

Town of Ridgefield
Parking Authority Meeting
April 20, 2023 – 8:00 a.m.
Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT
MEETING MINUTES - APPROVED

Members present:

J. Wilmot, E. Burns, M. Recck

Members absent:

None

Present: L. Yarrish, Parking Enforcement Officer

S. Dornfeld, Attorney, Parking appeals hearing officer

Chairman Recck called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

1. Approval of minutes from 3/16/23. Mr. Recck moved, and Ms. Wilmot seconded, approval of minutes for 3/16/23. Motion passed 3 – 0.
2. Mr. Recck welcomed Andrea Beebe, a Ridgefield resident who lives on Main Street and serves as the Chairman of the Ridgefield Commission on Aging. She explained that she has observed a number of delivery vehicles parked in the new handicap space in front of 383 Main Street (the former Deborah Ann's location). This situation is due to the elimination of the loading zone in front of the Ridgefield Hardware and the Addressi block. The delivery drivers are under time pressures to make their deliveries, in particular UPS and FedEx. Ms. Burns offered to discuss the situation with her UPS and FedEx Ground drivers to make them aware and suggest that they park on Bailey Avenue or behind the hardware store or the Addressi block and walk their deliveries from those locations. It is recognized that without the loading zone, the options for deliveries to businesses on Main Street, in particular in the block south of Catoonah Street, are limited. The PA members thanked Ms. Beebe for bringing this situation to our attention.
3. Parking Appeals discussion. Ms. Dornfeld discussed the changes made by the state legislature in Public Act 19-119 regarding penalties for parking in a handicap space without a permit. It was initially understood to have been raised to \$250. However, upon further research, Ms. Dornfeld determined that the \$250 is not the minimum mandated by state law. The law actually reads: "Any person who violates any provision of this section **for which a penalty of fine is not otherwise provided** shall, for a first violation, be subject to a fine of two hundred fifty dollars." (emphasis added). Ms. Dornfeld stated that since our parking regulations state a penalty of \$150 for such a violation, that we have the option to keep it at \$150 or raise it to \$250. After some discussion, it was decided that \$150 was a sufficient deterrent, so the fine will remain at \$150. There has also been a lot of confusion with the signage installed by the DOT contractor, which originally said \$250, but now say \$150. The ticket issued says \$150. Once the Main Street project is completed, the town will reinstall its own blue background signs and remove the state's white background signs.

L. Fernandez (Ridgefield HR Dept) also joined the meeting to discuss the signage issues. She will contact the company that makes them for the town to ensure they say \$150. Ms.

Fernandez also reported that the Justice Department has been conducting an audit of the town's compliance with the ADA, and that some of the private lots that do not have license agreements with the town are not in compliance because they cannot rely on the handicap spaces in adjacent lots to meet the ADA requirements.

4. CVS/USPS lots update. Mr. Recck requested and received from Mr. Marconi all the email communications between the town and the USPS regarding the Catoonah Street facility. The USPS contact name and email address from whom G. Morris (ECDC) learned that they rejected the town's proposal was not included in what Mr. Recck received. Ms. Burns will contact ECDC Chair G. Norwitt to see if she can provide this information.
5. Governor Street to Bailey Avenue sidewalk discussion. Mr. Recck received an email from Mr. Marconi indicating that the RVNA is amenable to this project. A specific plan, based on Ms. Burns' sketch and Google map, needs to be prepared and an agreement negotiated. Mr. Recck will continue to monitor progress and follow up, with the goal of having the sidewalks installed before next winter.
6. Parking fines data. Mr. Recck shared data from Ms. Fernandez regarding parking violations issued in a one month period ended April 17. There were 102 tickets issued for violations, and 48 fees paid for daily parking at the Branchville Train station. Of the 102 violations, 57 were for parking over the time limit, 18 for parking over the line, and just 6 for parking in a handicap space. All violation categories have declined from the last report.
7. Other business.
 - a. Ms. Burns pointed out that we had voted at our March meeting to change the number of permits to be sold in the Bailey Avenue lot, and to discuss the town employee parking situation with town hall. Ms. Wilmot will contact Ms. Fernandez to schedule a meeting to discuss the permit issue soon, before the sale of permits for the July 1 – December 31 period.
 - b. Ms. Burns inquired about the status of the EV charging stations that were planned for the Governor Street lot. Mr. Marconi indicated in an email to Mr. Recck that Mr. Muller had done a layout for the conduit for the charging stations, but that they town would be seeking grant funding to pay for them. Ms. Burns suggested that Level One stations might make more sense for the Governor Street lot since people using that lot are normally there for 8 hours and are unlikely to move their car once it is parked. Level One chargers use existing electrical capacity, require no upkeep of charging cables and the cost is much lower than for Level Two chargers. She will follow up with the town on this issue.
8. Adjournment. Ms. Burns moved, and Mr. Recck seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:21 a.m. Motion approved 3 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Burns