

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**JANUARY 17, 2001 7:30 PM**

**TOWN HALL LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM**

**APPROVED**

These minutes are intended to be a summary of the meeting and not a verbatim recording. A transcript of the meeting is available on request for a fee.

In attendance: Mr. Marconi, Dr. Yanity, Mr. Heyman, Ms. Manners and Mr. Zemo.

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**PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Marconi read the public notice. It is as follows:

To consider the acquisition by the Town of approximately 45 acres of land off Ridgebury Road, known as a portion of "McKeon's Farm," to be funded partially by donations of private citizens, and partly by the \$820,000 settlement between the State Department of Environmental Protection and Bridgeport Hydraulic Company allocated to the Town of Ridgefield for open space purposes, and contingent upon receipt of all private donations, an amount of \$93,000 to be approved from the Town general fund, for a total purchase price of \$3,613,000.

**Public Comments:**

Edith Meffley, Lewis Drive – Ms. Meffley's views were not on behalf as a Conservation Commission member but rather were on her own personal behalf. She stated that this acquisition is most appropriate and most valuable at this time when open space is a main concern and a beneficial asset to the Town.

Dave Huntoon, 42 Shadow Lane – Mr. Huntoon stated that this acquisition was a step in the right direction of much needed open space.

John Katz, Ridgebury Road – Mr. Katz wanted to note that of the \$3,613,000, \$2,500,000 is being put up by 6-8 private contributors and although the names are confidential, they should be congratulated for their donations.

Jenny Bocchino, R.O.S.A. – Ms. Bocchino read a letter on behalf of R.O.S.A. expressing gratitude to Mr. Marconi and George Orlan, Chairman, Conservation Commission for all their work in this acquisition. She also expressed the importance of the town acquiring the right of first refusal and preserving 25% of Ridgefield’s open space.

Steffi Jones – Wanted to congratulate Mr. Marconi on all of his hard work and efforts.

Mr. Marconi expressed that there is still a shortage in the amount of \$93,000 and options such as auctions will be looked into in an effort not to use the general fund for this acquisition.

## **AGENDA**

1. Interviews of candidates to fill vacancy on Golf Committee
2. Interviews of candidates for Building Projects Committees
3. First Selectman’s Report

Mr. Heyman made a request to add an agenda item for discussion – tax freeze for seniors. **Mr. Zemo made a motion to add the topic of a tax freeze for seniors to be added to the agenda; seconded by Dr. Yanity. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed unanimously.** This topic will be discussed after the interviews are complete.

1. Anne Doty – a member of the Golf Committee and registered democrat, resigned thereby creating a vacancy. Jay Saks, registered Democrat was interviewed. When completed, the Board expressed gratitude to Mr. Saks for his interest and will notify him upon the Selectmen’s decision.

Mr. Mike Jones, registered Democrat, has also applied but was unable to interview this evening. Additional interviews will be conducted next meeting.

2. Mr. Marconi explained that there are nine vacancies on the Master Building Committee and seven seats on the Parks and Recreation Committee with only four vacancies left. Dr. Peter Yanity, Paul Roche and Gary Smith will be members on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

The following candidates were interviewed:

Allison Hickey-Dyson- Registered Republican – Master Building Committee

Ms. Hickey-Dyson has her B.A. in architecture and has worked in the field of architecture for thirteen years. She was last employed as a project manager where her responsibilities included interviewing contractors, reviewed bids, supervised construction from conception to completion. She has been home with her children for the past year and wishes to volunteer her time to the Town.

Ron Hill – Registered Republican

Mr. Hill has been a Town resident for thirteen years and is currently employed as a professional engineer. He is also currently involved with the Town's Water Pollution Control Authority which meets once a month and would not interfere with his ability to attend meetings for the Committee. He briefly described his work experience and history with the U.S. Navy.

Lisa Gillingham – Registered Unaffiliated

Ms. Gillingham is currently employed as a Vice President of Customer Service. She moved to Ridgefield in August 2000 and wishes to get involved in the Town. She has general project management experiences and she stated her expertise is in the areas of overhauling processes and moving things along with strong administration skills.

Lisa Maurer – Registered Republican - Master Building Committee

Ms. Maurer is an attorney practicing in Ridgefield. She stated that she has extensive experience with commercial builders and trade unions. She believes her background may be helpful in "bringing in these projects on time and under budget."

Nelson Gelfman – Registered Democrat – Parks and Recreation Committee

Mr. Gelfman is currently a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He stated that he wants to help guide an environmentally and aesthetically sensitive building on the Ippoliti site. He may have to abstain from voting on special permit issues but he feels he can contribute to his insights and experiences to this committee.

James Delalla – Registered Unaffiliated– Interested in either Committee

Mr. Delalla has been a resident of Ridgefield since 1993 and is a licensed landscape architect and has practiced in New Canaan for the past twenty years. He has done projects with schools in the past as well as worked for private developers. He believes he can also contribute using his experience in dealing with conflicts that may arise while serving on a committee.

Sara Schragger – Registered Democrat – Parks and Recreation Committee

Ms. Schragger is currently employed as a lighting design specialist and expressed her interest as a consultant on the committee

(At this point, First Selectman Marconi excused himself from the meeting to meet with the Board of Finance in the small conference room. Mr. Marconi has interviewed all candidates prior to this meeting.)

Tom McLemore – Registered Democrat – Parks and Recreation Committee

Mr. McLemore is a twenty year resident of Ridgefield and is a member of the Recreation Center. He has experience in marketing and project management and stated that he would like to be on a committee that “takes action to get things done.” He feels that he could contribute to the committee with his abilities and would like to “give back” to the Town.

Gerald Roche – Registered Unaffiliated– Master Building Committee

Mr. Roche was the general contractor to the Ridgefield Playhouse and since the Selectmen were already familiar with his background, past contributions and intentions, Mr. Roche’s interview was brief.

Mr. Bill Lawler – Registered Republican - Parks and Recreation Committee

Mr. Lawler has been a resident since 1970 and possesses a strong business management background. He ran a marketing company and is very familiar with the Recreation Center.

Nancy Lagnese – Registered Republican –

Ms. Lagnese moved to Ridgefield two months ago and possesses a degree in Accounting with a sales background as well. She has experiences with building expansions, YMCA and feels her finance and sales background could contribute to the committee.

Howard Gale – Registered Democrat – Master Building Committee

Mr. Gale has been a Ridgefield resident since 1987 and is currently employed in Corporate Finance for a large engineering and architectural firm. His experience is in small and large design building projects from a financial perspective. He would like to assist in keeping the projects within budget and within the allotted time frame.

(At this point, First Selectman Marconi returned to the Board of Selectmen meeting.)

3. Mr. Heyman's request to discuss a proposed tax freeze for seniors ensued. This topic has been discussed in the past and Mr. Heyman is raising it again because he believes it is an important consideration that should be looked at again. He mentioned it in order for other Selectmen to begin to think about "the methodology for social and economic reasons." Mr. Heyman realizes the economic value to the Town in keeping senior citizens as homeowners and would like to see programs in place to ensure their stay. Mr. Zemo suggested that a way to begin the discussion might be to establish a committee of three to five people to conduct "needs based" studies on this matter. Mr. Zemo asked the question, the last time this was discussed, what was the vote and what were the reasons for and against. The answer to this question will be provided for the next meeting, January 25, 2001. Dr. Yanity suggested that information on this issue should be obtained from other towns. Mr. Marconi stated that this will be added to the next budget discussion.

4. First Selectman's Report

Mr. Marconi stated that Harry Shephard, engineer, looked at the Barlow site and his analysis of the water and sewer system was that the soil conditions are excellent and with some modifications, the system could be converted. This would produce a large savings for the Town.

Mr. Marconi met with O&G Industries and Parks and Recreation and they looked at the layouts for the new P&R building. Mr. Marconi asked to preserve what was originally planned and to keep the building in good relation to the Senior Center.

Mr. Marconi also attended an Insurance Risk Committee meeting to look at possible savings if all the bundled projects were insured as a bundle, i.e. for the Town to provide insurance for general liability and workers compensation. At estimates of \$100,000 per \$10 million contract, the savings could be \$900,000 savings for the total bundled projects. This would be a large financial savings to the Town. Mr. Marconi will continue to work on this issue and will report back to the Board with any more findings.

Mr. Marconi reported to the board that at the pre-construction meeting held on January 4, 2001, it was learned that a completion date for the new middle school of December 2002 had been discussed. This date came as a surprise to those in attendance. The academic wing, however, will be open September 2002. A plan for a fifteen-day turnaround of payment to trades and vendors in order to ensure manpower and to complete the project in a shorter time frame has been proposed as a possible way to still meet the September 2002 opening.

**Dr. Yanity made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Ms. Manners. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Lord  
Recording Secretary