



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
December 8, 2021 at 6.30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark, Bob Hebert, Barbara Manners (via Zoom), Sean Connelly (via zoom)

1. Public Comment

Coco Bryon, who lives at 51 Prospect Ridge, appeared before the Board to ask them to remove the Chair of the Affordable Housing Authority. Ms. Byron listed several ongoing issues there have been at the Prospect Ridge Apartments and her reasons for her request for the Chair to step down.

Russ Porter, who lives at 14 Pilgrim Hill, asked if the public is allowed to ask questions regarding the land donation at the Town Meeting. Mr. Marconi replied yes, as long as the moderator allows it.

2. Bonding Resolution - Robinson & Cole

Dave Panico from Robinson & Cole and Director of Finance Kevin Redmond appeared before the Board to discuss the Bonding Resolution issue. The Bond Resolution was never approved in 2020. Mr. Redmond gave a brief overview. Mr. Panico provided an explanation of the Bond Resolution adoption process and what will happen after adopting the resolution now, a year late. Ms. Kozlark asked about the ramifications to the Town and who is at fault for the mistake. Ms. Manners suggested asking the Governor for an executive order to wave the penalties. Mr. Panico talked about which expenses will be tax exemptible after adopting the resolution now. Mr. Panico and Mr. Redmond will go over the expenses line by line after the adoption is accepted. There was more discussion about how the lack of approval of the Bond Resolution went without notice and how this can be avoided moving forward. Mr. Marconi read the Bond Resolution out loud.

Mr. Hebert commented that there should be a follow up discussion with the Bond Counsel and the Board to discuss more about accountability and how to prevent this from happening again.

Mr. Connelly moved to accept the Bond Resolution as follows. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

RESOLUTION OF OFFICIAL INTENT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES FROM THE PROCEEDS OF TAX-EXEMPT OBLIGATIONS FOR THE PLANNING, DESIGN, RENOVATION, IMPROVEMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND ACQUISITION RELATED TO THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN IN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF \$7,911,626

WHEREAS, the Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut (the “Town”) has appropriated \$7,911,626 for the planning, design, renovation, improvement, construction and acquisition of project set forth on Exhibit A hereto, for the capital improvement program for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 (the “Projects”), said appropriation being inclusive of administrative, financing, legal and costs of issuance related thereto, and any and all State and Federal grants-in-aid thereof (the Town expects to receive \$180,000 in grants and rebates related to the Projects).

WHEREAS, the Town may finance any and all costs related to the Projects with the proceeds of tax-exempt bonds or other tax-exempt obligations (“Tax-Exempt Obligations”) authorized by subsequent resolution of the Board of Selectmen and approval by the electors in the maximum amount of \$7,911,626; and

WHEREAS, the Town may incur expenditures for the Projects prior to the issuance of the Tax-Exempt Obligations;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT:

The Town hereby expresses its official intent pursuant to Section 1.150-2 of the Federal Income Tax Regulations, Title 26 (the “Regulations”), to reimburse expenditures paid 60 days prior to and anytime after the date of passage of this Resolution from the net proceeds of Tax-Exempt Obligations. The Tax-Exempt Obligations shall be issued to reimburse such expenditures not later than 18 months after the later of the date of the expenditure or the substantial completion of the Projects, or such later date as the Regulations may authorize. The Town hereby certifies that its intention to reimburse as expressed herein is based upon its reasonable expectations as of this date. The Controller or his designee is authorized to pay said costs in accordance herewith pending the issuance of the Tax-Exempt Obligations. This Resolution is adopted solely for purposes of compliance with the Regulations and may not be used or relied on for any other purpose and shall take effect immediately upon passage.

3. Planning and Zoning – Update from Commission Chair Rob Hendrick

Mr. Hendrick provided an update about what is going on with the Planning & Zoning Commission. The update included a review of the transition of new members, the obstacles that the Commission is experiencing with finding replacements for the Planning and Zoning Director and Town Planner, and how they are addressing the gap in staff. Mr. Hendrick also gave an overview of the Commission activities to date and the expected initiatives and projects for 2022, including the affordable housing plan. A few items that will be discussed at the next P&Z commission meeting include the POCD, CBC regulation review, Public Notice regulation review, Branchville TOD, Federal

Infrastructure funding and the budget. The Board asked a few questions which included expanding on a previous statement that discussed the two sides of Planning & Zoning and also to clarify on the mentioned changes to the current Planning & Zoning document. The Board thanked Mr. Hendrick for the report.

4. Appointments – Dan O’Brien – reappoint to Historic District Commission

Dan O’Brien, who has been a member since 2007, is up for reappointment to the Historic District Commission. Mr. O’Brien was given the opportunity to talk about his accomplishments while on the Commission, focusing on the past year. There was a discussion about the recent unauthorized demolition of a historic home on New Street and the type of penalties that can be implemented. The Town wants to be sure the penalty is steep enough to deter people from demolition without permission moving forward. Mr. Hebert commented that he appreciates the great work Mr. O’Brien has done to help the Town and Ms. Manners thanked Mr. O’Brien for all his hard work.

Mr. Connelly moved to reappoint Dan O’Brien for a 5-year term on the Historic District Commission. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

The Board broke at 7:20pm for the Special Town Meeting. The Board returned to the regularly scheduled BOS meeting at 7:43pm.

5. Proposed Designation for Local Historic Property Presentation

Mark Scott has requested that his father’s house located at 90 Poplar Road be designated as a town historical landmark and be afforded the appropriate protections to the character of the house and garage. In a letter to the Board, Mr. Scott shares that the house, which his father David W Scott built, has unique architecture that was inspired by notable architects of the time and is now an example of the modernist architectural movement. Mr. O’Brien, Historic District Commission member, commented on the process they have been through so far and how the final step is now approval from the Board of Selectman.

Ms. Manners moved to approve the designation of 90 Poplar Road as a Local Historic Property. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

6. Downtown Clock Restoration –Ridgefield Rotary

Dennis Bishop and Bill Wyman, members of the Rotary Club, presented information on their proposed Clock Restoration project. The Rotary Club is proposing they move the clock in front of Town Hall and change it from two sided to four sided so that it is visible from all angles. The proposal included details about the design, dimensions and costs. Mr. Wyman gave a recap on the history of the clock. Each Board member expressed their opinions on the new clock vs keeping and fixing the old one.

Rob Hendrick, who lives at 17 East Ridge Rd, commented that the Historic Society would be a good resource to refer to and proposed an alternate location for the clock in front of CVS.

The Board will review the project again at the next meeting in January after they have

had time to think it over.

7. CT Yankee Council Property Acquisition – Conservation Commission

Jim Coyle, Chair of the Conservation Commission, provided an overview of the CT Yankee Council Property Acquisition which included a description of the property, a history of the land and its restrictions, and the proposal to buy the land from the Boy Scouts. Once acquired, the Conservation Commission plans to develop trails for community use. There was a discussion about the deed requirements and restrictions. According to the Deed, if the land is failed to be used for Scouts purposes it will be conveyed by the grantee to the Town of Ridgefield. The Deed does not provide specifics on the requirements of the conveyance and no one has previously pursued the land. There will be a Public Hearing and Town Meeting to discuss and vote on the matter.

Ms. Manners moved to hold a Public Hearing on January 5, 2022 and a Town Meeting on January 19, 2022 to discuss and vote on the Yankee Council Property Acquisition by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

Russ Porter, who lives at 14 Pilgrim Hill, commented that the hiking in the area is fantastic.

8. Affordable Housing Trust Fund Proposal – presentation

Dave Goldenberg gave an update on the proposal for an Affordable Housing Trust Fund which gave details on how the funds are collected, used and managed. The update also included an overview on other Housing Trust Funds in the county, the administrative details, potential revenue for Ridgefield and what that money could be used for.

The Board members had lots of comments and opinions on where the trust fund money could be used. Mr. Hebert commented that he is not in favor of using the funds for 8-30g retention and added that he can get on board with the Trust Fund, however the affordable housing needs in Ridgefield should be looked into further.

Ms. Manners commented that the fund is a wonderful way to generate money to help with affordable housing in town and the details of where the money is used should be discussed further. Mr. Kozlark agreed that the Trust fund is a good idea, but is concerned that the methodology being used could generate fees that could hurt the Town in the long run. Mr. Marconi commented that seniors are the fastest growing demographic for this income level.

Mr. Goldenberg expanded on the projected fundraising goal and the needs for the Town. The idea of the Trust Fund is welcomed by the Board, however they would like more research on the needs of the Town, a specific fundraising goal and a clearer target for the use of the funds. Mr. Goldenberg and the Committee will continue to work on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund proposal and bring it back to the Board at a later date.

9. Charter Revision Timeline Review

In January 2022, the Board will begin the process to appoint a Charter Revision

Commission. The Commission's job is to review the Charter and suggest revisions.

10. Tax Collector Refunds

Ms. Manners moved to approve the Tax Collector Refunds. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

11. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the November 17, 2021 BOS Executive Session minutes. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the November 3, 2021 BOS Meeting and Public Hearing Minutes as submitted. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the November 17, 2021 meeting minutes as modified. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

12. Selectman's Report

Mr. Marconi gave a recap of the latest COVID statistics. The positivity rate and hospitalizations for Fairfield County have both risen. Mr. Marconi commented that the testing company is slow to provide results to the State which is distorting the test rate numbers. 100% of the cases reported are people who are unvaccinated but are able to receive the vaccine.

The Main Street project is still underway and will hopefully be finished soon.

According to the State, the Branchville project needs a herpetologist to study the area where the sidewalks are going on Route 7.

The new PD/FD facility project will be put on the agenda in January to make the public aware of the planning and due diligence that has gone into the decisions that have been made on the project so far.

Ms. Kozlark asked if the Commissions and Committees should be reminded that they need to provide a report that gives the attendance for the year to the Board. Mr. Marconi commented that this used to be the job of the Treasurer, however Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, has been doing it for the past few years. There was a discussion about asking the Commissions and Committees to also provide an end of the year report that gives the Board an update on what's going on within their groups.

There was a discussion about the idea of a Leash Law. Mr. Connelly commented that he has seen dogs on Main Street without a leash and also in Ballard Park where dogs are not allowed. The Board will ask Town Attorney David Grogins to draft up the change to the ordinance.

**Mr. Hebert moved to adjourn the BOS Meeting. Ms. Kozlark second the motion.
Motion carries 5-0.**