

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JANUARY 20, 2016

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 6:30 P.M.

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the Board of Selectmen 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. Tree Committee Interview: Anthony Tufariello
3. Economic Development Commission Interviews: John Devine, Alex Karsanidi
4. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Alan Eskenazi
5. Commission on Aging Interview: Sayna Sierakowski
6. Building Code Board of Appeals Reappointment: Paul Payne
7. Parking Authority Member Reappointments
8. Approval of Assistant Treasurer: Michael J. Rettger
9. Approval of OPEB Investment Policy: Dave Campbell, Art Aaronson, Kevin Redmond
10. Parks & Recreation Field Safety Capital Expenditure
11. Approval of Golf Course Concession RFP
12. Conservation Commission Ordinance Change; Set Public Hearing, Special Town Meeting Dates
13. Rail Trail License Agreement
14. Approval of Tax and Building Permit Refunds
15. Request for Dedication of Shadow Lake Ballfield to Ryan Adams
16. Peaceable Ridge Radio Tower License Agreement
17. Regional Performance Incentive Program Resolution
18. Selectman's Report
19. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/6/16, 1/14/16 Special

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order following a meeting of the Fire Commission.

1. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
2. Tree Committee Interview: Anthony Tufariello
Tony Tufariello came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. He is an engineer by training but became interested in trees when he lived in California following his college years. He worked in the insurance industry and thus is very aware of liability considerations. He has planted trees on his own property and taken down trees as well over the years.

S. Zemo inquired about his work schedule. Mr. Tufariello does consulting work from home and thus is available during daytime hours.

B. Manners asked Mr. Tufariello if he has any goals in mind with regard to the Tree Committee. His response was that Ridgefield is quite “leafy” with many varieties of trees. He has spoken with John Pinchbeck and understands how there is a need for more planting. There are big old trees that have had to be taken down. There are beautiful varieties of trees that are resistant to disease. The American Chestnut is one such tree. He suggests planting more disease-resistant species.

M. Kozlark thanked Mr. Tufariello for coming forward and appreciates his interest in preserving Ridgefield's old historic trees. He also suggested labeling the old trees.

R. Marconi stated how the Tree Committee consists of four members appointed by the Conservation Commission and three members appointed by the BOS. Tag-A-Tree did quite a lot of labeling of town trees awhile back. R. Hebert stated how the Tree Committee has the right to protect trees on public property. They were called upon recently to review the various tree species on Sunset Lane.

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Anthony (Tony) Tufariello to fill one of the vacancies on the Tree Committee for a three-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Economic Development Commission Interviews: John Devine, Alex Karsanidi

Alex Karsanidi came forward to express his interest in serving on the EDC. He has lived in Ridgefield for the past thirty years, knows everyone on the BOS and has served on a variety of committees and town organizations over the years. He would like to see Ridgefield develop more the "cultural side" and its non-residential tax base. The Grand List continues to go up slowly which is good. There are not large areas available for commercial development, but "pockets of opportunity" here and there, such as along Route 7. There is development of Branchville now going on – the Town should tie into that. He is in favor of more senior housing. Seniors give a solid base to the community. They contribute but do not need as much in the way of services. Tourism can be developed more by working closely with the Chamber of Commerce.

M. Kozlark commented on the survey done by two realtors. Has Mr. Karsanidi had the opportunity to review their findings? The EDC is working to use the results of this report and they will be returning to a future BOS meeting to wrap up their presentation.

Mr. Karsanidi responded how in the last thirty years, there have been many studies done in Ridgefield. How many of their findings have been implemented? It is difficult to implement some of their plans. One can only do so much in the downtown area as there is not much available space.

B. Manners asked Mr. Karsanidi how he feels about development along Route 7. There is already so much traffic on this road. He does not want to see development like that on Federal Rd. in Danbury. What about some office buildings – not box stores? There are pockets for development – offices with first floor retail space.

R. Hebert stated how often economic development and economic growth are lumped together. How can we bring businesses into town? How can we bring in start-up's? How can we help existing businesses?

Parking is an issue that needs to be developed. What is our approach on how to do this? What about tax incentives? What about personal property incentives?

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Alexander Karsanidi to fill one of the vacancies on the Economic Development Commission for a one-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

John Devine, Jr.

Mr. Devine came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. His career was in the consumer products industry and specifically cosmetics from the manufacturer's viewpoint. He commented

on how sales have shifted to the digital markets. Last year newspaper ads were down 14% and magazine ads down 25%. He commented on his meetings with Ridgefield's Chamber of Commerce and how their marketing is for those with PC's and not tablets and cell phones. There is a group on Facebook called the Ridgefield Business Group which is an "open" group and already 1100 people have signed up. They hold breakfast gatherings 1x/month. If one wants to shop, Ridgefield is not "linked up".

M. Kozlark stated how the BOS will be bringing back the two women who did a survey and report on retail opportunities in Ridgefield. Mr. Devine commented on how Ridgefield is wedged between the Danbury Mall and Westport and thus it is difficult to get national chains interested in investing in a presence in Ridgefield. He feels there is not much retail space available in Ridgefield. R. Hebert stated how he understands what Mr. Devine is saying and he would like to spend some more time with him.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint John Devine, Jr., to fill one of the vacancies on the Economic Development Commission for a one-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Alan Eskenazi

Mr. Eskenazi came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. He has been a Ridgefield resident for 18 years and employed in the mental health profession for the past 25 years. He has been involved with direct patient care as well as substance abuse and other mental health issues. He is currently at Nyack Hospital.

B. Manners stated how Ridgefield is privileged to have Mr. Eskenazi come forward and share his expertise. He has two 12 year-old sons and thus his experience with youth is not just theoretical. S. Zemo commented on Mr. Eskenazi's impressive resume and also thanked him for his interest in volunteering.

M. Kozlark asked Mr. Eskenazi if there is anything in particular that jumps out at him that we should be doing. He commented on how the Ridgefield Prevention Council sponsors events with motivational speakers, but what happens after such events? Where is the follow-up two months later? How does the Council keep that message going? There is more than can be done.

R. Marconi stated how the use of heroin and how opiate deaths have exceeded motor vehicle deaths in CT. We need to step up what we are doing. More needs to be done in the middle school which is the age of experimentation. Studies show that 90% of the adults with substance abuse started experimentation with drugs before the age of 18 and 50% before the age of 15. S. Zemo suggested a joint meeting with the Prevention Council and the need to "anticipate" substance abuse problems rather than "react".

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Alan Eskenazi to fill a vacancy on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

5. Commission on Aging Interview: Dayna Sierakowski

Dayna Sierakowski came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. Her training is in medical social work with the elderly and has worked with the RVNA as a friendly visitor among other Ridgefield volunteer activities, and has attended several of the Commission meetings.

R. Hebert thanked Ms. Sierakowski for coming forward to volunteer. He commented on the amazing quality of Ridgefield's volunteers. M. Kozlark stated how Ms. Sierakowski will be a great addition to the Commission.

S. Zemo moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to appoint Dayna Sierakowski to fill a vacancy on the Commission on Aging for a three-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Building Code Board of Appeals Reappointment: Paul Payne

P. Payne was not present for the meeting.

7. Parking Authority Member Reappointments

Two members of the Parking Authority have resigned, and Chairman Matt Hicks was not able to be present this evening. S. Zemo suggested that this agenda item be put off to another date. B. Manners stated how the reappointments should not be made at this meeting. M. Kozlark suggested advertising for new applicants and include the current Parking Authority members in the interviewing process as well. The BOS should not reappoint at this time. R. Marconi stated how if the BOS does not reappoint this evening, then there is no one currently active on the Parking Authority. This interview process should not linger. The vacancies should be posted and the BOS should also talk with residents who have had issues with the Parking Authority and their policies. Let's see what responses we have to the posting and put this topic on the February 3rd BOS Agenda.

8. Approval of Assistant Treasurer: Michael J. Rettger

Mr. Rettger came forward to express his interest in serving as a volunteer Assistant Treasurer. He is retired from 35 years of insurance and reinsurance industry experience and has a focus on controls and public procedures. He has the time to volunteer for this position.

R. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Michael J. Rettger to fill the volunteer position as Assistant Treasurer. Motion passed 5-0.

9. Approval of OPEB Investment Policy: Dave Campbell, Art Aaronson, Kevin Redmond

This Investment Policy has been developed for the Town of Ridgefield Pension Commission to establish an investment policy for the Town of Ridgefield, CT OPEB Trust. The purpose of this statement is to identify a set of general investment guidelines appropriate for the Trust and to provide general guidance to the Trust's advisors, vendors and other Trust fiduciaries. Dave Campbell stated how this investment policy is to take a longer-term outlook. Art Aaronson is the one who has worked on this policy the most. It is good to build up assets. As of a week ago, there was \$3 million in the account. In this way, we are way ahead of other towns. B. Manners expressed appreciation to the Pension Commission. They meet on a regular basis 1x/month.

M. Kozlark moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to approve as presented the OPEB Investment Policy. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Parks & Recreation Field Safety Capital Expenditure

Paul Roche, Director of Parks & Rec, and Phil Kearns, Chairman of Parks & Rec Commission and Intern Justin Lawrence (from Western CT State Univ.) came forward to discuss the proposed capital expenditure. The Booster Club has raised \$50,000 to improve ballfields and build dugouts.

M. Kozlark stated how there is a five-year plan for Parks & Rec capital expenditures. \$17,500 was requested last year as an emergency expenditure for safety fencing for the East Ridge ball field. This was supposed to be done last year. P. Roche indicated that this safety problem was

completed last year. This proposed capital expenditure is for a different field – the high school softball field and is requested in a January 4, 2016 memo from P. Kearns.

R. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the Parks & Recreation Commission request to spend the funds in the current year capital on backstop and fencing at the high school softball field rather than on the softball field at East Ridge (Field Safety Capital Expenditure). Motion passed 5-0.

11. Approval of Golf Course Concession RFP

E. Tyrrell, Chairman of the Golf Committee, came forward to discuss the proposed RFP with the BOS. M. Kozlark thanked everyone for their input. The goal is to have the RFP out by the end of this week. They then reviewed the wording of the various RFP pages.

- Re cleaning of the restrooms – The restrooms are to be clean at the start of each day, 7 days/week, and are checked again at 11:00 a.m. They are the responsibility of the Ridgefield Golf Course and not the Concession as they are used by the general public.
- Whether there is a dinner menu is up to the concessionaire.
- There is an attached Schedule of Town Supplied Equipment – Additional equipment will not be purchased by the Town. The Concessionaire will need to work with the equipment that is there.
- If Dr. Seemann’s lease is not renewed, then he can remove the equipment he owns. There are a couple of coolers that are owned by vendors – Coke, Pepsi, etc.
- Anyone bidding can do a walk-through scheduled for February 4.
- Any repairs/replacements needed on Town-owned equipment need to be listed.
- There needs to be a statement submitted in the bid about the financial strength of the Concessionaire.
- The Concession is an amenity that helps to protect the Town of Ridgefield’s \$1.3 million investment in the Ridgefield Golf Course.
- R. Marconi indicated his desire for some flexibility regarding the terms of the contract – some optional criteria for extensions of the contract. R. Hebert stated how most individuals will not want to invest their time and dollars for just a one-year contract. A three-year option will probably result in interest by more qualified applicants.
- Payment Schedule – will insert correct dates once a contract is agreed upon.
- A Concessionaire may not engage in any other business on premises without written approval from the Town. This is important in order to protect the Town’s equipment from other uses.
- Responses will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee including Jerry Gay, Director of Purchasing, and Ed Tyrrell, Chairman of the Golf Committee and then forwarded with a recommendation to the BOS.

- The target date for opening of the Concession is April 1, 2016.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve the changes in the RFP for the Concessionaire of Golf Clubhouse Restaurant as reviewed at the BOS Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

12. Conservation Commission Ordinance Change: Set Public Hearing, Special Town Meeting Dates
A January 15, 2016, memorandum has been received from David Grogins, Town Counsel, indicating the process for proposed appointment of two Alternate members to the Conservation Commission and the responsibilities of these alternates. Dr. Oko has expressed interest in becoming an Alternate member. It was thought that the procedure for two Alternate members was provided for in the most recent Charter Revision but the wording of such could not be found.

M. Kozlark moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing and Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m., on February 17, 2016, Town Hall/Large Conference Room, 400 Main St., Ridgefield, CT 06877, to revise the Conservation Commission Ordinance to allow for two alternate members to be appointed to the Conservation Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

The Conservation Commission is also interested in adopting a Conservation Ordinance similar to the Blight Ordinance. They feel they need more leverage in dealing with tree cutting and defacement of public property. R. Marconi commented on how once the Blight Ordinance was implemented, properties were cleaned up by the owners where there had been a problem for years before.

13. Rail Trail License Agreement

R. Marconi indicated how this is a project that has been going on for the past two years. Eversource has been very slow to respond and when they did respond, they wanted the Town of Ridgefield to accept liability for the Rail Trail. The Town of Ridgefield would not agree to that and there was a lot of "back and forth". We finally have a license agreement to review and perhaps approve. The BOS wants to hear what the public has to say and thus it was decided to schedule two public hearings, one of which is to be on a Saturday. R. Marconi stated how he is still trying to have happen a phone conversation between Eversource and David Grogins, Town Counsel. M. Kozlark stressed how this license agreement does not make the Rail Trail safe for bicycles. It remains for now a walking and running trail. Plans for the Trail have to be developed before we can move ahead and get the necessary permits. The license is granted to Ridgefield from Eversource. The Town of Ridgefield would be liable just like it is for any other Town facility but the Town is not willing to accept liability for any prior contamination. It would be helpful if someone from Eversource could attend the public hearings. R. Marconi will see if that is possible but a representative would probably not attend the Saturday date.

B. Manners stated how the question to be resolved is whether biking is going to be allowed on the trail or just walking? We need to come to an agreement regarding this issue. Perhaps certain times of the day could be designated for cyclists. No one group is to have exclusive rights to this facility. M. Kozlark stated how the BOS needs to first hear from the public in these two public hearings. What is going to be the cost? Where should we look for the funding? Are there grant dollars available from the State? The State is in favor of connecting the trails between different municipalities. There will not be a vote at the BOS meeting on February 17 - B. Manners will not be present at that meeting.

Both the Conservation Commission and the Wetlands Board need to approve once there are plans in place. The BOS does not want to spend dollars on design work until the Town is in agreement as what they want for the Rail Trail.

R. Marconi set two dates for Public Hearings regarding the License Agreement between the Connecticut Light and Power Company (Eversource Energy) and the Town of Ridgefield regarding use of the rail trail for walking/hiking/and or biking also and construction/maintenance issues for Saturday morning, February 6, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. and February 17, 2016, at 7:30 p.m., both meetings in the Town Hall/Large Conference Room, 400 Main St., Ridgefield, CT 06877.

14. Approval of Tax and Building Permit Refunds

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the refunds totaling \$3,729.25 as requested by Tax Collector, Jane Berendsen-Hill in her memo dated 1/14/2016. Motion passed 5-0.

A memo dated December 30, 2015, was received from William Reynolds, Building Official for the Town of Ridgefield, regarding a request for a refund from Construction Associates for a building permit that was never used. Permits have never been refunded previously. Did the Town of Ridgefield incur any expenditures? No, they did not review the plans. M. Kozlark asked if a precedent is being set by returning this fee. R. Marconi indicated that we have never been asked before for a refund. B. Manners stated how often when a refund is made, it is for 80% of the charge with the 20% to cover administrative costs.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the refund request in the amount of \$2,244.00 (80% of \$2,805.00), from Construction Associates for permit #AP-2015-0273 for work at 109 Danbury Rd., which was not done. Motion passed 4-0. S. Zemo abstained.

15. Request for Dedication of Shadow Lake Ballfield to Ryan Adams

This is a request from Ryan Adams' mother, Mary Lou Hanney. Ryan was an Eagle Scout and his Eagle project was at Shadow Lake, renovation of the town baseball field that he had played ball on for many years. Ryan lost his life in a plane accident. Parks & Rec has a policy of not naming fields after someone. P. Kearns, Chairman of Parks & Rec Commission, asked that we not do this.

S. Zemo stated how he appreciates both viewpoints. He suggests that we work with this family and Parks & Rec and possibly plant trees or something similar as a "living memorial" – come to an agreement that the family is comfortable with. He suggests that two BOS members meet with 2 Parks & Rec Commission members to work this out and show our understanding of the situation.

16. Peaceable Ridge Radio Tower License Agreement

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the signing by First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, of the License Agreement between Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut, and the Town of Ridgefield to allow a radio tower to be installed on the Peaceable Ridge water tank. Motion passed 5-0.

17. Regional Performance Incentive Program Resolution

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the signing of the resolution for the Regional Performance Incentive Program, from WestCOG Regional Snowplow Routing Study. Motion passed 5-0.

18. Selectman's Report

- Due to a resignation, there is now a vacancy on the AAC.
- R. Hebert asked if residents can serve on two positions. The answer is yes – one elected position and one appointed position.

19. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/6/16; 1/14/16 Special

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the January 6, 2016, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the January 14, 2016, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion was approved 4-0-1. S. Zemo was not present at the meeting.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:45 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson