

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – NOVEMBER 19, 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, D. Masters, J. Plock

Absent: B. Manners (due to illness)

Agenda

1. Vendor Permit Application: Enver Ceylan
2. Youth Commission Interview: Sally Andre, Stephanie Cinque
3. EDC Interviews: Mark Robinson, Mark Grindle, Bill Markus, Dan Baransky
4. Land Conservancy Tax Abatement
5. Transfers, Vehicle Use Policy, Chef's Warehouse – Kevin Redmond
6. Community Center Lease – Patrick Walsh
7. Acceptance of MBC Closeout Vote
8. Historic Document Preservation Grant Resolution
9. "Shop Ridgefield" Proclamation
10. Selectman's Report
11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/15/08, 10/29/08

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

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to the Agenda as Item #9a, a discussion of the proposed oil purchase by the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen for Fiscal Year 2010 and set a Special Town Meeting for November 26, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. Motion passed 4-0.

1. Vendor Permit Application: Enver Ceylan

Mr. Ceylan came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his desire for approval of his vendor permit to sell packaged ice cream bars. His son was with Mr. Ceylan serving as interpreter. It is necessary for Mr. Ceylan to be properly licensed, and he has already appeared before the Police Department and the Highway Department for their approval as well. Any individual selling must be listed on the permit. Mr. Ceylan's daughter previously appeared before the BOS and received her approval. Mr. Ceylan indicated that some of the locations where they sell their ice cream include Ballard Park, Great Pond and some of the school playgrounds.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the Vendor Permit for Enver Ceylan for one year until 9/1/09. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Youth Commission Interview: Sally Andre, Stephanie Cinque

Stephanie Cinque came forward to express her interest in serving on the Youth Commission. R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Cinque. She has attended several meetings of the Youth Commission. As a social worker, she has focused her efforts on the area of juvenile rights. She has lived in Ridgefield since third grade, married a Ridgefield local and is now raising her family in Ridgefield. She works as a juvenile social worker for the Division of Public Defender Services in Danbury, and has been involved with Ridgefield youth who come thru the court.

J. Plock asked Ms. Cinque if she had the time to serve on the Commission? She indicated that she would be permitted to leave work to attend meetings. Her job is connected to the purpose of the Youth Commission. A. Bodner asked what does she consider to be the biggest youth challenge? Ms. Cinque indicated that the lack of education of some of the parents about youth problems such as bullying, drugs, the need for youth to be heard is a big challenge. The town needs to figure out how we are going to deal with drugs.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Stephanie Cinque McInerney to fill a vacancy on the Youth Commission for a two year term. Motion passed 4-0.

Sally Andre came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. R. Marconi read the application letter received from Ms. Andre. She has spoken with Ruth Leibowitz about becoming a member of the Youth Commission. The Andre teenagers have been influenced by Ms. Leibowitz at Wooster School. Ms. Andre has worked as a Ridgefield substitute teacher and was involved in fund raising and parent relations at Wooster School. She has not attended a meeting but read the October minutes on line. She realizes that the Commission needs someone with organization skills. She likes teenagers and likes their friends as well. She believes that youth issues include affluence, free time, vehicle accessibility, and the availability of spending money. Adults need to hear what the youth are saying. She has lived in Ridgefield for the past 16 years. Parents are concerned about the good student and the good athlete syndrome, but are missing concern for the good citizen. We need to find venues for the youth to get together; get them involved in community-sponsored events. It was agreed that Ms. Andre should first attend a couple of the Youth Commission meetings and determine if it is an organization that she would suit her background and focus. She should then return to the BOS if she is still interested in becoming involved with the Youth Commission.

3. EDC Interviews: Mark Robinson, Mark Grindle, Bill Markus, Dan Baransky
There are currently two vacancies on the Economic Development Commission (EDC). The following applicants have already been interviewed: Frank Lowe, Magdalena Fincham, Chris Fisher, and Stephen Hackenburg. Four additional interviews were scheduled for this evening.

Mark Robinson came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. He stressed the need for an Economic Plan and suggested sponsoring roundtables to make this happen: 1) business owner's input, 2) retailers including suggestions for the development of the Branchville area, and 3) landlords and developers input. Mr. Robinson is a 16-year Ridgefield resident and has a strong interest in contributing to the economic vitality of the Town. He has attended an EDC meeting and has met with EDC members outside of the formal meeting.

A. Bodner inquired as to his ideas for a "path to economic success"? Mr. Robinson indicated that he has professional strengths relative to the planning process and is accomplished at reducing something down to the essential items. D. Masters commented on how it takes time to get from "here to there" and the BOS recognizes this. What is Mr. Robinson's vision of economic development? Mr. Robinson replied that the economy will have its effect on Main St., but what about Route 7 development, how do we market the State of CT for their assistance to bring businesses to Ridgefield. Mr. Robinson's stated how his background is in marketing, identification of attributes, how to make Ridgefield attractive to someone. He used to own a business in Ridgefield and knows what it is like to be a small business owner. There are lots of less than 10-people businesses in Ridgefield. How can we make Ridgefield visible in a state having economic problems?

Mark Grindle came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. His career has been in IT consulting to large companies such as Hewlett-Packard, General Electric. D. Masters inquired as to Mr. Grindle's vision, what is the role of the EDC? Mr. Grindle responded that one must first understand what is the goal for the Town? The downtown area has its own personality, but there are some vacancies. The Route 7 corridor is undeveloped. A. Bodner asked if Mr. Grindle feels that the EDC's mission is to follow or to lead? He feels that the EDC should come forward with a proposal and not just take direction. He has been a Ridgefield resident for five years. Is there any particular area that he'd like to focus on? Mr. Grindle replied that the downtown area is so important – we need to keep the small shops here. He has not attended any meetings but has met with Mr. Levine.

Bill Markus came forward to discuss his candidacy with the BOS. Mr. Markus has an entrepreneurial background. He has lived and worked in Europe and has been involved with the same business for forty years. His skills include working with people, project management, putting together a plan, and how to proceed with a project. He sold the company last year and is now retired. He was out of town for the last EDC meeting, but has met with Rick O'Brien. Mr. Markus feels that the EDC must first put together a plan and work with the various Town committees – bring them into the process. What are the goals and how do we accomplish them?

Mr. Bodner asked Mr. Markus for his thoughts on what areas are the most important. Route 7 needs to be developed. People can commute to Ridgefield to work and not all the way to Norwalk and Stamford. He feels he can “sell the Town” and would like to have the opportunity to do so. He was an implementer of change in his company over the years.

Dan Baransky was not present.

Susan Constantino has also expressed interest in serving on the EDC.

Bob Knight came forward to represent the EDC. Rick O'Brien and Paul Levine were not able to attend this evening. Mr. Knight commented on how the EDC is a very cohesive group; they work very well together. They need to create a plan for conservation and development. They work intensively between the meetings. They communicate back and forth and research is being done. They would like to have an attorney as part of the Commission to help deal with land use problems. Someone with marketing skills would also be helpful. A corporate background is helpful also. D. Masters asked if the EDC should be expanded from five to seven members? Mr. Knight responded that five work well together – would we be as nimble with a membership of seven? Everyone has a niche. When members move away, we are crippled. A membership of three is much too small. It is important to have members who have the time to devote to the Commission. Someone with Hartford experience would also be helpful in seeking incentives from the State.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to appoint Bill Markus and Chris Fisher to fill the current two vacancies on the Economic Development Commission (EDC) for the one year term renewable 7/1/09. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing and a Town Meeting for December 10, 2008, at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, for the proposed expansion of the membership of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) from five (5) to seven (7) members. Motion passed 4-0.

4. Land Conservancy Tax Abatement

A memo dated 11/3/08 has been received from Douglas Martin, President of the Land Conservancy requesting that the outstanding taxes in years 2004-2007 totaling \$2345.68 be abated. This parcel of .340 acres is to be donated to the Land Conservancy by the Di Napoli Development Corporation. The Land Conservancy will provide to Ridgefield a drainage easement once the transaction is finalized with the Di Napoli Development Corporation. R. Marconi read the November 4, 2008, memo received from Al Garzi, Tax Assessor stating agreement with the proposal to abate the taxes and request as a condition of the abatement that the Land Conservancy of Ridgefield quit claim a drainage easement to the Town for future use if needed.

A. Bodner expressed his objection to abatement of the taxes. He feels they should be paid. This property was offered to the Land Conservancy a couple of years ago, but nothing was done to make it happen. In the meantime, the taxes keep adding up. J. Plock indicated a desire to abate the taxes for just the present year. A. Bodner indicated that he did not want to argue over the taxes for the current year. D. Masters inquired as to whether Di Napoli would still donate the property if the taxes are not abated? R. Marconi will contact them to determine if that is really the case.

5. Transfers, Vehicle Use Policy, Chef's Warehouse – Kevin Redmond

Transfers - The proposed Intra-Departmental Transfer is relative to the 2009 budget for the Police Department which includes \$54,434 related to the purchase of two police cruisers and the lease of one unmarked police vehicle. The Police Department is \$4,000 short as the estimated cost is \$58,434.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200903 Intra-Departmental Fund Transfer as requested by the Police Department to cover the increased costs of \$4,000 above what has been budgeted, related to the purchase of two police cruisers and the lease of one unmarked police vehicle, plus the costs associated with reinstalling the lights for the unmarked car. The Memo provides for Increase #10401-5341, Police Cruisers Operating Expenditure by \$4,000 and a Decrease of #10401-53310, Uniforms in the amount of \$2,000 and a Decrease of #10401-53400, Equipment Replacements in the amount of \$2,000. Motion passed 4-0.

Vehicle Use Policy -

With the current downturn in the economy, all expenses are being reviewed very carefully. It was agreed to put this item on the agenda for December 10 and invite Peter Hill and Paul Roche to attend to discuss. A lot of mileage is being put on vehicles driven to and from home for "emergency preparedness". Is this really necessary?

Chef's Warehouse –

K. Redmond indicated that he had reconciled numbers with Chef's Warehouse. An additional abatement for four months is being requested. Once the abatement period is completed, the Venus Building would generate about \$500,000/year in income, with expenses of approximately \$250,000 to cover the cost of water, electricity, oil and Parks & Rec plowing.

\$196,000 is unspent from the original roof project. This could be used for Phase 2. Transfers have to go to a Town Meeting. A. Bodner inquired as to the status of the roof replacement. It had previously been agreed to patch as needed to hold off for the present, and later add this expense into a bonding cycle. The worst part of the roof has been redone. An engineer will look at the

roof to ensure that the repairs will hold for the next year or so. This expenditure can then be part of the 5 year capital plan but will not be part of this year's operating budget.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to set a Town Meeting for December 10, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room to approve the proposed transfer of \$196,000. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to set a Town Meeting for December 10, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room to extend the Chef's Warehouse, Venus Building abatement for four additional months. Motion passed 4-0.

6. Community Center Lease – Patrick Walsh

Patrick Walsh, Dan O'Brien and Scott Schneider, representatives of the Community Center Board of Directors, came forward to discuss the Community Center lease which expires on April 13, 2009. The Board of Directors is requesting some revisions to the lease – make it an "operating agreement". A lease is not the appropriate document as the building is a Town property. The Town needs to participate in the support and upkeep of the building. Mr. Walsh stated that we need to carefully look at how the Community Center should be managed going forward – how is this historic building being used by the Town and the public? The Board of Directors has been successful these past 4-5 years and they have raised approximately \$2 million with about one-half coming from the donations of 50-75 individuals, Board members and corporate sponsorships. The building is rented out for catering events most weekends. They do not see the need for Town dollars in this budget cycle or the next. The Community Center Board is proposing an operating agreement with the Town; the Board will continue to be responsible for fund raising efforts and grant applications. The BOS should be the last line of defense if something financial happens to the building. A. Bodner inquired if the BOS has received the Community Center's financials in the past. The answer is no.

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D. Masters commented on how many organizations raise funds to maintain the Community Center building. An historic building like this one requires constant upkeep. It is the focal point of Ridgefield's Main Street.

R. Marconi will contact Town Counsel and have them work with Patrick Walsh and the Community Center Board on an operating agreement and to identify what changes need to be made, or modify the existing lease to fit the Community Center Board's requests. A. Bodner commented on how this is a much bigger issue here than just a renewal of the lease; it is a potential shift in responsibility. Should the Town have a line item to support the building? This will not fit into this year's budget nor next year's as well. Should support for the building be on the operations side or the capital expenditure side?

7. Acceptance of MBC Closeout Vote

The Master Building Committee met on November 15, 2008, and voted to approve for payment the outstanding invoices and approved the final two projects (RHS and ERMS) for completion and recommended to the BOS acceptance of all projects as being complete.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the Master Building Committee request to allocate the final balance of approximately \$47,000 to address the RHS leaking sprinkler system problem. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the acceptance of the Master Building Committee Closeout of the final two projects (RHS and ERMS) for completion and forward this Closeout Request to the Board of Finance for their approval. Motion passed 4-0.

8. Historic Document Preservation Grant Resolution

A November 7, 2008, memo has been received from Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk, indicating that the Town has been approved again for the Historic Documents Preservation Grant in the amount of \$7,000. These two resolutions are needed for the signing of the grant contract and for the payment to be processed.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a resolution that “Rudolph P. Marconi, First Selectman, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this municipality a contract with the Connecticut State Library for an Historic Documents Preservation Grant.” Motion passed 4-0.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a resolution that “the Town of Ridgefield, hereby adopts as its policy to support the nondiscrimination agreements and warranties required under Connecticut General Statutes 4a-60(a)(1) and 4a-60a(a)(1), as amended in State of Connecticut Public Act 07-245 and sections 9(a)(1) and 10(a)(1) of Public Act 07-142.” Motion passed 4-0.

9. “Shop Ridgefield” Proclamation

Ridgefield residents are being encourage to especially “Shop Ridgefield” during the month of December 2008. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the “Shop Ridgefield” Proclamation for the month of December 2008. Motion passed 4-0.**

9a. Set Town Meeting – Proposed Oil Purchase

The BOS and the Board of Education would like to have permission to lock-in an oil purchase for Fiscal Year 2010 when the price appears to be at its lowest point. A sub-committee on energy has been set up to find ways to save energy dollars with both the Town and Board of Education buildings.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve an oil purchase contract in conjunction with the Board of Education for Fiscal Year 2010 in the amount of \$850,000 to be able to take advantage of the lower oil pricing and to set a Special Town Meeting for 9:00 a.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room for approval of such, contingent upon the prior approval of the Board of Finance. Motion passed 4-0.

10. Selectman’s Report

- Resignation from the Design Committee – Phil Esser is moving to NYC
- Resignation from the Ridgefield Prevention Council – Grace D’Onofrio
- Resignation from the Insurance Risk Committee – P. Yeager
- Two resignations from the Ridgefield Arts Council
- Keeler House update – R. Marconi met with Mr. & Mrs. Martinson and J. Frey. The Martinsons tried to save this home two years ago and did not hear back from the town. They want the house moved down the street and the property left vacant next door. They want the public to know that they are working on saving this historic home. They would

like the taxes abated for the last two years and a refund of the dollars spent on the asbestos removal.

- Cell tower locations – researching locations and waiting to hear back from the cell phone companies
- Post Office parking expansion – The Post Office has asked the Town to go ahead and draft the agreement regarding the saving of the Cummings House as Sunrise Cottage #2 and expansion of the Post Office parking.
- Commuter Parking Lot has been set up by the Dog Park. The first day 18 cars were parked there. A. Bodner asked if the State of New York can contribute toward paving of this lot? Can we charge for parking permits? The Police Department is doing a license plate survey. Need to revisit the issue of possible parking fees at the Branchville Station.
- Jackie Hodges, resident, commented on how the residents of congregate housing are being back-charged for legal fees incurred relative to issues during renovation, including paint fumes. J. Frey has been consulted regarding this issue.

11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/15/08, 10/29/08

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the October 15, 2008 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0. J. Plock abstained as she was not present at the October 15 meeting.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the October 29, 2008 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0. J. Plock abstained as she was not present at the October 29 meeting.

A. Bodner moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:20 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson