

Minutes for January 9, 2006

The January Town Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on January 9, 2006 at 7:00 pm. Chuck Hunter, President; Linda Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Nancy Gearhart, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Merl Evans, Police Chief; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present.

President Hunter opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Gearhart thanked everyone who helped make Ridgely a happy, joyous town for the Christmas season.

Minutes – Chuck made a motion to approve the December 19, 2005 minutes. Commissioner Gearhart said she abstained from voting on Ordinance 283 (dealing with amending Chapter 124 Occupancy Permits) because she owns some rental properties. She remembered that in June, 2004, Jack Hall, Town Attorney; had told her she could vote on those issues as long as they were dealing with the whole town, and not one of her properties. The minutes stand as read.

Minutes unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – December, 2005 - The Treasurer reported a General Fund balance of \$212,611.13, Sewer Fund balance of \$170,103.05, and a Water Fund balance of \$53,933.12.

Bills presented to Commissioners for payment approval.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported that two people had been cashing fraudulent checks around the town and the county. One has been arrested, and there is an active warrant for the other one. Four wheelers are still a problem in town, mainly on Maple Ave. and Central Ext. There is a plan in place to end the problem.

Chief Evans reported that he wrote a grant for two pieces of night vision/\$3000 each.

Preston has hired a fulltime trained police officer so his time has been cut way down over there. The search for the second officer is underway.

The Chief reported the year end stats.

The Chief reported that he has been appointed by the Md. Chiefs Assoc. to be the Highway Safety Liaison for the State Highway Administration.

An ambulance has been donated to the department by Bob Musselman to be used as an operations center, communications center, SWAT truck. Denton has one that is a 1981 with problems. This one is a 1995 with 35,000 miles on it.

Commissioner Gearhart said there is rebar sticking up through the cement at the skatepark and feels something should be done to keep the kids from getting hurt. Signs, tape, or something.

Joe agreed.

Public Works – Robin reported on activities and meetings for the month.

Skate Park – The forms are done. When the weather clears it shouldn't take long to get it done. Should be done mid-March.

Robin reported the I & I project would be starting soon. Will be doing smoke tests and storm drain analysis. A notice will be put in the newspaper.

Robin reported on the shared purchase of a bucket truck with Denton and Greensboro.

Commissioner Gearhart said she had attended a workshop where they talked about sharing more expensive pieces of equipment. All the costs are split. Joe reported that Commissioner Gearhart has been working on this for a long time, and deserves a lot of credit as President of the Caroline Co. Assoc. of Municipalities.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported on his activities for the month.

David reported that there was an MDE inspection on Jan. 4 with everything okay. He reported that he went to court Jan. 6 regarding the water tower facility break-in. He will have to go back later.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – Planning/Zoning Commission – Janice White reported that they approved renovations for a duplex at 113 Central Avenue.

Questioned Lisa Takala about possible renovations to the Fourth and Sunset house. She has experience with related costs and had considered purchasing the property at one time. She estimated that it would cost \$70,000 to \$80,000. This is well within the range of renovating and selling this house for approximately \$375,000.

Janice reported they approved the renovation of an old store on Bell Street (across the alley from Provident State Bank). This will be the new home of The Ridgely Pharmacy. It will have a soda fountain, outdoor café, and a florist.

Joe Mangini submitted, and the Commission approved, a resolution to be sent to the Commissioners that all demolition of buildings throughout the town must be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Gearhart said the next Tree Committee meeting will be the 4th Thursday in January. She also reported that Town Talk is starting work on the next issue. Get information to Arlene Hege or Nancy.

Commissioner Gearhart asked Chief Evans to explain the process to reach Ridgely Police by phone. Chief Evans said if it's an emergency call 911. If you need to speak with an officer some time (non-emergency) call the office 634-2151 and leave a message. If it is not an emergency, but you need to talk to a police officer right away, call the cell phone 443-786-6696 or call the Sheriff's Dept. at 479-2515. Clerk reported the office phone system is having some problems with transferring calls.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reviewed the December calendar of meetings.

Points of Interest – Rails to Trails Project is still pending.

Mid-Shore Regional Business Technology Park – Infrastructure plans have been received and are presently being reviewed by town staff and engineers. Would like to make a presentation to the Town Commissioners at the January 23 work session with another presentation being given at the Planning/Zoning Commission meeting. Planning to invite appropriate county personnel and engineers to begin discussion/review. Hoping to have plans back to the county by April.

Joe reported the Maryland General Assembly begins its CY06 session this week. There is legislation that may concern growth and planning for the municipalities and counties, and also annexation.

WWTP Capacity Management Plan & WWTP Upgrade – Updated Capacity Management Plan indicates sewer availability for 52 homes.

Looking at WWTP upgrade to 500,000 gpd with direct stream discharge. Have been talking with Hanover Foods about taking over our spray irrigation system. They should be getting back to the town the end of the month.

Joe reported that the 500,000 gpd system would mean growth management for the next 20 years.

When the I & I Study is completed and corrected that could allow for another 100 homes.

Update on 211 Caroline – The structure has been removed by the property owners. The final legal paperwork is being completed in order for us to disburse the loan funds to the property owners. As to 304 Maryland Ave., we are still working with the property owners to alleviate that situation. Waiting for an answer from the Town Attorney to see if we could utilize those funds to help with that project as well.

Joe reported that the Town of Ridgely has been offered as a "contribution/donation" a Reading Railroad Caboose presently located in Westover, Md. This could make a nice addition to the Rails to Trails project plus enhance the Town's Railroad Park. The only costs to the Town would be the relocation of the caboose and any remodeling/repairs needed or desired. Recommended the Commissioners make a trip to see it before accepting.

Joe reported that our trash hauler has submitted a request to move the day for trash from the present Monday to Thursday.

Commissioner Gearhart said trash day has been Monday in Ridgely for years. This would be a big inconvenience to the Town. If it gets changed there should be an adjustment to the contract.

Joe reported that the audit for FY 05 is complete and available for anyone to review at the Town Office. The report came out fine; the Town is on solid financial footing. All appropriate paperwork has gone to the State. He thanked the Clerk for her work to help get it done.

Joe reported on a letter received from DNR reference the Forest Conservation issue. The Town adopted an ordinance giving DNR the authority to review forest conservation for us. There is a fee-in-lieu-of that is associated with that, and the Town had accepted fees for that. DNR is saying they should get the fees; what the Town has collected needs to go to them. He asked them if that money would be spent to do reforestation in the Town and they indicated they prefer doing that. He also asked them about the Town doing it's own reforestation plan. Caroline County has its own ordinance and they have a specialist who handles that for them. He would like to discuss this and come up with our own ordinance.

Commissioner Gearhart asked if DNR could attend a Tree Commission meeting to talk to them about this. Need a plan to show her when she comes. Asked if Joe could ask her if the money could be used for equipment, etc. as well as trees.

Joe reported that Town Department Annual Reports to the Town Manager are due February 15, and budget requests are due by February 28. The State of the Town Address will take place on March 6.

New Business – Resolution R-1-06 – A Resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely Clarifying Approval Authority for Demolition Permits – Joe read the Resolution. In certain planning districts within the Town of Ridgely, the Ridgely Planning/Zoning Commission is authorized to approve or reject demolition permits. This resolution requires that all demolition permits be reviewed by the Planning/Zoning Administrator with final approval authority to be the Planning/Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Gearhart said she felt demolitions should come before the Commissioners too.

Miss Ebling and Mrs. Eicher disagreed with needing demolition permits/approvals for sheds.

President Hunter made a motion to adopt Resolution R-1-06, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

Resolution R-2-06 – A Resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Renew the Town of Ridgely's Urban Renewal Line of Credit – Joe read the Resolution. The amount is increased from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

President Hunter made a motion to adopt Resolution R-2-06, seconded by Commissioner Gearhart. Unanimously approved.

Appointment/Reappointment of Members to the Ridgely Planning/Zoning Commission – Joe said Mr. Kingston is resigning, moving out of town. Martin Sokolich has been recommended by the Planning Commission to replace Mr. Kingston. Joe gave the Commissioners a suggested list of terms for the board to get back to the five year terms required by the Zoning Ordinance. He recommended: Martin Sokolich for a 5 yr. term, Arlene Hege for a 4 yr. term, Jeff Garrett for a 3 yr. term, Janice White for a 2 yr. term, and Toby Gearhart for a 1 yr. term. At the January meeting the members will be selecting officers.

President Hunter made a motion to approve those appointments/reappointments as read, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Gearhart acknowledged, and publicly thanked, Mr. Kingston for his generous donations of 25/26 boxes of books and his service on the Planning/Zoning Commission. (Seconded by Joe)

Payment of Bills – President Hunter made a motion to approve payment of the bills, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Gearhart made a motion to purchase a bucket truck together with the Towns of Denton and Greensboro, seconded by President Hunter. Unanimously approved.

Town Commissioners Comments – Commissioner Gearhart suggested making refrigerator magnets with the bulk trash schedule, Town Hall phone number, Police Dept. phone number and on-duty cell phone number.

Public Comments – Mr. Hege referred to developers coming and meeting with the Planning Commission. At what point do the citizens find out what is going on?

Joe and the Commissioners replied that all meetings are open to the public. He said he would talk to the paper and see if they would post agendas at no cost.

Mr. Hege said he didn't feel there were enough citizens involved to know that what is done is what most citizens want.

Town Meeting and Planning/Zoning Meeting agendas to be posted on Town bulletin boards.

John Balderson said there are still not any "No Parking" signs at M. S. Park.

John also said he would like to serve on the Town's Economic Development Commission.

Joe said he would like the Commissioners to come up with 3 members and he would like to pick 2. Three must live in town. Doesn't want to involve bankers because it could be a conflict with loans, etc. He will put on agenda for February.

President Hunter made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 pm, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol A. Balderson, Clerk