

PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JUNE 23, 2010

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

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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

In attendance: R. Marconi, A. Bodner, D. Masters, J. Plock

Absent: B. Manners

Public Hearing

*Notice is hereby given that a **Public Hearing** will be held on June 23, 2010, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to:*

- 1. Receive comments on the proposed donation of vacant land on Seymour Len, Assessor's Map E17 Lot 0039,*
- 2. Receive comments on the Parking Authority's request for imposing parking fees for the Branchville Station Parking Lot*

Maps and related documents for the proposed land donation and Branchville Station parking lot are available for public inspection in the Office of the First Selectman and the Town Clerk.

Agenda

1. Virginia Roebuck Sublease Request
2. RACE ICLEI (Carbon Footprint) Update
3. EDC Incubator Funding Request; Route 7
4. WeRecycle! Contract
5. Year-End Transfers
6. Charter Revision Draft Report
7. Children's Corner Lease
8. Ridgefield Guild of Artists Lese
9. STEAP Grant Resolution
10. Selectman's Report
11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 4/28/10, 5/12/10, 5/26/10, 6/9/10, 6/9/10 (Special)

Public Hearing

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:34 p.m., and read the call for the Public Hearing to:

- 1) Receive comments on the proposed donation of vacant land on Seymour Lane, Assessor's Map E17 Lot 0039. R. Marconi read the April 22, 2010, letter received from Michelle Luo, 50 Overlook Avenue, Fairfield, CT, indicating her interest in donating a parcel of vacant land on Seymour Lane, Assessor's Map E17 Lot 0039, to the Town of Ridgefield. Ms. Luo purchased the 1.15 acres of property out of the tax sale and because the property is "so wet", it is unusable land. Septic approval is not possible. A Town Meeting will be held on July 7

regarding approval of this request. There were no comments from the public. This portion of the Public Hearing was closed at 7:35 p.m.

- 2) Receive comments on the Parking Authority's request for imposing parking fees for the Branchville Station Parking Lot. R. Marconi read the June 4, 2010 letter received from the Parking Authority indicating their request the issuance of parking permits at the Branchville Metro North Train Station to include:
 - a) Establishing an annual parking fee permit of \$250.00 per year beginning October 1, 2010. These permits would cover an estimated 130 spaces designated for permit parking only.
 - b) Establishing a daily parking fee of \$6.00 per day beginning October 1, 2010.Any income generated from the parking fees have to go into a special account to maintain and make repairs at the station and pay for lighting and utilities and other expenses. None of the income can go into the Town of Ridgefield's General Fund. The Parking Authority indicated in their letter that the Ridgefield Highway Department has resurfaced the severe pot holes in the lot as well as "re-lined" each space, including Handicapped Spaces and reserved spaces for Whistle Stop Coffee Shop. This process was paid for from excess funds in the Highway Dept. budget from last year. The Parking Authority estimates the new permit procedures at the station would generate approximately \$50,000/year (less expenses).

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd. inquired as to how the fee of \$250 was decided upon; what happens to parking for the Coffee Shop, and why starting to charge for parking at the station at this time when economic times are tough? He doesn't feel there is a problem with charging for parking and using the income for maintenance, but why not put this off for another year? John McNicholas, member of the Parking Authority, responded by stating that repairs had to be made – the potholes were severe and this was an emergency situation. There will be 15 minute reserved spaces for those stopping at the Whistle Stop to pick up their coffee, etc. When the repaving and relining was done, the handicapped spaces were moved to a better location. The Parking Authority canvassed local train stations and \$250/year seemed to be a "reasonable" amount to charge for a permit. This comes to about \$1/day. The Katonah station charges \$1,000/year for their parking permits, and Connecticut residents can no longer purchase daily parking passes at Katonah. This is why Ridgefield provides shuttle service to the NY train line. Commuters who live north of Ridgefield are driving down to the Branchville Station to park and taking up parking spots which could be available to Ridgefield residents instead.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Rd. expressed support for charging a fee for parking. He feels \$250 is "in line", but \$6/day is steep. If a commuter is unable to get a permit, the daily parking charge would add up to \$1500. He suggests instead \$3 to \$4.

MaryAnn Corrado, Rockwell Rd., inquired as to who owns the Branchville train station property? R. Marconi responded that the State of CT owns the property. They also own the property for the Wilton and Cannondale stations. He spoke with B. Brennan, Wilton's First Selectman, and discussed Ridgefield's desire to start charging at the Branchville Station as requested by the Parking Authority. Mr. Brennan did not express any problem with this. Ridgefield's lease for the Branchville Station goes until 2017 or 2019.

Wayside Lane resident from Redding expressed support for the \$250 charge. Her husband commutes to NYC. She inquired as to how Ridgefield will allocate the permit parking spots? Will there be a list, a lottery? The lot is close to full now on a daily basis.

Ellen Romer, Chalbourn Rd., Redding, asked how commuters will be informed as to the application process? Flyers will be put on windshields at the station.

Bob Knight, Still Rd., expressed support for the \$250 charge, but he feels that \$6 is high. Golden's Bridge is cheaper, but it is still cheaper than driving into the City.

Resident of Blackman Rd., asked about the total number of spaces in the lot, how many of the spaces will be for permit parking, and how much does it cost to maintain the lot at Branchville? Parking is free at Purdy's – How will the lottery work?

John McNicholas responded that there will be about 130 permit spots. Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, will be responsible for the lottery. There will be plenty of notice for commuters to submit their applications for the lottery. Flyers will be put on windshields the end of July. The goal is to let the commuters be informed well in advance with a targeted start-date of October 1st. Regarding maintenance, what has been done so far by the Highway Department will last thru next year, but curbs and maintenance of the lining need to be done as well. It costs at least \$3 thousand/year for plowing and snow removal. Peter Hill, Director of the Highway Department, has stated that the parking lot needs a total reclamation with new draining, a new base and then a top overlay. This would cost in the 6 figures, but Mr. McNicholas does not have an exact estimate.

Andy Bodner asked about the mechanics of the lottery – how will this actually work? How many daily spaces will remain available as it is not good to oversell the permits. Mr. McNicholas responded that the Branchville lot consists of about 150 total spaces, which includes those for handicapped, daily spots, about 120-130 for parking permit commuters, and 15 minute spots for the Whistle Stop. The permits are for the monthly parkers.

Mark Robinson, Flat Rock Dr., pointed out that there will be sporadic users and those who cannot get a permit. What about a shuttle service from downtown Ridgefield to the Branchville station? R. Marconi responded that the Town budget does not cover such an option at this time.

Michael Christ, Riverside Dr., stated that he has been a commuter for 35 years, and the Branchville lot is full at about 7:00 a.m. Monthly commuters who live in Ridgefield park there every day. He is concerned that the Ridgefield commuters will not get the permit they need thru the lottery. Also, is there someone who will be patrolling the lot? R. Marconi responded that the Town currently has a parking officer who will also cover Branchville in addition to the downtown parking.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., feels that the fee establishment of \$250 is a “backwards” process. Instead, the costs of maintenance of the Branchville parking lot should be added up and divided by the number of spaces. That would be the “real” cost. He doesn't think the lottery system will work. Instead, he suggests the kiosk system like in New Canaan rather than permits.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Rd., feels that people will buy a lottery permit just to get a spot even if they do not commute regularly – “just to have it”. J. McNicholas responded that the Parking Authority will review the number of empty spots daily and then issue additional lottery permits if the lot is not full. R. Marconi stated that the costs of maintenance of the property have been studied. The Whistle Stop has their own maintenance costs including electricity for

the lightpost and a few overhead lights. The Town hopes to improve the walking bridge. The Branchville study ten years ago called for deck parking, but no one in CT received dollars from the State to help with this proposal.

Charles Fisher, O'Neil Ct., asked for "proof of ridership" to participate in the lottery. A Redding resident expressed concern with this idea as not all commuters purchase monthly train tickets.

R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing at 8:10 p.m. He pointed out that a Town Meeting was set for immediately following the Public Hearing, but this was in error. A Town Meeting is not necessary. The BOS has the authority to establish parking fees and accept, modify and/or reject the recommendations of Ridgefield's Parking Authority. Town Counsel, D. Grogins, suggests that the call for the Town Meeting be cancelled. Instead, this issue will be put on the agenda for the next BOS Meeting, and the BOS will look carefully at the proposed \$6 charge for daily parking, which was commented on frequently during this Public Hearing. Comments from the public continue to be most welcome. R. Marconi asked that members of the Parking Authority also be present at the next BOS Meeting for the discussion and vote on this issue.

R. Marconi indicated receipt of an email from Scott Furman, 137 Walnut Grove Rd., who stated that the \$6 fee for daily parking is too high. The State of CT is encouraging residents to drive less and use mass transportation, but this is not the way to increase train use.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Agenda

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to the evening's Agenda as #9B – Ann's Place Sewer Line. Motion passed 4-0.

1) Virginia Roebuck Sublease Request

Ms. Roebuck came forward to support her request to "help a friend get started". Because of the economy, Ms. Roebuck indicated her business is also "down". By sharing her space with Dr. McDonnell, this will also help Ms. Roebuck with her costs. Her current lease is from 2007 with a five-year renewal option. Any sharing of the space requires approval by the landlord. R. Marconi read a letter prepared by Town Counsel D. Grogins stating that Ms. Roebuck is still responsible for the lease, but with BOS approval, she is able to share her space with Dr. McDonnell.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Virginia Roebuck's request to provide office space to Dr. Penelope McDonnell from 6/15/10 thru 9/30/10. The Town of Ridgefield is granting Dr. McDonnell a license to share Ms. Roebuck's space with Ms. Roebuck continuing to be the leasee, pending receipt of a copy of Dr. McDonnell's insurance coverage. Motion passed 4-0.

2) RACE ICLEI (Carbon Footprint) Update

Dwayne Escola came forward to present Ridgefield's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory – Year 2008 (Preliminary Results – May 19, 2010). Mr. Escola is representing the Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment (RACE). He distributed the Inventory and reviewed it with the BOS. He particularly thanked David Ulmer and John Katz for their help with this Inventory. This Inventory represents Step 1 of RACE's 5 Step project – calculating Ridgefield's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The next steps include establishing target to

reduce those emissions, developing a “Climate Action Plan” for meeting these targets, implementing the measures in the Climate Action Plan, and monitoring our progress.

Mr. Escola described how data was examined across four factors: residential, town government, public schools, commercial and industrial. In 2008, Ridgefield emissions totaled 347,140 tonnes/CO₂e. They will do the Inventory again in 2-3 years and compare. Ridgefield’s numbers are similar to other towns in our area. With regard to Town buildings, the old high school stands out as using the most energy and emitting the most emissions as well. The current high school uses the most energy per student of any of the schools with their electric heat. 900 acres in Ridgefield are dedicated to roads.

The breakdown of Ridgefield’s electric usage and cost for 2008 is as follows: Residential - \$23 million at 47.8%; Businesses - \$25 million at 46.1%; Town - \$872,000 at 1.8%; and Schools - \$2 million at 4.2%. Very little propane and natural gas is used in Ridgefield. A \$4 million grant has been received from the government, but this is basically for residential use. Governor Rell vetoed the solar bill providing monies for commercial usage.

If Ridgefield has 20% of our roof space suitable for solar, that equals 23 acres of solar. To replace our electricity usage, Ridgefield would need 606 acres. In order to reduce our electrical need by 50%, we would need to install 300 acres of solar (5% of our open space). Mr. Escola also showed what can be saved by purchasing an electric or plug-in car. Residents need to conduct personal energy audits - turn off lights, drive less, seal up air leaks in their homes, and insulate the attic. RACE has formed a committee to help guide Ridgefield in setting practical energy reduction goals and to write an Energy Action Plan detailing how those community goals can be achieved. The BOS thanked Mr. Escola and RACE for their continued work on energy and greenhouse gas reduction for the Town of Ridgefield.

3) EDC Incubator Funding Request; Route 7

The following individuals came forward representing the Economic Development Commission: Bob Knight and Magda Fincham, Co-Chairs; Bill Markus, Secretary, and members of the Commission – Mark Robinson, Chris Fisher, and Paul Levine.

Paul Levine described the EDC’s Incubator Without Walls project to help foster growth and help incubate micro-businesses in town. He reviewed how the Commission studied this movement across the country, and reviewed what the EDC has done to date. It is difficult to start a new business at home and turn it into a viable commercial enterprise. The EDC will provide the entrepreneur with pro-bono advice and tie them in with others in town who can also be helpful. Eventually a home business can develop into a commercial entity that rents office/mfg. space and in turn will add to Ridgefield’s tax base. The EDC is seeking \$5,000 from the Town for printing of brochures describing the “Incubator Without Walls” project, a list of advisors to help residents get started, and development of a website. Legal and professional services will be provided for no cost. The money will help with marketing and communication to let residents know that this business assistance exists. A. Bodner inquired as to how this project fits in with SCORE and business promotions thru the Chamber of Commerce? P. Levine responded that “Incubator Without Walls” goes beyond what the Chamber can do. The residents involved so far indicated that they have not received help elsewhere. This is an outreach program. The EDC wants to show that this is a Town-sponsored activity. The \$5,000 will provide the one “initial push” to get this program going. They figure \$1,000 for brochure design and \$2,000 for mailing. R. Marconi suggested adding an insert to the quarterly tax mailing.

R. Marconi expressed the BOS's support for the EDC and "hears their enthusiasm". He will meet with Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance to see if there is any dollars available in the budget and report back at the next BOS Meeting. P. Levine will provide a break-down as to how exactly the money would be spent.

A June 16, 2010 memo was received from Co-Chairs, Bob Knight and Magda Fincham outlining the EDC's top 3 priorities as being the Route 7 Developability Study, the Incubator Without Walls (WOW) Initiative, and the Investment Retention and Attraction Initiative.

Chris Fisher commented on the Route 7 project and the need for a zoning study of the Branchville and north of Haviland areas. A multi-disciplinary group is needed to help plan this. R. Marconi responded that SWERPA developed a plan as a concept. M. Fincham suggested a parallel road to Route 7 for business development. The consensus from the BOS was one of support and "go for it".

B. Knight requested that representatives from the EDC be invited to attend an employee staff meeting. He will call Mr. Marconi's office to get on the agenda at the next meeting (if there is room on the agenda) or the meeting following.

B. Knight raised the issue of signage at each of the gateways to the Town – add or improve what is there currently. Where is the Chamber of Commerce relative to the "branding" process? D. Masters stressed how the BOS needs to approve the design of any proposed signage. The Ridgefield Design Council has been working on a common theme for signage. The EDC needs to work with both the Design Council and the Chamber of Commerce to make this happen.

B. Knight reported how he has been working with Betty Brosius, Director of Planning for the Town of Ridgefield and HEFCO, on CED – Comprehensive Economic Development – development of western Connecticut as a whole. It is helpful to promote this area of CT, but then we need to get the businesses to come to Ridgefield specifically.

4) WeRecycle! Contract

R. Marconi indicated that there is a new recommendation from the State that electronic manufacturers cover the cost of recycling of electronics. This is not really happening yet, but a manufacturer has stepped up and agreed to pay for the recycling of all brands of electronics, and nothing has to be "broken apart".

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the proposed agreement dated February 18, 2010, between WeRecycle, LLC, and Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRA) for the disposal of electronic waste (E-Waste), including Covered Electronic Devices (CED's), and Non-Covered Electronic Devices (NCED's), contingent upon receipt of the side letter of agreement with no-cost to the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 4-0.

5) Year-End Transfers

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201001, providing for Year End Transfer – Police Special Services, with an Increase in #10903-44230, Police – Special Services Revenue, \$350,000 and an Increase in #10401-51020, Police – Special Services Expense, \$350,000 (Necessary so that

the Police Patrol Expense line item does not close the year over budget). Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201002, providing for Year End Transfer – Snow Related Costs, with an Increase in Expenditures: 10603-53210, Snow Removal Material, \$210,000; 10602-51007, Highway Maintenance – Overtime, \$45,000; 10605-52004, Road Maintenance – Contractors, \$32,000; and a Decrease in Expenditures: 10401-51001, Police Patrol – FT Salaries, \$100,000; and an Increase in Revenues: 10906-44825, Town Road Aid Contribution, \$187,000 (Necessary so that the Highway and Snow-related Expense line items do not close the year over budget). Motion passed 4-0.

6) Charter Revision Draft Report

The following members of the Charter Revision Commission came forward to discuss their proposed 2010 Charter revision: John McNicholas, Chairman, Sharon Hyde, Vice-Chair, and Charles Primerano, Recording Secretary.

The Charter Revision Commission held their Public Hearing on June 8 to present the results of their work – June 1, 2010 draft. The BOS will now review the proposed Charter and schedule a BOS Public Hearing relative to the updated wording (Public Hearing to be scheduled for June 30, 2010.) The Charter Revision Commission will then receive recommendations from the BOS and will meet on July 20th to review these recommendations. On July 28, 2010, the BOS will act on the Charter. If the Board of Selectmen accepts the draft, it is to be published not later than 30 days after the acceptance. The BOS can approve the new document in total or reject it in total.

Andy Bodner commented on how the Charter Revision Commission has been a “great working group”. He then commented on some of the big picture items the Charter Revision Commission decided to not address. Some of the elective positions should perhaps really be appointed positions as they require some specific professional skills – for example, that is why the Tax Assessor position is an appointed position. John McNicholas responded that the Commission did discuss this issue, but they felt the residents’ voice thru the ballot system also has merit – “it was a good debate”. J. Plock stated how it is difficult to require credentials for an elected position.

R. Marconi commented on the general use of the word “agency” for all departments. The Board of Finance has the right to call any department before them to discuss that department’s budget.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to schedule a BOS Public Hearing for June 30, 2010, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT, for review of the updated Charter Revision document as prepared by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

7) Children’s Corner Lease

Town Counsel David Grogins, and representatives from Children’s Corner, Heidi Lockwood and Stuart Howkins, came forward to discuss the latest version (6/23/10) of the Children’s Corner lease. The current lease expires June 30, 2010. Ms. Lockwood stated that mention of an elevator should come out as there is no elevator.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the 6/23/10 updated version of the proposed lease with Children’s Corner (CCI) with the Town of Ridgefield, with the understanding that if the electrical meter cannot be installed shortly and for a reasonable cost, the lease will cover just the rental rate. Included in the lease is the 1/15/2009 Barlow Mountain Middle School (The Children’s Corner) Interior Space Lease Floor Plan prepared by the Office of the Town Engineer of the Town of Ridgefield, no request and/or allowance for new carpeting, and in return, forgiveness of the reimbursement requested by the Town of Ridgefield for the water charge. Motion passed 4-0.

8) Ridgefield Guild of Artists Lease

Barbara Dobbin came forward to represent the Ridgefield Guild of Artists. All snow plowing and insurance issues have been resolved. The lease renewal is again for \$1/year.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the 6/22/10 version of the renewal lease between the Town of Ridgefield and The Ridgefield Guild of Artists, Inc, 34 Halpin Lane, Ridgefield, CT, for a period of fifteen (15) years beginning on October 1, 2010, and ending on September 30, 2025, for \$1.00/year. Motion passed 4-0.

9) STEAP Grant Resolution

R. Marconi commented on the requests received for additional sidewalks – along Route 35, Barry Avenue, and from caution light down St. John’s Road. These all involve CT State property. The first big project will be New St. from Rte. 116. A. Bodner expressed concern about all the children walking along Prospect St.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to authorize Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, to sign on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield a personal services agreement for financial assistance to complete various improvements at the Venus Municipal Building Complex, STEAP 2010-12. Motion passed 4-0.

9B) Ann’s Place Sewer Line

Town Counsel, David Grogins came forward to discuss this proposed easement and showed a map as to where the easement is needed – less than 50 ft. in Ridgefield. The BOS approved this previously, but the direction of the sewer line has been changed and thus the need for a new easement authorization. The City of Danbury is anxious to get this signed so they can move ahead on this project.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to authorize Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, to sign on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield the Memo of Understanding between the City of Danbury and the Town of Ridgefield for the proposed sewer line easement to Ann’s Place. Motion passed 4-0.

10) Selectman’s Report

- Notice has been received that Ridgefield won the Pine Mountain case with the CT Yankee Council.
- Marita Bonni, M.D., Emergency Room doctor, is the new Chairman of the Ridgefield Prevention Council.

- State of CT - Walpole lease is available for \$1/year.
- Public Hearing for June 24 has been postponed – have to start on this project again, because the State came in with further requests.

11) Approval of Meeting Minutes: 4/28/10, 5/12/10, 5/26/10, 6/9/10, 6/9/10 (Special)

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 28, 2010 Public Hearing & Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to approved as amended the minutes of the May 12, 2010 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to postpone until the next Board of Selectmen Meeting on June 30, 2010, approval of meeting minutes for 5/26/10, 6/9/10, and 6/9/10 (Special Meeting). Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 11:10 p.m. Motion passed 4-0. The next BOS Meeting will be June 30th instead of July 7th.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson