

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL BOS MEETING

OCTOBER 6, 2016 – 7:30 P.M.

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM

UNREVISED/UNAPPROVED MINUTES

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

Attendance: R. Marconi, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held on October 6, 2016, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut, to consider the following changes to Ridgefield Code under Chapter 274: Article II: Peddling and Soliciting. Underline and bold italics represents addition to existing language: brackets and strikethrough indicate deletion.

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. He called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. and read the Call for the Public Hearing regarding the Food Vendor Ordinance.

R. Marconi pointed out originally farm stands were exempt from food vendor regulations. Different types of operations are allowed within certain zones. They do not have to be governed by an ordinance. R. Marconi read farm stands do not have to be contiguous with the farm. They can also be allowed in the central business district. He checked with Richard Baldelli about how the regulations for farm stands are OK the way they are. There were no comments from the public about this issue. R. Marconi met with Ridgefield's new Planning Director and discussed quite a few topics. They want to review some zoning perceptions and want Planning & Zoning to look at these topics as well. A Public Meeting will be scheduled for October 19. We do not want zoning issues to overlap with discussion of the proposed Food Vendor Ordinance.

A letter to the BOS (dated October 6, 2016) was submitted by Bernard Dzielinski, President, Fairfield County Agricultural Extension Council, Inc., relative to the discussion of the proposed Food Vendor Ordinance. Mr. Dzielinski points out that in 274.5, Item A, the wording deletes the Farming and Farmers Market statement; this statement should be retained. The ordinance needs an explicit clarification that the farming industry is exempt of this ordinance, rather than an implicit exemption as people could challenge Farm Stand operators as violating this ordinance, if it is deleted. In 274-5, Item C, the farming statement can be deleted as no farmers are 501C(3) entities; they are trying to make a profit.

S. Zemo stated he is in agreement with procedural changes and zoning issues. We need to look at health regulations and meet with Ed Briggs and also look at planning and zoning issues. Are there any concerns that involve the Fire Department?" What about the availability of water and the use of propane. The food vendors cannot be allowed to park in any fire zones.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. on October 19, 2016 and a Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on November 2, 2016, both at Town Hall/Large Conference Room, Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, for the purpose of discussion and possible adoption of the Food Vendor Ordinance. Motion passed 5-0.

Special Town Meeting – R. Marconi read the call for the Special Town Meeting following the Pledge of Allegiance, to consider and act on the transfer of \$8,800 from the unexpended capital balance of the

Richard Venus Building painting fund to the Peter Parley Schoolhouse painting project. Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk, was present and minutes of the Special Town Meeting are under separate cover.

BOS Meeting Agenda (*immediately following Special Town Meeting*)

1. Public Comment
2. Youth Commission Interview: Wendy Mitchell
3. Open Space Violations Appeal Officer Interviews:
 - a. John J. Fenton
 - b. Ronald S. Gutstein
 - c. Walter R. Knittel
4. Presentation of New Economic Development Commission Website
5. WREF Lease Amendment
6. Request to Rename Ligi Way and Post Sign
7. Selectman's Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 9/21/16
9. Executive Session: Future Lease of Town-Owned Property: Venus Building, Schlumberger

R. Marconi called the Special Town Meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

1. Public Comment – John Collins, Langstroth Drive, expressed his support for Wendy Mitchell. He stated she is very passionate about working with children and the arts.

2. Youth Commission Interview: Wendy Mitchell

Wendy Mitchell came forward meet the BOS and to support her interest in serving on the Youth Commission. R. Marconi read the letter submitted by Ms. Mitchell. She opened a new music school September 1st on Danbury Road – called Bach to Rock. She taught part-time theater at St. Mary School in Bethel and has run her own community theater program for over ten years in the greater Danbury area. She has also served as a volunteer youth mentor for 15+ years and was a Youth Director at Bethel United Methodist and St. John's Stamford. She is Head Teacher Certified through the State of CT in Early Childhood and has more than 15 years of teaching experience. She has been involved with and offered free healing through arts, music, and pet therapy to the residents and children of Sandy Hook. Ms. Mitchell grew up in Sandy Hook and the arts has been a big part of her life. She sings and plays bass. She stated through the arts, kids come out of their shell. She organized volunteers to help after the Sandy Hook shootings.

B. Manners stated “my goodness” – what a wonderful background. S. Zemo stated Ms. Mitchell reminds him of Ruth Liebowitz, who donated her Sunday evenings for twenty years to the children of Ridgefield with her program called, “Inside Out”. Ms. Mitchell indicated that she knows Ruth Liebowitz.

M. Kozlark stated music and performance groups focus on Ridgefield and how important such programs were following Sandy Hook.

R. Hebert stated Ms. Mitchell's husband is a drummer and he teaches English at the High School. His wife handles comfort dogs and he knows what a benefit this program is to the community. He expressed a thank you to Ms. Mitchell and thanked her for coming forward to offer her expertise to the Youth Commission.

There will still be five Adult vacancies on the Youth Commission and two vacancies for Youth members. **B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Wendy Mitchell**

to fill one of the adult vacancies on the Youth Commission for a two-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Open Space Violations Appeal Officer Interviews:

- a. John J. Fenton
- b. Ronald S. Gutstein
- c. Walter R. Knittel

Jim Coyle and other members of the Open Space & Conservation Commission were present at this evening's meeting. The Open Space Citation Hearing Officer will hear the cases of those who have received open space violations and wish to appeal them. One thought was appointing three individuals and have them rotate when they hold a hearing on an open space violation case. B. Manners stated she liked the idea. The three officers could even act as a group. M. Kozlark stated having more than one officer involved in a hearing would be helpful in the case of a tie. S. Zemo stated it would be helpful to hear three people's perspective on a violation case. Three people could consult with one another and come up with a creative way to settle the case. M. Kozlark suggested that the appointments be made for one year and then we can reassess how it has worked out.

John Fenton came forward to express his interest in this position. He serves as a Ranger with the Conservation Commission. Mr. Fenton had thirty-five years of experience in global account and general management and concluded his career as Executive Vice President and Managing Director at Young & Rubicam. He has served on the board and executive committee of the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk and provided staff assessments for this organization. This year marks his twelfth year as a child advocate, taking court appointments as a Guardian ad Litem in all of the juvenile courts in Fairfield County. He has had over 40 appointments involving 82 children. He has also served as a ranger for the Conservation Commission overseeing trails. Mr. Fenton therefore has had significant amount of experience in hearing cases and being involved with the decision as to what to do in each case.

Ron Gutstein came forward to express his interest in serving in this capacity. R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Gutstein. Mr. Gutstein served four terms on the Ridgefield Economic Development Commission and spent thirteen years in the RVFD serving six of those years as treasurer. He and his family are also active volunteers at the Woodcock Nature Center. Professionally, he is an institutional sales grader with a sub-specialty in forestry investments.

Mr. Gutstein described new software that is available that can take satellite images of an individual piece of property or even a single tree. This software provides very accurate evaluations. About 30% of Ridgefield is composed of open space. We have nine miles of open space. M. Kozlark asked Mr. Gutstein how he would handle a conflict. How would he resolve the situation? He would decide what is the correct course of action? He would try to come to the best conclusion with the realization that no one will be happy with the resulting decision. He said he would like the idea of three officers but doesn't like the idea of rotation of the responsibility of the cases. He prefers for the three officers to work together on a case. He thinks it is necessary to get a consensus and have the people involved satisfied at the end. The hearing needs to be fair and not have a pre-determined decision.

Walter Knittel came forward to express his interest in the Open Space Hearing Officer position. R. Marconi reviewed the Profile submitted by Mr. Knittel. He is a Professional Engineer retired from IBM and Electronic Environments Corp, a division of Time Warner Corp. He moved to Ridgefield in 2002 because he had a daughter and grandchildren here. He is very interested in

conservation and was a Ranger for a few years and also was a Boy Scout. Where he lives now in Fox Hill borders on conservation property. He feels this position will provide more challenge for his professional abilities.

Mr. Knittel feels that a group of three people working together would be the best way to proceed. These three people can collect thoughts individually and share in the decision-making. People at hearings can get “testy”. He has had experience with hearing at Fox Hill since 2004. He likes being part of management and likes to see a strong Board.

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint all three applicants, John J. Fenton, Ronald S. Gutstein, and Walter R. Knittel as Open Space Violations Appeal Officers for a term of one year. Motion passed 5-0.

What is the next step for this “group of three”. They will meet with Beth and be made aware of pending issues and what has been the process up to this point.

Jim Coyle distributed copies of the new book, “Ridgefield Walk Book”, which just came out.

4. Presentation of New Economic Development Commission Website

Arnold Light, EDC Chairman, came forward to introduce with the use of a PowerPoint presentation, their new website. They have spent about six months developing this website. It will make other towns more aware of what Ridgefield has to offer. There is still some “tweeking” to do. They have hired an answering service as they hope the website will generate a lot more calls. Most calls are going to the Town Planning office. The EDC is working with this office.

Bob Falco came forward to talk about development of the new website. He stated the “old” website was not very functional and really not helping to sell the assets of the Town of Ridgefield. The goal was to make the website into a marketing tool for this town. The thought was to have a business portal on the website – more comprehensive and more marketing-friendly. The goal is to “showcase the town”. The Home Page shows various photos of the Town. The goal is a “call to action” – to catch the eye of the visitor. They do not want to send people off the website to seek the information they want – the goal is for the information to be available right on the website; for example, a section on Forms and Dues. Do we want to open up to advertising on our website? The EDC likes the idea of not sponsoring any business on the website. He passed out paper copies of the website to the BOS. One thought is to change the name of the EDC to Ridgefield Economic Engineering Development.

R. Marconi thanked the EDC for their work on this project.

5. WREF Lease Amendment

The current lease expires in 2017. This lease has been in existence for 25 years, since 1992. The challenge is to find a site and build an antennae. They cannot build on a landfill. It takes at least three years to find a suitable site and build on it.

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the WREF Lease Amendment for an additional three years. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Request to Rename Ligi Way and Post Sign

A letter has been received from George Kain, Chairman of the Board of Police Commissioners, regarding “Ligi’s Way”. The BOS had previously renamed the Town’s “Bypass Road” to “Ligi’s Way” to honor former Chief of Police Richard Ligi and his years of service to the Town of

Ridgefield. A request has been made to members of the Police Commission to look into the possibility of changing the name of the road to Chief Ligi – to make it more personal. The two suggestions from the Police Commission are to 1) Rename the roadway from “Ligi’s Way” to “Chief Ligi’s Way” or 2) Place a sign designating the road as “Chief Richard Ligi Memorial Highway”. By Charter, the BOS is responsible for naming the roads.

R. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve one of the options presented by The Board of Police Commissioners to place a sign designating the road – Ligi’s Way as “Chief Richard Ligi Memorial Highway”. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Selectman’s Report

- The playground at Farmingville School was designed and built for the handicapped by volunteers from Jesse Lee Church under the direction of Peter Seirup.. The dedication of the playground is October 13. R. Marconi will email the BOS the time of the ceremony. This is an incredible project donated to the Town by Jesse Lee Church.
- Resignation from the Pension Committee – Gene Boehringer is moving to Florida.
- There will be a drill for volunteers on October 29th.
- Transfer Station is sponsoring a special on October 17 - \$5 per carload.
- Employee Recognition – Service Award Luncheon at Bernard’s – tomorrow, Thursday, October 7 at 12:30 p.m. Members of the BOS are welcome to attend if want to go. ??? will be recognized for 40 years of service.
- Absentee Ballots available beginning tomorrow, October 7
- Copies of the new laws passed by the State of Connecticut are available. Most of these laws went into effect October 1st, 2016.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 9/21/16

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the September 21, 2016, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

Executive Session: Future Lease of Town-Owned Property: Venus Building, Schlumberger

R. Marconi moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to recess the BOS Meeting at 10:00 p.m. and go into Executive Session to discuss Future Lease of Town-Owned Property: Venus Building, Schlumberger. Motion passed 5-0.

The BOS Meeting closed their Executive Session at 11:10 p.m. and resumed their public session. No vote was taken. **S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to adjourn the BOS Meeting at 11:12 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson