

Minutes for November 6, 2006

The November Town Meeting was held at the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:30 pm (following a Public Hearing). Linda Epperly-Glover, President; Nancy Gearhart, Commissioner; Chuck Hunter, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Jack Hall, Town Attorney; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; Merl Evans, Chief of Police; and Carol Balderson, Clerk; were present.

See attached list for other persons present.

Call to Order – President Epperly-Glover called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those who have given their lives for our country.

Opening Comments – President Epperly-Glover welcomed the Boy Scouts.

Ralph Brome introduced himself as the Assistant Scout Master with Troup 264. The theme for the month is citizenship. Part of the requirement is to observe a local government meeting.

Introduction of Invited/Requested Speakers – President Epperly-Glover introduced John Nussear who is with the Caroline County Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Nussear said the organization has been reborn. It is going to be reenergized. They have laid down a dues structure, developed a sponsorship program, and they asked him to initiate several types of activities to improve the awareness on the part of the public. They have a column in the Times Record every week – “Chamber Talk”.

They will hold three public receptions in different parts of the county. The first one will be in Federalsburg on November 10; the second one will be in Greensboro to take in the northern area of the county, and the third one will be held in Denton to take in the central portion.

The Chamber office is located at 322 Market St. – Room 103 in Denton.

Joe said when the EDC has their next Business After Hours Social he may wish to attend.

Commissioner Gearhart thanked Todd Lord for bringing electric bill issues to her attention. She introduced Cheryl Russell with Delmarva Power to explain some things and answer questions.

Ms. Russell said they have had several calls regarding estimated electric bills. They have had a manpower issue which has resulted in having to estimate some routes. They try not to estimate several months in a row. She said if you get an estimated bill you can read your meter and call it in and they will adjust the account immediately.

Ms. Russell showed a sample bill to show three areas which indicate it was estimated.

She said a lot of folks have been upset about the higher rates/increases. There is a budget plan available to make it easier to pay. The website allows you to find solutions/tips to help reduce energy costs.

Ms. Russell answered some questions and received some suggestions to help improve billing confusion.

Janice White invited interested persons to attend Historical Society meetings. Meetings are held every other month, the first Thursday of the month here at the Town Hall at 7:00

pm. The next meeting will be held January 4, 2007. You don't have to be a member to attend. Dues will increase in 2007 since we are a chapter of the County Historical Society.

New Business – President Epperly-Glover skipped to 10. b) Reappointment of Toby Gearhart to the Ridgely Planning and Zoning Commission for a Five (5) Year Term.

President Epperly-Glover made a motion to reappoint Toby for a 5-year term, seconded by

Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously passed.

Planning/Zoning Commission – Report – Toby reported they had a meeting last week. The major thing they considered was the Weese Development (Fourth and Sunset). This is a seven townhouse development. They gave preliminary approval. Final approval is down the road 3 or 4 months. There were two design standard reviews of a house being restored on Caroline Avenue and a simple extension on Central Ave.

Toby said on November 15 at 6:00 pm (changed to November 29 at 7:00 pm after discussion) they will be meeting with the Commissioners, mainly, to go over the Comprehensive Plan. He invited folks to attend and comment.

Jack Hall reported that he and Commissioner Gearhart attended an informational meeting a couple of weeks ago held by the Office of Planning. One of the changes made this year, thinks effective in 2009, is that the Comprehensive Plan will have to address water and sewer capacity and a plan for expansion.

Approval of Minutes – October 2, 2006 – President Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously passed.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$206,397., Sewer Fund balance of \$360,392.55, and Water Fund balance of \$42,412.23.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported there were 15 total arrests in October. The Elementary School's Halloween Parade went well, no problems.

The Chief reported he wrote a grant for \$200,000 for nighttime seatbelt enforcement for Caroline and Talbot Counties. (overtime)

The annual Md. Highway Safety Office meeting was held in Ocean City at the end of last month. Got some good information on grants.

Working on several felony investigations.

Halloween went well. Made a large drug arrest at the Cowbarn fields; doing donuts with vehicle. They held and taught the first school critical incident and active shooter training at the Town Office for 21 officers throughout the county. They went to the Elementary School and did some scenarios. They plan to go to each school in the county and do training to get familiar with the layout.

The Chief left at this time to take care of a personnel matter.

Public Works – Robin reported on his department activities. The transmission is gone in the white pickup, it has had its last drive.

The department is still down a person. Didn't receive very good applications. He wants to talk with the high school to see if we can get someone started part-time until school is out, and maybe work them into full-time later. He said he doesn't necessarily need another pickup right now, but there are some 2006s sitting on some lots that are cheaper than 2007s. Would like to talk about it at the Work Session.

President Epperly-Glover asked about leaves; front yard or back.

Robin said they should be around back, bagged.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported that Ben has finished with his classes now. Will take the test this Thursday.

David said Bilbrough's will be here Wednesday morning to go over the generator hookups.

David reported on department activities.

There is 45 days holding capacity in the lagoons.

Ken Burns will be here tomorrow to clean out all the lift stations, grease blocks, etc.

David reported that he will be off from November 16 until after Thanksgiving.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – EDC – John Balderson reported that they met at Sunrise Distributing for the After Hours Social. There was a good turnout. Hoping to get another business to host one in January or February. There are a couple of people interested in buildings and a business coming into town. The next meeting is scheduled for this Wednesday. President Epperly-Glover said the Social was very nice and she enjoyed the tour. Had no idea what they did over there.

Town Manager's Report – Joe said the WWTP Sewer Capacity Management Plan indicates there is enough capacity for approximately 15 homes. There was an allocation paid for that is not going to happen, so the money was returned.

Development Projects – Ridgely Estates Subdivision – They have preliminary approval for 16 houses (Lister Brickhouse).

Mid Shore Regional Business Technology Park – Bids have gone out. The Commissioners should soon be approving one of those bids for infrastructure.

There is a potential business interested in the Technology Park.

Walnut Farms Subdivision – 20 units – Has received final approval, but the Public Works Agreement is going to be revisited and probably revised.

128 Walnut Street – 3 units – Should be coming in with preliminary.

Cow Barn Town House Project – Preliminary was given. Still some discussion regarding getting water and sewer to that project.

Ridgely Park – Moving along slowly. The first phase of this project is tied to the I & I and new WWTP.

Municipal Capital Projects - I & I - Meeting with engineers on Wednesday; should be getting results of I & I Study. A decision will need to be made soon on what to do.

WWTP Upgrade Project – A decision will also need to be made soon on this project. We have 4 scenarios to consider.

Water Storage Tank – Will probably be located at the Technology Park. Will be looking at that in the next year.

New Well – Will be on line by the end of the year.

Ridgely Rails to Trails Project – Need to get started: get a consultant.

Third Street Project – Bramble will not be able to get in here until spring. Notifications will go out to everyone affected at least 30 days prior to start of work.

Municipal Grant Proposal/Projects Update – Joe reported there was a POS Grant for M. S. Park for \$15,000 to put up a bandstand, 2 bike racks, 2 picnic tables, and 3 park benches. It was approved but is waiting for Public Works to release the funds.

Also filed an application for \$4500 for cameras in the park. That is working its way through the system now. No answer yet.

Looking at a grant for EDC for \$50,000 for preparing and implementing an Economic Strategic Revitalization Plan.

Joe said he attended a meeting a couple of weeks ago and met one of the top directors of the DBED

and small business planning. He is responsible for CDBG for economic development programs. This program is geared to rural towns. They seem interested in doing some projects in Ridgely. Grant funds come to the town with a percentage of local funds contributed. This is specifically for the creation of jobs or the infrastructure to a building to create jobs. They are looking at the Cow Barn and the Hayman House. The Hayman House would be donated by the County. Joe said what he is thinking about is obtaining the properties and using the funds to fix up and lease out.

Old Business – Resolution R-6-06 – “A Resolution to Annex Certain Lands to the Town of Ridgely Located Near and Contiguous with the Easterly Corporate Limits of Said Town, Consisting of 4.826 Acres of Land, More or Less, and to Provide for the Terms and Conditions of the Annexation” (Emerson Property).

Jack Hall said the document indicates public notice advertising four times. The requirement is two times, which was done. He will provide clean copy.

Joe reviewed other minor terminology changes in the document (written in).

Commissioner Gearhart made a motion to approve Resolution R-6-06, seconded by President Epperly-Glover. Unanimously passed.

Ordinance No. 300 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely Assigning Zoning Districts Within a Newly Annexed Area”

Commissioner Gearhart made a motion to approve Ord. No. 300, seconded by President Epperly-Glover. Unanimously passed.

304 Maryland Avenue – Joe said this property, owned by Jeff and Carolyn Garrett, has gone through a couple of orders by the Commissioners. The initial order, some time ago, was that the outside of the house had to be brought up to code and be presentable. There was a 90 day period, and a loan from the Urban Renewal Fund. They missed the timetable and requested an additional 30 days. The Commissioners denied the extension and voted for a demolition order which was issued on August 10. That demolition order required the demolition to be done in 90 days and that time is up on November 8. Since then there has been activity at the house. Carolyn Garrett read a statement requesting an abatement of the demolition order on 304 Maryland Avenue. She said numerous people told them to use the 90 days to do the work. They have put new windows in and siding on. She then passed pictures of the house around.

Residents from 302 Maryland Avenue and 306 Maryland Avenue said they are contractors and so far, everything is being done right. They would like to see the house stay.

Joe said if the Commissioners don't feel they are in a position tonight to address this, it may be necessary to set an Executive Work Session (because it is legal) with the Town Attorney.

Michael Snow said a lot of structural work has been done on that house and he doesn't see any reason to tear it down now. It could be one of the town's better rental properties.

Cathy Schwab said even though it was done at the last minute, an effort has been made, the neighbors seem to be happy, and that's what the town should consider.

Commissioner Hunter said the people of this town would be shocked at how much money and time has been put into this. He doesn't want the people of this town to look at the Commissioners too, because Commissioner Gearhart is the property owner's sister, and she has eliminated herself from the vote. This town is not Wyatt Earp walking around the town bulldozing properties.

President Epperly-Glover thanked folks for their comments.

New Business – Resolution R-09-08 – Commissioner Gearhart made a motion to defer this until a later date when the person involved can be in attendance, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously passed.

President Epperly-Glover read the list of upcoming events/meetings.

Public Comments – Tommy Rampmeyer said he has another book finished and wanted to know if the Town would loan the money to buy some copies. Can get them copied for \$12.50 each and is hustling ads so they can keep the price at \$10. The original orders for the books have not cost the Town any money, the re-orders have. He requested 6 free books for his family and the funds to have 350 books copied.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve this request, seconded by Linda. Unanimously passed.

Pastor Denzil Cheek said there will be a Community Thanksgiving Service at the Brethren Church at 7:00 pm on November 22.

Town Commissioners Comments – Commissioner Gearhart said the Lions Club's Christmas Parade will be held on December 2. Lineup will be at 6:15 pm at M. S. Park. Leaving the park at 6:45 and should be uptown at 7:00. Everyone is invited to the Open House here after the parade. December 16 will be the Live Nativity here. Contact Toby Gearhart for more info. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk