

Commissioners of Ridgely

Minutes October 6, 2008

The October 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; David Crist, Supt. of Water/Sewer; Joanne Stepp, Admin. Asst.; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present. Tommy Rampmeyer, Town Historian, was also present.

A list of others in attendance is attached.

Call to Order - President Hunter opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our military.

President Hunter said Fire Chief, Bob Utz, is out on a call.

Tommy Rampmeyer said this will be the 8th edition of his history book. He said Medifast will print it for \$9.75/copy (a little higher than last year). Last year they were sold for \$10.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to order 275 books, seconded by Commissioner Smith. Unanimously passed.

Approval of the Minutes – President Hunter made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Sept. 8 and the special meeting of Sept. 22 as written, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Unanimously passed.

Treasurer's Report – September, 2008 - Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$52,446.63, Sewer Fund - \$30,005.69, and Water Fund - \$11,971.33.

Police Report – Chief Evans reported that they are losing an officer to the Sheriff's Office as of the 8th. He has an applicant that is certified and worked here before. He left for the pension. He has been working Cambridge and now wants to return.

Greensboro had an armed robbery at the pharmacy which was drug related. With the economy the way it is, they have seen an increase of thefts all over the county.

The Chief went on to report there was a stabbing in the Henderson area and the suspect was headed toward Greensboro with no Greensboro officers working. Officer Creason was requested to assist. An arrest was made and he happened to be one of our residents. In September there were 13 adult arrests, 2 juveniles, 2 drug, 1 DUI, 14 traffic, and 68 warnings.

Chief Evans reported the 2008/2009 Md. Highway Safety Office grant has been funded again for Caroline County. There was very little change in the amount from last year. Halloween is Friday, October 31. Trick or Treat will be from 6 pm to 8 pm.

The Lions Club will have their Halloween Party at the firehouse.

President Hunter reported that Wednesday he was in the area of Subway and witnessed 2 county police cars about 3:20 pm running through town at an excessive rate of speed. He called it in but heard nothing back.

Someone asked if the police duty phone was still working. Calls got no answer.

The Chief assured him it is working, but recommended they call the Sheriff's Office for dispatch.

Commissioner Smith questioned curfew.

The Chief said you have to meet stats to impose a curfew, and we don't. You have to meet the federal guidelines.

Public Works – Robin reported on maintenance activities. They finished elevating trees and cleaned some curbs.

The Ridgely House was tested for mold; it's okay.

Robin reviewed various meetings he had attended concerning Tech Park, WWTP Upgrade, gazebo, etc. Working with the county on taking over Seward, Hog Lot, and Race Track Roads.

Robin reported that an ad went to the newspaper for street work. The street sections he is looking at are 2nd St. between Caroline and Sunset, 2nd St. between Central and Md., First between Park and Caroline, Oak St., and Elm Ct. (behind Foster's).

A question came up about Walnut St. and he had that looked at. Bramble said don't do anything to it now. In 3 to 5 years it will have to be completely reworked.

Leo Stepp said Lister residents have been asking when this street would be fixed. It has been like this since they moved in and they were told it would be fixed.

The Commissioners have to decide which to do.

Nancy suggested putting a notice on the web site when the town is doing tree elevations; property owners could hire their own tree people.

Water/Sewer – David reported we currently have 127 days of holding capacity in the lagoons. He discharged 14 out of 30 days in September.

David reported there was a permit violation last month of TSS. It was caused by algae in the lagoons. This happens every year.

David reported on issues with pump #2 at Bell St. Pump Station.

A generator has been installed at well #3.

Other Board/Commission/Committee Reports – EDC – John reported that they are back after taking the summer off. They talked about the new Subway; Red Brick Pizza and Queenstown Bank to come. He said the town was turned down for a grant because there was not a Business Assoc. in town. EDC will use the November meeting to host a Business After Hours function, inviting local businesses, and John Nussear of Caroline Co. Chamber of Commerce and the president of Greensboro Business Assoc. to try to get a business association going. There will be an EDC meeting Wednesday night.

Joe reported that he talked to some folks at DBED about our \$50,000 grant that was initially approved by staff, and then held up by the Secretary. He is going to call the Secretary and see if he can get that money. We are issuing a loan for the day care and that reduces our local fund to \$10,000.

Parks/Recreation – Joe reported they discussed the Carriage House. They also talked about funding for the Cow Barn Park with George Jamar. Ridgely Park is to help with this but isn't here yet. Will have to regroup due to the financial situation.

Planning/Zoning – Martin Sokolich reported that they are still working with Mr. Carroll on the Cow Barn to preserve the exterior of that building. They are just about 90% there. Shane Johnston is working on it.

Cyberbridge – The owners/operators were not at the last meeting, but the town attorney and their attorney provided a list of rules, etc. which addressed a lot of the citizens' concerns. About 80% there.

Airport/Tech Park – There is a front setback issue.

They gave final approval for the Kiddie Kastle Learning Center, approved 2 sign permits, had a discussion with a gentleman from Lister Lane about a “paper street”. Wanted to buy property from the town. It is owned by the HOA of Lister Estates. It is the opinion of our attorney that there would need to be an agreement with every resident of the development that they would collectively sell it.

Leo said that parcel is owned by DNG.

Martin said there was some discussion on Ord. #242 (allows flexible use in the area where the old New Roads building is). Discussion as to whether it should be left open or changed.

Commissioner Smith questioned the Day Care not being approved by the Board of Appeals.

Martin said the legislation was not written very clearly. It could be interpreted either way. They heard a Board of Appeals approval was given for a day care where the Fish Locker is now; some people took that to mean it was an acceptable use in an industrial zone.

Joe said Ord. #242 amended our Zoning Ordinance. The problem with it is they took all the uses in the town and put them in I-1. That's why it has been recommended that 242 be repealed.

Rails to Trails – Joe reported there was no meeting – Still waiting to hear from the Board of Public Works. Have some changes from DNR, still talking with Cindy Todd about when this can go out for bid. JOK Walsh has expressed interest in saving the rails.

Historical Society – Nancy said the Cow Barn Event went well.

Want to assist with Christmas Open House. Requested list of items needed.

Joe said they requested the town pay for the portapottie used for the Cow Barn Event.

Tree Commission – Leo Stepp said they are applying for a grant for about 35 trees to be planted around town next spring.

Town Manager's Report – Joe reported per Capacity Management Plan there is 37,933 gals. remaining. Today he signed the Notice to Proceed for the WWTP Upgrade – Phase I. This is to be completed within the next six months. The electric needs to be changed out to the plant. Choptank Electric needs to do that at a cost of \$142,400. This is part of the cost included in the project.

Sewer allocation issue for Tech Park – Under an agreement the town signed with the county in 2004, the town agreed to provide water and sewer to the Tech Park. The State is requesting that the town hold 36,000 gals. of sewer allocation for that future use. This would be held in Phase II of the upgrade process. That letter needs to be signed.

Municipal Capital Projects – Should hear something soon about the wetlands issue regarding the water storage tank.

Joe said we should hold off a little while on the Revitalization Strategic Plan since that is a one to one match.

2008 Coastal Communities Grant was approved.

Other Pending Issues – Joe said there may very well be more money owed for the Bell Street Pumping Station. He is working on those figures and should have something by the end of the week.

Grant and Project Report – [Copy of report attached to these minutes.](#)

Joanne said JOK Walsh had someone from the Md. Historical Trust look at the Carriage House and had hoped for a grant. They called late this afternoon and said funding was not available.

Joe said he and Joanne met with Rural Development. They went over some programs they have. Most of their grants are a 45% match. There are two major programs for economic development that they are anxious for us to get involved in. They are grant funding/loan funding for individual businesses through the town's EDC.

Joe is very interested the program for special grant assistance for economic development specialist.

Someone asked if the caboose was going to get cleaned up or moved out or something.

Joe said there was some discussion in the Lions Club about taking that on. The Ridgely Park project was going to fund a considerable sum for these projects. Will have to look at some funding sources.

Jan McQuade asked about the funding progress for the Town Clock.

Nancy said not sure how much has been raised to date; all the events/programs the Historical Society is doing is to fund the clock.

Commissioner Smith said she wants to see the Ridgely and Caroline County Historic Societies involved in the renovation of the Train Station.

Commissioner Smith and Nancy said the Telephone Building was not intended to be modernized (interior drywall, etc.).

Joanne said that was her recommendation, it is up to the Commissioners what is done.

Nancy said could get donated time to put electric in, etc.

Joe said JOK Walsh questioned the lights, etc. (not in the plan). He said the county could do the inside too.

President Hunter asked where the guidelines for these buildings come from; paint colors, etc.

Butch Martin said the Boy Scouts use the Train Station for meetings now. If it gets renovated, will they no longer be allowed to use it.

Commissioner Smith said the outside of the building needs to look like a train station.

President Hunter read a letter from Mike's Custom Homes concerning the Carriage House into the record. [Copy attached](#)

Commissioner Smith said, according to the Public Works Agreement he doesn't have that option.

Some more discussion on the Carriage House. Nancy said the developer is still willing to pay the moving cost. It will have to stay on that side of Central Ave. Maybe the folks that are opposed to putting it at 104 Walnut could find another place to store it for 2 years.

Old Business – a) Ordinance No. 315 – An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely Amending the Town of Ridgely’s Zoning Code (deferred) Requires Public Hearing. This is the one Martin was talking about – striking out the 100 ft. minimum front setback. It is being held over because of Ord. No. 242. There will be a Public Hearing at 7:00 on Nov. 3 on both ordinances.

New Business – a) Re-Appointment of Herman Dunst to the Ridgely Ethics Commission for a three (3) year term – President Hunter asked if Mr. Dunst wants to be re-appointed. Joe said he does.

Commissioner Smith asked about other people.

This will be held over for another month.

b) Ordinance No. 316 – An Ordinance of the Commissioners of Ridgely Amending the Town of Ridgely’s Zoning Ordinance (introduction) Joe said this is No. 242 repealed.

c) Consideration of Award for the Town of Ridgely’s FY 09 Municipal Street Work Program – Robin reported there are two bids, Delmarva Paving and David A. Bramble. He said Bramble came in cheaper and there is more work involved. Robin’s priority order is as follows: 1) First St. – Park to Caroline, (first three streets will be reclaimed – paving ground up and reused like Third St.), 2) Second St. – Caroline to Sunset, 3) Second St. – Md. to Central, 4) Oak St., and 5) Elm Ct.

Dale said originally when street work was done, curb and gutter was installed, and half of the cost of the curb and gutter was borne by the property owner. What has changed, and why do some residents have to pay and others not.

Robin said this town is flat and there is no stormwater system. Guttering has created problems in some places, like Md. Ave. Some of the side streets that have been done over the years funnel to Md. Ave. and it all winds up at Connolly’s.

Joe said the policy of this administration is that curb and gutter is part of street work, and shouldn’t be paid by property owners. He has recommended that this be changed.

Dale asked how they go about requesting their \$1200 back.

President Hunter told him to write a letter.

Joe said Bramble’s quote is \$57,600. This work is to be done this year.

President Hunter make a motion to accept Bramble’s bid and the priority list given by Robin, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. President Hunter asked for discussion – there was none. Commissioner Smith opposed. Motion passed.

Robin asked if anyone had any suggestions for town sign replacements. The names that are there have been there for quite a while.

Commissioner Smith said she is concerned about the budget. She suggested getting a Budget Committee together to look at our budget. She is concerned about the finances. She doesn’t oppose having a road done, but thinks they should sit down before spending any money (borrowed money). The WWTP project was to be paid for by a developer.

She has not seen an updated DRRRA guaranteeing he is coming at all. You only have to watch the news one hour a week to know that the economy is in dire straits. We're still spending like there is no tomorrow.

Commissioner Smith said our town is in a deficit, we've been in a deficit, and there are no plans to fix it. She said the State Audit Dept. report shows out of 190 towns in Md. there were 3 written up for deficits and Ridgely was one of them. She said we need to have a serious meeting about this.

Joe said the deficit is reported through an audit. There is a deficit in the General Fund because he recommended dropping the trash fee. If we still had it, there wouldn't be a deficit. He also recommended to the Commissioners to reduce property taxes, another \$25,000 to \$30,000. He takes responsibility for that. The Legislative Auditor wants to know how the deficit will be corrected. These are possibilities.

Joe said a couple of years ago we purchased vehicles outright. That cut down surplus/reserves. We should have taken out loans. Our auditor has said we need to put back the trash fee.

Joe said in July, 2007 things looked good; Ridgely Park was ready to come. That didn't happen. In 2010 he thinks it will turn around, but it is going to be tough for a while.

Dale said there was a time in the 1980s when the State impounded funds. We need to impound our own money now. He would rather see overtime cut now to save jobs in March. Need to act now.

Commissioner Smith said there are other things we can do than adding charges back. We have a police officer leaving; maybe we don't replace that position right now.

She checked with MML and we don't have to have the Clerk sitting at meetings, they can record and she can type up; or come in late the next day.

President Hunter talked about the Landfill meeting. The permits were not approved yet. Now the main entrance will be on River Road. Some folks in the area were concerned about water issues.

Nancy said those meetings should be publicized at our Town Meetings and on our web site.

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

Nancy suggested making a list of ways to save money and prioritize at budget meeting on Oct. 20.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk