

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes January 7, 2008

The January 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; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present. A list is attached of other attendees.

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

Lou Hayes – RVFD – Lou gave the Fire Department's Activity Report for 2007.

He reported they have 64 members on the roster. They have done 800 hrs. of training in house and 1900 hrs. through the University of Md.

They rehabbed a fire truck at a cost of \$150,000 (\$500,000 to buy new).

Cost to equip a firefighter – just ordered 5 sets of gear (helmet, hood, coat, pants, boots, and gloves) - \$9700. If you add the bottle, that's another \$4000. per person.

Last year they were alerted for 252 fire calls or accidents. There were 960 EMS calls.

Lou thanked the Commissioners and the Town Maintenance Dept. for their assistance.

He introduced the Chief for 2008 – Bob Utz.

Chief Utz reported that they had a hurst tool donated to them by Seaford Fire Co.

He offered their services to the Town for whatever is needed.

President Gearhart said the Town is very fortunate to have this fire department.

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

Treasurer's Report – The Treasurer reported a General Fund balance at the end of December of \$66,068.51, Sewer Fund of \$151,351.48, and Water Fund of \$21,942.24.

Police Report – In the absence of Chief Evans, Joe gave the report. With the return of Ofc. S. Creason, the department is back up to full staff and is resuming their normal schedule.

December was fairly slow, with no major problems, other than a vehicle stolen on New Year's Eve which has been recovered without damage.

At year-end there were 147 arrests, 202 traffic violations, 756 warnings, 609 calls for service, and 1,563 hrs. of foot patrol.

SHA has been here to look at the bump on Central and are planning the repair when the blacktop is a little warmer.

They will be conducting in-service training for all Caroline County agencies to finish all officers requirements for year 2007 in the next week or so.

Joe read through all the end of the year totals.

Public Works/Water & Sewer Reports – Robin reported on his department's activities and meetings, and in the absence of David Crist, water and sewer issues.

URS is going to do new tests for I & I at no charge to us.

He reported on the light at Bill Moore's on Seward Rd. He attended the Tech Park meeting and handed them a written report on the issue.

Four trees have been taken down, as planned.

Ridgely has been recognized as a Tree City USA this past year. There were only 4 towns on the Eastern Shore.

Joe commended President Gearhart, Robin, and the Tree Commission for their work with trees.

Robin said the Town would be getting 3 trees for Mr. Brodie's parcel on Rt. 480 that will be planted in town. This is part of the forestation/reforestation program.

Per discussion at the last Work Session meeting, letters were sent out on I & I issues discovered through the smoke tests that were done. People are responding.

There were two in the report that were Town issues that have been repaired. These repairs were not needed due to pipe deterioration.

There are 32 days of holding time in the lagoons. We are set for stream discharge but are not doing this at this time.

Other Board/Commissions/Committee Reports – EDC - Joe reported they met on Dec. 12 and went over some things that were going on in Town. The application has been filed for the Local Revolving Loan Program with the State of Md. (DBED). We are requesting \$50,000 to augment the fund.

Joe reported he is holding off on the Strategic Economic Dev. Revitalization Plan because it requires a match from the Town. Needs to discuss it more with the EDC and the Commisisoners. This is a dollar for dollar match. You have to plan what type of businesses you want, where you want to put them, zoning, incentives, etc.

Bob Thayer of Thayer Entertainment made a presentation. He is looking at going into the Musselman building on Bell St.

Vickie's Restaurant was also discussed. As far as we know, it will still be a restaurant.

The Hanover Foods situation was discussed. County applying for CDBG grant for holding ponds.

Planning & Zoning Commission – Martin Sokolich reported that they had a short meeting. In addition to the usual administrative stuff, they had some discussion on working with the consultant for the Water/Sewer Master Plan.

He said Mr. Brodie came in with an alternative plan for his retail development along with the one that had been turned down previously. They told him they could not reconsider what had previously been turned down without changes. They approved the other one.

He now has two approved plans.

Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Joe reported they met on Dec. 19 (Special Meeting) to review three proposals from consultants to provide services for planning, design, and construction management to the Town. Joe read the written report. The three proposals were from: 1) Easton Utilities - \$45,416, 2) Pace Design - \$38,200, and 3) Davis, Bowen & Friedel - \$75,000. After consideration, the committee recommended Pace Design to the Commissioners.

Ridgely Historical Society – Cathy Schwab reported they met on January 3. They discussed the telephone building-- when it could be moved.

They discussed having an Ice Cream Social in the park (Railroad Park) this spring with Brenda Walls at the pharmacy. They want to have a little dedication of the bricks.

They have 15 more applications for bricks; this will bring the number of engraved bricks

to 140.

They also talked about the town clock. There is a company in Massachusetts that designs beautiful clocks. She and Rick will check this out in February.

Training for the Ethics Commission has been scheduled for Jan. 30 at 7:00 pm here (1-1/2 to 2 hrs.). The trainer will be Ernie Crofoot, who is the County's Attorney. He is the registered, certified trainer for the Md. Municipal League.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reported that they are working with MDE to work out the issues concerning sewer capacity. David's last report through Dec. 31 indicates a remaining capacity of 37,933 gals.

They are trying to get a meeting set up before Jan. 25.

There will be a construction permit requested from MDE soon. This project will make the system more efficient.

Joe reported that projects are in a holding pattern until this is worked out. It has affected the budget. We will be coming back to the Commissioners and amending the budget because a lot of the income we expected to come in won't be coming in. We have lost the Cowbarn Project (36 units) because of this.

The major upgrade project we wanted to do is affected.

There is a wetlands issue with the water storage tank. May have to find another location, so this will be held up for 3 months or more.

Joe reported he has not worked on getting started on a feasibility study for the Public Safety Facility because of these other issues. He said he has seen some beautiful buildings in Pocomoke, etc.

Joe reported he has informed Dept. Heads that year-end reports need to be in to him by Feb. 15 for his State of the Town Address, FY09 budget requests are due in by Feb. 29, and employee evaluations are to be submitted no later than Mar. 31.

Joe also reported that there will be a Capital Improvement Project Report given on April 7; there will be a budget address on May 5; and budget discussion/adoption on June 2.

Old Business – Consideration of Ord. No. 306 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend Chapter 175 Vehicles and Traffic of the Municipal Code of the Town of Ridgely”.

President Gearhart reported that this was read at the Dec. meeting. This concerns trucks parking on both sides of Rt. 480 in front of Connolly's Market and obstructing the view for motorists coming out of Md. Ave. Parking will not be allowed there. No Parking signs will be posted.

Commissioner Hunter asked if the owner of Connolly's had been informed. Joe said he was sent a letter.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to pass Ord. No. 306, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover.

President Gearhart said the ordinance reads “no parking between Central and Md.”. She feels trucks will park on the other side of Md. Ave., suggested amending the ordinance to extend it to Park Ave.

Joe said it can be passed tonight with Amendment 1 extending it from Central to Park. He will do the amendment.

Commissioner Hunter retracted his motion and made a new one to pass Ord. No. 306

with Amendment 1 which will provide for “no parking between Central Ave. and Park Ave.”, seconded by President Gearhart. Passed unanimously.

New Business – Consideration of proposals to provide planning, design, and construction management services for the “Greater Ridgely Rails to Trails Project”.

Joe said the 3 proposals included total planning and design, as well as construction management for the Rails to Trails for the trail in Town. This is only for the railroad right of way area. It does not include the Railroad Village or going to Crouse Mill until we get to that point with annexation of the wastewater treatment plant. This will be done in phases. There is a grant for \$200,000.

President Gearhart said the idea was to use grant funds and developer money – no taxpayer money.

Robin reported that we are waiting for a lease.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to accept the proposal recommended by the Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Pace Design for \$38,200, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed unanimously.

President Gearhart said the employee evaluation form needs to be discussed/changed. The January Work Session will be held on Jan. 28 due to the Martin Luther King Holiday.

Commissioner Hunter said he cannot be here for a Town Meeting on Feb. 4, he has to work.

President Gearhart suggested moving everything back a week. It was agreed that the February Town Meeting will be held on Feb. 11 at 7:00 pm and the February Work Session will be held on Feb. 25.

Public Comments – David Hege commended the Planning Commission for sticking to their rules/regulations and the Town Commissioners for working out a contract with the Town Manager.

Rick Schwab commented on the condition of Central Ave. Need to check with SHA and see if there is anything on the schedule.

Town Commissioners Comments – President Gearhart introduced County Commissioner Jeff Ghrist. He offered any assistance needed; feels it’s important for the county and towns to work together.

There was some discussion on the landfill.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to pay the December bills, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm, seconded by President Gearhart.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk

