



Town of Ridgefield

Special Board of Selectman Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes - Unapproved

July 15, 2020 at 7:30pm via Zoom

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Absent: Barbara Manners

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7.41pm, after the Town meeting.

1) Public comment:

There were no public comments.

2) Appointments and Reappointments:

a) Prevention Council (Youth member) - Teddy Hunter - Appoint

Mr Marconi explained the importance of the position on the Prevention council. Mr Marconi read Teddy's application letter. Teddy was a volunteer camp counselor, an active member of lion's heart, vice president of his class. Teddy wants to give input on ideas to serve the community using social media. He does not feel that drugs are as big a problem as vaping and drinking at parties. He feels moving to hard drugs is a problem in college. Mr Connelly asked what message would be communicated to get people to actually listen. Teddy said that stating the % of people doing drugs might show students that fun could still be had without including drugs, and a discussion on the after effects and health issues from drug use would be effective. Mr Connelly asked about the pressure of Covid-19 on youths and what could be done. Teddy answered that depression was an issue due to isolation but that interactive social media could help prevent isolation issues.

b) Youth Commission (Youth Member) - Ansh Suryawanshi – Appoint

Ansh is a rising junior, president of the sophomore class. He would like to help promote connectivity with the youth and help them go to better places. Ansh suggests using social media and student government to get the word out to

improve the spread of information.

Denise Quailey from the Youth Commission spoke in favor of Ansh, and welcomed him joining.

Motion to appoint Ansh Suryawanshi to the Youth Commission and Motion to appoint Teddy Hunter to the Prevention Council

SC made the motion, BH seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

c) Economic Community and Development Committee:

i. Cameron Cole Carcelen – Re-appoint

Cameron explained her involvement in the ECDC. She is an architect with an interest in sustainable infrastructure and community planning. Geoffrey Morris spoke in support of Cameron's reappointment.

Motion to appoint Cameron Cole Carcelen to the Economic Community and Development Committee

MK made the motion, SC seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

ii. Steven Spivak – Appoint

Mr Marconi explained that Steven Spivak is nominated for the seat vacated by John Devine, Susan Gessner is another candidate who is being recommended for a vacancy coming up in October. Her appointment to be tabled at the August 12 BOS meeting.

Mr Marconi read Mr Spivak's application letter. Mr Spivak introduced himself as a resident and an entrepreneur with a specific interest in hospitality in Ridgefield. Geoffrey Morris spoke in support of Mr Spivak's appointment.

Motion to appoint Steven Spivak to the Economic Community and Development Committee.

MK made the motion, SC seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

d) Graveyard Restoration Committee – George Hancock - Appoint

Mr Marconi read a letter from George Hancock introducing himself and his qualifications. Mr Hancock is interested in the history of the people who are buried in Ridgefield and the history of the town as a whole.

Mr Lundberg spoke in support of Mr Hancock.

Motion to appoint George Hancock to the Graveyard Restoration Committee

SC made the motion, BH seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

e) Ridgefield Arts Council – 4 appointments

Mr Marconi said that he had received a resignation from Mark Meecham as chairman of the Arts Council.

i. Pamela J. Jones

Mr Marconi read Ms Jones' application letter introducing herself and her involvement in the arts in town. Ms Jones wants to help the arts in town to flourish.

Motion to appoint Pamela J. Jones to the Ridgefield Arts Council.

MK made the motion, BH seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries.

ii. Jennifer Dineen

Mr Marconi read Ms Dineen's letter of application introducing herself and her expertise. Ms Dineen wants to leverage her experience in the art community to support the Ridgefield arts community. Ms Dineen was involved in the successful recently held 'Make Music Day'. Ms Dineen said she would want to look at uniting all the arts organizations in town and supporting the non-profits through collaboration.

Motion to appoint Jennifer Dineen to the Ridgefield Arts Council.

MK made the motion, SC seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

iii. Danielle F. Roth

Mr Marconi read Ms Roth's letter of application introducing herself and her expertise. Ms Roth said the need to be able to pivot, and acknowledged the challenges of wifi delays in live online transmissions was a challenge during covid, but she is optimistic for the future on the arts. With a background in Educational Theatre she would like to be involved with the artistic youth in the town.

Motion to appoint Danielle F. Roth to the Ridgefield Arts Council.

MK made the motion, SC seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

iv. Tracey Bryggman

Mr Marconi read Ms Bryggman's letter of application. Ms Bryggmann is positive about the resilience of the artistic community to rise to the challenges of online performances. Ms Bryggman said she would like to assist with the performing arts

Motion to appoint Tracey Bryggman to the Ridgefield Arts Council

BH made the motion, MK seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

3) Artful to join Friends of Ridgefield – Dianna (Dee Dee) Colabella

Mr Marconi read Ms Colabella's letter. Artful Visual Arts Initiative has 4 main goals as defined in the letter. Mr Marconi explained to the public the process Ms Colabella had gone through so far having come before the board twice before requesting to join Friends of Ridgefield – once she was asked to change the name of the organization from RPAC Gives to which she responded with Artful, and once where she was asked to first discuss the concerns the Guild of Artists expressed before the board would consider her request – Ms Colabella explained that the concerns the Guild of Artists had was with her initial explanation of Artful's mission. She clarified that Artful will not give art lessons but rather award scholarships to students for lessons in a blind award. The Guild have since rescinded their concerns. Artful have received 3 letters of support for inclusion under the Friends of Ridgefield 501C3 umbrella while they apply for their own 501C3 status. Mr Marconi asked about the timeline for this process. Ms Colabella said it would normally take 6-9 months, but timeline is unsure because of covid-19. None of the board had further questions

Motion to allow Artful to join Friends of Ridgefield

MK made the motion, SC seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

4) Ridgefield Allies to join Friends of Ridgefield – Jessica Mancini, Alex Harris and Mark Robinson

Mr Marconi read the Ridgefield Allies introduction email explaining their mission is to provide education, resources and events to aid in a community becoming active and effective in the drive for racial justice. Ridgefield Allies is apolitical, nonpartisan, and non-profit. Fundraising had not been done so far but was needed in order to keep the group alive.

Mr Marconi stressed that as a 501C3 the board needs to be sure that Ridgefield Allies are non-partisan.

Mr Robinson said that the genesis of Ridgefield Allies is to answer the question “How can we be of more help?” Ridgefield Allies would engage with the school system, and encourage the creation of Allies in other towns and that Ridgefield Allies were the first. Mr Marconi cautioned that Ridgefield Allies needs to remain nonpartisan as “Friends of Ridgefield” is a 501c3 and as such must not engage in any political debate.

Motion to allow Ridgefield Allies to join Friends of Ridgefield with understanding that there is a requirement that they remain apolitical to retain 501C3 status.

SC made the motion, MK seconded. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries

5) ECDC – Glori Norwitt (Set Public Hearing for Grant)

Glori Norwitt introduced the idea of a cultural district – CT State (**Connecticut Office** of the Arts Department of Economic & Community Development **CULTURAL DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE STATUTE** - An Act Concerning the Establishment of Municipal **Cultural Districts** effective October 2019) passed a statute that certain areas can be recognized as cultural districts, with guidelines. ECDC would like to define an area of Ridgefield as a cultural district. (Refers to map made by Geoffrey Morris of the area concerned). Ridgefield will be first town to apply. Only 5-7 cultural districts will be chosen by the State. ECDC would like to be on the August BOS Agenda for a formal public hearing to inform the residents and get feedback. At that meeting, the ECDC asks that the BOS to pass a resolution for ECDC to submit an application to become cultural district and require a letter of support to accompany the application. Ms Norwitt said successful applicants would receive promotion from the state, increased tourism and recognition that would benefit the town's status and tourism traffic. Mr Marconi commented that being declared a cultural district would mean grant money for other initiatives could be more readily available to Ridgefield.

Motion for a public hearing on Aug 12 to review the Cultural District grant application

MK made the motion, BH seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0, Motion carries.

6) Selectman's Report (needs names of people?)

- Turner Road Project: An inspection of possible violations of the Fire Safety Code was done on 06/29/2020. The width of the road is an issue to be addressed. The required road grade is an issue. The builder indicated he would enter into an agreement with the Town of Ridgefield to maintain the road. The conclusion is that the developer will seek modification of the Life Safety Codes from the State Fire Marshal, as well as modification to the grade of the road and that the developer assumes the town will maintain the road. Ms Kozlark and Mr Connelly asked about the contradiction of the builder saying he would maintain the road versus the developer assuming the town would maintain the road. Mr Marconi said that a town meeting was required to discuss this and that the town never agreed to anything and that the Fire Marshall had made a request and was waiting for feedback.
- Insurance Renewal: Indian Harbor Insurance would be used for School board Liability, but they have reservations about participating in the loss sensitive workers comp. In an email to Mr Marconi, Mr Mark Connelly said that with Covid-19 being an unknown and with Covid-19 compensation discussions mounting it may be good to postpone loss sensitive workers comp.
- COST Webinar on Zoning, Land Use and Housing Issues addressed changes to

the legislation including “Accessory Apartments”, small-scale developments in 50% of the area within ½ mile of fixed transit, and ¼ mile of commercial corridors, 10% of land in towns with 5000+ residents be designated to small scale developments and multifamily housing, eliminate “character” consideration in approving projects, cap town fees for housing applications, modernize traffic and sewer standards, require land use commissioners complete 4 hrs training per year, convene working group to model zoning regulations to adopt. Mr Marconi disagreed with the legislation because the cost of land generated the price, not the building. Ms Kozlark said that this legislation looks like another version of the 8-30G but with less control for the town. Mr Marconi said CCM was supporting this for addressing socio-economic and racial diversity. Mr Marconi believes that 8-30G has not been successful to desegregate. During the webinar, many legislators voiced the opinion that this topic is a deep topic affecting local communities ability to run their own community and that needs its own agenda. Mr Hebert commented that he was concerned that this appears to be the state pushing down mandates on the communities that may damage the character of the community.

- Steven G. Mendick, attorney, response to interplay of “in-person” meetings and Executive Order on Large Gatherings.
- Mr Herbert asked if the conversation regarding the wearing of masks at condominiums and apartments could be included in the Selectman’s report. Mr Hebert had requested that the First Selectman send a letter requiring the residents to wear masks when in the communal spaces of these buildings. Mr Marconi said that he would not require people to wear a mask on private property, but that the selectman could request that residents’ voluntarily respect other people’s rights and wear masks when in public spaces of the condominium. Mr Marconi agreed that a letter could be drafted for approval and sent to HOA’s for distribution.

7) Minutes Approval

Ms Kozlark requested that people’s names be written out for non-board members to avoid confusion.

Mr Marconi reminded everyone that the meetings were recorded and were on the website for anyone to listen to if they require full details. The requirement for supplying minutes to the public within 7 days is being fulfilled because the audio is available the next day.

Motion to approve minutes from 04/22/2020, as amended (page 3 edits required).
BH made the motion, RM seconded Vote 4-0. Motion carries.

Motion to approve minutes from 04/29/2020.
MK made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries

Motion to approve minutes from 04/30/2020, as amended
SC made the motion, BH seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0. Motion Carries.

Motion to approve minutes from 05/06/2020.
MK made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries.

Motion to approve minutes from 05/12/2020, as amended.
MK made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries.

Motion to approve minutes from 05/27/2020, as amended.
MK made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries

Motion to approve minutes from 06/10/2020, as amended.
SC made the motion, BH seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries

Motion to approve minutes from 06/24/2020, as amended.
BH made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote 4-0. Motion carries

Mr Connelly asked about the capital expenditure planned for the future. Mr Marconi said these would occur in 2022. Mr Connelly asked for a breakdown of expenses due to Covid-19 this far against expected expenditure. Mr Marconi agreed to present this at the August 12th meeting.

8) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:41p.m.
BH made the motion, SC seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0. Motion carries