

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – OCTOBER 29, 2008

TOWN HALL/LARGE 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

Absent: J. Plock (due to illness)

Agenda

1. Vendor Permit Application: Enver Ceylan
2. EDC Interviews: Frank Lowe, Magdalena Fincham, Chris Fisher, Stephen Hackenburg
3. Youth Commission Interview: Frank Orzechowski & daughter Kelly
4. North Street Water Main Financing Issues
5. Venus Building: Re-Roofing Project, Chef's Warehouse, Improvements Project Update
6. Pension Discussion
 - a. Current Plan
 - b. Elected Officials Pension Plan
7. Selectman's Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/15/08
9. Executive Session:
 - a. 24 Old Stagecoach Road – Pending Litigation
 - b. Keeler House – Negotiation with Owner's Attorney
 - c. Boy Scout Property Litigation
 - d. Town Use of Open Space

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Vendor Permit Application: Enver Ceylan
Mr. Ceylan was not present.
2. EDC Interviews: Frank Lowe, Magdalena Fincham, Chris Fisher, Stephen Hackenburg
There are currently two vacancies on the Economic Development Commission (EDC). Ten applications for membership on the EDC have been received. No decision will be made until all applicants have been reviewed. Four interviews were scheduled for this evening. The EDC is comprised of five members – perhaps it would be best to increase the size of the Commission and especially since there are currently so many interested applicants. D. Masters suggests opening up the Commission to at least seven members. These are all busy professional people who often move away and leave the Commission with too few members to proceed, as is currently the case.

Frank Lowe-

Mr. Lowe came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. Mr. Lowe had submitted his resume for his application. He has lived in Ridgefield for the 28 years and still feels very excited about living in Ridgefield. The homeowners are carrying the tax burden. His career was in international packaging. In his travels he became aware of how other states in the U.S. campaign for businesses to settle in their states. Connecticut needs to be much more proactive

in this manner. Ridgefield has much to offer. Ridgefield residents comprise an excellent network that needs to be utilized for economic development.

A. Bodner asked Mr. Lowe to explain his view of the objectives of the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The right businesses need to be brought into Ridgefield. We need industries that won't create undue demands on water and sanitation. We do not have bus and railroad transportation. Blue collar industry is not the answer, but professional corporations. We need to be discerning in what we select.

B. Manners asked Mr. Lowe how he visions Ridgefield in twenty years. The tax base provides for seniors and the schools. Those on fixed incomes need to be able to remain in Ridgefield. R. Marconi pointed out that 14% of the town's income now comes from non-residential sources. Ridgefield needs to sponsor comfortable growth without damaging the integrity of the community.

D. Masters commented on how Mr. Lowe has a good handle on what Ridgefield needs. Certain industries suit Ridgefield. Utilities are expensive here. The Town and Connecticut as well need to be persuasive and present a hard sell to secure new businesses.

Magdalena Fincham –

R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Fincham. She is a five-year resident of Ridgefield and is a patent attorney with Walker Digital in Stamford. She feels fortunate to be part of Ridgefield and has three children growing up here.

D. Masters asked Ms. Fincham if she had any particular ideas about economic development in Ridgefield? She suggests a shuttle service between office park areas and downtown; development of a retail district behind Main Street – almost a cobblestone street where people can walk freely. She feels there is a noise factor on Main Street. She has met with Paul Levine to discuss her ideas about economic development.

A. Bodner indicated that Ms. Fincham to expand on her broad vision of economic development. What would be her plan to alleviate the pressure on the individual tax payer? Ms. Fincham responded that Ridgefield has a Norman Rockwell type of character; national chain stores on Westport's Main Street are not the same feeling. We need to target a specific industry and get known for that, a highly paid industry, like hedge funds in Greenwich.

Chris Fisher –

R. Marconi read the letter of application received from Mr. Fisher. He is a seven year Ridgefield resident with two young children and loves living here. He is a partner in the law firm of Cuddy & Feder, LLP with offices in NY, White Plains, Fishkill and Norwalk. His practice is focused on real estate development, zoning and environmental law. He has served as Chairman of the firm's Land Use & Zoning Department in the past. To quote his letter, he "consults on governmental bond financing, real estate transactions, development and permitting and other matters associated with commercial, residential, utility, not-for-profit, and other uses that are critical to a varied and thriving community with a strong economic position." His firm represents large corporations such as AT&T, retail corporations like CVS and Home Depot, and residential developments.

B. Manners asked Mr. Fisher for his ideas on the ideal development for Ridgefield. He responded that Ridgefield's land use is already fairly well developed. Land use challenges

include sewer, water and transportation needs. Certain under developed retail areas could be enhanced, such as the Branchville area. Certain densities could be increased. He envisions the EDC working closely with Planning & Zoning and the BOS.

D. Masters commented on how the Conservation Commission is redoing their ten year plan. She asked Mr. Fisher about his ideas about economic development in keeping with this Conservation Commission plan. Are there other areas he would have in mind besides Branchville? He has an interesting background for working on the EDC. Mr. Fisher responded that there are additional properties behind Main Street which could be enhanced. He would encourage private owners to step forward and would review open spaces. He suggests doing ground work now and the creation of a comprehensive economic development plan.

Andy Bodner pointed out that the Town doesn't really own much property that would be available for development. How can the EDC enhance private property? What can they realistically do? Mr. Fisher responded that stability can be promoted in areas of private ownership. The Town can facilitate private development – value can be added to property; commercial density can be added thru rezoning.

Stephen Hackenburg

Mr. Hackenburg has been a Ridgefield resident with his family since 2003 and has submitted his resume to the BOS for their review. Mr. Hackenburg is currently employed with the Aon Corporation in New York City and has national responsibility to grow and maintain the casualty brokerage business segment within the U.S. operations of Aon. To quote his resume, "Aon Corporation is a global provider of risk management services, insurance and reinsurance brokerage, and human capital consulting with 36,000 professionals worldwide."

Andy Bodner asked Mr. Hackenburg if he has a sense of where he would want to go with the EDC? His response was to encourage additional small businesses – attract entrepreneurial start-ups. The Town's strength is its classic New England style. Economic development in keeping with this character is what should be encouraged.

B. Manners commented on Mr. Hackenburg's commercial brokerage experience. He feels he has strong communication skills and good business sense. Ms. Manners asked if would be interested in serving on Ridgefield's Insurance Risk Committee?

D. Masters commented on Mr. Hackenburg's strong resume. He responded on how Main Street is ideal for "Mom & Pop" shops. We want other "Moms & Pops to join in".

3. Youth Commission Interview: Frank Orzechowski & daughter Kelly

Mr. Orzechowski & Kelly came forward to express their interest in serving on the Youth Commission. They have applied because of their concern over the closing of The Barn and their desire to make sure that the youth of Ridgefield are represented in Town and have a voice. Ridgefield has an outstanding athletic program, but there are some youth who are not interested in sports. The Barn provided a venue for the youth to express themselves in the arts and music. Ridgefield like other communities faces the problems of bullying and teen pregnancies. The Youth Commission is so important to keep the dialogue open between the Town and Ridgefield's youth.

D. Masters commented on how we are so lucky to have this father/daughter team step forward. B. Manners echoed what Ms. Masters said and especially as her son did not like athletics. Drama was important to him. It is so important to recognize that there are many different types of students and difficult teen issues, including substance abuse. The work of the Youth Commission is so valuable.

Mr. Bodner commented on how the high school is not doing enough for the wide range of student interests – this is a constant challenge. The Barn did provide a place for the youth to congregate – better than Ballard Park and in front of CVS. The Barn has a better reputation than in past years, and was being open on a much reduced schedule of just Friday and Saturday and then closed for budget reasons. They have been advertising but have not found the right fit for a Director for The Barn.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd. commented on how this is the first father/daughter team that has come forward to serve on the Youth Commission – they are setting a “good example”.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Frank Orzechowski & daughter Kelly as members of the Ridgefield Youth Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

4. North Street Water Main Financing Issues

Charlie Fisher came forward to discuss issues regarding the North Street Water Main project and the Venus Building construction projects. Mr. Fisher indicated how he had been requested to secure a bid to install and test an exploratory well at a different location. If the water tests results are acceptable by the State from this new well, then it will not be necessary to run the proposed North Street water main out to the Barlow Mountain and Scotland Schools. This new well will be in a different area; not in the North/South water vein.

It is thought that leaching from the water softener has contaminated the existing wells. These old wells are also located too close to the road and to possible areas of contamination. As Mr. Marconi pointed out, the choices are to extend the water main, capital reverse osmosis (RO), or drill a new well. B. Manners asked if there is only a single bid from one firm? Yes, only one bid was requested for Mr. Fisher to secure. Ms. Manners indicated the desire to see more than one bid. It is important to show that the BOS has explored the options. R. Marconi indicated that Mr. Fisher will secure two other bids and will contact other RO companies as well. Mr. Fisher pointed out that eventually the Town is going to have to solve this water problem. R. Marconi stated that we are not just looking at the “bottom line”, but looking at the best option for the Town long-term.

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve up to and not more than \$42,000 as per the GZA proposal for the installation and testing of an exploratory well located on the easterly side of the Barlow Mountain Elementary School property, and that this request be forwarded to the Board of Finance for their approval with the possibility of the funding to come from the Contingency Fund. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Venus Building: Re-Roofing Project, Chef's Warehouse, Improvements Project Update

Charlie Fisher reported on the re-roofing of the Venus Building. The first phase should be completed before Thanksgiving. The asbestos work is done. He is still seeking bids for the second phase. Phase 1 totaled \$653,950. Phase 2 will total \$717,938 less the \$166,050 left over from Phase 1. \$552,000 is therefore being requested. Can we buy any time? What has been already completed had to be done. There is a significant leak by the cupola. R. Marconi

indicated how Chef's Warehouse is working on their redo of the second floor and now are facing the roof leakage problem. A. Bodner indicated that as the building landlord, it is our responsibility to fix the roof. In the end, it will cost us more to not do the repairs in a timely fashion. Whatever monies the BOS approves, it has to go before the Board of Finance for their approval also. In the meantime, Mr. Fisher will see what can be temporarily repaired. R. Marconi indicated that this is the "band-aid approach", but we may be able to buy some time this way and put the \$552,000 request in next year's budget. The roof is also our responsibility to the Playhouse.

Chef's Warehouse: It is suggested that the BOS re-schedule a tour of the facility. Chef's Warehouse has pretty much completed their redo of the first floor and are now working on the second floor.

Charlie Fisher submitted an October 27, 2008 memo outlining the Venus Site Improvements Update. The project as originally bid us under funded by \$376,345.50. The project's scope has been reduced to keep it within the available funding. The State of Connecticut has approved the reduced project scope. Work anticipated to be completed under the revised scope includes relocation of the existing skate board park, reconstruction of a 68 space parking area, new site lighting and landscaping within the newly reconstructed parking areas, and relocation of the existing play structure. The revised shortfall of \$27,658.02 may be made up through the utilization of LOCIP funding, keeping the project entirely state-funded. To accomplish this, appropriate resolutions must be made by the BOS to place it on the Town's capital plan. The only other resolution that is in need of updating to keep the project moving forward is attached. (Attachment 1)

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the resolution to authorize Rudy Marconi, as First Selectman, of the Town of Ridgefield, to sign a STEAP grant agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of Connecticut for financial assistance to complete various site improvements at the Venus Municipal Building Complex; that the Municipality of Ridgefield will support the nondiscrimination agreement and warranty under subdivision (1) of Sections 4a-60 and 4a-60a of the Connecticut General Statutes as amended by PA 07-142; that Rudy Marconi, (First Selectman) is authorized to enter in such agreements, contracts and execute all documents necessary to said grant with the State of Connecticut, and that Rudy Marconi's term as First Selectman began on November 20, 2007 and will continue until November 22, 2011. Motion passed 4-0.

The question is do we abate the rent or go to the Board of Finance for the additional \$415,000. Improvement that have been completed include: air conditioning renovations; wheelchair access with the addition of a lift; and asbestos removal. Improvements that still need to be done include: 2nd floor men's room repairs as pipes are leaking; and main entrance reconstruction. The original thought was that abatement was the way to go. A. Bodner prefers long-term capital projects be paid for thru long-term bonding. The rent exceeds the cost of the bonds. He suggested that the Venus Building be sold if the Town is not willing to maintain the building properly. R. Marconi pointed out that there are a lot of community organizations as occupants of the Venus Building, such as the VNA, the synagogue, the Playhouse, and the Board of Education. D. Masters stated that we currently have a large tenant in Chef's Warehouse who is willing to put monies into improving the space. They are putting in \$1 million of their own from which the Town of Ridgefield will benefit.

It was agreed to go to the Board of Finance with the request for capital funding. If the response is no, then abatement will be the answer or perhaps the Board of Finance will come back with another financing solution.

Charlie Fisher reported on the improvements to the Yanity Gym parking area site renovation. We have a \$500,000 grant, but the bids came in at \$834,000. Mr. Fisher is looking at ways to reduce the scope of the project. The goal is to bring the price down to \$490,000. LOCIF dollars can be used for capital expenditures, but not for a repair. Engineering fees have already cost \$32,000 with an additional \$27,000 needed. A. Bodner inquired as to what is being sacrificed by doing less? The reduction is in the courtyard area. They will apply for another grant when they are able to do so. There is no problem with the State regarding the project's reduced scope.

6. Pension Discussion:

- a. Current Plan – David Campbell has provided an update on the Pension Plan – reviewed at the annual actuarial meeting with David Leonard, Actuary.
- b. Elected Officials Pension Plan – A copy of the July 14, 2008 memo to David Campbell from Jay Wahlberg, Laurie Scholl, titled “Pension Contribution for Elected Officials – FY 2009”, was provided for BOS review. R. Marconi recused himself from the discussion. Elected officials can now participate in the pension plan. The average is a 9.7% money purchase plan. This is being brought to the BOS for their approval of up to 9%. A. Bodner indicated that this is a bad time for this issue to be brought forward. This should be part of the total compensation plan. Board of Education compensation packages total much more than those of the Town government. B. Manners stated that she is in agreement that there is an inequity here, but this is such a bad economic time. A decision on this issue should not be made without J. Plock's input. Ms. Manners stated that a three person vote is not appropriate.

An investment course is being provided at Founder's Hall.

A Treasurer's Report was submitted detailing Investments as of 9/30/08 and Year-to-Date Interest Earned.

7. Selectman's Report

- Police Captain McGran has been promoted to Major.
- Sue Manning has been working with the Chamber of Commerce and Steve Zemo. They will present a proposal at the next BOS Meeting.
- A revised BOS meeting schedule for the balance of 2008 is as follows:
 - 11/18/08 – Joint BOS, BOF, BOE Meeting – 7:00 p.m.
 - 11/19/08 – BOS Meeting – 7:30 p.m.
 - 12/10/08 – Fire Commission Special Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
 - 12/10/08 – Board of Selectmen Special Meeting – 7:30 p.m.
- Keeler House – Continuing to work on – David Grogins was contacted and asked to respond. There are different alternatives – land swap, moving the building to a new Town-owned location, moving the building to Stoneridge Estates. The moving of the Scott House would cost about \$750,000 (including new bathrooms, etc.) Work is continuing on this proposal.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/15/08
Approval of the October 15, 2008 BOS Meeting minutes was tabled to the next BOS Meeting.
9. Executive Session:
 - a. 24 Old Stagecoach Road – Pending Litigation
 - b. Keeler House – Negotiation with Owner’s Attorney
 - c. Boy Scout Property Litigation
 - d. Town Use of Open Space

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:10 p.m. and go into Executive Session with Dr. Oko, Mr. Orlan, and Mr. Brewster invited to attend to discuss: 1) 24 Old Stagecoach Road – Pending Litigation; 2) Keeler House – Negotiation with Owner’s Attorney; 3) Boy Scout Property Litigation; and 4) Town Use of Open Space. Motion passed 4-0. The Executive Session was adjourned at 11:05 p.m. and the Board of Selectmen Meeting was called back to order.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 11:05 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson

Attachment 1

**RESOLUTION OF THE
TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

I, Barbara Serfilippi, do hereby certify that I am the Town Clerk of the Town of Ridgefield, a municipal corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut having its principal place of business at 400 Main Street, that I am the keeper of the corporate records and seal. That the following is a true and correct copy of resolutions duly adopted and ratified by the Ridgefield Board of Selectmen at its meeting on October 29, 2008 at which a quorum was present and acting throughout, and that the resolution has not been modified, rescinded or revoked and is at present in full force and effect.

RESOLVED, that the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, be and hereby is authorized to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield a STEAP grant agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of Connecticut for financial assistance to complete various site improvements at the Venus Municipal Building Complex.

MUNICIPALITY FURTHER RESOLVES that it will support the nondiscrimination agreement and warranty under subdivision (1) of Sections 4a-60 and 4a-60a of the Connecticut General Statutes as amended by PA 07-142.

IN ADDITION, that Rudy Marconi, (First Selectman), is hereby authorized to enter into such agreements, contracts and execute all documents necessary to said grant with the State of Connecticut.

IN ADDITION, that Rudy Marconi was elected First Selectman. His term of office began on November 20, 2007 and will continue until November 22, 2011. As the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Town of Ridgefield, and is duly authorized to enter into agreements and contracts on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield.

Dated at Ridgefield, Connecticut this 30th day of October, 2008.

Town Clerk

Barbara Serfilippi