

## **Ridgely E.D.C. Meeting Minutes September 10, 2008**

The September meeting of the Ridgely Economic Development Commission was called to order by John Balderson at 6:39 P.M. In Attendance were Joe Mangini, John Balderson, Leo Stepp, Jerry Sutton, Kelly Hayman, Joanne Stepp, Kathy Smith and Sara Wright.

### **Approval of the Minutes:**

Minutes for June 11, 2008 meeting were unanimously approved following a motion to approve; made by Leo, seconded by Jerry.

### **Town Manager's Time:**

#### **DBED Grants Review:**

##### **Local Revolving Loan Fund:**

The \$50,000. loan Ridgely was approved for is being held up. There has been no response to inquiries about the funds. The Secretary of DBED is still reviewing all of the local revolving loan fund paperwork for Ridgely, but is interested in creating one large fund, rather than a small one in each town. Joe will call Secretary Edgerly directly.

Joe noted that the Commissioners of Ridgely approved a \$15,000. loan for Subrena Guy's daycare center. It will be a line of credit loan and the check will be issued to both her, and her landlord. The loan is a five (5) year, 3% loan. Payments will be monthly.

##### **Strategic Economic Development Revitalization Plan:**

Ridgely is holding off on doing a plan right now. Pete and Shane Johnston are currently working on one for Crisfield at a cost of \$150,000. for the Town. Joe plans to check for a grant that may be available to cover the cost, or possibly ask for donations.

### **New Business Opportunities/ Ventures/ Concerns:**

#### **Musselman Business Complex:**

There was nothing new to report on the Musselman Business Complex. Mr. Musselman is currently undergoing treatment for cancer.

#### **Subway Shopping Center:**

Subway is now open. A Redbrick Pizza is planned to open in unit next to Subway, and Queenstown Bank will open on the opposite end. There will be a drive- thru window at the bank.

#### **Ridgely Industrial and Office Park:**

Cyberridge is now being worked out between the Town of Ridgely's attorney and an attorney for Alexander Brodie. There was opposition to the opening, but there was also some support. Kathy Smith said that Cyberridge was never brought before Ridgely Planning and Zoning before it was approved, and that's the reason it has to be handled by attorneys now.

## **Development Projects Review:**

### **Ridgeway Estates:**

Infrastructure is near completion, and there will be sidewalks. Jerry asked why there would be sidewalks if they don't lead to anything; Joe explained that Ridgely's Planning and Zoning Commission wanted them. Joe also said that Ridgeway is still dealing with the Carriage House issue.

### **Tech Park:**

Ridgely received a second letter from the State of Maryland asking for 36,000 gallons of allocation, stating that they would like for it to be reserved for the Park before they'll continue. In 2004 Ridgely had agreed to provide water and sewer for the Tech Park, but never stated an amount. The State will not release the money for Phase II until Ridgely commits the allocation. Phase I (9,000 gallons) was paid for by Caroline County. A compromise will have to be reached between the Town of Ridgely and Caroline County.

Leo shared his belief that Base Realignment and Closure will affect the economy in late 2009 and into 2010. He said that housing in Anne Arundal County will be affected, and that it will have a domino effect to the Eastern Shore. Joanne and Joe discussed federal companies possibly starting offices in the Tech Park, and Joe said that the parking lots have been moved further from buildings there to stay within security guidelines. Joe also advised that Caroline County was trying to purchase the airport.

### **Cowbarn Project:**

Joe said that the Cowbarn Project had not been approved by Ridgely's Planning and Zoning Commission. The developer has backed out because of problems with Archie Carroll and past M.D.E. issues. The Cowbarn itself and the two (2) acres of land that it is located on were supposed to be turned over to the Town of Ridgely. Archie would now like to keep the Cowbarn and sell four (4) acres of land. Joe discussed how the façade easement and an overlay zone would allow the Townhomes to be built and the Cowbarn renovated. The façade easement still needs to be approved though.

John said that he believed if Archie wanted change the agreement with the Town, and not give the Cowbarn to Ridgely, then the amount of townhomes allowed to be built there should be lowered. Joe explained that the developer did not want to pay the amount Archie is asking for the property and that Archie will not lower the price unless he gets to retain ownership of the Cowbarn. Joe also noted that each new home is roughly \$2,000. in income for the Town of Ridgely. Kathy said she thinks the Town of Ridgely should be sympathetic to Archie so that growth can be brought to Town.

Kathy asked what the Town of Ridgely would do with the Cowbarn, should we receive it. Joe explained that there had been talk of turning it into a community center, but thought that now it would just be preserved to be sold for commercial use. Kathy stated that she does not think the Town should be specific on preservation of the Cowbarn because she doesn't want to have it drawn out with lawyers. She also said that she would rather see the Carriage House preserved than spend much more money on the Cowbarn because the

Carriage House is the only piece of history in the Town of Ridgely. Joe noted that if Archie wanted to demolish the Cowbarn, the only thing the Town could do is issue a \$100. fine. He said the same applies to the Carriage House and that there really isn't any provisions that could save either.

Joanne asked if there was a historic preservation district in the Town of Ridgely; Joe and John told her no. She then asked how the Ridgely Planning and Zoning Commission could require Ms. Raikes to build more than she can afford if there is no specific rule on it. Joe said that Ms. Raikes wanted to demolish the house but Planning and Zoning wouldn't allow her to do it because they thought that the house could be saved. Joe also said that another reason for them denying the demolition was that one of the Planning and Zoning members did not like the person who Ms. Raikes was planning on buying her new house from. Kathy requested a copy of the Planning and Zoning minutes, in which the decision was made, because she said that it was not appropriate for the decision to be made based on that.

#### WWTP Phase I Upgrade:

Phase I has been approved. The pre-construction meeting will be on September 18, 2008 and the work should start by October 1, 2008. The selected bid amount was \$1,100,000.00.

Ridgely Park cannot settle until phase I is complete and approved by the State of Maryland.

#### **Municipal Capital Projects Review:**

##### Municipal Public Safety Building:

Ridgely Police Chief Evans and the Ridgely Fire Department have given their information for the new building. Blades Construction will draw up design plans and an estimate at no cost.

#### **Old Business:**

##### **Kiddie Kastle Learning Center:**

The Town is still waiting on Attorney Jack Hall to return to his office to finalize the loan paperwork. Subrena Guy should have center open soon.

##### **Business Directional Sign:**

There are only two (2) businesses on Bell Street who have not agreed to help pay for a directional sign to be placed on the corner of Bell Street and Central Avenue.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Greater Ridgely Business Association:**

The Town of Ridgely applied and was turned down for a Main Street Maryland grant. One of the questions on the application was "What support do you give to businesses in town?" The Town of Ridgely has no support for businesses, which puts us at a

disadvantage. Joe said the Town would not be able to get anything through Main Street Maryland until there is some sort of business support system. He would like to see a couple of the strong business owners in Ridgely step up and try to “join forces” with other town businesses. John agreed that it would be a good idea, but that it would be hard to get the owners together to meet. John recommended having another E.D.C. after-hours business social to bring the businesses together to discuss the start of a business association. Joe said he would like to invite Mr. John Nussear and the President of Greensboro’s business association.

It was agreed to by all to have the social on November 12, 2008 at 7:00pm at the Ridgely Town Hall.

### **Commission Roundtable Discussion:**

Kathy discussed her desire for the Carriage House to be saved, saying that she had talked to many people who shared her desire to save it. She would like to see it moved to the Martin Sutton Park athletic fields and opened as a sports museum. Kathy added that tourism generates a 15% increase in business. She went on to discuss her house, The Smith House, and the importance of Thomas A. Smith to the Town of Ridgely. John responded to Kathy’s talk of the Carriage House by saying that most people didn’t know the Carriage House’s history until just recently. Jerry added that Martin Sutton Park would not be an ideal location for the Carriage House because of a lack of security. Kathy said she is not worried about the security and that the police are going to “get off their butts” and do security.

### **Next Meeting:** **October 8, 2008**

### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 P.M.