

Town of Ridgefield
Parking Authority Special Meeting
Thursday, June 7, 2018 – 8:00 a.m.
Town Hall Small Conference Room
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Members present:

J. Wilmot, E. Burns, S. Lussier, R. Murphy

Others present:

K. Knoche, J. Beckman (Parking enforcement agents)

Willing (Wing) Biddle, President & CEO of Urstadt Biddle Properties (UBP)

Chairman Wilmot called the meeting to order at 8.05 am. [Note: due to a lack of a key to Town Hall, the meeting moved to Southport Engineering's offices on Bailey Avenue until 8:30 am when Town Hall opened].

1. Discussion with invited attendee Wing Biddle re: 426 & 470 Main Street.

Mr. Biddle discussed his company's recent acquisitions of 426 Main Street (where Baja Cucina recently opened) and 470 Main Street (Silver Lining, etc.) He explained that 470 Main Street is a commercial condominium that includes the large brick building on the corner of Main and Prospect, and the 1-story building on Prospect Street known as Yankee Ridge. UBP is now the 52% owner of the condominium, and thus has majority voting rights. UBP is also the condominium manager. He indicated that they had recently held their first condo association meeting since his company's acquisition last year. There was a general discussion of the parking lot that belongs to the association and the "Morganti blocks" which were installed many decades ago in the ramp between that lot and the upper lot behind 440 Main Street. Ms. Burns suggested that the removal of those blocks would take cars off of Main Street, as those who wanted to park behind 440 Main or in the Bailey Avenue lot could enter off of Prospect Street. The thought was that, if they were removed, the ramp would be one-way in from Prospect Street, and cars would exit onto Bailey Avenue. The ramp is wide enough to accommodate some parallel parking spaces as well.

Ms. Wilmot asked if Mr. Biddle would be interested in including the Yankee Ridge lot in the town's parking authority, with signage and patrol. It was suggested that, since many people in town, including employees of downtown businesses frequently park there without permission, putting the lot into the town's authority would allow time limits to be enforced, whereas now, there is no enforcement. It might be better for the Yankee Ridge businesses, since we believe they most likely would not want to get

involved directly with patrolling and towing of vehicles. Mr. Biddle will discuss with the other owners and/or tenants of Yankee Ridge, and will let us know.

Mr. Biddle also noted that his acquisition of 426 Main came with approximately 12 parking spaces, and that he proposed putting those 12 spaces under Parking Authority control in exchange for 12 hang-tags for his tenants in that building. Ms. Burns asked if he wanted those tenants to park in those spaces, and he said no, they should be used for patrons of the businesses. This raised a general discussion of employee parking, which should be restricted to spaces away from the buildings. It was agreed that Mr. Biddle would check the existing leases for tenants in that building, which includes some office and some residential, to determine what his legal obligations are to those tenants regarding parking.

The issue of hang-tag permits, and window sticker permits, will be discussed further at our next meeting, with a full discussion of the new parking/permitting plan for all lots.

A discussion then followed about the construction schedule for the expansion of the Governor Street lot (probably not until 2019), and the status of proposals for some additional space in the CVS lot and next door to the Post Office. Ms. Wilmot indicated that Benenson (CVS complex owner) entered into a very long lease with the USPS, but did not know how long. Mr. Biddle indicated that he leases to many post offices in other communities, and generally they have 10-year leases. Ms. Wilmot pointed out that the USPS built the building, so it is likely that the lease (which included the vacant lot next door, where the dilapidated home there was torn down) is a long-term land lease. The other area is land behind CVS that is owned by the Ridgefield Housing Authority. Ms. Burns will follow up with Rudy regarding the status of his discussions with the Housing Authority.

2. Continue discussion of new permit system. The current system will continue, although with fewer permits sold for all lots. The plan is to determine how many hang-tags should be issued, how many sticker permits should be sold, and where those with hang-tags and stickers can park. However, until the Governor Street expansion is completed, it was felt that we could not implement a new plan, but that it will be designed. The existing all-day free parking lot on Governor Street is nearly full every day, and will be beyond capacity when the Boys & Girls Club start their summer programs. In the interim, the PA is interested in obtaining an agreement with Shane Casey for the dirt lot at the bottom of Bailey Avenue. Ms. Wilmot will discuss with Mr. Casey and follow up with First Selectman Marconi.

Mr. Beckman explained the new machines they will be using starting sometime in late summer in place of tire chalking. It is essentially a smart phone app with a

place to enter license plate numbers and time (not a reader). The use of this system would prevent people from gaming the system by moving their cars during the day. They would have to move to a different lot to avoid a ticket. Ms. Wilmot expressed concern about this new system, which the PA members were not aware of. Ms. Wilmot and Ms. Burns will schedule a meeting with Laurie Fernandez to discuss.

The next meeting in June will be dedicated to consideration of a new parking plan. Ms. Lussier will make multiple copies of all of the lot maps for use that meeting.

3. Operation of new parking plan for Ballard Park events/CHIRP concerts. Ms. Knoche & Mr. Beckman reported that it went well for the first concert, although it won't really be tested until after school ends, which is when the attendance is greatest. They requested 2 additional informational signs, which will be requested to Laurie. The owner of Ridgefield Wine & Spirits should no longer need to put up his own signs in front of his store since the area is being patrolled and no CHIRP parking is allowed there.
4. Budget Discussion Ballard Park events. It is not known if the funds committed by Dennis DiPinto and Barbara Manners has been received. Ms. Wilmot will follow up with Ms. Fernandez and Mr. DiPinto.
5. Approval of minutes. Motion by Mr. Murphy to approve the minutes of May 1, 2018 as submitted. Seconded by Ms. Wilmot. Approved 4 – 0. Motion by Ms. Burns to approve, seconded by Ms. Lussier to approve the minutes of May 10, 2018. Passed 3–0–1 (Mr. Murphy was absent).
6. Other Business: Ms. Wilmot will again request the new 2 hour signs for the Donnelly lot, as Mr. Murphy indicated they had not yet been installed.

1. Adjournment.

R. Murphy moved, and J. Wilmot seconded a motion to adjourn at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Burns