

## Minutes for February 6, 2006

The Ridgely Town Meeting was held in Town Hall on Monday, February 6, 2006 at 7:00 pm. Chuck Hunter, President; Linda Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Nancy S. Gearhart, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; Merl Evans, Police Chief; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk were present.

The following citizens were also present: Clay Owens-Times Record, John Balderson, Elsie Ebling, Janice White, Betty Jean Mumford, Diane Harris, David Hege, Arlene Hege, A. McCauley, Sr., A. McCauley, Jr., Cathy Schwab, Rick Schwab, and Joe O'Connell.

President Hunter called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

He said Commissioner Gearhart is giving the Cub Scouts a tour of the building.

Opening Comments – Joe said his State of the Town address will be given on March 6.

Reports due in from the staff by Feb. 15.

Budget requests from staff due by Feb. 28.

Betty Jean Mumford – Introduced Diane Harris – They are representing the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority. For several years the Commissioners have allowed the sorority to use the meeting rooms (free of charge) in October for their meeting. They presented the town with a red, white, and blue decorative wreath made by one of the sorority members.

**Approval of the Minutes** – January 9 – President Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

**Treasurer's Report** – January – The clerk reported the General Fund balance of \$190,405.59, Sewer Fund balance of \$170,662.51, and Water Fund balance of \$54,104.84. Bills have been presented to the Commissioners for approval.

**Police Report** – Chief Evans reported the department received and has put into service a used ambulance donated by Mr. Musselman. It will be used as a communications vehicle, ERT unit, etc.

The Chief reported that they have received approval from the State Quartermaster for some more surplus equipment.

Marley is certified and has scanned two vehicles so far with positive results (residue only), no arrests.

The Chief also reported that they have contracted with Todd Lord to be their ERT team medic. He will be the driver when available. They were requested to go to Chestertown with Queen Anne and Kent Co. ERT teams. They hit three places at one time and made nine arrests.

The Chief said they received two long-gun vehicle locking gun racks at no cost for the command unit.

Year-end state and federal reports are finished and have been sent in.

The Chief talked about receiving a pacesetter award at BWI for 100% seatbelt use for the town. Trained in new self-defense tactics at the academy.

The Chief will be putting out a special order concerning juvenile traffic stops.

Parents are going to be notified while the juvenile is stopped and advised of the infraction at the time of the stop.

Joe said there has been a lot of stuff in the press recently about the cameras. He received a call recently from the U. S. government. One of the things they were concerned about was whether or not we had an emergency plan and how we were dealing with Homeland Security. Most of our facilities are funded by the federal government and they want to make sure they are being protected. He let them know about the cameras, the gate, and that there was a plan in place. They were impressed. Hats off to the Chief.

Commissioner Gearhart said the Chief had worked hard on the new vehicle and it looks good.

Chief Evans left at this time.

**Public Works Report** – Robin reported on projects, meetings, and training in January/first of February. Clearing the ditch along the tracks on Bell Street, and starting to haul dirt for the shooting range at the plant.

Robin reported that the gate has been installed and is operable.

Skatepark – Robin reported they are bringing in equipment and putting a lot of time on it.

Pardoe's should be in here in two weeks to do the tree work they have been contracted to do.

Commissioner Gearhart asked about signs for the skatepark.

Robin said he needs verbage from the Chief.

Commissioner Gearhart asked if the Fire Dept. would have access to the new gate.

Robin will take care of that.

**Water/Sewer Report** – David reported on his activities and meetings for the last month. He will be attending a Capacity Management class on February 17.

Commissioner Gearhart said Cub Scout Pack 264 came tonight before the meeting for a tour of the town offices. They are working on their citizenship pins.

**Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports** – Joe reported the Parks/Recreation Committee will be meeting here at 7:00 pm on February 21.

Planning/Zoning Commission – Janice White reported they had several presentations at their meeting. They were Mid-Shore Technology Park, Ridgely Park (McNomee farm property), and a Municipal Projects Report by the Town Manager and Town Engineers (URS). They also had Lisa and Monika Takala present plans for a duplex at 113 Central Avenue. They discussed a minor subdivision of three units at 128 Walnut Street. The Cow Barn property was updated. Their plans now are to give the Cow Barn and two acres to the town, and possibly develop the rest in multi-family units.

**Tree Commission** – Janice White reported they had Sylvia Kauffman speak to them and they discussed using native trees, and possibly using their sources to obtain trees. Briefly discussed the DNR letter regarding fee-in-lieu for Lister Estates. They will have Marian Hennessey at the next meeting. She is the State Forest Conservation program coordinator. She will be assisting them in writing a program to be approved by DNR Forest Service. The tentative date for Arbor Day is April 29 pending participation by community groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.

Commissioner Gearhart said this will be the third year for Arbor Day plantings. The first year they tried to include families. Last year they went to the school and the third graders helped plant trees there. This year they are going to do community groups. Tammy asked if the Cub Scouts could plant a tree by the railroad station.

**Town Manager's Report** – Joe reviewed the January calendar of meetings and major points of interest.

1) Moving slowly on the Rails to Trails Project. Awaiting a scope of work from the planning consultant who will assist Ridgely in doing the trail. There will be a request for a motion from the Commissioners tonight to approve the planning consultant, Toole Design Group. The state needs that motion from the town for expense reimbursement to the town.

2) Mid-Shore Business Technology Park – Work session with the Planning Commission on this. They need to be out for bid by April 1.

3) DNR – Because this program is run by the state the fee in lieu goes to the state. Would like to have that fee come to the town. Will need our own ordinance for forest conservation.

4) WWTP Upgrade – Received a copy of a letter that our engineers sent to MDE. They are letting them know that the town is pursuing a 500,000 gpd new plant using direct stream discharge. This will accommodate the town's needs for the next 20 years. This is anticipating adding 1000 new homes in town (maximum buildout).

5) The Commissioners adopted an ordinance setting up an Economic Development Commission. Waiting for names from the Commissioners. If not tonight, would certainly like to have that for the meeting on March 6.

6) I & I – Inflow/Infiltration – Joe said this means there is water getting into our sewer lines. It creates a capacity at the plant over and above what we should have. When the study is completed, we are going to try to fix that. It's about 30,000 gallons going through the treatment plant that shouldn't be going there. The state asked us to take care of this. This will be in the budget for next year.

Joe reported that Senator Pipkin has introduced a bill in the Md. General Assembly that would curtail annexation powers by municipalities. Copies have been given to the commissioners for review. Currently, the towns do not need county approval to annex. If the county does not agree with it the zoning would have to remain county. Ridgely is working well with the county.

**Payment of January Bills** – President Hunter made a motion to pay the January bills, seconded by Commissioner Gearhart. Passed.

Commissioner Gearhart said Maverick Turner is now a fulltime public works employee. He started as a part-time employee during the summer. Welcomed him. Robin said he is doing a good job.

A question was asked about dogs in town. Dogs running loose, and people walking them with long leashes allowing them to ruin shrubs. Need to make folks clean up after their dogs.

Dogs are not allowed to run loose in town.

President Hunter told the gentleman to call the office after Joe has had an opportunity to review the ordinance.

**Town Commissioners Comments** – Commissioner Gearhart said a hot topic at some of the meetings she has been attending is the Agricultural Excise Tax. For any development done outside the municipalities there has been an excise tax. Now the county commissioners would like to extend that into town development as well to help with ag preservation. Commissioner Gearhart said it was mainly intended to limit development out in the county and push it to the towns. The money from the tax has been put toward paying farmers for putting their land in ag preservation and they have building rights, TDRs (Transfer Development Rights), etc. To be discussed at the county commissioners' meeting tomorrow.

Commissioner Gearhart said MML has Municipal Month in April each year. They sponsor an essay contest for all fourth graders called "If I Were Mayor..." The fourth grade at RES will be taking part and taking a field trip to Town Hall on February 23. President Hunter made a motion to accept Toole Design Group as consultant on the rails to trails project, seconded by Linda. Passed.

President Hunter said he had a busy Saturday. Martin O'Malley is running for governor, and he met with him about some issues. Gov. Ehrlich has done a lot to get rid of ag preservation. He is interested in turning a lot of state paid or supported programs over to the local towns and counties. Poor areas can't do it. He said he also met with Norm Conway, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

President Hunter said he spoke with County Commissioner, Jack Cole on Sunday. Commissioner Layton was badly burned and will be out for sometime. He has until the end of July to decide if he is going to run again or not. They don't want to have to deal with any hot issues now.

President Hunter said this Thursday and Friday he would be attending the Md. Mayor's Assoc. meetings in Annapolis. There will be opportunities to go to the State House and listen to testimonies.

**Public Comments** – David Hege asked how likely it was that the Ridgely Park project would be approved.

Joe said he hopes they will come to the next Planning Meeting with a conceptual plan to get tentative approval to proceed. Then they could go to the annexation portion of it.

Joe stressed that all meetings are open to the public except executive sessions. However, public comments are not allowed at work sessions.

Joe O'Connell asked what was going on with 304 Maryland Avenue. The 90 days is up.

Joe Mangini said the property owners would like to keep the structure and bring it up to code on the outside, then work on the inside. He will be meeting with them in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. O'Connell insisted that the house is not worth trying to fix it up.

President Hunter said that's what the Urban Renewal funds are for. It has not been dropped. Something will happen.

Mr. O'Connell also said he has asked for monitoring of the stop sign on the corner of Md. and Fourth St.

Arlene Hege said articles/information for Town Talk need to get in sooner. It was agreed that March 17 will be the deadline for the April issue.

Town Talk is done completely by volunteers. The town pays for the printing and mailing of it. They need folks to write stories and come up with ideas for stories.

Commissioner Gearhart has been looking into getting refrigerator magnets made up with town phone number, police phone, emergency public works, bulk trash schedule, etc. Cost would be 18 cents each.

President Hunter made a motion to adjourn to executive session at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol A. Balderson, Clerk