

Town of Ridgefield
Parking Authority Meeting
May 18, 2023 – 8:00 a.m.
Town Hall Lower Level Small Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT
MEETING MINUTES - APPROVED

Members present:

J. Wilmot, E. Burns, M. Recck

Members absent:

None

Present: L. Yarrish, Parking Enforcement Officer

Chairman Recck called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

1. Approval of minutes from April 20, 2023. Mr. Recck moved, and Ms. Wilmot seconded, approval of minutes for 4/20/23. Motion passed 3 – 0.
2. CVS & USPS lots update. On Monday, 5/15, Mr. Recck forwarded to L. Quattrocchi – Benenson Real Estate Corp (owner of the CVS & USPS lots) a social media post (on the Ridgefield CT facebook page) that complained about the 6 or 7 spaces in the lot marked with signs reading “Village Wine & Spirits” indicating “15 minute parking limit/loading zone/curbside & store pickup”. These signs are a violation of the license agreement between the town and Benenson, which preclude any tenants from erecting their own signs. The 15 minute limit is not enforced by the town, since the limit in those spaces is 30 minutes per our license agreement. The owner of Village Wine & Spirits (Craig Jensen) has been instructed to remove the signs by Benenson but has not done so. The town is doing 5 day/week enforcement in that lot, but there are customers from other nearby businesses, in particular, Tequila Escape (located in the Addressi building) parking in the CVS lot. It was more of a problem in the worst of the COVID years when many restaurants had tents set up in parking lots for outdoor dining, but that has stopped. An extensive discussion was held regarding the best way to handle this situation. Mr. Recck will draft a letter to Mr. Jensen informing him that the signs must be removed and to initiate a dialog to achieve a reasonable and fair solution. He will share with the other PA members and review with Ms. Quattrocchi before it is sent.

Regarding the USPS lot, Ms. Burns requested that Glori Norwitt, the Chairman of the ECDC forward to Mr. Recck all correspondence, including names and email addresses, pertaining to the contacts G. Morris had with Congressman Himes’ office. At their May 10 meeting, the Selectmen indicated that the town should continue pursuing the use of the lot for the town, possibly through Senator Blumenthal’s office.

3. Governor Street lot to Bailey Avenue sidewalk discussion. There was no progress reported on this project. Mr. Recck will continue to pursue with Mr. Marconi and Mr. Muller.
4. Permit Allocation update: Ms. Burns and Ms. Wilmot met with L. Fernandez to provide to her the new limits for the sale of town permits in each lot. Ms. Burns will follow up with

an email with the limits for each lot. Town Hall will need to handle situation for town employee parking.

5. EV Charging. The new Governor Street lot is supposed to have 4 charging stations, but Mr. Marconi said they were looking for grant money to buy them. Ms. Burns emailed V. Giordano (member of the Ridgefield Energy Task Force) to inquire about the new charging stations and other issues with EV stations in town-owned parking lots. She did not hear back from him before the meeting but will follow up and forward his response to the other PA members. Mr. Recck (who owns 2 EVs) felt that pay-to-charge stations would only be worthwhile for Level 3 charging stations. All of the current town-owned stations are currently Level 2.
6. Town communications/newsletter discussion. The town is creating a newsletter managed by Gillian Sheerin for distribution through the town media office. The PA was asked to contribute a short article, and Mr. Recck will draft one and send to PA members for review.
7. Parking fines data. Mr. Recck shared data from Ms. Fernandez regarding parking violations issued in a one month period ended May 15. There were 92 tickets issued for violations, and 54 fees paid for daily parking at the Branchville Train station. Of the 92 violations, 62 were for parking over the time limit, 10 for parking in more than one space, and just 1 for parking in a handicap space.
8. Other business.
 - a. Ms. Burns reported that an out-of-town customer had recently come into her store and observed that the town “has a parking problem”. He lives in Bedford but likes to shop in Ridgefield due to the better variety of shops. He found no spaces available behind town hall or in the Bailey Avenue lot, so went around to the Donnelly lot that was also full because the Thrift Shop was open. Although anecdotal, it points to the issues on Saturdays when there is no enforcement. She suggested that most employees are not using the Governor Street lot on weekends since there is no enforcement, contributing to the overcrowding in lots needed for customers. The PA needs to work with the business owners and landlords to encourage the use of the Governor Street lot on Saturdays.
9. Adjournment. Ms. Burns moved, and Mr. Recck seconded a motion to adjourn at 9:06 a.m. Motion approved 3 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Burns