

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes September 8, 2008

The September Town Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00 pm. Chuck Hunter, President; Linda Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Kathy Smith, Commissioner; Joe Mangini, Town Manager; Merl Evans, Police Chief; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works (in late); David Crist, Supt. of Water/Wastewater; Joanne Stepp, Admin. Asst.; Dan Divilio, Times Record; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present.

A list of others in attendance is attached.

Call to Order – President Hunter called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence remembering 911.

President Hunter excused the Commissioners for a short Executive Session – 7 pm to 7:10 pm.

Joe asked that folks remember Chief Evans' family upon the passing of his mother-in-law.

Approval of the Minutes – Aug. 4, 2008 – Regular Meeting - President Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes of August 4 as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported August bank balances as follows: General Funds - \$49,761.80, Sewer Funds - \$33,970.23, and Water Fund - \$15,939.25.

A list of bills was previously presented to the Commissioners for payment approval.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported their meeting with DJJ may have had some impact; they called in regard to a problem juvenile and advised that they would place her if our police had any further incidents. This was not requested by this department.

There was a large theft of metal shelf standards from Medifast. It was reported on August 18 and arrests were made on Aug. 28 at Schultz Salvage. 240 of the stolen items were recovered – total theft was around \$36,000.

There were a couple of drug related assaults resulting in the victims refusing to identify the offenders. Drug deals gone bad – suspects from School St. area.

There were 10 adult arrests, 3 juvenile arrests, 99 traffic warnings, 17 traffic citations, and 129 foot patrol hours.

Ridgely PD participated in a DUI check point with MSP and CCSD on Aug. 29 in the Marydel area.

Commissioner Smith asked where the police do their foot patrol.

Chief Evans said the businesses, the park, different areas of town.

John Balderson commended the Police Dept. on Medifast's behalf for a job well done – 10 days from report to arrests.

Public Works Report – David reported there were 16 loads of brush (2 days to pick up). Still working on elevating trees and cleaning streets. Seward Rd. has been paved.

70 water disconnect notices were hung – 11 were turned off.

Lister Est. and Ridgeway Est. have been paved.

They are getting some prices on paving streets: 1) First St. from Caroline to Park, 2) Second St. from Central Ave. to Md., and 3) Second St. from Caroline to Sunset.

There will be a pre-construction meeting for the WWTP Upgrade on Sept. 18.

Commissioner Smith questioned the timing of the tree trimming.

David said he is not a tree expert, but has always trimmed trees from July on because there is no more re-growth.

Water/Sewer Report – David reported there is 130 days holding capacity in the lagoons.

They discharged 20 out of 31 days in August.

The CCR report is on the town website and was published in the newspaper. The certification form was sent to MDE.

The new pull behind mowers are in service and working well.

The emergency pull behind generator has been placed at the water tower site; hard wired.

The Bell St. pump station had to be reprogrammed and put back into service.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – 1) EDC will be meeting Wed. night at 6:30 pm.

2) Ethics Commission has not met but they need to call a meeting because reports have to be filed in January. There are a few issues to be discussed.

3) Parks & Rec. – Joe reported they discussed the Carriage House, the work on the Telephone Building, a proposed grant for the railroad station, the concert, and activities at the Cow Barn field.

4) Rails to Trails – No meeting - Joe said the sublease with DNR should be scheduled for Board of Public Works approval in the next 60 days. Our package is just about ready to go to bid but will need DNR approval. The biggest holdup may be MDOT taking up the rails.

5) Planning/Zoning – Martin Sokolich said they met on Aug. 27 (packed house). The biggest part of the meeting was the Cyberridge Amusement Center proposed for the old New Roads building. Alexander Brodie came with his attorney. There were a lot of concerns from the community. Age and content were the main concerns; separation, carding of customers, etc. A letter was read into the record regarding concerns about the effect of games and caffeine beverages. Some people were supportive, some were not too keen on the location (concerned about the potential for loitering, illegal activity, noise, traffic safety on Bell St., etc.)

At the meeting, the applicant verbally made some changes to some things that he had said prior, including limiting access to the energy drinks, reducing the number of players for leagues, staff present, statement regarding not responsible for what happens in the parking lot during business hours.

It was agreed that they would come back with a written proposal for the handling of issues.

They formally approved a day care at Robin's Court, approved a building permit for 109 Maple Ave. to allow for an enclosed porch at the back of the house, and approved a Subway sign. There was also some discussion on the proposed privacy fence between the cemetery and the building.

Joe said he and the Chief went down and looked at the fence situation.

Joe also said Mr. Carroll has been to a lot of meetings concerning issues with the Cow Barn property. The Town's planner has come up with a façade easement. This has been forwarded to the Town's attorney for review.

Mr. Carroll asked for assistance from the Commissioners to get this resolved. He has been meeting with the Planning Commission since April. This is tying up the owner of the property.

Commissioner Smith asked Martin to explain what the holdup is.

Martin said when the property originally came to the Planning Commission the proposal was to develop the vacant part of the property with some townhomes. They reserved the Cow Barn itself as open space to allow for the density (which was not allowed at that time). It was thought that perhaps the town could take over the Cow Barn and renovate it for some kind of public use facility. The project has been held up for several reasons unrelated to P & Z, such as water and sewer. In the meantime, Mr. Carroll has looked at the arrangements made then, and would like to separate the development of the townhouses and what happens to the Cow Barn.

Joe said there are going to be Smart Growth Listening Sessions and the one for our area is to be held Sept. 17 at 6:30 pm at Queen Anne Co. High School in Centreville.

6) Ridgely Historical Society – Janice White reported they met on Sept. 4. They discussed the Christmas Open House – decorations and in house traffic control.

The Christmas ornament this year will be Rev. Greenbury Ridgely.

The Cow Barn Event is the main thing now. It will be Sept. 20 from 11 to 3:00.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reported he is waiting to hear back from the county as to when they can meet on the Tech Park sewer allocation. DEBD has written a letter to try to get this issue resolved.

The only development project that is actually moving is Ridgeway Estates. The developer is trying to get something done with the carriage house.

Joe reported he will be meeting with Ridgely Park folks this week.

Joe reported he sent a letter to Blades Construction in Pocomoke regarding the Municipal Public Safety Facility. Need a schematic design and some idea of the cost involved.

Joe reported there has been no word yet from DBED regarding the Revolving Loan Fund. The Coastal Communities Grant folks have been in touch for contact persons.

Joe reported that Chuck Krockner is present regarding some issues with Lister Estates.

There are 26 units in Phase I and 63 in Phase II. The Bell St. pump station could not handle Phase II so the developer was going to put in a new pump station. The town requested extra capacity for 286 units. The cost to the town at that time was \$122,000.

(This was before Joe came to town.) When he came onboard the preliminary plans for the construction of the Tech Park were presented, and the plans indicated the main sewer line was going to come down Md. 312 and into our lagoon. After some town discussion, they went to the county and suggested coming down Hog Lot and Seward and going into the Bell St. pump station. Everyone was in favor of that. The agreement with the developer was the extra cost to bring in the Tech Park would be added. A letter was sent to the town on Aug. 18 – total reimbursement was \$226,000. The letter was forwarded to

URS (town's engineers) for input, and it was reviewed by town staff. The additional cost to the developer at that time appeared to be \$32,190. At some point, the original \$122,000 was increased to \$125,000. Total reimbursement to the developer was \$157,190.

There were town costs involved in reviewing the developer's plans, which were to be reimbursed to the town. These costs were deducted. There has been a disagreement with Mr. Krockner since then.

Joe reported the town received a check from Caroline Co. for \$171,200. That was a payment for the allocation of 9,000 gpd (36 units). According to his calculations, between what we paid the developer and what he initially asked for, there is a difference of \$68,813.75.

This needs to get resolved.

Mr. Krockner said he doesn't understand why this hasn't been resolved. He and Mr. Pilli met with the town's engineers and the town commissioners in November.

Commissioner Smith said she has not been involved in this, and they just got paperwork tonight before the meeting. Can't make a decision tonight.

President Hunter said they will have to review this at the work session.

Mr. Carroll asked if the Town Manager and the Commissioners could discuss the possibility of getting a copy of the easement to the Planning Commission.

Grant and Project Report – Joanne reported that the Carriage House grant that JOK Walsh had applied for was disapproved. He suggested some alternatives which have been presented to the commissioners for review. 1) move the building now, and apply for grants later. The cost to move the building to the ballfield is \$18,000. The developer had agreed to pay \$8,000 up front to move it to the ballfield (costing the town \$10,000). It may cost more to move it to the railroad park area and the developer is not obligated for that move; it would just come out of the \$500. park fee per house.

Commissioner Smith said she had spoken with both developers and they both really wanted to save this building. She was appalled that the town did not do better to try to save this building. There are no plans for the caboose (and it is not part of the town's history). The Carriage House is part of the town's history. The developer was willing to give us an extra 30 days to move it. It should be saved.

Joanne went on to say JOK's alternative 2) move the building to a temporary location for \$8,000 and then to its permanent location later (cost to move not covered by grants), 3) we would have to get grants to fix the building. The Md. Historical Trust Grant likes to see a match from the town (but does not require it in all cases). This would not be available until July, 2009. We would still need a \$20,000 grant for building repairs plus inside renovations. Need to decide what the use would be for this building, what would be needed to make it happen, how likely is it that it would draw people to the town, where would the town move it, does the town own the property, what it would cost to renovate it and maintain it, is the town going to be able to afford renovation and maintenance of another building, etc. Can the town get grants, and if so, afford at least a 25% match?

Commissioner Smith asked if we had that information on the caboose and the telephone building. What about the Cow Barn?

Joe said all of these projects require town funds in the absence of grants. He said he didn't think anyone was really opposed to saving the Carriage House. If the Commissioners are in agreement that they want to save it, it would require at least \$10,000 from the General Fund.

President Hunter asked Joanne if she could contact JOK's guy and see what it would cost to move it (in writing) to the ballfield.

Rev. Cheek said Caroline County has a great history of sports and there is not a museum in the county anywhere. That seems like a good use.

After some more discussion, Joe said, if this is what the Commissioners want, we need to get the commitment to move it to the ballfield and pursue grants to renovate it.

Joanne talked about the "Concert in the Park" and thanked all the sponsors and all those who helped with food, tent, stage, etc. She has checked with the Caroline County Arts Council to see how we can get more grant money to have a series of concerts next year. Could probably get \$2,000-\$2,500 before July for two events, etc. Need to submit soon.

Martin Sutton Park Grant – Five bids were received for the gazebo construction.

Telephone Building Grant – The Caroline County Historical Society is working on the building. They expect to have the exterior completed in early October.

Electricity to the building seems to have been overlooked. The building needs to be rewired.

May have to ask for a grant extension since Mr. Wilson will not have a class until the spring of 2009 to do the research for the display inside.

2010 Community Parks and Playground Grant – Application was submitted for \$100,000 with a town match of \$25,000 for renovation of the Railroad Station. Should hear in April, 2009 whether it was approved or not.

Joanne reported she is getting started on State Highways Sidewalk Grant. Application is due in February, 2009.

She will be attending the EDC meeting this week to talk about an open house at Town Hall to discuss forming a Ridgely Business Owner's Organization to put us in a more favorable position to get economic development and revitalization grants.

Bell Street Sign – Joanne reported on a sign for the corner of Central and Bell to list the businesses on Bell St. Will bring this up at the EDC meeting because we may want to have other like signs pointing to other business areas in Ridgely.

New Business – a) Approval of Contract for Additional Engineering Services from URS/MDE Loan – Joe said he wants to make sure all the t's are crossed and i's are dotted. He has been informed that there is some high level interest in our project. He has asked URS to be more involved because of this. The cost would be \$5,000 to do this.

Nancy asked if MDE was going to come in and survey water/sewer rates.

Joe said the interest on our loan, if we get it, would be less than 3%. Sure they will look at the rates, but doubts we will have to raise rates because of the planned reimbursement by the developer.

President Hunter said this should be discussed at the Work Session, when everyone has had a chance to review it.

b) Ordinance No. 314 “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely Establishing A Local Economic Revolving Loan Fund” (Adoption) – Joe read a portion of the proposed ordinance.

President Hunter stated that this is currently a resolution. The town attorney recommended that it be changed to an ordinance to make it more binding.

President Hunter made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

c) Consideration of Approval of a EDC Local Revolving Loan of \$15,000 to Subrena Mason (Kiddie Castle Learning Center) to assist in Start-up Costs for a Day Care Facility in the Town of Ridgely – Joe reported EDC has recommended approval of this. They have gone through the documentation, she has provided all of the paperwork. The loan would be for 5 years, a line of credit at 3%. The initial payments would be interest only for 3 months. There is a 1% filing fee, and all legal costs will be borne by the applicant. Nancy questioned Board of Appeals approval for a Day Care.

Joe said it is not necessary. Ordinance 242 permits it.

President Hunter made a motion to approve this loan, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

d) Ordinance No. 315 – “An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely Amending the Town of Ridgely’s Zoning Ordinance” (Introduction)

Joe explained that we have an airport/industrial zone that was created in Section 29.

Unfortunately, in the list of requirements a minimum front yard setback was not inserted. There is a 100 ft. minimum setback. It needs to say front yard. Zoning changes need to be in the form of an ordinance.

e) Consideration of Award for the Martin Sutton Park Bandstand/Gazebo Project –

Joanne reported that they decided to go for a larger gazebo than originally planned. It will be 24’ x 16’. Thought it would give a band more room, and could also be used for other things. We have \$20,000 - \$15,000 is grant/\$5,000 is town’ match. The grant was originally for a gazebo, bike racks, benches, and picnic tables. She called to check to see if the gazebo came in higher the grant could be used for that, and they said yes. She said the lowest bid was \$20,112.31. She received bids with some different options, so she had to call all the bidders and make them all equal.

President Hunter made a motion to accept the low bid by Woods Carpentry, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

f) Resolution R-08-08 – “A Resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely Establishing a Line of Credit not to exceed One Hundred Thousand Dollars To Finance Municipal Street Work for FY09” – Joe reported this was approved in the budget. He recommended refinancing the original loan. Joe read the proposed resolution.

President Hunter made a motion to approve Resolution R-08-08, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously approved.

Nancy questioned this loan.

Robin said the funds will be used to pay for Walnut St. They originally planned to buy some equipment, but that went away. Portions of some other streets in town are to be fixed.

Leo Stepp asked if the portion of Walnut St. that was not paved is on the list to be done. Robin reported, not currently. There are some other streets that, in his opinion, are in worse condition than that. He said the Commissioners can look at what he is suggesting, and change that.

Joe suggested that Robin get a quote for Walnut and see what it is.

Public Comments – Comments from concerned parents/residents regarding unsupervised kids, out all hours of the night. They said a curfew is needed. There has been vandalism at the post office, in the park, etc.

Joe said curfews are not legal.

She reported there are teenagers illegally smoking, etc.

She said she didn't think the town police are as active as they were when they moved to town.

President Hunter said they can leave their names and the Chief will be contacted about this.

Joe asked that they call him tomorrow to set up a time for him to meet with them.

Kelly Callahan – Caroline Center – questioned water and sewer extension for some small lots on Wayman St. They are thinking about possibly adding a home some day for some of their clients. She asked if there was a future plan to add any of that; if not, what would be the process to appeal to them to connect from the Caroline Center.

Joe said there have been some discussions between the town and the county on the possible annexation of the whole area. From his own standpoint, usually a town will not extend water and sewer unless the area comes into the town through annexation. There are no plans for over there at the current time. He said she could write a letter to the town, but should also talk with the county.

President Hunter said Ridgely is scratching for every gallon of allocation we can get.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk

