

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes April 7, 2008

The April 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 others in attendance.

Call to Order – President Gearhart called the meeting to order and announced the loss of Esther Hoffman who was very active in the community. She asked that folks remember her and her family along with our service folks. Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence.

Commissioner Hunter remembered Esther Hoffman saying to him she didn't know how he did all he did. He said this next year should be dedicated to her. She did so much. President Gearhart said the ESHI presentation would be delayed until the next meeting. President Gearhart introduced Fire Chief Bob Utz.

Chief Utz reported they had 62 fire calls and 225 EMS calls the first quarter. They had an arson fire on Rt. 480 across from Connolly's Market.

The Chief reported they are putting in for a grant for an in-house cascade system. In March, 2007 they sent a truck out for rehab. It went back into service the end of February, 2008.

The department now has a hurst tool and some other equipment donated by Seaford Volunteer Fire Dept. They have 20 to 22 members in training.

Chief Utz reported on upcoming events sponsored by the Fire Dept. including a beef'n'dumpling dinner, Texas Holdem, and a Motorcycle Awareness Day and Car Show.

The Chief said he has had questions about the siren going off and explained that all members do not have pagers or scanners. The siren is also needed for civil defense. President Gearhart said it also lets the folks on the street know to be alert for emergency personnel travelling to the fire house.

Approval of the Minutes – March 3, 2008 – Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported balances for March – General Fund - \$95,484.67, Sewer Fund - \$117,051.65, and Water Fund - \$22,189.12.

Bills presented to Commissioners for payment approval.

Police Report – In the absence of Chief Evans, the Town Manager read the report.

There were several shoplifting cases closed between departments.

A newly acquired 2002 Trail Blazer (donation) is now in service. This means he will not have to request another vehicle in next year's budget.

Since several arrests last month, there have been no other reported break-ins in town.

The foot patrols are getting excellent comments from the public.

Little League Parade on April 12 will require street closing for about an hour.

Public Works/Water & Sewer Report – Robin reported on his departments activities for the month. He reported on information regarding moving the Lister carriage house and street work in Lister Estates.

Robin also reported on water and sewer activities in the absence of David Crist.

Robin explained that for the sewer upgrade we need to plant grass now. The cost will be \$20,000+.

Robin reported that stream discharge is shut down now, and there are 76 days holding time in the lagoons.

Robin also reported that he put up a sign at the WWTP Facility since it has been difficult for folks to locate.

Ed Hopkins asked how many acres are required for spray.

Robin said no additional acreage is required for Phase I.

Question about the painting of the fence at the tennis courts.

Commissioner Hunter said he would get some help and get it painted.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – EDC – John Balderson reported that Cynthia Pyron (Marketing Director for the Tech Park) gave a power point presentation at their meeting.

He also reported that there is someone interested in the Musselman building and that a Day Care Facility has been approved at Mr. Brodie's building. There is a restaurant coming back where Sam's was.

Planning/Zoning – Martin Sokolich reported that Stacey Weisner, Director of Caroline Co. Planning & Codes Administration, gave a presentation.

A permit for an addition at 101 Maple Ave. was approved.

There is a zoning issue at 106 W. Railroad Street. They are trying to find a provisional way to allow for first floor residential use until commercial is available.

Rails to Trails Advisory Committee – Joe reported that he met with John Wilson and Sue Simmons on Friday. Part of the brick work and the caboos are on the railroad right of way. The phone building is okay now. They want the caboos moved down closer to Park Ave. They also want the recycle bins moved and no parking along that side of the street.

It will take 3 months to get the lease through after it is signed.

Ridgely Historical Society – Janice White reported that they have learned that the telephone building is not the original one, but is still old.

Ole Time Ridgely Days will be held on May 3 from 10 am to 4 pm in Railroad Park. There will be food, games, art, train displays, etc.

Janice reported that their annual meeting will be held on June 5.

The Historical Society will be in the Strawberry Festival Parade again this year and will have a booth in the park.

Ridgely Tree Commission – Leo Stepp said there was no official meeting, no quorum.

Arbor Day will be observed on April 19 starting at the elementary school at 9:00 am.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reported that Ridgeway Estates is up and running.

Walnut Farms has paid the allocation fees for 3 years.

Need to look for ground for a water storage tank.

Ridgely Municipal Public Safety Facility – Joe said he will be touring a facility in Pocomoke this Friday. He will be meeting with the Fire Dept. and the builder of the Pocomoke building on April 15.

Cahall – Our trash contractor sent a letter requesting an additional \$100/mo. for increased fuel cost.

Crown Castle – Joe reported a letter was received concerning the Sprint tower lease. We have a 37-year lease. They now want a perpetual lease and will pay \$27,600. He said if this was agreed to it should be split with the Fire Dept.

President Gearhart asked to table this until there is an opportunity to talk with the Fire Dept. since there is a disagreement on how the tower should be handled anyway. She said she and Kim would be coming up tomorrow to go through minutes.

Commissioner Hunter asked Dale Mumford if he recalled anything on this since he was a commissioner at that time.

Dale said it was his understanding that the Town would take the revenue for 5 years. Then it would go to the Fire Dept. when they built a building.

Joe reported that there are a couple of things for the Commissioners to consider for Ridgeway Estates: 1) Restrictive Covenants – The storm water management pond is going to be out front and will be maintained and used by the Town; 2) carriage house removal.

Draft Lease Agreement w/DNR – Rails to Trails project – 50 years – President Gearhart made a motion to approve the lease with the extension to Crouse Mill, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed unanimously.

Joe reported the Work Session will be held on April 21. Krockner and Pilli (Lister Estates) will be on the agenda. There will also be a presentation on the Rails to Trails project.

Old Business – Ordinance #307 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend Chapter 136 Property Maintenance of the Municipal Code of the Town of Ridgely” – Update to 2006 version – President Gearhart made a motion to adopt (including amendments as previously added), seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed unanimously.

President Gearhart said Cary approached the Commissioners with sample brochures some other towns are using regarding rental properties and lead paint. She said she didn't think it was necessary to pay to get them printed. The information could be processed by the Town Office staff.

Ordinance #308 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend Chapter 75 Building Construction of the Municipal Code of the Town of Ridgely” – President Gearhart said this requires sprinklers in new homes. Do not want to include renovations. President Gearhart made a motion to adopt Ord. #308 for new construction, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Passed unanimously.

Ordinance #309 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend the Town of Ridgely's FY 08 General Fund, Sewer Fund, and Water Fund Operating and Capital Improvement Projects Budget” – Joe said these amendments reflect the situation with MDE, the change in Highway User Revenue, and adjusts for Administrative Assistant.

President Gearhart said 2) under New Business concerns the loan; that should come first. **New Business** – 2) **Resolution R-2-08** – “A Resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely Declaring It to be the Commissioners Official Intent to Borrow A Sum Not to Exceed One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars for Phase One of the Upgrade to the Municipal Extended Waste Water Treatment Plant” – Commissioner Hunter had asked for definitive loan numbers.

Joe said the Town Attorney recommended doing it this way; after the resolution is adopted he can pursue grants/loans to get the best deal for the town. Everything we did up to 60 days before this and after this can be covered in this loan. Otherwise, we would not be able to recoup what has already been spent.

President Gearhart said this is committing the Commissioners to a \$1.5 million loan without having a road map.

Commissioner Hunter and Commissioner Epperly-Glover agreed that there has been a lot of discussion, and Commissioner Epperly-Glover said we know we have to do it.

President Gearhart said we need some numbers so that we know what we are committing too.

Kathy Schwab asked if this can be amended later.

Joe read Section 3. of the resolution as follows: “The Town Manager is hereby directed and authorized to enter into negotiations with potential sources for the borrowing and to report back to the Commissioners for their further consideration of the loan and the terms upon which it might be obtained.” Joe said we need an interim loan now. We are looking at MDE because their interest rate is 2% but funds would not be available until 2010.

President Gearhart said it should be in the DRRA as to how all this was going to work with them. It was written that we already had this capacity for them, but we don't have it. They have committed to a certain amount of money, but it's all in there in different sections, but things have changed.

Joe said Ridgely Park's commitment is for \$4.825 million. We will pay this loan from the present sources we have right now and the impact fees that we will now get in from present developers. That should take care of it for 2 years, and by then MDE should be onboard.

David Hege asked how much sewer bills will go up.

Commissioner Hunter said that's what this process is all about, we will know before any loan is approved. Now it looks like it won't effect town fees at all.

Joe said there is going to be a rate review this year.

Mr. Hege also asked if it was possible to get a line of credit.

Joe said that's a good point; then you only pay on what you borrow.

Commissioner Hunter said this developer is giving a lot to the town...

President Gearhart said it comes to a little over a million dollars more than what all developers would pay.

Commissioner Hunter made a motion to approve Resolution R-2-08, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. President Gearhart opposed. Motion passed.

Ordinance #309 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely to Amend the FY 08 Budget” – Commissioners agreed to defer until loan information is in.

Consideration of Appointment of Election Judges for Municipal Election/April 28, 2008

– Elsie Ebling, Linda Ross, and Arlene Hege were presented for appointment –

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to appoint as presented, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Unanimously approved.

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

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk