



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
April 10, 2024 at 7:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners

Absent: Chris Murray

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

1. Public Comment

Michael Londrigan, Danbury Road, expressed gratitude to the owners of 52 Danbury Road, who have been receptive to adding additional handicapped parking spaces. Mr. Londrigan also asked the BoS to continue researching traffic safety issues in town, especially on Rockwell Road.

Glori Norwitt, High Ridge Avenue, congratulated Barbara Manners on receiving the ECDC-Cultural District Award this year, which is being awarded at the upcoming Arts Council Gala.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, expressed continued concern about Board, Committee, and Commission members with prolonged absences, and asked about ECDC's attendance and whether the Chair advised Mr. Marconi of vacancies. Mr. Carr distributed copies of an email exchange with Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk, with the BoS.

2. Appointments and Re-Appointments

a. Parks & Recreation Commission – Candidate Antonio Ramos Appointment

Antonio Ramos was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- i. Mr. Ramos shared he saw the Commission opening posted on Instagram, then met with Phil Kearns, Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman, and Dennis DiPinto, Parks & Recreation Director, interviewed with the Commission, and attended a recent meeting. Mr. Ramos shared he grew up in Stratford, CT, and had been involved with Parks & Recreation growing up.
- ii. Rudy Marconi read a letter from Mr. Kearns supporting Mr. Ramos' appointment.
- iii. Barbara Manners asked which project Mr. Ramos finds most interesting. Mr. Ramos shared he's interested in open spaces and frequents the Rec Center, but first wants to listen, learn, and get his feet wet.

- iv. Sean Connelly asked Mr. Ramos about attending a recent Commission meeting. Mr. Ramos confirmed he attended their March meeting, and expressed finding the Martin Park Beach and proposed pickleball courts particularly interesting.
- v. Maureen Kozlark asked about his experience on other committees or with collaborative work. Mr. Ramos shared he's always played sports, had leadership experience as a college athlete, and is a career firefighter in Norwalk.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the appointment of Antonio Ramos to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

b. Commission for Accessibility – Reappointments (Donald Ciota, Christine Santori, Maureen Culhane & Dave Choplinski)

Donald Ciota, Commission for Accessibility Chairman, and Commission Members Christine Santori and Maureen Culhane were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- i. Mr. Ciota shared an update on CoA activities, an ADA compliance transition plan update, the CoA mission, and several accessibility-related legislative acts; and discussed the CoA's collaboration with the Board of Education for their first annual transition program.
- ii. Mr. Ciota shared Dave Choplinski has moved to Florida and is resigning from the CoA. Tony Phillips, Social Services Director, has a prospective member who will attend their next meeting.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the reappointment of Donald Ciota, Christine Santori, and Maureen Culhane to the Commission for Accessibility. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

c. ECDC – Reappointments (Dr. Brittny Howell & Sean Dowd)

Glori Norwitt, ECDC Chair, and Commission Members Dr. Brittny Howell and Sean Dowd were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- i. Dr. Howell shared she's enjoyed her work with the ECDC, especially marketing projects for small businesses in town.
- ii. Mr. Dowd shared he also enjoys working with the ECDC and highlighted it requires a lot of time and effort outside of meetings.
- iii. Ms. Norwitt shared Dr. Howell and Mr. Dowd have had 100% attendance this calendar year, and the ECDC voted unanimously to reinstate both members.
- iv. Ms. Manners agreed with Mr. Dowd's point about the amount of work required outside of meetings and voiced appreciation for their effort.
- v. Ms. Norwitt shared a "vagueness" in the Charter about appointments and read some portions regarding board member absences. Mr. Connelly asked about changing the reporting to indicate absences and unexcused absences. Ms. Kozlark thanked Dr. Howell and Mr. Dowd for their commitment and voiced support for their reappointment.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the reappointment of Dr. Brittny Howell and Sean Dowd to the ECDC. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, asked about ECDC's progress on the inventory of business properties in Town. Ms. Norwitt shared she's in touch with CT Main Street Center and is taking guidance from them on first steps.

3. ACT Theater Lease Renewal

Daniel Levine, Artistic Director, and Erin Craig, Producing Director, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Rudy Marconi shared ACT is looking to begin a capital campaign. Ms. Craig confirmed they're also exploring government grant programs, and most require a longer (25-year) lease agreement. Mr. Levine shared that their current lease agreement indicates the roof is the responsibility of ACT, and Mr. Marconi confirmed the roofs for other Town 501c3 organizations are the responsibility of the Town. Mr. Levine confirmed the ACT roof is currently leaking and paying for a new roof presents significant hardship.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about the original lease agreement and the work ACT has put into the facility. Mr. Levine shared they renovated the entire interior, front office, some exterior work, new HVAC and ductwork, electrical, and bathrooms, but nothing on the roof, which is still the original roof.
- Sean Connelly asked about the origin of the clause indicating the roof is the responsibility of ACT and not the Town. Mr. Marconi shared that the members of ACT who negotiated the lease are no longer involved. Ms. Kozlark shared it was a large undertaking for the Town to originally purchase the property and the BoS has been mindful of large expenditures. Mr. Marconi confirmed the Town had taken care of roofs, fire suppression, paving, groundskeeping, etc. for other 501c3 properties in Town.
- Mr. Connelly asked about the current lease term. Mr. Marconi confirmed ACT is currently in the first of its three 5-year lease renewal periods.
- Mr. Marconi confirmed these substantive changes to the lease would require a Public Hearing and Town Meeting, and confirmed Jacob Muller, Superintendent, is currently getting a quote for the ACT roof. Mr. Marconi confirmed the funds would come from LoCIP and wouldn't require additional appropriations.

Barbara Manners motioned to move forward with the allocation of LoCIP funds to fund roof repairs, extend the current lease term to 25 years, and set the dates for a Public Hearing (April 24) and Town Meeting (May 8). Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

4. 2023 State Homeland Security Grant Resolution

Rudy Marconi shared a Memorandum of Agreement that Ridgefield will take care of any equipment received, the 2023 State Homeland Security Grant Resolution is an agreement to be completed by the Town Clerk, and read the agreement to the BoS.

Sean Connelly asked about the figures referenced within the Memorandum of Agreement. Mr. Marconi clarified the numbers represent the total amount of funds for Connecticut and for Region 5 (Ridgefield's region). Mr. Marconi shared a steering committee would determine the Region's allocation of funds, which may be used for emergency lighting, pumps, etc.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the resolution for the 2023 State Homeland Security Grant Resolution. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. March 20, 2024 – Special Meeting (Executive Session)

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 3-1-0.

b. March 20, 2024

Sean Connelly clarified under the discussion of Tax Credit Programs the name of the third program was missing. Rudy Marconi confirmed it was the Renter's Rebate.

Mr. Connelly clarified within the Task Force formation discussion, Chris Murray asked for candidates to submit a paragraph in support of their application, not a writing sample.

Mr. Connelly clarified the BoS expressed support for elected officials to participate in Task Forces.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Selectperson's Report

Rudy Marconi shared Jacob Muller, Highway Superintendent, is not using the Superintendent's pickup truck, it will go to Rich Morrell, and Mr. Morrell's truck will go to the Foreman. Sean Connelly asked about the Nissan Leaf, Mr. Marconi shared it's still in use and is a shared vehicle.

Mr. Connelly discussed an email from the Parking Authority about enforcing parking in EV spaces while not charging. Mr. Connelly expressed concern about someone unplugging a vehicle parked in an EV space, making it appear like an incorrect use of an EV parking space. Mr. Marconi shared Marcus Recck, Parking Authority Chair, will come in to discuss and provide an update.

Mr. Marconi shared he received an email about the Senior Tax Credit. Mr. Connelly asked whether the BoS could complete the research. Maureen Kozlark felt a committee could be helpful to lead the charge. Mr. Connelly suggested utilizing an intern for the project.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, asked about attendance records. Mr. Marconi shared an email from Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk, confirming receipt of attendance.

Mr. Marconi shared the Town is largely on track to meet forecast revenue: interest greater than forecast, the Building Department is a little under, Parks & Recreation strong, and conveyance taxes are soft (housing market transactions at a five-year low).

Ms. Kozlark shared a WPCA update: demolition of the old station on Route 7 is underway, most of the force main has been tested, and final project completion is expected in July. For the South Street station, sand sieving began on one filter and two more filters had sand installed, sludge centrifuge testing is underway, with completion expected in June.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:30pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.