

PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING

SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

TOWN HALL/LOWER LEVEL 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, J. Plock

Public Hearing – 7:30 p.m.

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on September 20, 2006, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to discuss the proposed 25-year lease of the Town of Ridgefield owned Ridgefield Theatre Barn located at 37 Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Workshop for the Performing Arts.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Agenda (immediately following Public Hearing)

1. Commission on Aging Interview: Eileen Wilson
2. Ridgefield Housing Authority Interviews: Theresa Santoro, Harry Pierandri
3. Economic Development Commission Report
4. Fire Department – Staffing
5. Woodcock Nature Center Sublease
6. Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club Tax Abatement
7. Danbury Airport Discussion
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 8/9, 9/6
9. Selectman's Report

Public Hearing

R. Marconi read the Notice calling the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. and pointed out two small changes to the wording of the proposed 25-year lease relative to the Town of Ridgefield owned Ridgefield Theatre Barn located at 37 Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Workshop for the Performing Arts. The current lease has three years remaining – until 2010. This new 25-year lease extends thru 2031. A long-term lease needs to be in place to apply for grant dollars. There were no questions from the public. The Town Meeting was already set for October 4, 2006, 7:30 p.m.- Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room. R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing at 7:35 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Meeting

1. Commission on Aging Interview: Eileen Wilson
Ms. Wilson came forward to discuss her candidacy to fill the one vacancy on the Commission on Aging. There are seven current members on the Commission. R. Marconi read the charge of the Commission on Aging. Chris Robertson of the VNA and a member of the Commission, encouraged Ms. Wilson to apply. Currently, Ms. Wilson is the Clinical Supervisor at the RVNA and she has also worked as a Primary Care Nurse for the agency. She has been employed in many

areas of health care both hospital and community-based with the focus of the last ten years in the area of home health. She has lived in Ridgefield for eleven years.

D. Masters inquired as to the concerns of the seniors in this town. Ms. Wilson replied that seniors are concerned as to how they are going to get their needed medicine, how to work thru Medicare, how to get to doctors, how can they stay in their homes. Are there any specific areas Ms. Wilson would like to work on? She replied that she is not yet familiar with what the Commission is working on, but would welcome the opportunity to be of assistance in whatever. D. Masters mentioned that Chief Burford has noted the increase in “falls” and suggested the launching of an educational program in conjunction with the VNA, the Fire Department and the Commission on the Aging in an attempt to reduce the number of falls.

Andy Bodner inquired whether Ms. Wilson thinks there would be a conflict working with the VNA and serving on the Commission at the same time? Ms. Wilson did not think there would be a conflict. B. Manners inquired if she had heard anything from the seniors as to how the Heart Bus is functioning? Ms. Wilson replied that the seniors sometimes have to wait. Ms. Manners asked if she would be willing to serve on a different commission/committee as well? Ms. Wilson replied yes, but prefers something related to her interest in health care. J. Plock inquired as to anything specific she would like to change, something that is not happening now? Ms. Wilson replied that she would have to get involved and then go from there. It is important to bring healthcare issues to the attention of the town.

2. Ridgefield Housing Authority Interviews: Theresa Santoro, Harry Pierandri

Ms. Santoro came forward to introduce herself to the Board and express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Housing Authority. R. Marconi read the July 20 letter received from Ms. Santoro. She is a registered nurse and has been a Ridgefield resident for thirteen years. In the past she served as the Nursing Director of the Congregation of Notre Dame, serving the retired and elderly nuns and meeting their needs as they aged in their housing community. Currently, she is the Vice President for Clinical Operations at the Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association. Ms. Santoro feels she is familiar with the needs of the senior population and could contribute to the Town of Ridgefield and the residents the Housing Authority serves. D. Masters inquired about her availability during daytime hours. The Housing Authority is currently seeking someone who can assist in overseeing the expansion of Ballard Green and Prospect Ridge – the project’s building and construction issues.

R. Marconi pointed out that Phil Bergquist, a member of the Housing Authority, has not been reappointed. It was agreed to invite Mr. Bergquist to appear before the Board of Selectmen to express his continued interest in serving on the Housing Authority.

The vacancy on the Housing Authority was created by the resignation of Martha Campbell. R. Marconi read the June 12th letter from Ms. Campbell expressing her desire to resign effective August 20, 2006. She stressed in her letter the need for a person with weekday daytime availability to participate in the Housing Authority’s upcoming building projects.

Harry Pierandri came forward to present his interest in serving on the Housing Authority. R. Marconi read the September 13 email received from Mr. Pierandri. Mr. Pierandri outlined his background in real estate. He worked for twenty-five years for a subsidiary of Equitable with responsibilities for all phases of commercial real estate, acquisitions, financing, property management, and pension fund real estate investment. He has lived in Ridgefield for 60 years –

all his life. He is partially retired and can make himself available during daytime weekday hours. R. Marconi read the email received from the Ridgefield Housing Authority expressing their endorsement of Mr. Pierandri to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Martha Campbell.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Harry Pierandri to fill the vacancy on the Ridgefield Housing Authority. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Economic Development Commission Report – Robert Cascella, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), and Paul Levine, Vice-Chairman of the EDC came forward to discuss their request for an allocation of \$40,000 at this time. R. Marconi read the September 18 letter received from the Commission. It is their desire to market the entire Ridgefield community, not just the Schlumberger property. They have received proposals from two firms in New York to assist in this PR project. R. Marconi indicated that an email had been received from John O’Toole, of CLP gas pledging up to \$10,000 in communications assistance. Perhaps this assistance could be used for design and printing of brochures and website development. A. Bodner inquired whether we have anything in writing from Schlumberger so that Ridgefield can proceed in marketing their property? The response was that the Commission acts as a conduit, steering people to Michael Katz, Schlumberger’s representative. How were these two bids secured? The response was that there are five members on the Commission and these individuals have many contacts. Mr. Levine went to two firms he knows to secure these bids. Mr. Levine responded that this is a three-month public relations campaign, not an advertising campaign. Schlumberger recognizes the value of marketing the property as a whole – intact. A. Bodner inquired if Schlumberger has any interest in assisting financially with this public relations campaign? The response was that there has been discussion about this.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the request by the Economic Development Commission for an allocation of \$40,000 for a Ridgefield public relations economic development campaign and to send this request to the Board of Finance for their approval of a special appropriation. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Fire Department – Staffing

Fire Chief Burford came forward to report on the two previous meetings with the Board of Selectmen relative to this increase in staffing issue – Monday evening, September 18 and prior to this evening’s meeting with Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources for Ridgefield. Chief Burford feels this increased staffing is necessary to maintain the EMS program and provide for Fire Department safety and efficiency. Two possibilities were presented: 1) hire four full-time Fire Medics, 2) hire an Assistant Chief and immediately hire two Fire Medics. Both the Assistant Chief and one Fire Medic are already in the budget. The decision was to proceed with Option #2.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Fire Department’s request to hire an additional daytime full-time Fire Medic. Motion passed 5-0. A. Bodner pointed out that this hire can be done within this year’s budget and will enhance the daytime shift when the volume is the highest. The hope is for a reduction in overtime. Chief Burford expressed her appreciation to the Board of Selectmen for listening to her operational concerns and moving ahead. They will be seeking both internal and external candidates.

Dom D’Addario, Tanton Hill Rd., inquired as to who covers for Chief Burford now when there is no Assistant Chief? Chief Burford responded that she uses the Captains, one per shift, to cover for her if she is out of town.

5. Woodcock Nature Center Sublease – This sublease is the next step in the Woodcock Nature Center leasing process. J. Plock inquired as to the cost for the \$1 million liability coverage. R. Marconi responded that this coverage is included in the liability coverage for the entire Town of Ridgefield, not this property onto itself.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to send a request to Planning & Zoning for an 8-24 on the Woodcock Nature Center sublease and set a Public Hearing on October 18, 2006 and a Town Meeting on November 1, 2006 for consideration of this sublease. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club Tax Abatement – The Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club has been tax exempt since 1936. They failed to file for tax exempt status this year and thus a tax bill had to be sent to them. A September 18, 2006 letter was received from Terence Hughes, Executive Director of the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club, requesting abatement of their property taxes for the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the tax abatement for the 2006/2007 Fiscal Year for the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club in the amount of \$26,785.54 in principal and \$301.34 in interest as requested by Al Garzi, Assessor for the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Danbury Airport Discussion – The following individuals came forward to discuss the Part 150 Study, copies of which are now available: Strat Sherman, George Washington Hwy., Michael Kroposki, David Marker, Ridgebury Rd., and Dr. Michael Autuori, Ridgefield P&Z representative. Dr. Autuori reported that the report includes the minutes, correspondence, etc., but is lacking in several areas. There is detail in the minutes but not in the reports. The FAA ignored the previous agreements and there are notable discrepancies in the report. The existing 1982 noise abatement procedure agreement should be added to this report. The Federal Court stipulated agreement went into effect in 1987.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd. stated that the FAA and Danbury did not want to pay attention to the 1987 Federal Court agreement. Runway 2-6 is the preferential runway and is used about 76% of the time. Other runways can be used, but “do not count on it”. The pilot rules. If he wants the safest runway, he’ll use Runway 2-6 even if there is no wind problem.

Strat Sherman stated that the FAA has policy goals for the country as a whole. Danbury Airport fits into their plan. Danbury prefers to “export their noise” to Ridgefield; they do not want to have noise abatement; they have ignored the 1987 abatement rules. R. Marconi reported on the meeting in which the Danbury Airport Manager walked out. Danbury is using the FAA system to disadvantage Ridgefield.

B. Manners indicated that she feels there is basis to go to court to challenge the validity of the final report. The Federal Courts can review the situation and the past rulings. It is a “flawed document on a flawed process”. We have only sixty days after the report is issued to file – that would be November 6. Strat Sherman indicated that many Ridgefield residents are upset about this issue; moving ahead to work on preparation to file, but would want BOS support for doing so. The Board members need to read the report first.

Andy Bodner inquired if the 1982 ruling needs to be enforced? – Yes, but not exclusively. Danbury Mayor Boughton said he would enforce once the study was completed, but the study doesn't include the recommendations from the "working group".

John Katz pointed out that micro-jets will become more of an issue and this was left out of the report. A noise profile for the jets is available. BOS members will read both the original report and the supplement for discussion at the October 4th BOS meeting.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 8/9, 9/6

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the August 9, 2006 Public Hearing and Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the September 6, 2006 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the September 6, 2006 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

9. Selectman's Report –

- Founder's Hall Discussion - R. Marconi reported on his recent conversation with Grace Weber, Founder's Hall. They are interested in working with the Town and hope that the Town will be able to assist Founder's Hall with up to \$100,000/year in time. The consensus was that the BOS is willing to work with Founder's Hall but they want Founder's Hall to charge fees to non-residents, which isn't currently the case. Parking continues to be an issue. The Men's Club has moved their meeting time back to the a.m.

B. Manners indicated that the construction at The Temple is just about complete which will provide additional meeting locations. The Temple is interested in opening their facility to town functions, especially during weekdays. Ms. Manners will suggest that The Temple invite the community in to view the facility. R. Marconi will call the Rabbi about this idea.

Andy Bodner pointed out that Founder's Hall is about half way thru their lease on the property. If the property is turned back to the town, this will result in a financial obligation. He also suggested a request for representation on their Board (R. Marconi pointed out that the Town has representation on the Library Board in conjunction with the Town's contribution to the Library budget.) J. Plock suggested the possibility of increased funding to Founder's Hall thru establishment of an endowment.

- Family Day Reminder – Monday, September 25.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:30 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson