

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – APRIL 6, 2005

7:30 P.M. – TOWN HALL LOWSER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
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, B. Manners, D. Masters, J. Plock, P. Yanity

AGENDA

1. Charter Revision Commission Appointments
2. Phil Baumann appointment as full Board of Ethics member
3. Insurance Risk Committee Interviews – Christopher Lang, Michael Blackwell, James Keidel
4. Transfer of Funds; Approval to bid for new auditor – Jay Wahlberg
5. Discussion of permission to use Town Seal in historic structure plaque program
6. Design council Non-Profit Sign Subcommittee Report Review
7. Current Year Budget Discussion (travel & training freeze)
8. CAACE - \$1,000
9. Discussion of Parking Authority
10. Approval of 2/16/05 and 3/9/05 minutes
11. First Selectman’s Report

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA

1. Parking

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:55 p.m. following the Town Meeting relevant to the change in Ridgefield Code regarding the prohibition of motorboats and snowmobiles on Lake Mamasasco, Pierrepoint Lake and Great Pond.

1. Charter Revision Commission Appointments – R. Marconi read the slate of the Charter Revision Candidates: Charlie Barr (attorney), Kevin Briody (WPCA, Singer/songwriter), Robert Kleinberg (scientist – Schlumberger), John McNicholas (former NYC policeman), Jim Mele (editor/writer), Jill O’Connor (attorney), Bob Opotzner (attorney), John Noonan (retired), JanRifkinson (retired TV producer), Betsy Thompson (6 year resident, ready to become involved), Ed Tyrrell (Chief Administrator, Southern District, U.S. Attorney’s Office, and Lynn Marie Wieland (anthropologist, researcher). Nine candidates need to be appointed to the Commission. Party affiliations include 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans and 2 Unaffiliated. Each Board member voted and the ballots were tallied by A.J. DiMattia and Janet Johnson. The ballots and tally sheet will become public record. A.J. DiMattia read the vote results.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint the following list of candidates to the Charter Revision Commission:

Kevin Briody (R)
Robert Kleinberg (D)

Jim Mele	(D)
Jill O'Connor	(U)
Bob Opotzner	(D)
Jan Rifkinson	(U)
Betsy Thompson	(D)
Ed Tyrrell	(R)
Lynn Marie Wieland	(R)

Motion passed 5-0. R. Marconi will send out letters informing all the candidates of the results of the vote and the make-up of the Commission.

A discussion followed regarding the Charter Revision Commission charge. Bond Counsel has some suggested changes to be made to the charter for consideration by the Charter Revision Commission. BOS members should submit their recommendations for the wording of the charge – it is important to be specific about the expectations for the Commission. R. Marconi will work on the wording of the charge and e-mail BOS members the resultant draft.

2. Phil Baumann Appointment as Full Board of Ethics Member – Mr. Baumann came forward to express his continued interest in serving on the Board of Ethics. He has been attending their meetings regularly as an Alternate Member. The Board of Ethics does not have a lot of cases; sometimes they are not made public.

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to appoint Phil Baumann as a full member of the Board of Ethics. Motion passed 5-0. Mr. Baumann will check to see if he needs to be sworn in again as he was already sworn in as an Alternate to the Board of Ethics.

3. Insurance & Risk Management Committee Interviews – Christopher Lang, Michael Blackwell, James Keidel – A discussion followed as to whether the Insurance & Risk Management Committee is composed of 9 or 11 members. There are 6 current members and therefore either 3 or 5 vacancies, depending on the composition of the Committee. Three candidates have come forward expressing their interest in serving on the Committee. They will be appointed at the next BOS Meeting.

Christopher Lang – Mr. Lang came forward to introduce himself to the Board and express his interest in serving on the Insurance & Risk Management Committee. Mr. Marconi read Mr. Lang’s letter and bio. He has been a Ridgefield resident for three years, and his wife grew up in town. His insurance career spans 18 years. His specialty is the commercial casualty area, financial and professional insurance. He indicated he does have the time to serve on the Committee and there is no conflict of interest with his current employer, Marsh, Inc. His party affiliation is Unaffiliated.

Michael Blackwell – Mr. Blackwell has appeared before the Board previously. R. Marconi read his letter of application. He has been a Ridgefield resident since 2000, and has been a licensed life and health insurance producer in Connecticut for five years and a consultant to individual consumers of property and casualty insurance contracts for four years. He has attended the Committee meetings and has the time to devote to the Committee. Mr. Blackwell is a Republican

James Keidel – Mr. Keidel came forward to introduce himself to the Board. R. Marconi read his CV. Mr. Keidel is an attorney and is responsible for starting and managing the New York City, Stamford, CT and Newark, NJ satellite offices of a Buffalo based insurance

litigation and coverage law firm. He handles all phases of litigation from inception through trial in New York, CT and NJ, state and Federal courts involving professional liability claims and insurance coverage disputes. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in Ridgefield in 2000. His party affiliation is Unaffiliated. He has attended several meetings of the Committee. The Insurance & Risk Management Committee does not currently have a lawyer as one of its members.

4. Transfer of Funds; Approval to Bid for New Auditor – Jay Wahlberg

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200511, Intra-Departmental Transfer for the Fire Department, to increase Fund #10501-54012, Building Maintenance in the amount of \$3,000 and decrease Fund #10501-54002, Small Equipment in the amount of \$1,000, decrease Fund #10501-52055, Telephone, in the amount of \$1,500, and decrease Fund #10501-52407, Employee Assistance Program in the amount of \$500. Motion passed 5-0.

Louis Yarrish, Fire Chief, requested this transfer because the Fire Department has exceeded their building maintenance account due to numerous repairs in the building and updating of the dispatch center.

Jay Wahlberg has requested approval to seek bids for a new audit firm to be hired by the Town of Ridgefield. The current firm has been on retainer for the last ten years. It is healthy to switch firms. The normal tenure is five years. R. Marconi pointed out a concern if the bids come in substantially higher than what is being paid currently. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the request made by Jay Wahlberg to seek bids for a new Town auditing firm, and the formation of a committee to screen the bids received. This Screening Committee will consist of R. Marconi, J. Wahlberg, P. Yanity and a representative from the Board of Finance. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. Discussion of Permission to use Town Seal in Historic Structure Plaque Program -

Gary Singer, President of the Ridgefield Historical Society, presented the Society's request to use the Ridgefield Town Seal as part of their historic structure plaque program. He submitted a sample plaque design made by a Maine craftsman in the hand lettered 18th century signage technique. This design has been reviewed by Ridgefield's Design Council. The Town Seal is incorporated in the upper part of the plaque. This will encourage voluntary historic designation in the Town. 600 homes are on Ridgefield's historic list. The cost of the plaque will be in the \$75-\$125 range for which the homeowner's will purchase. Concern was expressed over the size of the plaque and possibly not as effective if over-used throughout the town. **P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Ridgefield Historical Society requested use of the Ridgefield Town Seal in the historic structure plaque program. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Design Council Non-Profit Sign Subcommittee Report Review – Roger Guilfoyle, Design Council Chairman, reported back relative to the subcommittee's charge to look at what the Town can do about the proliferation of signage advertising functions, non-profit events, etc., what about businesses not on Main Street and how can non-profit organizations advertise? The March 23 report from the Subcommittee has been received by the BOS members and reviewed. J. Plock commented on what a wonderful report it is – very detailed. The report recommends a signage permit system to be used especially in the Town center area with regulation of signage size and duration. An architect would design an appropriate structure to hold the signs. A permit would be required but no fee. The structure would be

attractively landscaped. A map and website would be available for businesses not physically located on Main Street. The Library Board has been consulted and they do not want signage either behind or in front of the stone wall. They feel a proliferation of signage in front of the Library detracts from the architectural charm of the building.

What is the next step – find a landscape architect? Several parking lots are currently under construction. Continuity in signage and a signage style suitable to the character of the Town throughout for parking lots, etc., would be most desirable. Signage is currently regulated by Planning & Zoning thru State statute. There are several issues regarding signage; on-premise signage and off-premise signage. Off-premise signage is not allowed. Betty Brosius, Director of Planning for the Town of Ridgefield, stated that a regulation needs to be written governing signage size and shape – content cannot be governed. A regulation can be written for town-owned property. P. Yanity suggested three locations for a signage structure advertising non-profit functions – one by the Recreation Center, one on or adjacent to Main Street, and another location to be determined. Design Council can determine these locations. The CVS parking lot was suggested, but that is private property. R. Marconi to check with the owner of this property about their willingness to participate in this. Monday, April 18, 4:00 P.M. is the next Design Council meeting. BOS members should attend this meeting and solicit Design Council’s input.

7. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to table Agenda #7, Current Year Budget Discussion (Travel & Training Freeze) until the next scheduled BOS Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

8. CAACE - \$1,000 – CAACE is the Connecticut Association Against Casino Expansion. This organization is currently focusing on politics and lobbying. The social impact of a casino is quite severe to a surrounding area. They are asking for \$1,000 from each town. Lynn Marie Wieland, a member of CAACE, spoke stressing the need for a state-impact study on the casino issue. The last such study was done in the 70’s. The Mohegans claim, “We contribute \$400,000,000 in revenue to the State of Connecticut with no expenses.” This is a fallacy as the negative impacts of gambling carry a very high cost for all the residents of Connecticut. \$1,000 from each town will help the committee initiate such a study. **B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Ridgefield’s contribution of \$1,000 to CAACE. Motion passed 5-0.**

9. Discussion of Parking Authority – Ridgefield needs to look at the possibility of parking as a revenue source. Other towns charge for parking at their railroad stations and on Main Street. Revenue from parking would help pay for lighting, paving, etc. R. Marconi to check on what other towns are doing. This issue will be discussed also as part of the Economic Development Commission agenda.

10. Approval of 2/16/05 and 3/9/05 Minutes -

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the February 16, 2005 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. P. Yanity abstained as he was not present at the February 16 meeting.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 9, 2005 Public Hearing & Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

11. First Selectman's Report -

- A letter has been received from the Deer Committee. They are organized and in working sessions currently.
- Sturges Park situation where a boat is parked in the roadway. Three letters have been sent out and a title search indicates that the boat is on Town property. The boat needs to be moved - Probably moving ahead on the issuing of a temporary injunction.
- Danbury Airport issue – This is ongoing. The neighborhood opposition is gaining momentum. R. Marconi has found an airport consultant – Roger Price, a Town resident. The FAA has removed one proposed beacon to date. A public hearing would probably be in order. Such a hearing would provide all the neighbors an opportunity to say how they feel. Accurate information needs to be provided.
- R. Marconi participated in a ribbon-cutting at Stop'nShop
- Possibly changing town insurance to CIGNA. The previous problems with CIGNA have been worked out. Aetna did come back and lowered insurance costs slightly. If the change is made, a resultant savings of \$105,000 is possible.

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

R. Marconi called the meeting of the Economic Development Commission to order at 10:00 p.m.

1. Parking – The question is whether or not to set up a parking fee system for the Town. The revenue would be welcome, but is this the way to go? It would require a lot of work to initiate and would completely change the responsibilities of the Parking Authority. What about the parking lots the Town currently rents for \$1/year? Would the lot owners go along with a fee system? Should we charge everywhere or just in certain locations – free parking further away for retail and town employees? A system of “pay to park close up” would change the dynamics of the town. The Chamber of Commerce is discussing this issue. They are in favor of doing something creative about the parking situation. A revenue stream would generate funds for additional lots, striping, etc. There are very few ways to change the traffic pattern in town. All roads lead to the Town center. Is this an appropriate subject for a public hearing at this time?

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to close the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 10:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson