



**Town of Ridgefield  
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes  
UNAPPROVED  
January 20th, 2021, at 6.30 pm via Zoom**

**Present:** Rudy Marconi (RM), Bob Hebert (BH), Sean Connelly (SC), Maureen Kozlark (MK), Barbara Manners (BM)

**1) Public Comment**

-No Public Comment

**2) Reappointment to the Economic and Community Development Committee**

a. Glori Norwitt

-Rudi Marconi introduced Glori Norwitt to the Board of Selectman. G. Norwitt's term as a member of the ECDC is close to expiring due to only one year. The ECDC is looking to renew her as a member of the ECDC. Some of the work she has done on the ECDC range from helping to sitting at Round Table Discussions that the ECDC hosts to being apart of the Sales Committee that helped non-profit and for-profit businesses figure out what they needed to stay afloat during Covid-19. G. Norwitt stated that she has also been the Secretary of the ECDC since October.

-Bob Hebert thanked Glori Norwitt for all the work she had for the ECDC. B. Hebert stated that he would wholeheartedly support giving G. Norwitt another term as a member of the ECDC.

-Sean Connelly stated he would concur with what Bob Hebert previously stated. S. Connelly asked G. Norwitt what she had learned while being on the ECDC for a year and how she will use that new information to drive herself forward to help the ECDC reach the goals they set out. G. Norwitt responded by saying that she better understands how things work on specifically understanding who to contact for specific resources and even how the ECDC works today and operates. G. Norwitt stated that working with the seven other members on the ECDC and creating an

environment where everyone works well together has been enjoyable.

-Maureen Kozlark stated that she would like to echo what both Sean Connelly and Bob Hebert said. M. Kozlark said she thinks that Glori Norwitt and the ECDC are doing a fantastic job. Also, that if there is anything the Board of Selectman can do to help to reach out.

-Barbara Manners stated that Glori Norwitt is a blessing to the ECDC and the community of Ridgefield. B.

-Rudy Marconi introduced Geoffrey Morris to speak on the half of the ECDC. G. Morris stated that the ECDC was thrilled to have Glori Norwitt on the ECDC. She put in on previous grants and put together guides for people who want to open businesses in Ridgefield.

**Sean Connelly moved to re-appoint Glori Norwitt to the Economic and Community Development Committee. Bob Hebert seconded the motion. (Motion carries 5-0)**

### **3) Reappointment of Historical District Commission**

- a. Mark Blandford
- Rudy Marconi introduced the agenda item of the reappointment of Mark Blandford to the Historical District Commission. R. Marconi introduced Mark Blandford and Daniel O'Brien to the Board of Selectman. Daniel O'Brien stated that Mark Blandford had been an extremely active member of the Historical District Commission. That M. Blandford lives in the Historical District and his Real Estate Development background has been a massive help to the Historical District Commission. That M. Blandford has excellent business sense and has worked well in speaking with planning and zoning commissions. That his knowledge and wherewithal has been of great help. D. Blandford stated he was very impressed with how D. O'Brien runs the commission and is very serious about preserving the town.
- Rudy Marconi asked both Daniel O'Brien and Mark Blandford about the recent zoning legislation coming out and how that legislation affects Historical Districts. D. O'Brien responded, saying he has heard about it could affect Historical Districts. However, he is unsure of the exact legislation. D. O'Brien Anything that puts in place terms where local ordinances can be overruled is undoubtedly not good for the Historic District.

- Maureen Kozlark clarified that Mark Blandford would be staying in the alternate position on the Board of Selectman. M. Blandford stated that this was, in fact, the case. M. Kozlark also inquired about the demolition delay ordinance put in place and if the Historical District Commission was looking to put anything in place. Dan O'Brien responded by saying that the next item the commission is promoting the historical districts throughout town. This advertisement for the Historical Districts would be done through signage. However, at this point, with Covid-19, it would not be introduced as a proposal until September likely.
- Sean Connelly asked if there was anything else Mark Blandford might want to accomplish while on the Historical District Commission. M. Blandford stated that maintaining the character is the most crucial piece to him.
- Bob Hebert asked for a brief background of Mark Blandford. M. Blandford stated he is a Diamond Properties partner based out of Mount Kisco, New York. That he brings more of a general real estate background to the Commission, Bob Hebert mentioned that he hopes the historical district can be a strong voice to going against the legislation being introduced that could override town ordinances.

**Maureen Kozlark moved to re-appoint Mark Blandford to the Historical District Commission. Motion seconded by Barbara Manners. (Motion carries 5-0)**

#### **4) Reappointment Conservation Committee**

- a. Jack S. Kase
- Rudy Marconi introduced the next item, which is the reappointment of Jack Kase to the Conservation Committee. J. Kase stated that the Conservation Committee currently maintains 22%-23% of open space. Their ultimate goal for open space is 30%. J. Kase stated that the Committee is looking for new ways to acquire this land and find land to meet this goal. This due to donations tailing off as years go on.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about the meaning behind the 30% open space goal for the Conservation Commission and what happens after reaching the 30% open land goal. Jack Kase responded by saying the reason behind the goal is to protect that land and ensure that this open space is protected. Rudy Marconi stated that maybe the Conservation Commission might want to increase their goal if the 30% goal is met. J. Kase stated that ultimately that decision would be up to the Board of

Selectman if it would allow the Conservation Committee to expand their goal.

- Sean Connelly asked about what happens when the 30% goal is hit. Finding land and investing land that is adjacent to land that is already owned by the town. Jack Kase stated that the draw of open space is a huge key in how people see Ridgefield. Rudy Marconi stated that he is unsure how easy it will be to get to the 30% goal through relabeling.
- Bob Hebert asked about the relabeling of properties and if they were not to be relabeled open space if there would be a risk of development on the land. Jack Kase said yes, this land could be developed if the land was not relabeled open space.

**Bob Hebert moved to re-appoint Jack S Kase to the Conservation Commission. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. (Motion carries 5-0)**

## **5) Appointment to Commission of Accessibility**

- a. Doctor Kathryn White
- Rudy Marconi introduced Doctor Kathryn White to the Board of Selectman. Donald Ciota stated that the commission is happy to see Dr. White so enthusiastic about joining the commission. She brings a level of insight that is helpful and furthers the discussion. D. Ciota stated he hopes that she will be a worthwhile and long-standing member of the commission. R. Marconi asked Dr. White if she had attendance at any meeting. Dr. White replied that she had been attending commission meetings since last September.
- Maureen Kozlark asked Doctor Kathryn White what area she is specifically looking to get into while on the commission. Dr. White stated her most significant area of interest would be assessing the town and what can be improved to make things more accessible. This being, but not limited to Main Street, playgrounds, and schools within Ridgefield. Dr. White stated her goal was to create a bridge between families with disabilities and the town itself, which could create a network for these people to share their stories.
- Sean Connelly stated he appreciates Doctor Kathryn White being willing to join the commission. S. Connelly asked about the rise playground in Scotland and if this was something that would be expanded upon in Ridgefield. Dr. White

responded by saying that currently, there are some issues in Ridgefield Schools with accessibility to playgrounds. Specifically, the playground at Ridgebury has issues of accessibility at this point. Dr. White stated that other playgrounds suffer from this same problem. That giving possible advising to the Board of Education would be a possibility to make things more accessible. S. Connelly asked about Ridgefield's current projects and if the commission had any thoughts and advisory statements on them. Donald Ciota stated that the commission has put out a survey and that it is finished and will soon be sent out to stakeholders and constituents of the projects. The essential items will be looked at first, and then dates will be set to those to when they will be finished. D. Ciota stated that the repercussions of not doing these things could be vast due to the Department of Justice handling these issues. R. Marconi stated that over time the town has been able to make itself more accessible through various means.

- Bob Hebert stated he hopes the vacancies on the Commission for Accessibility can be filled soon. That he is grateful that she is joining the commission and that any ideas Dr. White has going forward should be brought to the Board of Selectman.

**Barbara Manners moved to appoint Dr. Kathryn White to the Commission for Accessibility. Bob Hebert seconds the motion. (Motion carries 5-0)**

#### **6) NRVt LOTCIP Grant Letter**

- Rudy Marconi introduced the Norwalk River Valley Trail and Local Traffic Capital Improvement Program Grant Letter topic. R. Marconi stated that the town is currently applying for LOTCIP. There are two projects in place that would fall under this grant. There is a current match in place for \$230,000 for the project. R. Marconi stated he is unsure if it is a town commitment or an NRVt commitment acting for the town. The amount might need to be put into the budget with an offset grant for it.

#### **7) Covid Update**

- R. Marconi stated the positivity rate is at 2.1%, which is down overall. Ridgefield has a downward trend in the number of cases per 100,000. R. Marconi stated there is a new variant of Covid-19, and there is an expected spike to happen in March due to this variant. Six feet of social distancing is the minimum, and ten or twelve feet is the recommended. Personal hygiene is of the utmost importance. Ridgefield

has no idea how many vaccinations they will be getting week to week on the vaccination front. R. Marconi stated the RVNA had done a fantastic job in getting this moved forward.

- Rudy Marconi stated that the state has a telephone line to get information about the vaccine. This help system is slowly being put into place and expanded. Ridgefield's Covid testing center transitioned into a vaccination center. Vaccines will be administered Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. People are being recruited to help along the process of scheduling vaccinations. Phase 1B encompasses 1.4 million people in Connecticut. An information video is being put together to help people along and understand the process.
- Bob Hebert asked how many people in Ridgefield has received the vaccine. R. Marconi stated that the RVNA would have completed 1200. However, that is only that site and does not account for other sites like Danbury Hospital.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about a possible contingency plan if vaccines are leftover. Rudy Marconi stated that always having people in the queue is the key to making sure no vaccine is going bad without being used.

## **8) Pura Investigation Update**

- Rudy Marconi Stated that Pura is currently on hold. The Final Briefs are being submitted. An email has been sent out for estimations from the attorney that is representing Ridgefield during the Investigation. The total amount is 18,000 and change for expenses.

## **9) Minutes (11/4/20-11/18/20-12/9/20-1/6/21)**

- **Maureen Kozlark moved to Accept November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Minutes as modified. Sean Connelly seconds the Motion (Motion carries 4-0) Barbara Manners Abstained**
- **Bob Hebert moved to Accept November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Minutes as modified. Barbara Manners seconds the Motion (Motion carries 5-0)**
- **Sean Connelly moved to Accept December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Minutes as modified. Sean Connelly seconds the Motion (Motion carries 5-0)**

- **Bob Hebert moved to Accept January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Minutes as modified. Sean Connelly seconds the Motion (Motion carries 5-0)**

#### **10) Selectman Report**

- Rudy Marconi stated that the initial operating budget request was roll up 4.08% than the Capital came in at just under 10 million dollars. R. Marconi stated that he is meeting with the Police Department and that the Board of Selectman will have a budget report soon.
- Maureen Kozlark mentioned that with the new Covid-19 strain, it is better to be on the safe side and not meet in person for the budget meetings.
- Rudy Marconi stated that voting for the budget will occur in early April after the bond Counselor finalizes it.
- Bob Hebert stated he had heard some frustration about the Eversource increase. Along with other expenses that have recently come out. B. Herbert mentioned that the BOS had no control over this but wanted to bring this to the BOS's attention. Then finally, tax increases have recently occurred due to a business making upgrades. These companies would be looking for a deferment due to not currently having the income for the increased taxes. B. Hebert stated he again wants to bring this to the attention of the BOS.

**Barbara Manners moved to adjourn at 9:01 pm. Maureen Kozlark seconds the motion. (Motion carries 5-0)**