

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes August 6, 2007

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

List attached of residents in attendance.

Call to Order - President Gearhart opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our service men and women.

Approval of the Minutes – July 3, 2007 – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported a General Fund balance for July of \$86,563.37, Sewer Fund balance of \$248,685.61, and Water Fund balance of \$21,392.16.

Bills presented to Commissioners for payment approval.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported that the new officer, Stewart Ewing, has completed his certification and will be out on his own Aug. 9.

The Department recovered about \$5,000 worth of jewelry stolen from Lister Est.

It has been a slow month as far as calls.

Chief Evans reminded residents that his department does property checks when notified that residents will be out of town for vacations, etc. if residents will let them know.

Cathy Smith said tractor trailers are using Sunrise Ave. She also said branches are hanging over the no trucks sign.

Chief to check on this.

Public Works Report – Robin reported that they are starting to trim trees on Central Ave. Street lights – one will be added at Dave's Place, one will be changed (brighter) at Connolly's, there will be three new ones on N. Central past Jerry Sutton's, and two new ones on Oak St.

Looking into uniform alternatives for his department. The current system is getting more costly.

Tech Park contractor dug up part of Lister Lane today tying into sewer line. The street will be closed for a couple of days.

David, Ben, and Robin attended a water class last week.

Cathy Smith asked about water pooling in front of her house, along curb.

Robin said it has always been low there. He will look into it to see what could be done.

Arlene Hege asked if the gauge on the gas pump had been fixed.

Robin said it has.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported 95 days holding in the lagoons.

There was a water leak last week by the school. Bramble fixed-no charge to the town.

Hanover Foods easement project has created a lot of problems.

There were several complaints from Lister Estates residents about the chemicals in the water causing spots on vehicles, windows, etc.

David and Robin said calcium is high in the water in this area, not only in town limits.

David will set up testing for Thursday.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – Economic Development Commission

– John Balderson reported that they will hopefully be ready by October with a loan program. Thayer Entertainment is planning on moving into the Musselman building. They are concerned about Hanover Foods problems; afraid they will leave town.

Mr. Brodie has two businesses coming into his building now.

Two members are needed on EDC – one in town and one out of town.

President Gearhart asked if anyone is interested to contact the Commissioners.

Planning & Zoning Commission – Joe reported they did not have a quorum for July 25 so the meeting was rescheduled to Aug. 7.

Tree Commission – No meetings.

President Gearhart said they were talking about getting a plaque for the five trees that were planted at the school (founding fathers).

Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Meeting cancelled. Next meeting scheduled for Aug. 27.

Ridgely Historical Society – Janice White reported no summer meetings. Next meeting will be in September.

Rick Schwab reported they have 110 bricks now.

Town Manager's Report – Development Projects - a) WWTP Sewer Capacity Management Plan – Joe reported that Caroline Co. Health Dept. recently refused to sign off on a subdivision (Ridgeway Estates) because they want a clarification on our Capacity Mgmt. Plan. This plan has been done by State regulation. It is figures going out for three years, averaging that and then coming in and adding in the extra units approved, and those paying an allocation fee. We are adding in for infiltration and inflow, adding in a reserve that David requested. This information will be provided to them.

As of right now we are showing about 41,933 ga. of availability including the Tech Park, Walnut Farms, Ridgeway Est., the Walnut St. Subdivision, the Cow Barn, and the Weese Townhouse Dev.

Joe reported that there is activity on the marketing part for the Business Tech Park. A meeting will be held here tomorrow morning.

Municipal Capital Projects – WWTP Upgrade – Scheduling a meeting with Ridgely Park since they will be paying the cost.

Water Storage Tank – Joe reported he has stopped work on this project pending review of a contract from the county's contracting engineer to us for about \$7,000 for the same services as our engineers are providing. Need a clarification on this before we move ahead.

Well Project – Problems getting the electrician here to complete the project. Joe will get with Robin and David on this.

Greater Ridgely Rails to Trails Project – Joe reported that the State of Md. has received approval that the Dept. of Transportation can turn over to the Dept. of Natural Resources the ability of granting an easement for those entities that want to use the rail bed for Rails to Trails. Now the State wants a proposal from the Town as to what the Town wants to do with the railroad right of way. It will take about three months to get an answer back

as to whether or not they will give us this easement. He will get this to them this month. He said he has asked Ridgely Park for some help with expertise for this project.

Martin Sutton Park Renovation Project – Robin said he needs some direction.

President Gearhart said she worked on the grant and has that information.

Joe suggested having a meeting with the organizations that use the park to make sure everyone is in agreement.

140th Anniversary Celebration Project – Joe reported he has considered a picnic in M. S. Park with fireworks in the evening. He has contacted a fireworks company.

EDC Local Revolving Loan Fund – Joe said they had targeted having this in place by October 1, but no later than January 1. Have money right now, and have had two inquiries.

Joe said he has received the application for State Dept. of Economic Dev. funding to augment town funds. This is specifically geared for small businesses.

Ridgely Economic Dev. Revitalization Strategic Plan Project – Joe reported that he has the application and can get up to \$50,000 in grant funds from DBED.

Payment of Bills – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to pay the July bills, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

Old Business – Commissioner Epperly-Glover asked about the lighting for the parking lot on Railroad St. Why aren't they lit? There has been some concern.

Joe reported he will check on them tonight.

President Gearhart brought up the Ethics Commission. They talked about rewording the criteria for members for that at the last meeting. She had suggested that it be anyone who lives in town and is not serving on a town board, is not related to another town board member, or an employee of the town.

Commissioner Hunter said he has talked to several people who are not interested in it. Need a description.

Joe reported that at the end of the year every elected and appointed official must fill out a form regarding whether they accepted anything during the year from anyone that could influence them (Financial Disclosure Statement). It also serves the purpose of handling complaints against an official or employee.

President Gearhart said three people would be appointed for a 3-year term. In the beginning one member would be re-appointed or replaced each year.

Joe suggested putting this on the Workshop Agenda.

President Gearhart made a motion to amend the Ethics Ordinance as stated, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

President Gearhart recommended Rev. Denzil Cheek and Kathy Smith for members.

Anyone interested in serving should contact the Commissioners.

Ad for Capital Projects Officer – Commissioners made some suggestions for changes/additions to Joe's ad, i.e., educational requirements.

Commissioners want it in the local papers, web, and MML.

Joe will revise and return to Commissioners.

New Business – Commissioner Hunter said he hasn't seen or heard anything about the Sept. Car Show.

Missy said this is the first time they have done this here. It will be Sept. 16 – 40 to 50

cars. They have contacted the Lions Club, Fire Dept., etc. The Lions Club was the only response.

Public Comments – Betty Jean Mumford made several points concerning problems with the overhead door business on Sunset Blvd. which was previously discussed at another meeting..

The property has been surveyed and marked (she presented pictures).

She said it was also stated that the zoning was changed to I-1 and that would ensure that it would not be a nuisance to residential neighbors. Noise is not the issue, it is the unsightly storage of construction materials on the town's street.

According to state law, when alterations are made to an existing building's exterior walls a licensed architect should be employed. Were there construction drawings; and if so, who is the architect?

Missy said there were architectural drawings (did not remember architect's name).

She also asked if there was Fire Marshall approval for the renovations?

Missy replied that gets addressed with the plans.

She asked if there was a stormwater management review?

Joe replied it's less than 5,000 sq. ft.

She asked who inspected it prior to granting an occupancy permit?

Missy said it was a conditional occupancy permit based on final inspection approval by MDIA.

Joe will check on the materials sitting on the street.

Arlene Hege said she still needs website info from Public Works and Police. Then she needs to put the businesses on there and have Commissioners sign off on it.

Arlene said she checked on the cost for more web space to 50 mb. Additional cost was not that much. Should consider upgrading next year.

Cathy Smith said she agrees with Mrs. Mumford – What are the Commissioners doing for the citizens? She was upset that plans have not been made to celebrate the 140th Town Anniversary; there is nothing on roads with developments coming; need more stop signs; tree issues; taxes are high; water complaints blown off; etc. There is a lot of frustration. She feels complaints aren't taken seriously.

Robin said his department has a routine and it keeps them constantly busy. Almost anything extra gets contracted out. Because the grass hasn't been growing they have been able to do some other things. He said he is the one who has the tree license and he has had personal issues to deal with.

President Gearhart said more has been done with trees in this town in the last few years than probably has ever been done.

Mike and Linda Stumpf had concerns over water bill issues, and the fact that it took five weeks to get a response to a letter.

Joe apologized for that.

Kathy Schwab complained about the amount of truck traffic coming up First St. to Central Ave.

Chief Evans will handle.

David said they are short staffed in the Public Works Dept. With Robin's situation, and now Wilson's, they are getting farther behind each week.

There was more discussion about the quality of the water.

Joe said the staff will pursue the concerns regarding the water; the Commissioners have to make the decisions about the cost to fix the problems.

Linda Stumpf asked if the yellow abandoned building that is boarded up on Walnut St. was going to remain as an eyesore.

Joe will have the building inspector check into this.

Commissioner Hunter said there are a lot of people in this town who work for the town who are diligently working through the job everyday. The best way to handle problems is to let people know about them; that's not saying they're going to get done the next day. There is always someone willing to talk. He gets calls all the time. He said he's had several conversations about the business on Sunset that Betty Jean was talking about. He's gone over there himself and talked to the owner (he taught him). He's talked to Joe about it. It can be taken to the Appeals Board.

Commissioner Hunter said he thinks the water quality all over Maryland has problems. He said David gets wound up, but he takes it seriously. He said Robin has been treated for cancer, and has been here working when he probably should not have been. A lot of people are doing the jobs of two.

Cathy Smith said after having a shop here for 2 ½ years and talking to people, they don't come here because they say nothing happens. As a taxpayer, you shouldn't have to go to the Appeals Board, or wait 3 ½ years to get something done with a tree that is busting up your foundation.

President Gearhart read through the list of upcoming meetings.

Commissioner Hunter thanked everyone for their emails, cards, etc. after his surgery.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to adjourn at 9:05 pm, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk