

## **TOWTN of RIDGEFIELD – BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JUNE 8, 2016**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 P.M.

### **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, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

### **Agenda**

1. Public Comment
2. Rotary Sunrise Proclamation
3. Board of Education Technology Lease: Paul Hendrickson
4. Economic Development Commission Report
5. Food Vendor Ordinance Presentation: Gwen Ellis, Catherine Crespo
6. Sidewalks Ordinance Discussion: Gwen Ellis
7. Public Building Lead Testing Results: Angela Sun
8. ADA compliance in Town Meeting Rooms: Ryan Carey
9. Branchville Schoolhouse, Ballard Pump House research: Brendan Pallant, Jake Seem
10. Old Quarry Road Former Schlumberger Property – Decision to Purchase
11. Selectman's Report
12. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 5/25/16

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Surprise Happy Birthday for B. Manners.

**S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to add to the evening's agenda as Item #8A a discussion if the BOS wants to move ahead with a Public Hearing and a Town Meeting at least ten days following for the request of the Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club to lease and manage The Barn. Motion passed 5-0.**

1. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
2. Rotary Sunrise Proclamation – Tony Phillips, Director Social Services, presented A Proclamation to Honor The Rotary Club of Ridgefield Sunrise” for their many hours of service to the people of Ridgefield. Ron Guastino, representing the Rotary Club of Ridgefield Sunrise, accepted the award. This Rotary Club raised funds in the Women’s Center of Greater Danbury Walk, held their first Pumpktober Fest, and donated proceeds to The Ridgefield Playhouse, The Prospector Theater, The Women’s Center of Greater Danbury, and Ridgefield’s Lion Heart Organization, organized the first “Responder’s Month” honoring the Ridgefield Fire Department, Police Department and volunteer services, and raised over \$250,000 over the course of 2 ½ years for the Ridgefield Food Drive, without missing a single day of work. Members present of The Rotary Club of Ridgefield Sunrise came forward to be honored.
3. Board of Education Technology Lease: Paul Hendrickson

Paul Hendrickson, Director of Finance for Ridgefield’s Board of Education, came forward to discuss this year’s BOE Technology Lease. The BOE pays the lease, but since the Town of Ridgefield is designated on the lease, Mr. Hendrickson comes before the BOS each year to seek their approval. Capital One won the bid this year with an interest rate of 1.55%. Last year’s

winner was J.P. Morgan but their bid this year was 2.21%. The BOE has in place three technology leases for four years each, with a new lease approved each fiscal year. Because of the longer life of the equipment, the lease is now considered a capital expenditure rather than part of the annual budget. B. Hebert inquired and was told that the payment of the leases comes out of the BOE operating budget and thus the BOE gets the tax-exempt rate. S. Zemo stated how this tax-exempt rate allows the BOE to buy more equipment.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the Board of Education 2016-17 technology lease for \$305,000 with Capital One presenting the lowest bid for this year's lease. Motion passed 5-0.**

#### 4. Economic Development Commission Report

Arnold Light, Chairman of the EDC, and other EDC members were present this evening for the Commission's power-point presentation. The EDC has had a reorganization and wished to share with the BOS their "5 Point Plan" and the Commission's objectives and goals. John Devine provides counsel to the EDC with regard to brand development and presented the Commission's report to the BOS. Their membership consists of the Chairman, Arnold Light and six members – Mary Henwood, Retail/Marketing Liaison; John Devine, EDC Town Marketing Coordinator, Alexander Karsanidi, Branchville TOD Liaison, Paul Levine, EDC Counselor, John Collins, SCRE Parking Authority Liaison, and Bob DeFalco, State & Federal EDC Liaison, Schlumberger Liaison, and EDC Web-Site Administration.

The EDC's "5 Point Plan" consists of:

- 1) Preserving Ridgefield's Image and Personality which includes promoting Ridgefield as a leading cultural and Arts destination. This year's Film Festival was a success.
- 2) Striving for sustainable economic growth which include the identification of internal and external best practices that can support existing businesses; secure new tenants to include both regional and/or national occupants to increase foot traffic and contribute tax revenues; and identify short and long-term parking solutions.
- 3) Initial focus is on Main Street and then the surrounding streets; promote and support the potential TOD Project; and support implementation of an approved Schlumberger Plan
- 4) Developing active marketing with the redesign of our Town web-site
- 5) Improving coordination and communication with the BOS, State & Federal EDC, Chamber of Commerce, Planning & Zoning, Parking Authority. Representatives of the EDC will meet with R. Marconi, First Selectman one time/month and the BOS on a quarterly basis.

The EDC's goals include

- 1) Promote and preserve the unique image of Main Street
- 2) Develop a comprehensive plan that supports sustainable business growth. People do things individually but the EDC needs to build a strategy with goals developed out of the strategy
- 3) Identify and secure new tenants – national occupants would be welcome but not likely to happen. Local businesses are the most likely happen and they need to be welcomed and encouraged.
- 4) Leverage all town assets, on and adjacent to Main Street
- 5) Strive to change future ground floor space occupancy as a retail priority – voluntary and zoning by attrition. Create demand for retail on the ground floor.
- 6) Increase foot traffic for existing occupants.

The EDC has divided up into three Task Force Teams –

- 1) Economic Development Task Force with John Devine as Chairman – a new website is a “must” with a home page and to links. The web site needs to be so attractive that it will encourage a visit to Ridgefield.
- 2) Parking Task Force – Short-term plan by July 2016 and a long-term plan by December 2016
- 3) Retail Task Force

M. Kozlark stressed the need for the website to be up and running by October. It definitely needs to be in place for the holiday season. B. Manners stated how the Chamber of Commerce has a new website which will provide a link to the Town website.

R. Hebert expressed support for what the EDC is doing and especially liked the branding. He asked if the EDC will be developing a slogan? The response was that they have yet to create a brand. The EDC feels that they need to leverage the cultural aspects of the Town. For example, the Aldrich Museum and the Playhouse bring a lot of people into Ridgefield.

R. Marconi thanked the EDC for their dedication and hard work.

- 5, Food Vendor Ordinance Presentation: Gwen Ellis, Catherine Crespo – This presentation is by two Ridgefield High School Interns.

Gwen Ellis came forward to present their findings. Catherine Crespo had to work and could not attend. They looked at the food vendor permits that Ridgefield has approved. No one in Connecticut has a numerical limit on the number of vendors in their town. New York City does have a limit in place. They created two surveys and received 522 responses from the community and 25 responses from restaurant owners. The responses indicated large positive support for food vendors on Main St. One comment was that not all the food trucks have trash cans. Restaurants indicated a negative effect if the food truck affects their business. Food trucks affect foot traffic positively.

Should there be a limit on the number of food trucks on Main St? Both survey groups said “yes”. Most individuals in town do not realize how many permits have been issued. Permits are not transferable. Most permits are for only one vendor. It was suggested that the hours of operation should be listed on the permit. Another suggestion was to have the season of operation be defined on the permit. The BOS can then offer seasonal permits.

Section 7 deals with suspension and appeal of a suspension of a food vendor’s permit. Some Connecticut towns do have this in writing. A suspension and an appeal is not something that has yet happened in Ridgefield. It is recommended that all vendors have permits and not just for food vendors. The BOS can have the flexibility to extend or limit hours of operation.

Gwen and Catherine are suggesting the addition of Section 11 with a cap on the number of permits. This number can be reviewed every five years. They are also suggesting that mobile food vendors shall be permitted to park and operate from town-owned property in conjunction with town-sponsored events. However, mobile food vendors should be excluded from parking at athletic events while the concession stand is in operation.

Another suggestion that they are requesting is that no permit shall be issued to any vendor if his or her business entity will be within 1,000 feet of a permanent business which sells a similar product,

unless that business agrees to the location. A food vendor who remains in the same location may be considered a permanent business.

R. Hebert stated how Gwen and Catherine's report did not differentiate between food trucks and ice cream trucks. Some move to different places and others are stationary. We do have some food vendors who are waiting for a permit. S. Zemo stated how the location of a food truck is an important issue to be considered. Thank you for an excellent research job.

M. Kozlark stated how this reports gives the BOS "food for thought". Appreciate their suggestions as to what we need to incorporate in our permit policy. She has spoken with Weston and other surrounding towns where they consider a food truck as a catering business and not as a permanent food vendor. A comment from the public was that in some towns, a food vendor has to be a resident of the town in order to obtain a permit. In Ridgefield, our Police Department is responsible for a vendor check. They check out the vehicle and the motor vehicle records. They do not do a real background check.

Town Counsel David Grogins asked where are we with this project? We need to define whether a food permit is for all year-round or short-term and seasonal. He feels that our permit process is "mostly fine". How do residents feel about a moratorium? Let's look at these issues and move ahead. R. Marconi suggested that the BOS come up with a draft and then share it with the Police Department for their feedback. S. Zemo stated how the BOS has some work to do.

6. Sidewalks Ordinance Discussion: Gwen Ellis – This is a presentation by one of Ridgefield High School's Interns – Gwen Ellis.

Gwen worked alone on this project dealing with municipal maintenance of all public sidewalks and what is the responsibility of the property owner. R. Marconi stated how the crosswalk has to coordinate with the adjoining sidewalk. Our ordinance states that the landowner is responsible for the sidewalk in front of his property. The court cases in Connecticut on this issue have not protected the towns. The Connecticut ordinance in 1982 was repealed. We need to propose some changes to our local ordinance. The Town hopes to get a vendor who will deal with municipal sidewalks. A Public Hearing and a Town Meeting would then be scheduled relative to this issue. There is a lot of "conversation" about this topic.

7. Public Building Lead Testing Results: Angela Sun – This is a project conducted by one of Ridgefield High School's Interns – Angela Sun.

Angela is thinking about a possible career in Public Health and thus was interested in this intern research project. She presented the results of lead testing at four Ridgefield public schools. Two samples were taken from each school – with one sample taken from a fountain or sink that had not been used for at least six hours and a second draw was taken after the water from the same sink or fountain ran for about 2-3 minutes straight. These samples were taken to the Aqua Environmental Lab in Newtown, CT for testing on lead and copper levels. The test samples showed elevated levels but still well below any danger levels.

R. Marconi stated how this was a learning experience for all of us. We abide by the EPA standards issued by the Department of Health. This shows we are proactive. Aquarian tested six municipal building locations last fall with no resulting problems.

8. ADA Compliance in Town Meeting Rooms: Ryan Carey

Ryan is currently a student at the University of Maryland and this is a project Ryan has been working on as an Intern with Tony Phillips. Tony Phillips, Ridgefield's Director of ADA Compliance, came forward also. They researched a variety of sound systems that would bring Town Meeting Rooms up to ADA-compliance. The goal is to make setting up for someone with needs a basic procedure. This sound equipment has to be useable for someone with a hearing aid. What if someone has a pacemaker? S. Zemo inquired as to how this equipment is to be controlled and allocated. People with special conditions, need to ask for assistance. Some receivers were too loud and others were too soft. The individual has to have their listening device with them. The estimated cost for the desirable equipment is \$3,923.96. R. Hebert asked if there is anything additional we need to do for this Town Hall meeting room? T. Phillips responded how everywhere we look, we see problems and/or omissions.

#### 8A Request of the Boys & Girls Club to Lease and Manage the Barn

Mike Flynn, Executive Director, Don Romoser, President of the Board of Directors, and Chris Leonard, member of the Board of Directors, came forward to present their request from the Boys & Girls Club to lease and manage The Barn as a teen center.

The Barn is a center for youth to come to and "hang out". The Parks & Rec Department would like to have The Barn open more hours. How do we make this facility more available to the youth? The Boys & Girls Club has 1625 registered members with about 600 being middle-schoolers. More youth come on Friday's if there is a band there. The Youth Commission has looked at The Barn and considers it a great opportunity. This will be a place for the teens to come and "decompress" and where skilled and role-model counseling will be available.

S. Zemo thinks that continuity becomes important. It is a place where teens can go every day. There are lots of angles to consider when looking at this request. There is a lot of value in this proposal.

R. Hebert stated how he echoes everything he has heard but he does have two questions – 1) How is the Barn being funded now? It is a line item in the Parks & Rec. Department budget for \$65,000, and 2) What is the financial obligation, and how do we fund it? We need to look at the lease. We currently pay for the utilities and insurance. \$45,000 has been spent recently in renovating The Barn. It has never been in better shape. The BOE uses The Barn in the early morning for their transitional program. The Boys & Girls Club can work with the BOE to make it possible for both their programs to work. The Boys & Girls Club wants to take over The Barn and operate it. They would like for the Town of Ridgefield to continue to pay the utilities. J. Katz, Ridgebury Rd., expressed his support for this.

B. Manners stated how the youth need to feel that The Barn is "their place". M. Kozlark indicated how the BOS is very sensitive to this. Yes, the youth do need a regular place to go to. It is important to maintain structural programs. At one time there was concern about elementary school children walking by on their way home from school. There needs to be a perimeter put in place. The youth need to work with rules and regulations. There is to be no smoking anywhere in the area.

S. Zemo inquired if The Barn is a community-grants recipient. Yes. There should be someone from the BOS on the Board of the Boys & Girls Club. Other towns like Wilton, New Canaan, Greenwich, all have teen centers that the towns pay for the costs. B. Manners stated how the intentions of the Boys & Girls Club are good and the Youth Commission is supportive of the idea also.

S. Zemo expressed concern about the commitment for \$65,000/year. We need to look at this amount every year. There needs to be flexibility. If it comes under Community Grants every year, then we look at it. R. Hebert is in agreement that there should be an annual review. The Boys & Girls Club needs to come before the BOS each year with their yearly report. We want to know exactly how many of the youth are participants of The Barn. B. Manners stated how often these are the youth that do not feel included. R. Marconi stated how this will give these children a place, the opportunity to feel better about themselves so that they do not feel excluded.

The representatives of the Boys & Girls Club stated how they specialize in kids that do not fit in. They urge the BOS members to come by and get acquainted with what the Boys & Girls Club has to offer. We attempt to provide what these kids need. R. Marconi suggested June 22 as a Public Hearing date and a Town Meeting the first meeting date in July.

In a memo from Laurie Fernandez, the BOE is currently using The Barn during the school year, in the mornings from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The Barn is currently open for 4 hours on Mondays and Wednesdays and 8 hours on Fridays, a total of 16 hours/week. L. Fernandez submitted a break-down of costs to run The Barn (bare minimum) is \$63,670.44 for 16 hours /week.

**R. Marconi moved and B. Hebert seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing date for June 22 at 7:30 pm in the Town Hall large conference room and a Special Town Meeting on July 6 at 7:30 pm. Motion carried 5-0.**

9. Branchville Schoolhouse, Ballard Pump House Research: Brendan Pallant, Jake Seem – The research on these two locations has been conducted by Brendan and Jake, two of Ridgefield High School's Interns.

Brendan Pallant and Jake Seem came forward to share their research regarding these two old Ridgefield buildings. In the late 1700's, Ridgefield was divided into fourteen school districts and the Branchville Schoolhouse served one of these districts. It was built in 1801 and is somewhat historically significant. There is said to be an old flag in the building which may well be the oldest flag in Ridgefield. The building was originally leased out in the 30's. It was then leased to the Branchville Civic Association in 1946 for \$1/year. The Ridgefield Jaycee's leased the schoolhouse in 1955 until the 1980's, and the Ridgefield Little League from 1987 to the present. Until the present time, only the shed (which is not original to the building) has been used for storage. When a building such as this is altered, one tries to do as little as possible in order to maintain the structure's historical significance.

These two students also researched the history of the Ballard Pump House in what is now, Ballard Park. Elizabeth Bigelow died in the 1960's and passed the Pump House on to the Town of Ridgefield where it was used as a thrift shop before the shop moved on to a different location. R. Hebert looked into what it would cost to repair the building – The foundation needs to be repaired, the siding and roof replaced and electrical work is needed also. The Pump House needs to be turned into something else or torn down. It is of no value to the Housing Authority which is responsible for Ballard Green. Repair of the Pump House is too large an expense for a non-profit to afford. So far no one has come up with a viable use for the building. The Guild of Artists has indicated some interest in the structure.

10. Old Quarry Road Former Schlumberger Property – Decision to Purchase

S. Zemo recused himself from this discussion.

R. Marconi stated how he did not feel it was necessary to go into Executive Session. He is not in favor of buying the property back. B. Manners stated how she does not feel it is necessary to go into Executive Session, but she is not as firm as other BOS members about not buying the land back. Land is a precious commodity and we may wish we had re-purchased the property sometime in the future. M. Kozlark agreed that Executive Session was not needed and she also does not see the BOS repurchasing the property.

Chris McQuilkin stated how the Town sold the property for \$1.25 million. Do we have to buy it back for this same amount? This is an opportunity for us to repurchase; we can make an offer. There is nothing about the right of a first refusal.

Patty ???? inquired as to what can the property be used for? R. Marconi responded how different suggestions are welcome.

**R. Marconi moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion for the Town of Ridgefield to not purchase back the Old Quarry Road former Schlumberger Property of 3.8 acres. Motion passed 3-1. B. Manners voted to not approve the motion. S. Zemo recused himself from the meeting on this subject and was not present for the vote.**

11. Selectman's Report

- Relay for Life scheduled for June 11. Tents are being set up for this event at the Boys & Girls Club.
- The BOE has new Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, Dr. Kim Hapken.
- New Principal replacing Marty Fiedler at East Ridge Middle School, Patricia Raneri.
- Historical Society – lead found in the paint. Will need to schedule a Town Meeting to approve the funding as not what originally planned for.
- HRRA – Does the Town want to increase hauler fees next year? Haulers currently pay \$100/year to use the Transfer Station. R. Marconi read off the different amount assessed to haulers in neighboring towns. It was decided to keep the fee at \$100/year.
- Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, received again this year the Certificate of Achievement award from GFOA.
- Friday, June 24, 5:00 – Reception at Gallo honoring Betty Brosius on her retirement. Should we do a proclamation?

12. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 5/25/16

**S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the May 25, 2016, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

**S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:48 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson