

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting & Budget Meeting

Wednesday, February 5, 2020- 7:00pm

Town Hall, (Large Conference Room)

400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut

UNREVISED/UNAPPROVED Minutes

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Hebert, B. Manners, M. Kozlark

Absent: S. Connelly

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Appointments
 - a. Thomas Leonard - Candidate for Pension Commission
3. Proposed Demolition Ordinance
4. Addressi Center Parking Agreement Discussion/Possible Vote
5. Love Mgmt Parking Agreement Discussion/Possible Vote
6. Tax Collector Refunds
7. Approval of Minutes - January 22, 2020
8. Selectman's Report

Budget Agenda

1. Ridgefield Fire Department Budget
2. General Budget Discussion
3. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen's Meeting to order at 7:30pm.

1. Public Comment

Sharon Dunphy, President of the Ridgefield Historical Society - submitted a letter in support of the Proposed Demolition Delay Ordinance. The letter highlighted the town's historic charm. It said we have over 500 homes

documented in the Ridgefield Historic Architects Resources Survey. Some of these buildings have stood for over 300 years. An excellent example of preservation is our own 1714 Scott House. Instead of demolishing the building, it was relocated, and repurposed as the Ridgefield Historical Society Headquarters.

Surprisingly, Ridgefield currently has no Demolition Delay Ordinance. Most of the surrounding towns, including Bethel, Brookfield, Darien, Fairfield, Greenwich, New Canaan, Redding, Westport, and Wilton have a Demolition Delay Ordinance. We have already lost many significant structures. If we continue destroying them and altering our street scape, we will lose the ambiance of Ridgefield. As members of the Ridgefield Historical Society, please give us the opportunity to help preserve the historic nature of Ridgefield by voting to approve this Demolition Delay Ordinance.

2. Appointments

a. Thomas Leonard - Candidate for Pension Commission

Mr. Leonard retired from General Electric in 2018, after 25 years as the Director of Government and Employee Benefits Finance. He was responsible for benefits finance, including accounting, and reporting for the company's pension plans, retiree health plans, and savings plans. Prior to his time with GE Mr. Leonard spent twelve years in public accounting with KPMG as a Senior Audit Manager, with responsibilities for various multi-national clients and local municipalities. Mr. Leonard is a graduate of IONA College, and has been a Ridgefield resident for 31 years.

Mr. Leonard is looking to give back to the Town, and with his background he felt that this was the perfect fit.

The BOS and Mr. Leonard discussed the market, as well as the different pension plans the Town employees have.

The BOS then had a discussion about Mr. Leonard with the other candidate who had applied for this position on the Pension Commission. The board felt very fortunate to have two very qualified individuals to choose from. The board discussed ways to use the talents of both individuals, R. Marconi will reach out to the other candidate to explore other areas of interest.

The board decided in favor of Mr. Leonard.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to appoint Thomas Leonard to the Pension Commission. Motion carried 4-0.

3. Proposed Demolition Ordinance

Dan O'Brien, Chair of the Historic District Commission presented the Proposed Demolition Ordinance.

Mr. O'Brien worked very closed with Town Attorney Dave Grogins on the ordinance, along with Jay Celestino, Building Official, Richard Baldelli, Director of Planning & Zoning/Zoning Enforcement Officer and Karen Martin,

Assistant Planner, to make certain that what is in the ordinance mirrors exactly what the Town Department are doing today. The Demolition Delay Provision allows a 90 day delay, for when an historic resource is threatened with demolition. It allows limited time for interested parties to talk to the owners of the property to see if there is some other use of that property or if there is rehabilitation possible. The 90 day delay can not be extended, and shouldn't serve as a hardship to any property owner.

This ordinance is co-sponsored by the Historic District Commission and the Ridgefield Historical Society. It has been reviewed and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission as well as being the number one historic goal in the 2020 POCD.

The BOS suggested revising the language for the amount of the the penalty to reflect the maximum allowed by state statute.

B. Hebert inquired as to how long it normally takes to execute a demolition permit. The building department has an extensive list of requirements in order to obtain a demolition permit. Once that permit is issued you can demolish the building that same day. With the proposed demolition delay ordinance, an objection would have to be filed within 30 days from the date of the permit application acceptance by the building department. This shall delay the issuance of the demolition permit for a period of 90 days from the receipt of the initial written objection.

There was discussion regarding the properties that are not within the purview of the Historic District Commission but are part of the Historic Resource Inventory. There are four or five other historic districts in Town not protected by the Historic District Commission. Documentation should be gathered on these properties, so that everyone is aware of them. It was suggested that this information be included on the Assessor's Field Cards/Deeds to the properties.

There was discussion in regards to more specific details of the ordinance. The Demolition Ordinance will go before the Town for a Public Hearing followed by a Town Meeting on March 4, 2020.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to bring the Demolition Ordinance to a Public Hearing followed by a Town Meeting on March 4, 2020. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Addressi Center Parking Agreement Discussion/Possible Vote

Jessica Wilmot, Chairman of the Parking Authority was present to discuss the Addressi Center Parking Agreement. Ms. Addressi requested 41 landlord permits for 30 parking spaces. The Town countered with leaving 16 of the spaces as no-permit parking. Ms. Addressi decided to withdraw the request for lease, and is not going to have the Town oversee the parking lot. The Town signage has been taken down in the Addressi lot, and has been replaced with their own two-hour parking limit signs. The BOS will send a letter to Ms. Addressi verifying acceptance of the termination.

5. Love Mgmt Parking Agreement Discussion/Possible Vote

Jessica Wilmot, Chairman of the Parking Authority informed the BOS that Sandy Heaslip, Landlord of 378 Main Street, LLC is requesting 23 landlord permits out of 24 parking spaces. There are eight, one-bedroom apartments above the retail space, she currently gives them 6 permits, 3 to each retail space all of which would receive 2 parking permits. The BOS discussed the possibility of assigning at least 6 spots for customers of the retail establishments. Ms. Wilmot felt that might be a possibility.

Ms. Wilmot felt that Ms. Heaslip's situation was a little different since none of the employees are allowed to park in the lot, and the tenants living in the apartments are generally not home during the day. The BOS discussed this with Ms. Wilmot and decided to approve the one year license agreement with the condition of the 6 spot signage.

M. Kozlark motion and B. Manners seconded the motion to approve the License Agreement for 378 Main Street aka Parking Lot#4 with Love Management, for a one year term. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Tax Collector Refunds

The Tax Collector Refunds as submitted were \$9,986.81. The refunds are for cars that were traded in and/or sold while the taxpayer had paid for the full year of taxes. Residents get a refund of what they overpaid.

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the Tax Collector Refunds in the amount of \$9,986.81. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Approval of Minutes- January 22, 2020

The minutes were not included in the packet, therefore the approval of the minutes was postponed.

8. Selectmen's Report

Crosswalk Request on 35

R. Marconi reported that a resident of Fox Hill requested a crosswalk on Route 35 near the Parks & Recreation Center. There was discussion regarding the safety of putting in a crosswalk mid-block crosswalk on Route 35, Route 35 is a State Highway, so any crosswalks would be a State discussion.

M. Kozlark brought up the crosswalk by Saint Mary's Church on Catoonah Street. The crosswalk. has been moved to the corner of Catoonah. There is still a crosswalk sign by the old crosswalk. This is potentially dangerous. R. Marconi informed the BOS that Catoonah Street is Route 102, a State Highway.

R. Marconi informed the BOS that a letter has been drafted regarding Quail Ridge sidewalk for the new walking trail extension. This letter is from Attorney Grogins regarding the prosper Prospect Woods Sidewalk:

"I am writing in response to the discussion you & I had with R. Marconi last week regarding two issues concerning the sidewalk adjacent to the Prospect Woods Condominium property. In this regard, as I previously stated the Town ordinance requires the Condominium Association as the adjacent property owners required to keep the sidewalk free

of snow and debris. With regard to repairing the sidewalk, or replacing it the Town is the property owner, and responsible for this work. The only limitation is that the Town has a standard level of construction for this work, anything above it will be the responsibility of the Condominium Association.”

R. Marconi mentioned that whatever bid is put out and the Town gets that, that is what the Town would pay.

Turner Road Development

There has been an application to the Planning & Zoning Commission for 9 units near the Turner Road Development. The access road that is being proposed on the plan is on Town property. The Town hasn't received any written notice, not a request for an easement, or a conveyance, in regards to use of this property.

The access road has been chained off, and the State informed it is no longer in use. In order for a road to be officially abandoned, a Town Meeting has to vote and approve it. The BOS has to decide if they want to grant an easement, sell the road, or reject it since the property still belongs to the Town. The BOS looked at the plans, and maps to see which portion of the road R. Marconi is referring to. R. Marconi will get more info from Town Council regarding this item.

Economic Community & Development Commission

The ECDC will be coming to the BOS tomorrow evening regarding money for their budget, R. Marconi handed a letter out to the board members to include in their budget books.

Oil & Gas Prices

The Town went out to bid for oil & gas prices. Diesel prices came in favorable. Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance indicated that these numbers were already included in the budget numbers.

Charitable Tax Credit Program

R. Marconi handed out a draft declaration regarding the Charitable Tax Credit Program. The BOS has to review it to decide if Ridgefield would be interested in supporting the lawsuit brought by New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. The suit challenges an IRS final rule that undermine State and Local Programs designed to promote charitable giving through the use of State Local Tax Credits. This Issue is the result of new Federal Tax Rules known as S.A.L.T.

FOI

R. Marconi received a letter from Donnelly, McNamara & Gustafson written by Attorney Jewell, Attorney Jewell had submitted an FOI, and was charged \$50.50 for copying fees. He is requesting that the BOS waive the fees. The BOS felt that copying cost was a regular charge, and not to be waived.

Emergency Management Director

R. Marconi distributed a description of the general duties of the Emergency Management Director to the BOS. The board is going to be asked to reappoint Richard Aarons as Emergency Management Director on a future agenda. This is an appointed volunteer position, however Mr. Aarons receives a stipend of \$5,000 that comes out of the \$15,000 grant received by the Town.

CCM, COST & COG

B. Hebert asked for explanation of Town Membership Dues paid annually.

CCM is Connecticut Conference in Municipalities. All 169 municipalities belong to this organization, and they function as a lobbying arm for all the municipalities. They keep us apprised of what bills get introduced, and try to negotiate to protect the towns from incurring further unfunded mandates. The Town pays dues of \$15,000 a year.

COST, is the Council of Small Towns. Members are under 35,000 people. COST focuses on the impact on small towns, associated with bills that are detrimental to the finances of the small towns. The yearly dues for COST are approximately \$5,000-\$6,000.

COG, the Council of Governments, evolved from what was originally regional planning agencies. There were 13 of them in the State of Connecticut, and for 50 years they worked fine until the legislature said that they were going to consolidate. What happened was, a merge with the South Western Regional Planning Agency, and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials, to form an 18 town COG, the Western Connecticut COG. The dues yearly for the COG are roughly \$9,000.

The dues and memberships all together are approximately \$32,000.

The Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting is concluded, and the board will now move on to the Budget portion of their Agenda.

Budget Agenda

1. Ridgefield Fire Department Budget

Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, Jerry Myers, Fire Chief, & Mickey Grasso, Assistant Fire Chief, presented the Fire Department Budget. The FD is looking at an increase of under 3.5%. The driving reason for the increase is the contractual increase in salary for the firefighters. The budget for the Fire Inspectors is increasing by approximately \$12,000. The reason behind this is 4 additional hours a week to do inspections. The BOS discussed ways to streamline the scheduling of fire inspections.

The operating expense portion of the budget is otherwise flat.

There was some discussion with regard to the grant the FD is looking to file for the new ladder truck. The BOS is very focused on a timely submission of the grant, and the possible use of an experienced grant writer to aid in the grant submission.

The Fire Department's first capital budget item is the replacement of an ambulance, at a cost of \$230,000 and the boiler for Station#2 needs to be replaced. The replacement of the boiler is \$25,672.

The FD is also looking for \$61,738 for protective gear for the firefighters. This is part of their usual rotation of gear. The last item on the FD's Capital Budget is the Life Pack Monitor/Defibrillator. This item was originally planned for the 2022 budget cycle, but was moved up to the 2021 budget cycle due to the fact that effective July 1, 2021 the manufacturer will no longer support the old style Life Packs that the FD has been replacing.

2. General Budget Discussion

Tomorrow night IT, Economic & Community Development Commission, and Highway will present their budget presentations.

3. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

There was no vote.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting/Budget Meeting at 10:07pm. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hollie M. Rapp