

PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING
DECEMBER 5, 2007

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

Public Hearing

*Notice is hereby given that a **Public Hearing** will be held on December 5, 2007, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut with regard to a grant by the Town of Ridgefield of a utility easement on Prospect Street to AT&T for telephone purposes.*

Board of Selectmen Agenda (immediately following Public Hearing)

1. Recognition of Boys' 2007 Soccer Team – State Champions
2. Economic Development Commission Interviews: Bill Maxwell, Tom Hayes, Ken Treschitta
3. Reappointment of Peter Killie, Constable
4. Approval of 2008 Meeting Schedule
5. Tasers
6. Selectman's Report
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/14/07, 11/17/07 (special mtg.), 11/19/07
8. Golf Committee Report – Proposed Deer Hunt Expansion
9. Possible Executive Session: Pine Mountain Boy Scout Property

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 P.M. B. Manners indicated concern about the wording of the agreement for the easement – too general rather than being specific to only this telephone terminal at this particular location. The 8-24 approved by Planning & Zoning provides for an easement on Town property for this specific location. These comments will be passed on to AT&T for a change in the wording of the agreement. The next step is to set a Town Meeting date.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the easement agreement with modifications and set a Town Meeting for January 9, 2008 relative to the Prospect Street Easement on Town Property for AT&T, File #2007-095-REF. Motion passed 4-0.

R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing at 7:42 p.m. and called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order.

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to accept the recommendation of the Fire Commission and appoint Mr. Ryan Eckhoff to fill the current vacancy on the Fire Department. Motion passed 3-0. (D. Masters out of the room during the vote).

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to accept the recommendation of the Fire Commission and appoint Mr. Nicholas D'Angelo to fill an upcoming vacancy should the position become available between December 5, 2007 and January 15, 2008. Motion passed 4-0.

1. Recognition of Boys' 2007 Soccer Team – State Champions

R. Marconi welcomed the 2007 Boys' Soccer Team to the BOS Meeting and offered the Town's congratulations on their recent victory as Class LL State champions and their winning season of 18-2-3, the first Boys' Soccer crown since 1984. Coach Phil Bergen and Team Captains, Paul Sanderude and Connor Walsh, came forward to represent the team. Coach Bergen commented on how this victory was all the more special to him as he had played on Ridgefield's high school soccer team 24 years ago. Even though Coach Bergen grew up in Europe, his senior year was at Ridgefield High School. R. Marconi read the citation presented to the team. Sixteen of the team members are seniors and thus will not be returning next year.

2. Economic Development Commission Interviews: Bill Maxwell, Tom Hayes, Ken Treschitta

Bill Maxwell came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and discuss his interest in serving on the EDC. R. Marconi read the September 29 letter received from Mr. Maxwell indicating how he has served on the Board of Directors of the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce and is currently on the Leadership Advisory Board of the Ridgefield Playhouse and the Corporate Educational Board of Manhattanville College. He has also served a two-year term as Chairperson of the Danbury Business School Collaborative and on its Executive Board for six years. He stated how he has a "keen interest in the economic development and success of this region of Connecticut.

D. Masters welcomed Mr. Maxwell's interest in serving on the EDC and commented on his "wonderful, optimistic" letter and wishes he could do something as well with economic development on the State level. A. Bodner asked Mr. Maxwell if he has the time and availability for the EDC responsibilities? The response was yes. His career was in human resources. He was General Manager of a business unit for a training and cross-cultural business. Mr. Bodner asked Mr. Maxwell if he had any ideas for grass-root growth opportunities for Ridgefield? Bill's response was that large physical spaces are not necessary for E-based companies such as those in Silicon Valley. B. Manners commented on Mr. Maxwell's great background.

R. Marconi inquired as to how does Ridgefield compete with the likes of Danbury and Stamford who hire professional economic developers? Mr. Maxwell indicated that Ridgefield needs to "segment" – look for a different niche than Danbury. We don't have manufacturing space. Individuals working at home doesn't help Ridgefield's tax base; we need companies located here. Mr. Maxwell pointed out Ridgefield's location and accessibility as positives.

R. Marconi pointed out that the Board has already interviewed two other candidates and has two others to interview as well. There is one vacancy currently on the Economic Development Commission and another one coming up shortly. B. Manners pointed out how other Boards and Commission need members as well. Mr. Treschitta was not able to be present this evening.

Tom Hayes came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his interest in serving on the Economic Development Commission. Mr. Hayes indicated how he is an e-business entrepreneur and has built three businesses from the ground up, becoming a millionaire by the age of 29. He knows how to produce results on a shoestring. He is part of the NYC financial community and would like to see the encouragement of private equity groups, hedge funds, etc. to locate in Ridgefield, similar to what has happened in Greenwich and New Canaan. Ridgefield is a great place to live for families and working close to home is a big attraction. Ridgefield needs to create a tax-friendly environment to encourage start-ups. Higher income earners in town trickles

down to shopkeepers, landscapers, etc., etc. and increased home values. A. Bodner pointed out how rebates can only be made on property taxes; we cannot rebate hedge funds.

B. Manners asked Mr. Hayes if has spoken with anyone on the EDC? His response was no – he saw the ad on-line. Ms. Manners commented on Mr. Hayes’ “wonderful energy” and encouraged him to participate on other Boards and Commissions if he is not selected for the EDC.

3. Reappointment of Peter Killie, Constable

Mr. Killie’s name inadvertently wasn’t on the constable reappointment list approved at the previous BOS meeting. He especially oversees the Shadow Lake property. **B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to reappoint Peter Killie as Constable. Motion passed 4-0.**

4. Approval of 2008 Meeting Schedule

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to accept the Board of Selectmen & Fire Commission 2008 Calendar as presented. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Tasers

D. Masters requested that this subject be placed on the agenda as emails have been received from concerned residents about the Ridgefield Police being able to purchase tasers because of a gift to do so from an anonymous donor. This is a subject that the BOS wants to have discussed out in the open. Ms. Masters commented on how citizens are asking what they can do about this situation? The even bigger topic is the idea of private funds leading public policy – policy that has impact on the entire town. D. Masters pointed out how individual residents are afraid to speak out against the Police Department. The Police Department, like all departments, has to work thru the annual budget process. The Police Commission is involved in all other Police Department issues. Concerns can be conveyed to the BOS who will, in turn, convey the concerns to the Commission. Ms. Masters pointed out how Ridgefield is not a metropolitan city. Our Police Department currently is well supplied with adequate weapons – batons, mace and guns. In her opinion, tasers are not necessary. It was pointed out that campaign dollars have to be disclosed; how can a donation for tasers be anonymous? Donations to social services should not be discouraged, but this is a different kind of donation.

B. Manners indicated that J. Plock (absent this evening) supports the right of the Police Department to purchase their own equipment, but does not approve of private donations being used for controversial items which have been previously discussed and the decision made to not put these items into the budget. R. Marconi indicated that a check for \$9,634.90 was written to specifically cover the cost of the taser purchase, and he feels that it is appropriate for the Police Department to have tasers if they have determined the need for such. Tasers are not as dangerous as a gun and may well assist an officer with a difficult arrest and prevent personal injury.

Andy Bodner commented on how there is obviously disagreement on this issue. The negatives of taser use are often highlighted. If an officer has to choose between using his gun or a taser, a taser would be better. R. Marconi feels that the use of tasers should be a Police Commission issue. D. Masters commented on how the Police Commission should recognize that they need to do “damage control” – they need to do a public relations campaign to put the public at ease regarding this issue and the public’s concern about expressing opposition to Police Department issues.

Elana Yaghsizian, Peaceable St. – expressed concern about the use of tasers. She is not opposed to the use of tasers as such, but the Police Department needs to communicate what situations would result in the use of this weapon. The public needs to know what the guidelines are. R.

Marconi replied that a letter has been received from the Chairman of the Police Commission regarding their policy on the use of tasers. He will give a copy of the letter to Ms. Yaghsizian and others who wish a copy. She thinks citizens should have the opportunity to say what tools the Police can use.

Betsy Reid, Great Hill Rd. – has written a letter in opposition to the use of tasers. R. Marconi read her letter. She feels this weapon presents an enormous potential for abuse.

6. Selectman's Report

- Email received from Jim Leahy , regarding Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. R. Marconi read the email detailing the history of this holiday. B. Manners announced the upcoming Memorial Lighting in Ballard Park to which the community and the BOS are invited.
- Resignations from the Parking Authority – Richard Huntington and Michael Kaufman. An advertisement to fill the vacancies will be put in the press and on-line.
- Community Billboard design – R. Marconi working with Betty Brosius and Jake Muller on this project with agreement on three locations: Across from ROAR, Parks & Recreation, and in front of the Library. A map of these locations is available and is being sent to P&Z for administrative review.
- Low interest loan for the water line to Scott-Barlow will have to be put into the budget. There have been eleven bids on this \$9.6 million offering.
- Library building project presentation has been deferred as they are coming up with a new plan and new numbers. D. Masters stressed the need for the new proposal to be submitted before the end of February if it is to be considered for the upcoming budget discussions. The taxpayers need to be know ahead of time what is being proposed. All capital requests need to be submitted to aid in prioritization.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/14/07, 11/17/07 (special mtg.), 11/19/07

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the November 14, 2007 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the November 17, 2007 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the November 19, 2007 Budget Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education and the Board of Finance. Motion passed 4-0.

8. Golf Committee Report – Proposed Deer Hunt Expansion

Ed Tyrrell reported on the Golf Committee's meeting regarding the possible use of the Golf Course for bow deer hunting during the month of January 2008. Tom Belote, Chairman of the Deer Implementation Management Committee, requested permission to apply for a sharpshooter permit from the DEP should there be a desire to continue the hunt on the Golf Course into

February, depending on the results from the bow hunt in January. It will take awhile to receive this permit, and thus the application process needs to be started immediately.

Tony Steger commented on how the deer population on the Golf is much worse in the past five years plus the resultant Lyme Disease problem for golfers and employees. He is in favor of the hunt. The hunting area is contiguous to public space hunt areas along the corridor bordering N. Salem, and is not along the 18th fairway.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to permit bow hunting on the Ridgefield Golf Course for the month of January 2008. Motion passed 3-1. B. Manners voted in opposition.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the application to the DEP for a sharpshooter permit to continue hunting on the Golf Course subject to further discussion with the Golf Committee at their meeting on Monday, December 10, 2007, and an analysis to see if the archery program on the Golf Course in the month of January 2008 meets their goals. Motion passed 3-1. B. Manners voted in opposition.

9. Possible Executive Session: Pine Mountain Boy Scout Property

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:20 p.m. and go into Executive Session to discuss the Pine Mountain Boy Scout Property with Dr. Ben Oko, Chairman of the Conservation Commission invited to participate. Motion passed 4-0. The Executive Session closed at 9:50 p.m. and R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting back to order.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:50 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson