

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

NOVEMBER 8, 2017 - 7:30 PM

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

REVISED/APPROVED 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, S. Zemo, M. Kozlark and B. Manners

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and then read the notice of the Public Hearing:

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on November 8, 2017, 7:30 PM, Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to consider the following changes in Ridgefield Code under Chapter 120. Animals. Underline & bold italics represents addition to existing language; brackets and strikethrough {~~strikethrough~~} indicates deletion of text. Copies of the text were available for all attendees.

Jeff Hubsher of Ridgebury Road stated the thrust of this was to prevent horses and the impact they have on neighbors. 500 lbs would allow you to get a small pony in under the ordinance. Small ponies don't have the same impact.

Val Cook of 78 Manor Road: Spoke about the welfare of the animals and the residents of the town. There should be a restriction on the number of animals.

Marcia Nichols, 4 Lewis Drive: Talked about the consistency of Article 2 and 3. Livestock being redefined, is creating a new problem.

Tom Pesce, 32 Lewis Drive: Agreed it's about protecting people and animals. This is about what makes the most sense, for property, animals, and water sources. The same issues would come up again with any large animal. There needs to be a limitation on the animals. The ordinance should not be left vague. If we add miniature language it will be excluded.

R. Marconi stated the intent was to create an ordinance specific to horses. He stands by the inclusion of a weight limit.

B. Manners reiterated that the Manor Road issue has been rectified secondary to much work. We are over legislating the issue. We can rectify the issue as a small community.

Val Cook: Stated that ponies never came up on the committee discussions. Wants to live in a neighborhood with good air quality. B. Manners stated there is enough protection currently where we don't need to regulate all of these animals.

Tom Pesce further discussed the issue on Manor Road. This should not be a special interest group.

Brian Douglas, 18 Weir Farm Lane: Has followed this interest from the beginning. Commends the BOS and both sides. The ordinance is a long way from legislation. It is in the best interest of the community and likes the general spirit of it.

Leigh Diffey, 58 Lewis Drive: 3 year resident. Feels ordinance is fair as it is written and stated it is essential to prevent same situation at later time.

Brian Hoey, 71 Manor Road: We are an animal loving community, and friends are amazed that there aren't already regulations in place. Nice to have a rule in place, just in case.

Robin Augustdadt, 61 South Olmstead Lane: Some of us have been here for decades. Discussed the Venus property and him having a small pony. When she looked for her equestrian property, there were no guidelines in place. She talked about the permits she gets from P&Z for any work that is done.

Val Cook: Stated the tenant on Manor said he looked Ridgefield up because there was no regulations.

Tom Pesce, 32 Lewis Drive: spoke about lack of common sense regarding these types of issues. This is a win-win situation for both sides.

PJ Campbell, 141 Peaceable Street: stated this is a fair proposal. Works raising thoroughbreds. Wants something in place; this is a simple proposal.

George Nichols, 4 Lewis Drive: Article 2 under definitions are for this article. Do they apply in any respect to the next article? Would like the definition under 123 of Article 3—it should apply to both.

Jeff Hubsher: once the committee was assembled, the horses on Manor Road were gone after 3 weeks. In agreement with Barbara Manners to have less legislation. It's too broad to have all hooved animals under this umbrella. Horse people were willing to devote time that may avoid conflict with neighbors. Reasonable to make it skinny--limit hooved animals to 500 lbs and over, and leave the rest off. It is far-fetched to have 20 horses or pigs.

S. Zemo: stated he is anxious to move this along. This is an extension of the town meeting form of government. We cannot likely get 100% agreement to this. He likes the weight requirement. Future Boards and town meetings can modify this later. Wants to craft the weight issue.

B. Hebert: supported everything S. Zemo stated. He doesn't have a horse in this race and has listened to everyone on this issue. It's going to be difficult to culminate a perfect document.

M. Kozlark: agreed that the weight can be lowered a bit. Reminds the public that this still has to go to vote at a town meeting.

B. Manners: agreed that the process has been exactly what you want in the town. She appreciates the feedback. And feels sad that we need all these regulations.

R. Marconi reminded all that we are a growing town and with those changes, we are not an open farming community.

B. Hebert stated that the document has been agreed upon by both sides of the argument. And he'd like to move forward.

Jeff Hubsher discussed the weight requirement. 500 lbs is a reasonable number as the said animal will have very little impact. Ponies and goats need pairs.

S. Zemo proposed the Board go back to not exceed hooved animals at 500 lbs.

Tom Pesce: it's absurd to allow a 500 lb animal.

R. Marconi would like to include miniature pets. Hubsher is not sure that miniature are defined anywhere.

Weight is irrelevant- manure is manure.

Val Cook: pony and horse are separated by height not weight.

R. Marconi to move as written changing Article 2 from horses to hooved animals. Or livestock to hooved animals (verify) without adding weight. Add definitions from Article 2 to Article 3.

Hubsher: does not want all animals lumped together with horses just because of the Manor Road situation.

Brian Douglas, Weir Farm Lane: clarified the weight of a pot belly pig.

Robin Augustadt: does the current use go with the sale of a property. If this is passed, can we add something to the ordinance that go with the 2019 proposed guidelines. It states that they will be current with guild elites for watercourses. Wants this given to realtors for future buyers. Burden will be on the seller and the buyer to be sure that the property is recognized by the town. Would like something filed with the Assessor's office.

Leigh Diffey, Lewis Drive: Stated that this started by having 3 horses in a residential backyard.

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to hold a Special Town Meeting on December 13th at 7:30 pm in the Town Hall large conference room. Motion carried 4-1 (B. Manners opposed).

Agenda (immediately following Public Hearing)

1. Public Comment
2. Ridgefield Housing Authority Reappointment: Frank J. Coyle, Jr.
3. Vendor Permit Renewal: Tivoli Pizza (Junio Filgueira)
4. Food Vendor License—Nod Hill Brewery
5. Jesse Lee United Methodist Church Tax Abatement Request
6. Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Date for TAP & FLBP
7. Approval of 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar
8. Selectman's Report
9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 4/19/17, 10/25/17

1. Public Comment

No public comment.

2. Ridgefield Housing Authority Reappointment: Frank J. Coyle Jr.

Frank is seeking reappointment after years of service and hopes to continue to work on the initiatives he's identified during his time working with the Housing Authority. R. Marconi started the discussion by thanking Frank for all of the work he has done to present. Frank said he plans to revisit the Board of Selectmen in January to discuss the Meadows to discuss potential tax abatements. Frank briefly gave an overview of the financial health of the properties as well as the success of the management team and process' in place. Frank has been working diligently to renegotiate the terms of the Meadows mortgage; however the prepayment penalties have made refinancing near impossible. Frank also speaks to the improvements made at Ballard Green, Prospect Ridge, and the Meadows.

S. Zemo moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to reappoint Frank J. Coyle Jr. for an additional five-year term. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Vendor Permit Renewal: Tivoli Pizza (Junio Filgueira)

This permit renewal comes a little over a year, as we were waiting for a completed application. Junio states that this year a majority of his revenue came from private parties, concerts at Ballard Green, and participating in Family Day at the Lounsbury House. Junio states that overall business has been good.

B. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to renew the vendor permit for Tivoli Pizza truck. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Food Vendor License: Nod Hill Brewery

The owners at Nod Hill Brewery have been seeking approval to have food trucks on site for their patrons, as the business is not set up as a restaurant and currently serves only craft beers. The business previously met with Planning & Zoning to seek approval, but was redirected to the Board of Selectmen to obtain a vendor permit. If permitted, the food truck(s) would only operate during the brewery's business hours. The brewery sits on private property and is housed within an industrial building. The brewery wants to prove its success before expanding its operations and adding a restaurant. The brewery has already seen a favorable turnout, as they are serving over 1,000 patrons each weekend, 50% of which are Ridgefield residents. They do not feel that their business will impede upon the Little Pub, which sits just south of the of the brewery, as it is an altogether different experience from your typical restaurant/bar. The Board is sensitive to this request, as the property itself pays a substantial amount in property taxes. Nod Hill Brewery is not seeking any permit to have signage for the food vendor(s). R. Marconi will add this matter to the November 29 agenda for further review and consideration, after also speaking with Town Counsel for an opinion on our ordinance.

5. Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church Tax Abatement Request

Item removed from the evening's agenda and added to November 29, 2017 agenda (6:30 pm).

6. Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Date for TAP & FLBP

The project is currently estimated to cost \$6.8M. Per R. Marconi's request, Dave Ulmer will complete a site visit to review the project. The ultimate goal is to make the area a vibrant center for both commercial and residential use, similar to that of Danbury Road. It is essential that we complete our project goals while also meeting the state and federal inspection standards (ADA requirements). A Public Hearing and Town Meeting are still necessitate, and public involvement is a mandate at various points of the project. An official timeframe for the project has yet to be determined as it is heavily dependent upon the MTA's availability and process. The funds for the project have already been committed within the budget.

B. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to schedule a Town Meeting and Public Hearing for November 29, 2017 at 7:30 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Approval of 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar

The Board will move the 1/17/18 meeting to 1/24/18, as well as the 2/28/18 meeting to 2/21/18 secondary to conflicting schedules.

B. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to approve the 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar with modifications to January and February. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Selectman's Report

After review and consideration, applicants were selected to have a seat on the Charter Revision Commission. Decision letters were mailed out today to all applicants. Applicants who were not chosen to serve on the commission were invited to apply to other commissions in which there is currently a vacancy.

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the revised 4/19/17 BOS meeting minutes as submitted. Motion carried 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to approve with modifications the 10/25/17 BOS meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to adjourn the BOS meeting at 9:51 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Freda