

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes May 7, 2007

The May Town Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00 pm. Linda Epperly-Glover, President; Nancy Gearhart, Commissioner; Chuck Hunter, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; Missy Vanskiver, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer; and Carol Balderson, Clerk/Treasurer; were present. See attached list for other attendees.

Call to Order – President Epperly-Glover led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for those who have given their lives for our country and for the people in the town of Greensburg which was nearly demolished in a tornado.

Outgoing President Epperly-Glover thanked folks for their faithful attendance at meetings. She also thanked the Town Staff, Police Dept., and the other two Commissioners for their dedication. They have worked together as a team and that's how things get done.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover was sworn in by the Town Clerk at this time for her second term.

Joe Mangini said he has been here for three years and has served with the same Commissioners in that time. Ridgely is kind of a strange town as far as the government is concerned. It is composed of three commissioners, elected for a three-year term. Unlike most towns, there is an election every year. The person who serves the third year of their term becomes the president, whether they want it or not. We are "Team Ridgely". He thanked all the Commissioners for their service. They are all dedicated to this town.

Incoming President Nancy Gearhart thanked everyone for allowing her to serve as President again. One of her goals this year is to have the meetings and decision making process be as open and transparent as possible. If anyone wants to comment on what is being discussed, they will be given that opportunity. This Town belongs to its citizens, and we depend a lot on the volunteers. To her fellow commissioners, she said they can feel free to bring up items not on the agenda. The only way to create a good future for Ridgely is to work together in making good decisions.

Re-Appointment of Clerk/Treasurer – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to appoint Carol Balderson as Clerk/Treasurer, seconded by President Gearhart.

Unanimously passed.

Approval of the Minutes – April 2, 2007 Public Hearing – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover.

April 2, 2007 Regular Meeting – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover.

April 2, 2007 Executive Session – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by President Gearhart.

Treasurer's Report – Finance Report – Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$200,216.51, Sewer Fund - \$324,617.87, and Water Fund - \$43,517.14.

Bill list presented to Commissioners.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to pay the April bills, seconded by President Gearhart. Passed.

Police Report – Joe gave the report in the absence of the Chief. There were two SWAT calls; one in Ridgely and one in Denton. Slight increase in domestic related incidents, two DWI arrests, and three drug related arrests.

The Chief had a special meeting with one of the owners of one of our businesses in reference to some problems they have been having, reducing problems.

Officers have been out on reimbursable overtime for the school bus and speed control.

The Chief attended the annual Chief's training in O. C. this month.

The voice message on the duty phone has been changed.

The Commissioners received a copy of the monthly report.

There is a good possibility that Sgt. Creason will be coming back soon on a part-time basis.

Kathy Smith asked if there were certain hours the police spend on patrol. Has seen cars here for several hours...cars didn't move. Ted Wold agreed.

Kathy said there had been some incidents of fires/explosions (aerosol cans) and graffiti on fences.

Joe reported the Chief will call both residents concerning their complaints.

President Gearhart said there have been some complaints regarding the skateboard park.

The Chief is aware. May have to pay someone to monitor the park.

Public Works Report – David reported on activities and problems. New sewer line for M. S. Park restroom. The z-track mower is being repaired...behind on mowing.

Bramble is working on Third Street.

Interviewed for Public Works opening last week. Hiring a young man who is graduating from high school.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported 12 days of holding capacity in lagoons. Fixed water leak on Railroad. The house next to Dave's Place is now connected to town sewer. Purchased four fire hydrants.

Janice White asked if the paving cut on Fourth St. by M. S. Park would be repaired before the Strawberry Festival.

David said he was uncertain. The guy that is supposed to do it is supposed to do the Bell Street pump station. It's all supposed to be paved at one time. Maybe Bramble could fix it while they're here.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – EDC – Met on April 11 - John Balderson said Joe told him that Mr. Brody has a business with thirty employees moving into the old New Roads building. DEBD quarterly meeting to be held here on May 17. The Town has set up an account with \$25,000 so they can loan money to small businesses. Federalsburg and Denton have very good programs.

Joe said larger businesses would go to the County for assistance. The State has a plan that provides \$2 for every local \$1.

Parks/Recreation Athletic Field Advisory Committee – Met on April 26 – President Gearhart reported that this was set up to work on plans for money to come from Ridgely Park for the athletic complex. There are three folks on the committee. They hope to use those funds to get grant funds.

Planning/Zoning Commission – Joe reported they met on April 25 – There was not a whole lot on the agenda. The major item on the agenda was the Elementary School will be coming in with a plan to increase parking in front of the school and on the side.

Tree Commission – President Gearhart reported on the Arbor Day tree plantings last Saturday. Planted 20 trees around town. Scouts and Lions Club helped. Public Works dug the holes for planting.

Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Met on April 30 – Joe said the \$200,000 from the State was to be used strictly for planning and design. Ridgely Park is pledging \$250,000 and there is a grant from Eastern Shore Heritage for \$2,200.

An amendment has been put through allowing us to use the State money for construction, management, consulting, etc. The project needs to get started this summer.

Joe reported some folks who worked on Easton's trail have offered to help with Ridgely's.

Someone has looked at the caboose.

Joe invited folks to attend the meetings and provide input.

Ridgely Historical Society – Met May 3 – Janice White said some of the group will be dressing up in period costumes and will ride in the Strawberry Festival parade. She presented engraved bricks to be used in Railroad Village. They are \$15 each until the Strawberry Festival. They will go to \$20 at that time.

Cathy Smith said Thomas Smith should have a brick...he was one of the founding fathers of Ridgely.

Joe said he visited the grave of Rev. Greenbury Ridgely in Hillsboro and took pictures.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reported the WWTP Sewer Capacity Management Plan has about 44,000 gals. left. The new Water Capacity Management Plan has about 30,000 to 35,000 gals. left.

Development Projects – Weese Town House Project of 7 units – Public Works Agreement is completed.

Ridgeway Estates Subdivision – PWA being worked on by the Town Attorney now. They are trying to get into the county project (Tech Park) water/sewer.

Mid Shore Regional Business Technology Park – Joe reported they have almost completed the water and are beginning the sewer infrastructure.

Walnut Farms Subdivision - There is a PWA that has been prepared by the Town Attorney.

128 Walnut Street Subdivision – An issue with the county over the well that is there.

Cow Barn Town House Project – 36 unit townhouse project (Ali's Cove). Working with Ridgely Park for water/sewer. The remaining 2 acres with the Cow Barn are to come to the town.

Ridgely Park – 2 important meetings this week on DRRA.

Municipal Capital Projects – Joe reported Sewer I/I and WWTP Upgrade will be tied together. Our engineers do not feel Aqueonics (direct steam discharge plant, .5 million gpd) can meet the state criteria for direct stream discharge. The plant they recommended would cost about \$8.5 million. We have \$5 million coming from the developer; that

would mean \$3.5 million would come from Ridgely residents and the Commissioners don't want to do that. They want to stay within the \$5 million and do as much as we can with no cost to the residents. After much discussion, it was decided that spray irrigation is the way to go now. They think \$5 million will cover this. It will add an extra 100,000 gpd to cover Ridgely Park, development that is on the table now, and economic development that is on the table.

The water storage tank will cost about \$1.5 million for a 500,000 gal. tank. This is something the town should have had years ago. What we have now is not adequate. The tank we have needs maintenance.

Ridgely House is in the process of being painted now; hope it will be done by Strawberry Festival.

Municipal Grant Proposal/Projects Update – M. S. Park Renovations Project – Joe reported there is \$15,000 for a bandstand and some other renovations. Will hold off until after the Strawberry Festival.

M. S. Park Citizen Security Project – 2 cameras – Won't get state grant for this. The Chief is looking into some other areas.

Ridgely 140th Anniversary Celebration Project – Joe reported May 13, 1867 is the date the town was founded.

Since the water storage tank will be located at the Tech Park, Joe is looking into some grant funds from the Md. Dept. of Economic Dev.

Ridgely Economic Dev. Revitalization Strategic Plan Project – Ridgely EDC will be working on this to get some grant funding.

Joe reported the town is working on building a relationship with the Governor's office to get some support.

Kathy Smith asked about the handling of the traffic on Central Avenue from these projects.

Joe said Ridgely Park is going to provide funding for a Ridgely metro-core traffic impact study (5 miles out from the center of town). The study will identify all those projects and where that traffic is going. It will include the Schuster project, the Mid Shore Business Technology Park, developments within the town itself, development in Greensboro, and the landfill.

New Business – Ordinance No. 303 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Adopt the Town of Ridgely's General Fund and Water/Sewer Enterprise Funds Operating and Capital Improvement Projects and to Establish the Real Property and Personal Property Tax Rate for FYE June 30, 2008” for introduction only.

Joe said this ordinance officially introduces the budget. Copies are available for the public. The administration is recommending that the real property tax rate be reduced from .53/\$100 to .50/\$100, and personal property tax from \$1.33/\$100 to \$1.25/\$100. There will be a formal budget hearing and Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing here on May 21, 2007 at 7:00 pm.

Public Comments – Kim Wold asked Joe if he was going to move to town.

He said he was. Ted Wold complained about the cost of the town car; over budget.

Joe said he should look at how much he has saved the town. The contract does require the Town Manager to live in the zip code area, not the town. He and his wife have looked at about 30 homes. They are up here a lot on the weekends. He figures he saves the town about \$100,000/year by doing what he does that is more than a normal manager would do.

Joe said he did have a house about a year or two ago, but someone raised a ruckus about it because of an ethics issue; so it was dropped.

He said he has to make sure his spouse is happy, and until she is satisfied with the house, she will stay where she is. If everything goes okay with a contract tonight, he will be living in the zip code area.

Joe said as far as managers living in town; for Ridgely, it is not required by the Charter or an Ordinance. It is required by the contract. He also said that when you say there is a violation of the contract, there are sections in there that the Town has not honored either. MML says there are five towns of the 157 in the state that require their managers to live in town. Four are by Charter, one by contract (big towns). There are two smaller towns; one is Indian Head (where he was Town Manager) and the town of Oxford that require their town manager to live in town; and because they do, they provide housing.

Ted Wold said there have been hundreds of houses for sale. He feels something should be done; maybe he should pay for his own gas driving back and forth. He feels taxpayer money is being abused by his not living up to the contract. He also feels it's Joe's job to save the town money.

Joe told Mr. Wold he should come to more than one meeting a year, and encouraged him to get involved, run for office, etc.

Cathy Smith said people in town don't come to the meetings because they feel it is a waste of time; and people don't want to listen to a Town Manager who has not honored his contract.

Mr. Wold also said Joe did not go out and meet with the residents like he said he would when he first came. He said the Commissioners don't talk to the people about the issues. He also complained that the town website is down, there is no newsletter, postings in the post office are at least a month late...who even knew there was an election?

Clerk said the election notice was posted a good month before the election on the Town's bulletin boards, and in the newspaper.

Commissioner Hunter told Mr. Wold he was off base on this. Things have never been more open than they are now. Joe goes over everything at these meetings, again and again. Taxes are going down, the trash fee has been taken off the bills, etc.

Commissioner Hunter said he has been on Joe about moving here because he worries about him driving. He saves this town a lot of money in legal fees alone.

Discussion on a town newsletter. Joe said he is negotiating with the Times Record about doing a town paper, or maybe a page in the Times Record. He has also talked with Medifast about it.

Joe said we will need help when we get it going to get news from all the organizations, etc.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover said she is always on the streets talking to people. She

is in touch with the citizens.

Commissioner Hunter said Mr. Wold has no way of knowing about phone calls, etc. the Commissioners get and what kind of schedules they have.

Discussion on how to get residents involved, and let them know what is going on in town. More discussion on the Town Manager moving here.

Joe said he appreciates everyone's comments and their concern for his welfare. He has relocated for jobs before: Elsmere, Rock Hall, Taneytown, Indian Head, and Somerset County. He picked the house they live in now, and his wife was not happy with it. Like Commissioner Hunter said, a 2-1 vote and he could be without a job. Now, his family is secure. If he sells his house and comes up here, the Commissioners change, and in a year he is gone. His wife is afraid of that and he has also talked with the Commissioners about a long-term contract (still on the table). He also said his wife is dealing with some serious medical problems similar to what some of our employees have had and he doesn't want to push her too hard.

Joe said he has a friend with whom he has formed a partnership, and if everything works out, he will be here perhaps within the next 30 days, living in the area (without his family).

Town Commissioners Comments - Commissioner Hunter said anytime anyone wants to talk about town issues they are welcome to call him.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover said folks are welcome to come knock on her door, and people do. She is always happy to talk to folks.

Upcoming Events/Meetings – President Gearhart read through the agenda list.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk