Rd. to Ridgebury Rd. A special permit was issued at the time of the building of the gatehouse at this back entrance. The permit would have to be changed if additional traffic is to use this entrance. R. Marconi will research any restrictions detailed in this permit.

Todd Rockefeller, 786 Ridgebury Rd. – indicated that he feels more truck traffic is planned for this back entrance. Boehringer Ingelheim would not be undertaking the cost for straightening the road if they did not have plans for this entrance for the future. Mr. Rockefeller stated that he would hate to see a chain link fence or a stop light installed at this location. The current fencing is set back and is attractive the way it is. He hopes the concern being voiced by the neighbors will be passed on to B.I.

D. Masters commented on Ridgebury Road remains a road with rural character. The “S” curve does slow down the traffic and contributes to the rural look of the road. A. Bodner asked if the new straightened road will be the same width as the current Ridgebury Rd.? The answer is “yes”.

Nancy Newman-Limata, 973 Ridgebury Rd., indicated that there is already a large increase in traffic on Ridgebury Rd. with the building of the apartments on the Danbury side. Serious truck traffic would change the character of the area – no longer “bucolic”. We should seriously question the use of this back entrance for trucks.

John Katz, 473 Ridgebury Rd. commented on how Boehringer Ingelheim needs infrastructure to service their facility. We do not know enough – we do not know what they have in mind for the long term. The road width needs to remain the same. The “S” curve and the narrow width of the road is a “traffic calming device”. A widened road with a signal light is not welcome.

Lisa Rockefeller, 786 Ridgebury Rd., indicated that this area of Ridgebury is so close to the town line where there is a lot going on in Danbury. We need to know what is really going on!

R. Marconi indicated that he will schedule a meeting with Mr. Hardeman and find out if Boehringer has long-range plans for this back entrance. Mr. Marconi will also research the terms of the previous permit. Another Public Hearing may be scheduled for further discussion with a possible Town Meeting at a later date. Residents of Ridgebury Road signed their names and contact numbers to be notified of future meetings and additional info.

The Public Meeting was closed at 8:00 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Meeting

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

1. Charter Revision Commission Interviews: Kelly Labritz, Heidi Namiot

Two additional applicants for the Charter Revision Commission were scheduled to be interviewed by the BOS.

Kelly Labritz came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. R. Marconi read the January 20th letter received from Ms. Labritz along with her CV. She is a lawyer, mother and a new resident in Ridgefield, having moved to town this past year. She has been a corporate lawyer since 1991, primarily practicing in the mergers and acquisitions arena and presently practicing investment funds law with a firm in New York City. She indicated that she would have the time to serve on the Charter Revision Commission as she travels to NYC only one day/week and works from her home the balance of the week.

D. Masters asked Ms. Labritz if she has any particular interest with regard to the Charter revision. Ms. Labritz responded that she has obtained a copy of the current Charter. She would like to see the Charter shorter and more understandable – easier to read. The Charter needs to be a document that can be referred to easily.

B. Manners commented on Ms. Labritz’s interesting CV. The Charter determines how the Town works. Does Ms. Labritz feel as a new resident that she could quickly “get up to speed”. She feels she is adept at reading legal documents and interpreting the intent of what is written. A. Bodner inquired whether Ms. Labritz understands the balance necessary between the different organizations in the town – how the Board of Education, Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen all have their individual function but also work together. Ms. Labritz commented that running a town is similar to running a corporation. The fundamental corporate document is what determines how the corporation functions – she has experience in reading such documents and how an organization really functions – how this document is interpreted is the result of the personality of the Board.

Ms. Labritz inquired as to the qualifications the BOS is seeking for the members of the Charter Revision Commission. Ms. Manners responded that this Commission is being convened earlier than required. After working with the current Charter, it has been determined that there are some side effects to some of the procedures which have been set up. There are glitches that need to be corrected. Ms. Labritz was thanked for coming forward.

Heidi Namiot came forward to express her interest in serving on the Charter Revision Commission. R. Marconi read the January 23rd email received from Ms. Namiot. She has been a Ridgefield resident for three years and is currently a volunteer on the Public School Long Range Planning Committee (K-2) as well as the PTA. She is a retired bond trader now at home to raise her three children and teaches a course at the Univ. of CT Danbury campus. D. Masters asked Ms. Namiot if there were any areas of the Charter in which she had particular interest. Ms. Namiot indicated that she would be coming with “fresh eyes” and is interested in getting involved in Ridgefield town government. She has attended lots of education meetings and attended Superintendent Debbie Low’s presentation of her long-term plan in the fall. Ms. Namiot commented on how one notes the different personalities when attending these various meetings and has noted how these various “cogs” fit together. B. Manners commented on how Ms. Namiot’s financial background is useful and thanked her for coming forward.

2. Building Code Board of Appeals Interview – Paul Payne

Paul Payne came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his interest in serving on the Building Code Board of Appeals. There is one vacancy on this Board which usually meets only one time/year. Mr. Payne grew up in Ridgefield, married a Ridgefield girl, and now lives here as well. He currently works for the Town of New Canaan as a Deputy Building Official. R. Marconi reviewed Mr. Payne’s resume. The BOS was in agreement that Mr. Payne is well qualified for this position.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Paul Payne to fill the vacancy on the Building Code Board of Appeals for a five-year term. Motion passed 4-0.

3. Resolution for Refunding (Kevin Redmond)

Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, and Janette Marcoux, Senior Vice President of First Southwest Company, came forward to discuss their proposed “Resolution for Refunding”. Ms. Marcoux led a discussion about the current municipal market. In September ’08 the market

experienced a total credit freeze when no one, private individual, corporate, nor commercial banking/lending institution, could borrow anything. Since December the lending market has slowly started to come back. The interest rates have gone down for highly-rated communities such as Ridgefield, although Ridgefield's rating would have to be reaffirmed. A. Bodner asked Kevin and Ms. Marcoux if they are concerned about the reaffirmation of Ridgefield's rating. The response was no. They would look at Ridgefield's financials and how the BOS and the BOF are addressing the challenges. It would show how very proactive the Town is in keeping their financials in order and the main building projects have all been completed. As a note, Wilton sold yesterday and maintained their AAA rating on 15-year bonds. Ridgefield does not have any unusual circumstances and has maintained a healthy fund balance. Ridgefield was last rated in 2007. With refinancing, Ridgefield's principal would not increase. Even with factoring in all the costs, this constancy in the principal is because of the savings in interest.

D. Masters asked if there is any downside to doing this refunding? The answer is no – even if the transaction is scheduled, it can be stopped until the day the bonds are posted. What is the cost? The last time Ridgefield did refinancing, the cost was \$131,000. The cost would be all built into the transaction. A. Bodner inquired if an analysis had been done as to the cost of waiting until 2010? Ms. Marcoux responded, “No, because we do not know what the rates will be in 2010.” A. Bodner asked if we have the ability to adjust the principal payment within the final terms? Kevin responded that we can look at two or three different structuring options. The Board of Finance approved this “Resolution for Refunding” at their meeting the previous night, February 3rd. We would select an underwriter and they would provide the Town two or three different options.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion accept the “Resolution With Respect to the Authorization, Issuance and Sale of Not Exceeding \$35,000,000 Town of Ridgefield General Obligation Refunding Bonds”. (Attachment 1) Motion passed 4-0.

4. Reappointments: Building Code Board of Appeals (Peter Coffin); Historic District Commission (John Conners); Tree Committee (David Andry, Nancy Boersma, Bill Molyneux)

B. Manner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to reappoint Peter Coffin for an additional five-year term to the Building Code Board of Appeals; to reappoint John Conners for an additional five-year term to the Historic District Commission; and to reappoint David Andry, Nancy Boersma and Bill Molyneux for an additional three-year term to the Tree Committee. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Wear Red for Women Proclamation

R. Marconi read the Proclamation to Honor “Wear Red Day for Women” submitted by the American Heart Association to encourage women to pay attention to their hearts and help them live longer, stronger lives by reducing their risk for cardiovascular disease.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the request by the American Heart Association, that the Ridgefield Board of Selectmen, in recognition of the importance of the ongoing fight against heart disease and stroke, do hereby proclaim February 6, 2009, to be “Wear Red Day for Women”. Motion passed 4-0.

6. Approval of Tax Refunds

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the list of refunds dated January 20, 2009, submitted by Tax Collector, Jane Berendsen-Hill, totaling \$6,309.99. Motion passed 4-0.

7. Selectman's Report

BOS Budget Meetings are scheduled for next week at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room: Monday, February 9 – 2009-2010 Capital Items Budget Discussion; Tuesday, February 10 – 2009-2010 Operating Budget Discussion; Wednesday, February 11 – 2009-2010 Operating Budget Discussion; and Thursday, February 12 – 2009-2010 Overall Budget Discussion. The goal is to achieve 0% increase for the entire Town of Ridgefield budget. About a \$6 million shortfall for 2008-2009 is anticipated as revenues are way off. The town-wide goal is to find \$3.6 million to keep “as is”. A freeze on salaries including union salaries would be helpful, but that alone doesn't do enough. It was agreed to have next week's discussions first and then schedule meetings with the various departments with the BOS for the first week in March. A. Bodner has asked that Al Garzi, Assessor, review the Grand List to check if anyone is listed that should not be – are there any adjustments that need to be made?

Jim McChesney has now rejoined Planning & Zoning.

Fountain Cover Costs – John Mannuzza is requesting that the BOS discuss the issue of the \$5,000/year cost to put the fountain cover on and off. One suggestion is to place the Ridgefield Academy settlement in a revenue account earmarked for care of the fountain.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/12/09, 1/21/09, 1/29/09

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the January 12, 2009 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 3-0-1. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the January 12, 2009 BOS Meeting.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the January 21, 2009 Public Hearing & Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0-1. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the January 21, 2009 BOS Meeting.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the January 29, 2009 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:25 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson