

**TOWN of RIDGEFIELD**  
**PUBLIC HEARINGS, BOARD of SELECTMEN REGULAR & BUDGET MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2017 – 7:30 P.M.**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

REVISED/, APPROVED MINUTES

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

In attendance: R. Marconi, R. Herbert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

**Public Hearings Agenda**

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Ridgefield Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at the Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street Ridgefield, Connecticut in the large conference room, to consider the following proposed leases:

- A. The premises known as the “Philip Johnson Building” and a portion of the basement on 36 Old Quarry Road, Ridgefield, Connecticut between the Town of Ridgefield as lessor and Bassam Fellows, Inc. as lessee;
- B. The premises known as “The Schlumberger Auditorium”, which is a performing space, and a portion of the basement on 36 Old Quarry Road, Ridgefield, Connecticut between the Town of Ridgefield as lessor and ACT, Inc. as lessee

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on February 8, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to receive comment on a proposed donation of land at 41 Lakeside Drive, Ridgefield, CT to the Town of Ridgefield.

**Agenda** *(immediately following Public Hearings)*

- 1. Public Comment
- 2. Reappointments:
  - a. Economic & Community Development Commission – John Devine
  - b. Parking Authority – Richard A. Moccia, Jessica M. Wilmot
  - c. Conservation Commission – Susan L. Baker, Carroll W. Brewster, David J. Cronin
- 3. Vendor Permit Application: Herve’ Aussavis
- 4. Henny Penny Lease
- 5. Approval of Tax Refunds
- 6. Selectman’s Report
- 7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 12/11/16 Special, 1///18/17, 1/27/17 Special

**Budget Meeting Agenda**

- 1. RVNA Budget
- 2. MLIF Community Grant Discussion
- 3. General Budget Discussion

Public Hearing (A) – R. Marconi read the call for the Public Hearing to consider the following proposed lease at the premises known as the “Philip Johnson Building” and a portion of the basement on 36 Old Quarry Road, Ridgefield, Connecticut between the Town of Ridgefield as lessor and Bassam Fellows, Inc. as lessee. The Town Meeting is scheduled for February 22<sup>nd</sup>, on this subject with notice of the Town Meeting 15 days prior and another notice at least five days prior. An 8-24 has been received from Joanne Meder, Director of Planning, giving permission to lease the “Philip Johnson Building” and a portion of the basement.

Also under consideration is Public Hearing (B) – M. Marconi read the call for the Public Hearing to consider the rental of “The Schlumberger Auditorium” and a portion of the basement on 36 Old Quarry Road, Ridgefield, Connecticut, between the Town of Ridgefield as lessor and ACT, Inc. as lessee.

David S.- 9 Brookside Rd., inquired as to why the Town of Ridgefield is leasing the property for \$1/year for 13 years rather than the actual value of the property. The reason is because Bassam Fellows, Inc. is putting a significant amount of money into the property to fix it up.

S. Zemo stated how it is a “win/win” for all. The Town of Ridgefield is getting the property restored without putting any capital into it. We are preserving the integrity of the Philip Johnson Building which was built in 1952 and is a building of historical significance. We want to preserve it. We cannot sell the property because the remediation is on and thus the solution is to lease the property.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how it is very common for a landlord to get a credit for making improvements. The lessee is putting in \$1 million.

Mr. Davison, Sunset Lane, inquired if there were any other clients?

Scott Pellow, Bassam Fellows, Inc. stated that people will not be coming on a daily basis as buyers. He pictures more marketing events with cocktail receptions, etc.

Ellen Burns, Ridgefield Rd, stated how this lease is a good arrangement for the town.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Rd., read what the Town of Ridgefield needs to do. Bids aren’t out yet, but there is exterior site work that needs to be done. We need to make the circular roadway. Charter Bros. has agreed to do this. We need to put in new site lighting and exterior parking spaces – about 30 spots near the back of the building. We need to have meter electrical service installed, a new hot water system (the sewer systems is already hooked up), and continue to clean up around the exterior of the building. He listed what has already been installed.

David Scogill, Old Brookside Rd., inquired as to how many parking spots will be made available? The answer is about 100 spots will be made available to the site.

Chuck Hancock, North St., stated how we were involved with the art collector before. We have the property for future uses by the town. The Town did not want to sell the property. We now have someone who will be using the property in a relatively benign use. This way we do not have to make an investment up front. This is an appropriate situation where we do not have to face rent for 13 years. Bassam Bros. will need to pay for a new roof, HVAC, and an electrical system.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd. inquired as to how did we arrive at \$1/year? The going cost is \$20/sq. ft. Do we know what is the value of the property is as a rental property? The total building is 1525 sq. feet. The Venus Bldg. is 1648 sq. feet.

R. Hebert stated that he has come up with \$8500/month which is the market rate per sq. feet.

S. Zemo stated how he took the estimate for the renovation and that is how he came up with the figure for 13 years.

Tim O'Connor, North St., asked how do we know the number is a good number.

S. Zemo stated how we felt that it is a fair working number. It is how to make sense of a deal. We do not know their costs nor do we know our costs.

Michael ?????, 77 Sunset Lane, inquired about the egress on Old Quarry Rd. We need to leave it open so that emergency vehicles can get thru, but it is not going to be open for traffic to use.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Rd., stated how the present state of the building is so bad that it is currently of no value. We are not giving some of the value away. Since 2012, we have been intending to rent the building.

Michael ?????, 77 Sunset Lane, stated how the Schlumberger property needed to be part of the Town. Toll Bros. wanted to buy it. Charter is completely sold out. They are doing a great job.

The Public Hearing on the lease with Bassam Fellows, Inc. was closed at 8:10 p.m. and opened the Public Hearing (B) on the Schlumberger Auditorium with ACT, Inc.

S. Zemo explained how the concept is pretty much the same but this one involves the Schlumberger Auditorium. They will renovate the theater. There will be a restaurant, an office and play space. It is a great location with great space.

Suzanne Scogill, stated how she has seen theaters come and go throughout the years. She stated how what makes for success is the number of parking spaces and the space on the top of the theater “fly in space” so that sets can be put in place quickly. She asked if Ridgefield is prepared for these expenses. R. Marconi responded that there will be 105 parking spaces. He cannot really answer about the “fly in space” but we will work to make the place function.

Chuck Hancock, North St. stated how he does not see how we can lose. We will do what needs to be done to display the props and fit the space.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd. stated how this is good from a land-use perspective.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd. stated how he thinks this rental is a good idea.

Lady from 77 Sunset Lane inquired as to what will the outside lighting be like as they look directly at the stage. R. Marconi inquired as to the height of the lighting. S. Zemo responded that the town will be doing site lighting.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how lighting is controlled by regulations. R. Marconi stated how bids will be coming in to Parks & Rec regarding this issue.

Pam Jones stated how there is much in the way of focus on the arts in Ridgefield. She is involved with the theater barn and its productions. They need parking and lighting done at their location also.

R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing on the ACT, Inc. lease at 8:25 p.m.

The next Public Hearing involves the Conservation Commission and the donation of property at 41 Lakeside Drive. Present to discuss this issue was Jim Coyle who is currently acting as Chairman and Susan Baker. The Conservation Commission wants to know the back taxes that are owed on the property prior to acceptance of the property. The amount owed is \$3754. R. Marconi read the 8-24 that has been received regarding the property. There are no other environmental issues that will affect the donation of the property. The Public Hearing on this donation was closed at 8:31 p.m. and the BOS Meeting was called to order.

1. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
2. Reappointments :Economic & Community Development Commission – John Devine
  - 1) Mr. Devine came forward. He has been very active on the EDC. He foresees three focuses for 2017 – Working on marketing, making the EDC more business-friendly, and the education of small businesses. R. Marconi stated how he understands the process. Mr. Devine has put in a lot of time and events often involve a coordination of efforts. He commented on the permit process and how this needs to be improved. It took him ten trips to offices around town which is a lot for an individual permit application. Everything can be pretty much be put on the website All can be done on line electronically except for attending hearings. Bob DeFalco has been working on this also.

R. Marconi commented on how Alex Karsanidi has chosen to not be reappointed. R. Marconi read the note received from Mr. Karsanidi. Party affiliation does not apply because this is an appointed position. Either party can fill an empty position. They have lost their only female on the EDC and are seeking a female candidate

**M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to reappoint John B. Devine, Jr. for an additional one-year term on the Economic & Community Development Commission. Motion passed 5-0.**

- 2) Parking Authority – Richard A. Moccia, Jessica M. Wilmot

Both Mr. Moccia and Ms. Wilmot came forward to express their interest in being reappointed. They commented on the parking study which was recently done. They have been dealing with the merchants in town and know this is a difficult situation right now. They are trying to balance situations for the people who are coming into town from elsewhere. On February 20 there will be a discussion as to how to limit open space on the ground floor. People who are coming into town need to have access to a better map. The Police would like a map that they can read quickly. The Parking Authority would like to hire a full-time parking officer. They also would like better signage in town. A license plate reader may be helpful. They think there may be one available in town somewhere. A liaison person to the EDC may be helpful.

R. Hebert inquired as to whether we track the number of parking violations? The answer is no – the Parking Authority has a turnover of parking people. S. Zemo stated how we need to find potential locations for parking spots.

**B. Manners moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to reappoint Richard A. Moccia and Jessica M. Wilmot for an additional one-year term on the Parking Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

- 3) **Conservation Commission** – Susan L. Baker, Carroll W. Brewster, David J. Cronin

Susan Baker and Carroll Brewster came forward to support their desire for reappointment. R. Marconi read their letters of application. David Cronin was not present this evening. M. Kozlark expressed a thank you to both Susan and Carroll for all they have been doing. The Conservation Commission raised \$59 more than last year, but they do have additional donors this year. They feel their breadth of influence is much larger.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Susan L. Baker, Carroll W. Brewster and David J. Cronin for an additional three-year term on the Conservation Commission. Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Vendor Permit Application: Herve' Aussavis

Mr. Herve' Aussavis came forward to request a renewal of his Vendor Permit. The moratorium on permanent locations is still in effect. S. Zemo recused himself as he is a landlord. Mr. Aussavis wants in particular special permission for Bastille Day, July 14, and from his truck in accordance with food truck ordinances and from the parking lot at Lucs at 3 Big Shop Lane on 7/14 Bastille Day, to sell his food items and crepes.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the vendor permit for an additional year for Herve' Aussavis to sell food items and crepes on July 14 Bastille Day and from his truck at all other times. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Henny Penny Lease

Whitney Freeman, Tenant, came forward regarding her lease which needs to be resigned. This is necessary because the government wanted their wording inserted – # (j) *Tenant is permitted to seed and conduct controlled tillage for invasive and/or noxious plant control and seeding for improved forage. However, the Conservation Commission will have approval rights of any soil amendments as recommended by NRCS, per soil test from UCONN or similar soil testing laboratory.*

**R. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the lease as amended between the Town of Ridgefield as Landlord and Whitney Freeman as Tenant. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. Approval of Tax Refunds

**M. Kozlark moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to approve the tax refunds totaling \$5,427.43 as requested in Tax Collector, Jane Bernedsen-Hill's memo of 2/3/2017. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Selectman's Report

- Main St. project is moving forward
- Route 35 construction is a problem even with the Police presence It has impacted businesses in the area, especially in the Ippoliti Building near Pamby
- New light on Main St. This is a sample of a new lamp for possibly changing the entire town. Northeast Utilities is releasing everything. Use of the LED's is moving forward. Not as bright at the corner spot but does take care of the area. The bulbs have a longer lifespan.
- The Grand List is out with roughly a 1% increase - \$1,250,000
- LWV is at the Library on February 23<sup>rd</sup>
- February 27 – discussion of 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail

- Special meeting of the BOS taking place this coming Friday – tour of Parks & Rec and their problem with dampness of the wall. Tour also of the Police station. R. Hebert has already toured Parks & Rec. and part of the Police Building.
- Everyone shutting down tomorrow, Thursday, February 9 – snow forecast. We may have to cancel tomorrow night also.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 12/22/16 Special, 1/18/17, 1/27/Special

The BOS agreed to put off approval of the meeting minutes until the next meeting.

B. Manners moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to adjourn the BOS Meeting at 9:36 p.m.

### **Budget Meeting Agenda**

1. Lake Mamanasco
2. RVNA
3. MLIF Community Grant
4. General Budget Discussion

1. Lake Mamanasco – Representative, Barbara Hartman came forward for the discussion. They are charging all lakefront owners \$350/ft. for their lake frontage to obtain a fund to control the lake. They are not including the town ownership. The growth of blue algae was not as bad this past summer. Ms. Hartman asked for the town's support and a contribution. They have had support from the town in the past and they want this trend to continue. If the lake fills in, it will become a swamp. Money goes for lake management and testing. They ask residents to use no fertilizer and they study all septs on the lake. They have been in contact with Jim Coyle and Susan Baker of the Conservation Commission.
2. RVNA – Representatives of the RVNA came forward for their discussion – Therese Santoro, President, M.J. Heller, Director of Development, Kevin Lewis, CIO, and a lady from the Board of Directors. Ms. Santoro stated how the BOS has supported the RVNA historically. She passed out a letter from the RVNA and a chart that lists how the RVNA supports the needs of the town. In 2016, the Town's contribution was converted to a community grant. The RVNA asked for \$42,500 in 2016 and \$15,000 in 2017. Support of their new building is a significant part of RVNA's Operating Budget – 90% of their expenses are for staff and benefits including a rent abatement. Per Kevin Lewis, last year RVNA ended up \$800 in the black.

The Board of Education is working on their budget numbers. Paul Hendrickson issued an expense sheet. The 2017/18 budget numbers are down to a 3.5% increase. R. Marconi indicated he has spoken with Hartford representative, John Fry and Joey Berlin, head of the Employees Union. S. Zemo inquired about the possibility of a class action suit. There would be bias on such a suit in a Fairfield court. There are legal conditions regarding such a suit. J. Fry doesn't think we would get anywhere. R. Marconi is very concerned about this issue. We can hold back our conveyance payments. S. Zemo suggested we invite a representative from Hartford here for our February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. We could invite someone to come here at 8:30 p.m. following the Town Meeting. We don't want to bring down the education level of our State. R. Marconi will contact other towns that are being also impacted. We need to be careful about our fund balance situation.

**S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting at 10:32 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson