



APPROVED MINUTES
Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.org

Meeting
December 13, 2021 at 7 P.M.

Present: James Coyle Roberta Barbieri Jack Kace
Allan Welby Kitsey Snow Erik Keller
Matt Sharp Daniel C. Levine Jim Liptack

Absent: Jean Linville

Guests: J. Capocci, P. Shotton, B. Nissim

Jim Coyle chaired the meeting. Ms. Campbell-Gibson took the minutes.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7 P.M.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Sharp), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of November 29, 2021 be approved and ordered filed in the Town Hall. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Snow), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to reappoint Mr. Coyle as Chairman of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Snow), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to reappoint Dr. Kace as Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0

3. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Mr. Hally was not in attendance to give an update.

4. OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION FUND ANNUAL APPEAL

Mr. Coyle asked Ms. Campbell-Gibson to give an update on the 2021 Annual Appeal. Donations received thus far amount to \$11,292.00.

5. THRIFT SHOP GRANT

The Ridgefield Thrift Shop has opened the grant application process for their FY2022 grants. Mr. Coyle asked the commissioners to think of items to request. Various projects were discussed. Commissioners are asked to submit grant application items at the meeting on January 3, 2022.

A few items suggested include plugs of native grass to improve Lauzen Hayfield, owl boxes, additional purple martin gourds, funds to create campaign material for an 'Adopt a Park' campaign proposed by the invasives committee.

6.1 CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

The town is forming a new Charter Revision Commission (done every 4 years) to review the town charter. Mr. Coyle asked the commissioners to consider proposed charter revisions. Dr. Kace suggested proposing changes to Aquifer Protection. He suggests the commission request that the APA fall under the IWB and not the P&ZC. A steep slopes ordinance was also discussed, but probably does not require a charter revision.

Mr. Coyle asked to add FECB as an agenda item under item number 6.

UPON motion duly made (Snow), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to add Flood and Erosion Control Board to item 6. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0.

6.2 FLOOD AND EROSION CONTROL BOARD

Mr. Coyle read a portion of an email received from a resident residing in Wooster Street, regarding their experience with flooding since they moved to Ridgefield last year. They reached out to the FECB for advice on controlling floodwaters. Ms. Snow responded to the resident by suggesting wetland plantings to slow down the floodwater coming onto the property. Ms. Snow wrote a letter to the BOS on behalf of the RCC to express concern over the lack of flood mitigation in the town and suggests this letter be submitted.

UPON motion duly made (Welby), seconded (Barbieri), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to submit a letter of concern regarding significant rain events and the potential for flooding to the board of Selectmen. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0.

Ms. Snow explained the purpose of the FECB according to the state, is for towns to have a conduit to funding to resolve flooding issues. The commissioners agree that they possess neither the funding nor the expertise to adequately advise on flood mitigation in the town. Dr. Kace stated that flood mitigation from an engineering perspective is the purview of the town engineering department.

7. OPEN SPACE

7.1 G08-0012 Land Donation - The donation was accepted at the town meeting held on December 8, 2021. The donor wishes to close this calendar year. The town counsel will work with the donor's counsel regarding this transaction. The deed wording needs to protect the parcel as open space land in perpetuity.

7.2 Boy Scout Property – There will be a public hearing on January 5, 2022, where residents can make comment. The BOS will then schedule a town meeting on January 19 to vote on this topic.

7.3 Declaration of Open Space – Mr. Keller and Mr. Coyle had a meeting with Mr. Marconi regarding protecting town-owned land under the management of the RCC where current deed language does not protect the land as open space in perpetuity. The decision not to use the term “conservation easements” to accomplish this was decided to avoid confusion. Instead, a declaration of open space attached to a list of 90+ parcels would protect those parcels as open space. In January 2022, the BOS will discuss this. Mr. Keller has designated five parcels where open space could be declared on portions of existing town-owned parcels. Subdivision of parcels requires survey work to be done. This would be pursued with the BOS at a later time.

Dr. Oko has emailed the commission regarding the Lewis Grant. Mr. Keller suggested the survey of land parcels for possible subdivision, as a request of the Lewis grant program.

The Port of Missing Men property on the northwestern border of Ridgefield is vacant and remains unclaimed since the dissolution of the POMM. The commission wishes to claim this land as open space.

7.4 Prospect Ridge – Mr. Marconi says the RCC does not control Prospect Ridge, Parks and Recreation does. Mr. Marconi also mentioned a grant from the federal or state government that is linked to these parcels, but it is not clear what the grant was for.

7.5 Tarps – Repurposed billboard vinyl is available for sale at \$160 for 20X60 foot size with an additional \$60 for shipping. These vinyl billboards are black and they are 12-15 ml thick. These will outlast the 6ml thick tarps available at Home Depot. Ms. Snow suggests purchasing two of the repurposed billboards.

UPON motion duly made (Snow), seconded (Welby), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to purchase two repurposed billboards for \$220 each including shipping. The funding will come from the annual budget. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0.

7.6 Trails – Mr. Shotton, a new Ridgefield ranger, was present to talk about his suggestions for trails in northern Ridgefield Bennet's Pond State Park. Mr. Shotton spoke about the suggestions he had emailed to the Ranger Program manager regarding trail blazes and mapping of the trails in Bennet's Pond into neighboring Wooster Heights.

Mr. Coyle explained that the commission does not manage state-owned land, and he referred Mr. Shotton to Mr. Nathan Hale of CT DEEP. Mr. Liptack offered to work with Mr. Shotton on the re-blazing of trails in Bennet's Pond where trail blazes are missing or faint. Mr. Coyle said the RCC would update our maps accordingly.

8. OLD GROWTH FOREST NETWORK PARTNERSHIP

Ms. Snow and Mr. Levine will report at the January 3, 2022 meeting.

9. RAPERIAN ZONING AMENDMENTS

Planning and Zoning have adopted the new legislation regarding riparian buffers in Connecticut. The purpose of this legislation is to protect the Long Island Sound. This requires a buffer of 100 feet minimum and an additional 25 feet if pesticides for land abutting a waterway. This was adopted for four of Ridgefield's rivers. The RCC will work with the P&Z and IWB to provide suggested changes to the adopted regulation.

10. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Mr. Levine has completed the winter newsletter. This will be sent to all for comment. Commissioners are asked to submit comments by the end of the week. The NRI events were posted on social media. The Christmas Bird Count Event is already full but there is debate regarding the planned location of this event due to construction taking place on the Rail Trail.

11. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

No issues were reported with meetings for attendance until the end of this year.

12. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle thanked Mr. Nissim for attending the commission meeting as a prospective commissioner. He asked Mr. Nissim to attend a few meetings before deciding if he wants to continue with his application to the open commission seat.

ADJOURNMENT

UPON motion duly made (Liptack), seconded (Keller), and carried, it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:50 P.M. Motion passed unanimously. Vote: 9:0.