

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes April 2, 2007

The April Town Meeting was held in the Town Office on the above date at 7:40 pm (following a Public Hearing). Linda Epperly-Glover, President; Nancy Gearhart, Commissioner; Chuck Hunter, 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. A list of others in attendance is attached.

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. RVFD Chief, Lou Hayes, gave the Fire Department's quarterly report. They are in the process of hiring an administrative person to allow them to upgrade their personnel records and keep them up to date, assist with grant writing, help with medical records, etc. This will require 10 to 15 hours per week.

The budget for this year is \$380,000. They depend on help from the county and the town with that. They have several fund raising projects. Check website. It will be linked to the Town's new website.

They have 22 folks in training right now, from Firefighter 1 up.

In the first quarter they have had 60 fire calls, 139 ambulance calls (not counting the paramedic unit at 111 calls). There were 9 multi-alarm fires in the first quarter.

They have one engine out of service being rehabbed at a cost of \$135,000+. A new truck would cost between \$450,000 and \$500,000, and this will extend the life of the truck 10 to 15 years. A tanker has been loaned to the department by Goldsboro.

The Seaford Fire Dept. gave Ridgely a hurst tool.

Ridgely got a grant to purchase new hose. They have upgraded some of their tools at a cost of \$20,000. They are applying again for grants to purchase gear and an in-house cascade system. It costs between \$4,000 and \$5,000 to outfit one member.

In the next couple of months they will be coming out to the businesses, churches, and schools pre-planning to see what everyone has.

Chief Hayes thanked the Town and citizens for their assistance.

He said membership is probably up one third. Part of those are administrative personnel.

Chief Hayes left at this time.

Charles Cawley, Caroline County Administrator, reported on the airport project. He presented a plan. He has been working on this project for about 8 years now. Trying to save the airport as a commercial base to help stimulate business and as an economic development project. There are fewer and fewer airports. Easton Airport started out like this, and they have a similar vision for this one. The plan is to enhance the airport and have a state of the art facility in 20 years. The first step was to have an Airport Layout Plan. It took about 4 years to do this. The runway will be 5,000 ft. long to accommodate small business jets (like Easton). The second step is an Environmental Assessment. It is now with Federal Aviation for their approval. There are wetland issues to mitigate. The runway will run from Rt. 312 to River Road. There is ag preservation land around it. This project will cost \$22,000,000; 95% of the cost will be paid by FAA from airline

ticket sales (grants). The third step is actually purchasing land. The dilemma is getting funding from FAA (\$5,000,000), for about 295 acres. This will be Phase I. The next year they will purchase the other parcels and start doing some mitigation on the other end, power lines, trees, etc. They won't be starting on the runway until 2010. They have done noise studies for the town, etc.

He mentioned the FAA would fund a fire house on the premises.

Mr. Cawley answered several questions.

Mid Shore Business Tech Park – Mr. Cawley said there are tech parks in Denton and Federalsburg and they felt Ridgely would be a good location with the airport. Caroline County qualifies for One Md. money (interest-free loans for development projects). They got \$1.5 million and they used about \$700,000 to buy the property. Then they went to the Mid-Shore Regional Council, became an EDA district, and got a \$2.1 million grant. This will almost pay for Phase I which gets us the roads, infrastructure, water, sewer, and the site path. Have not used any county taxpayer money.

They will be hiring a marketing person to market the property.

Phase I should be done around Thanksgiving.

Landfill – Mr. Cawley encouraged interested folks to attend the April 4 meeting. This project has been in the solid waste plan for 20 years. Technology has improved since the first one; this will be a better operated landfill. This is a big event for the area.

Commissioner Gearhart said a traffic study needs to be done with all parties involved; airport, tech park, landfill, and residential development (including neighboring towns).

Mr. Cawley suggested working with the county GIS and hiring Dr. Scott of Salisbury University.

Mr. Cawley left at this time.

Approval of the Minutes – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes of March 5, 2007, seconded by President Epperly-Glover. Passed.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$222,535.95, Sewer Fund balance of \$379,254.40, and Water Fund balance of \$43,344.04.

Bills presented for payment.

President Epperly-Glover made a motion to pay the bills as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported they had one SWAT Team callout which involved several counties.

Ridgely PD has a modified 24/7 schedule.

MSP was here for 3 days for rifle training.

They did another round of video and billboard photos on March 12 and 13. There were 248 officers from all over Md. This was sponsored by the Highway Safety Office for the grant.

Have four bike patrol officers now. Both new officers have finished their training and are working regular shifts.

Commissioner Hunter asked for a breakdown of how many citations are written on Central Ave.

President Epperly-Glover said she has had a complaint concerning Sunrise Ave. speed and folks not stopping at stop signs.

Cathy Schwab said someone started a fire in their trash can which melted their new fence. They are putting up a motion light.

Chief Evans reported they have had increased problems at one establishment on Rt. 480 next to the boat place. They met with the owners and they are going to do some increased lighting in their parking lot. The police are going to see if they can get some more lights on the street.

Public Works Report – Robin thanked everyone for the flowers, cards, support, and prayers while he was out.

Robin reported that Bramble is to be here next week regarding work on Third St. Hoping to have that work done before the Strawberry Festival.

Robin reported that the Ridgely House is to be painted, hopefully, the third week in April. He is checking on the installation of the new infrastructure for the Tech Park/water lines. Have a startup date on the Bell Street Pump Station – next week.

Robin reported on various meetings.

Joe said while Robin was out the weight fell on David's shoulders. He thanked David for his help. He said David is a rare find. He planned ahead and already has passed Class 5 wastewater treatment plant operator. He got this to be prepared for changes.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported he has 70 days holding capacity in the lagoons. He reported on various water/wastewater operations.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – EDC – John Balderson reported there was no meeting. In March they held their second Business After Hours Social hosted by Mercantile Eastern Shore Bank in Ridgely.

Parks/Recreation Athletic Field Advisory Committee – Joe reported they are looking at the Cow Barn Park needs. This was prompted by Ridgely Park's proposed donation of \$100,000.

Commissioner Gearhart said they would like to use that money as the local portion to obtain more grant funds since there is a lot of funding needed.

Planning/Zoning Commission – Joe reported there was a permit for a swimming pool that will probably need to go to the Board of Appeals for a rear yard setback. The other major item on the agenda was Ordinance #302 and some discussion about adding the C-3 Zone to the Design Guidelines in order to address some of the comments addressed tonight.

Tree Commission – Commissioner Gearhart reported that Arbor Day is planned for April 28th at 9:00 am at Martin Sutton Park. Someone from the Arboretum will be giving a little presentation. This is the third year for this event. Invitations were sent to youth organizations (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H). The Lions Club has offered to help this year. The Tree Commission has mapped out places where trees should go. Robin's crew will prepare the areas for the trees.

Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Joe reported Heather Deutsch from the National Conservancy was here and said they are doing what they should be doing. The biggest hangup now is planning and design of the trail. A couple of gentlemen who helped with Easton's and Queen Anne's County's have offered assistance with Ridgely's, as well.

The goal is to plan and design the trail and use the funds for construction. MDT needs to get approval from the federal government to transfer that over to DNR so that we can lease it from them. Interested parties are invited to attend the monthly meetings.

Ridgely Historical Society – Rick Schwab brought a brick sample engraved by Moore's. To get a sample from Fleegle tomorrow to compare. They plan to sell these and use them in Railroad Park.

Requested the town front the money to buy (3) cubes of bricks.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to provide \$1500 start up money for the bricks, seconded by Commissioner Gearhart. Passed.

Town Manager's Report – Five Year Capital Improvement Projects Report – 1)

Repainting of the Ridgely House this year - \$13,900, 2) Public Safety Building (Feasibility Study, cost between \$10,000 to \$25,000 to complete - Fire Dept. to help with funds). Building cost \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000, 3) W. Third Street Renovation - \$160,000, 4) Well #4 to be brought on line this year (in FY 07 Budget), 5) New Water Tank – Cost between \$600,000 to \$1.7 million. Will be seeking grant funds along with Ridgely Park Dev. \$375,000 contribution. 6) New Wastewater Treatment Plant – Ridgely Park Dev. has agreed to pay up to \$4,825,000, 7) Sewer Infiltration/Inflow, 8) Rails to Trails, and 9) Ridgely Athletic Field Complex (anticipated cost \$500,000).

Development Projects – Weese Town House Project of 7 units and Ridgeway Estates Subdivision of 16 housing units are both underway. Still need to do Public Works Agreements for both.

Walnut Farms Subdivision – Will be doing a Public Works Agreement on this project.

128 Walnut Street Subdivision – 3 units

Cow Barn Town House Project – Ali's Cove – 36 town house units – Cow Barn and 2 acres to be deeded to the town. Developer waiting for Ridgely Park.

Ridgely Park – 403 units – Commissioners have approved the DRRA. Still a few issues to review. Will be doing a temporary pumping station with water and sewer lines. This will be going across Cow Barn and will connect the Athletic Complex.

Municipal Grant Proposal/Projects Update – Martin Sutton Park Renovations Project – To be additional park benches and a bandstand. This will probably be held off until fall because of Strawberry Festival in May. Grant - \$15,000

Martin Sutton Park Citizen Security Project – 2 security cameras – Haven't heard anything on this grant.

Ridgely 140th Anniversary Celebration Project – Did not receive grant from ESHA. Wants to do something...banquet, etc. Has requested Gov. O'Malley for this event.

Ridgely EDC Local Revolving Loan Fund – Account has been set up.

Ridgely Economic Development Revitalization Strategic Plan Project – Need to get this started when things calm down.

Old Business – Ordinance #302 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Ridgely”

Joe said a motion is needed to approve the amendment (add Sunrise Ave. Planning District and the South Planning District to the Design Guidelines) to be added to Ord. #302. Then Ord. #302 would be approved with that amendment.

Commissioner Gearhart said based on tonight's comments, she feels more information is needed.

Joe said the Commissioners could defer, but they need to meet with the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission made the recommendation.

Joe said REDC also supports this ordinance.

Commissioner Gearhart requested that it be deferred until they have more of a plan.

Commissioner Hunter said the ordinance itself will not change.

Joe reminded them that this project is a permitted use under the Zoning Code in the C-3 Zone no matter what we do. There are no guidelines right now for this project; that's why the Planning Commission asked for this amendment to be put in, to protect the Town.

Joe said he understands the Cemetery Association and totally agrees about the integrity of the cemetery; but you can't change the zoning, the individual has bought the property, and he wants to build a 5-unit shopping center. The only thing pending is the drive-in. If it hadn't been for this amendment there would have been no reason to contact anybody because it's a permitted use. If you're thinking that whatever we do is going to stop the project, or change it, that's at the level of the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve the amendment to the Design Guidelines, seconded by President Epperly-Glover. Passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve Ordinance #302 as amended, seconded by President Epperly-Glover. Commissioner Gearhart opposed. Passed.

New Business – Appointment of Judges of the Annual Municipal Election for April 23, 2007 – Joe said the following citizens have agreed to serve: Elsie Ebling, Chair; Linda Ross, Member; and Herman Dunst, Member.

President Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve these appointments, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously passed.

Joe reported that John Balderson served last year, but is now EDC Chairman (appointed position), and he asked him to step aside and let someone else serve.

Consideration of Contract with URS to Provide Engineering Services for the Proposed Elevated Water Storage Tank – Joe, Robin, and David have reviewed the contract. Joe asked that the Commissioners approve as is, it may need to be adjusted.

President Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the contract with URS, not to exceed \$52,606, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously passed.

Public Comments – Elsie Ebling asked when something would be done with the caboose.

Joe said he needs to get with Robin and get it cleaned up.

We have a key if anyone would like to look at it.

Miss Ebling also asked about the other building moved to Railroad Park.

Commissioner Gearhart said it was the old telephone building that used to be in town. It was moved out to Ninetown Road. It was used as a church out there for a while. It may be used as an information building with the Rails to Trails Project.

Someone suggested putting a sign on it stating what it was and what the intent is for the building.

Joe reported on the trip to Annapolis to meet with the Governor's Office of Governmental Affairs. Joe, Nancy, Robin, Merl, and John Balderson went and talked with them about things that were going on in their departments. He wanted to establish contacts if projects get lost on someone's desk. They asked that we prioritize projects. Rev. Cheek announced that there will be a Good Friday service at the Wesleyan Church. There will also be a Sunrise Service at Martin Sutton Park at 6:30 am Sunday morning followed by breakfast at the Methodist Church. There will be a Cross Walk on Saturday.

Town Commissioners Comments – Commissioner Gearhart said the refrigerator magnets were ordered. Need to decide on verbage for mailing.

She also talked about ordering shirts for Commissioners, staff, and committees/commissions with name and town affiliation on the front. This will be about 50 shirts. The cost would be about \$20/each.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to purchase shirts, seconded by Commissioner Gearhart. Unanimously passed.

Commissioner Gearhart said she would like to do a Town Booth at the Strawberry Festival, have some information on projects we're working on, etc.

Commissioner Gearhart also brought up Ethics Commission again.

Joe said he will put that on the agenda for May.

Announcement of Upcoming Events/Meetings – Commissioner Gearhart announced the Little League Parade would be held on April 14 in Greensboro this year. President Epperly-Glover read over list.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk

