

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JULY 20, 2005
FIRE COMMISSION MEETING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

7:30 P.M. TOWN HALL LOWER 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, D. Masters, J. Plock, P. Yanity
Absent: B. Manners (ill)

AGENDA

1. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg
2. Lyme Disease Task Force
3. Deer Committee Recommendations Discussion
4. Affordable Properties
5. Dee Flag Art Donation to Town & Presentation
6. Approval of meeting minutes – 7/6/05, 7/12/05
7. Selectman’s Report

FIRE COMMISSION AGENDA

1. Emergency Operations Center – Chief Yarrish, Assistant Chief Gaeta
2. Fire Department General Discussion & Update

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA

1. Review of Current Applications

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg

J. Wahlberg, Town Controller, reported on the Board of Finance meeting held July 19, 2005.

- Tax Collector’s request for motor vehicle and personal property taxes not collected taken off receivable list and turned over to a collection agency was approved – annual occurrence.
- Status of outstanding school projects
- Bennett’s Pond – no costs incurred at this time, idle waiting for judge’s ultimate ruling
- Transfers – utilization of fund balance decided not to do now; elected to reshuffle what want to do ultimately
- Budget Forecast presented as of June 30, 2005 – approximately \$350,000 left after all transfers to be completed. All expenses for the year have now been booked;

may yet receive a check from the State of CT which will have to be applied to 2005 income.

- R. Marconi inquired as to the use of the Board of Education's end-of-year surplus for books and/or supplies for the next budget year, whereas the Town's surplus cannot be spent but reverts back to the General Fund. P. Yanity suggested consulting Town Counsel about this.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200518, Intra-Departmental Transfer requested by the Parks & Recreation Department to balance its line items. The memo provides for an Increase in 10354-52050, Utility – Electric of \$5500 and 10354-52052, Utility – Water of \$3,000 and a Decrease 10352-53041, Vehicle Fuel of \$8500. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200519, Intra-Departmental Transfer requested by the Highway Department to balance its line items. The memo provides for an Increase in 10691-52013, Maintenance (School Buildings) of \$16,100, and a Decrease in 10680-52012, Maintenance (Town Buildings) of \$16,100. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Lyme Disease Task Force - Karen Gaudian and Jennifer Reid, members of the Task Force came forward to discuss House of Representatives Bill H.R. 2877, called the "ALERT ACT", the "Act for Lyme Education and Research and Tick-Borne Diseases" introduced to the 109th Congress and which was then referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. The Bill is to provide for the expansion and intensification of efforts for prevention, education, and research activities with respect to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, including the establishment of a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee. Chris Shays is supporting the Bill; Senator Lieberman supports the issue but has not come out to date in support of this particular Bill; Senator Dodd is being contacted. Ridgefield's Lyme Disease Task Force is seeking the Board of Selectmen's support for this Bill and assistance in presentation of this Bill for support from neighboring towns throughout Connecticut. The State of Connecticut Department of Public Health does not currently budget any dollars for Lyme prevention and/or research. Danbury and Ridgefield have the highest recorded incidents of Lyme Disease in the State. This issue needs a major boost for State support. The State has not issued a press release relevant to Lyme Disease in the last two years and has even ended mandatory reporting of Lyme Disease cases in the state.

D. Masters moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion for the Board of Selectmen to send a letter to all Connecticut delegates to support House of Representatives Bill H.R. 2877, the ALERT Act, relevant to Lyme Education and Research and Tick-Borne Diseases. Motion passed 4-0.

R. Marconi will contact Chris Shays' office to encourage his continued endorsement of this Bill and to ask what Ridgefield can do to assist in getting the Bill passed and increase awareness of the prevalence of Lyme Disease and the need for prevention and cure.

D. Masters commented on how the ALERT Act stipulates dates for various reports to be received; it is good that it is not open-ended as specific dates result in increased action and accountability.

2. Deer Committee Recommendation Discussion - The Deer Committee report was

presented to the Board of Selectmen for their review at the BOS Meeting on July 6, 2005. **P. Yanity moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to acknowledge receipt of the report of the Ridgefield Deer Committee at the BOS Meeting on July 6, 2005. Motion passed 4-0.**

John Frey, Ridgefield's State Representative, had been invited to return to the BOS Meeting to discuss the hunting and deer control issues from the State perspective. D. Masters inquired as to whether any State rules had been changed since Mr. Frey last met with the BOS relative to the hunting issue, and asked him to provide the BOS with current regulations on bow and arrow hunting on smaller pieces of property. Mr. Frey responded that no changes have been made during this last year relative to bow and arrow hunting regulation. Two bills had been proposed: 1) neighbors need to be notified, and 2) regulations concerning the distance from a neighbor's property whereby one can hunt. Neither one of these issues were scheduled for a public hearing. Every other state in New England except Connecticut has a regulation about distance from a neighbor's property. Respectable hunters are considerate of the neighbor currently; awareness has been raised on this issue, but nothing else has changed during this past year. A public hearing was held relative to bow and arrow hunting on private property on Sunday. Hunting on Sunday is prohibited currently. Bow and arrow hunting currently requires a license and a short training period, but there are no other restrictions. R. Marconi inquired whether Ridgefield can enact their own restrictions. The answer is no. The Town can enact restrictions for hunting on Town-owned property, but not for hunting on private property.

D. Masters asked John Frey for any suggestions as to what Ridgefield can do. He indicated that when these two bills were introduced, a lot of press resulted relative to the high number of auto accidents caused by the deer, the proliferation of Lyme Disease, plus the property damage to landscaping caused by the deer. J. Plock pointed out the Old Sib Road issue from last year where a deer can be hit by a bow and arrow and then runs to a different neighbor's property and bleeds out.

Mr. Frey mentioned the Connecticut Sportsmen's Coalition which is a big supporter of bow hunting. He has discussed with them the 150 foot rule from a neighbor's piece of property. This is not the total answer, but would help.

R. Marconi inquired as to the possible availability of grant dollars from the State to conduct a fly-over to conduct a deer count. The cost for Ridgefield would be approximately \$15,000. Tom Belote pointed out that the goal is to get other towns to participate in a fly-over also and have the deer count be done county-wide. Mr. Belote also pointed out how the DEP has been hit hard by State budget cuts and is down by 18 officers. This is a significant manpower cut. Mr. Frey will look for possible grant dollars, but they are hard to find.

J. Plock indicated that an Implementation Committee needs to be appointed as a follow-up to the Deer Committee's report, and this committee would then report back to the BOS for approval of implementation plans. Implementation of a fly-over would be one of their responsibilities. The report was sent to Planning & Zoning and a response from Betty Brosius was read. The report was well written and received. However, the recommendations are outside the jurisdiction of Planning & Zoning. Becky Mucchetti, Chairman of Planning & Zoning, pointed out that Planning & Zoning is a "land use committee and not land management".

P. Yanity suggested that advertising be done for membership on an Implementation Committee as a follow-up to the Deer Committee's Report. The Implementation Committee would consist of seven (7) members from the Town at large. A discussion followed regarding the status of members of the Conservation Committee and the Police Department on this committee. Mr. Belote indicated that the Police Department had indicated that if they were to serve on this committee, their representative should be a voting member. It was decided to see what response is received from an advertisement and discuss this further at the August 3rd BOS Meeting. Mr. Belote indicated that Wilton has approximately five (5) on their implementation committee.

Oz Schmitz, of the Yale Forestry School, has been contacted. He is currently away on sabbatical, but will return mid-August.

Gwen Thaxter will submit her Minority Deer Committee Report at the end of July and expressed her desire to have this report reviewed and considered by the BOS.

D. Masters thanked John Frey for coming and asked him to resubmit those two bills.

J. Plock inquired as to whether it would be helpful to open Town property to hunting. This would have to be approved by the Conservation Commission and the Land Conservancy. Quite often Land Conservancy property is deed-restricted for no hunting.

3. Affordable Properties – This is a topic which needs to be discussed by the BOS. This situation arose as the result of a proposed sale of a designated “affordable property” in The Village on Route 7. Cohen & Wolfe researched the deed and it is stipulated as an “affordable property” in the agreement. The State says it is up to the town. Ridgefield's Housing Authority does not want to get involved as they want to deal only with their own units. Planning & Zoning would qualify the new purchaser? The town does not want to lose the property's “affordable” status. The BOS needs to decide the procedure for the sale of an affordable property and what board or who in town is responsible for overseeing the sale and approving the new purchaser. There are five such properties at The Village. R. Marconi will discuss with Bethel how they handle such sales and will speak with Ridgefield's Affordable Housing Committee.
4. Dee Flagg Art Donation to Town & Presentation - **J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to accept with great gratitude the Dee Flagg work of art donated by Mike and Marc Flagg to the Town of Ridgefield in memory of their mother. Motion passed 4-0.**
5. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 7/6/05, 7/12/05 -

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the July 6, 2005 Public Hearing and Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the July 12, 2005 Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

6. First Selectman's Report –

- Boston Red Sox' trophy on display at the Community Center, July 21, 3:00 p.m.
- Jack Sanders has submitted his recommendation for Bypass Road.
- Information is back from the State on the snowmobile ordinance. They want to change the wording from motorboats which is too general to one prohibiting use of internal combustion engines and snowmobiles. Our ordinance will need to be changed accordingly
- Chad Cohen needs to supply two passport photos for all of his employees.
- The Ridgefield Public School 10-Year Enrollment Projections 2005-2114 report has been received from H.C. Planning Consultants, Inc. – very interesting.
- On 7/15/05, a copy of the recently completed Route 35 Traffic Improvement Plan for Ridgefield, CT was sent to Jonathan Chew, Executive Director of HVCEO, as the Town of Ridgefield's application to the Connecticut DOT for federal funding under the STP program.
- The Discovery Center in Wilton lease expires. We want to continue this lease for another 25 years.
- Sam Masters has expressed interest in setting up an ice cream cart on Main Street (in addition to his ice cream truck) at a location Chad Cohen is not interested in. He will come forward with a vendor application.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Meeting at 9:05 p.m. and reconvene as the Fire Commission Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

Fire Commission Meeting

R. Marconi called the Fire Commission Meeting to order at 9:06 p.m.

1. Emergency Operations Center – Chief Yarris, Assistant Chief Gaeta - Present to discuss the plans for the Emergency Operations Center were Chief Lou Yarrish, and Assistant Chief Nick Gaeta. FEMA has put out guidelines for establishment of such a center. Assistant Chief Gaeta reviewed Ridgefield's need for an Emergency Operations Center, which would be available to use in an emergency situation. All department heads would function out of this one control area. R. Marconi would meet with them there to make decisions. This is not a shelter for the general public, but a command center for the Town. From this Center, communication would be made to other towns. Yanity Gym is a great location for Ridgefield's command center. Reverse 911 would be set up there. The Town has been given Federal dollars to set up this center. This center will be a permanent set-up. No additional staff will be hired. Chief Yarrish will be Chairman of the Emergency Operations Center and Assistant Chief Gaeta will be the Emergency Operations Center Coordinator. Electrical work needs to be done in the Gym. The generator hook-up is already there. They will return to the BOS when they receive information on costs involved for set-up. The Center will be under lock and key. A tour and a drill will be scheduled when the Center set-up is complete.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the Fire Department's moving ahead with plans for the establishment of the Emergency Operations Center at Yanity Gym in the space previously occupied by Almost Home. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Chief's Update – Chief Yarrish reviewed the cooperation received at the time of the tanker disaster on Route 7. A lot of volunteers from the Police Department and Peter Hill and the Highway Department providing coverage until the temporary bridge was opened. The State agency people were excellent and most helpful. R. Marconi organized coordination and communication between the different groups. The Police are still looking for the car which caused the accident to occur. Testing of the scorched earth and vegetation is being done. The State is doing borings and removing contaminated soil. Chris Shays has been here to look at the situation and bring in Federal help. It has been declared a disaster site and detailed reports need to be kept as to costs incurred for reimbursement purposes. All overtime will be reimbursed and 20 percent of the cost of the new bridge. A temporary bridge is being designed for the northbound side. During construction on a permanent bridge, traffic will alternate over the temporary bridge.

R. Marconi thanked the Chief and Assistant Chief for a job well done in management of both the Bissell fire and the tanker disaster.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Fire Commission Meeting at 9:30 p.m. and reconvene as the Economic Development Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

Economic Development Commission Meeting

R. Marconi called the Economic Development Commission Meeting to order at 9:30 p.m. He read a letter received from Betty Brosius, Director of Planning, listing current development requests. She will continue to keep the BOS apprised of projects.

- Route 35 Toll Bros. denied first application – expect application will be resubmitted.
- Route 7 medical facility, 901 Ethan Allen Highway, still in planning stages; have asked Chief Yarrish for the number of EMT calls at Sandpit. Chief Yarrish has met with Meadow Ridge regarding their high number of EMT calls.
- Red Lion property – denial of affordable housing after continuation of court hearing on August 17. Not sure where we are with this.
- Ridgefield Bank offices for 94 Danbury Road
- Ridgefield Hardware wants to put on a second story for storage purposes. Public Hearing September 6 on this request. The application has been received. No variance is needed as no extra parking will be needed.
- 66 Grove St. – area adjacent to the Fitness Center – proposal for 20 townhouse units. No formal plans have been submitted. Traffic in this area is already crowded and longstanding environmental issue with this property.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 9:40 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson