

**Commissioners of Ridgely
Town Meeting
June 7, 2010**

The June Town Meeting was held in the Ridgely House on the above date at 7:00 pm. Linda Jo Epperly-Glover, Commissioner; Anthony Casey, Commissioner; Jack Hall, Town Attorney; Robin Eaton, Director of Public Works; Stephanie Berkey, Asst. Clerk-Treasurer; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present.

The following persons were also present: Joanne Stepp, Leo Stepp, Cathy Schwab, Rick Schwab, Anne Ogletree, Archie Carroll, Dave Walls, and Dan Divilio – Times Record.

Opening- Commissioner Epperly-Glover opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for our fallen heroes, and those who are still serving to include police and firefighters.

Minutes – April 5, May 3, and Closed Session of May 17 – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Casey.

Reappointment of Clerk-Treasurer – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to reappoint Carol Balderson as Clerk-Treasurer, seconded by Commissioner Casey. This annual appointment was missed in May.

Treasurer's Report – Clerk reported a General Fund balance of \$145,973.85, Sewer Fund - \$16,992.83, and Water Fund - \$1,595.99 at the end of May. Will be moving about \$12,000 from the General Fund to the Water and Sewer Funds this month.

Bills were presented for payment approval. A copy of the check register was provided because formal payment approval was not given previously.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to pay bills as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Casey.

Historic Society – Cathy Schwab reported they held their annual meeting and she is now president. They have not heard anything yet on the grant the county applied for (\$350,000) for the train station renovation. A \$30,000 grant was approved by Dept. of Transportation for tables, benches, etc. Hoping to be able to obtain the funds up front. Rick Schwab contacted the folks who donated the caboos and was able to obtain some paperwork showing ownership.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover asked if there were any comments or questions on the departmental written reports. She commended Public Works for making the town look so nice for the Strawberry Festival.

Dave Walls asked about getting the ditch on Sunset Blvd. cleaned out.

Robin will provide contact information for Anthony to call.

Status of 2010 Budget – Clerk reported that an update at the end of March looks good. Income tax revenue is coming in slow. There is \$18,000 in the works now – should be arriving soon.

Jerry agreed that the expenses look like they are in line and we hope to end the year in the black. Water/sewer funds are being set aside for MDE payments on loan.

Old Business – Cow Barn Easement – Archie Carroll said they have spent about \$45,000. A lot of money has been spent for the façade easement, and they have attended Planning Commission meetings and Town meetings, etc.

Attorney Anne Ogletree said they attended a meeting about a year ago and they expressed interest in doing whatever they could to move the Cow Barn Project forward. At that time Mr. Hall suggested they draft some regulations, with regard to the overlay district, which she did. They came to the Planning Commission meeting in July. Mr. Hall had not had an opportunity to review it and the Planning Commission had nothing from him. When they came in August, the same thing. When they attended in September the Comprehensive Plan was being finalized. At that time Mr. Hall suggested some language, which they agreed to, that would permit in the new Comprehensive Plan the Cow Barn Overlay District. She reviewed the Façade Easement and suggested some changes. In March of this year, she received a letter from Mr. Hall regarding some of the changes. This is not moving. She said she needs clear direction as to what is needed from her to move it forward.

Mr. Hall said the Façade Easement was approved last September, but was not signed at that time. Diane came across it when she came in December. Three changes were made and it was sent to Ms. Ogletree for Mr. Carroll's signature. He said he received her revisions today. He was not able to reach her. He said an enabling ordinance was passed. In order to implement an overlay zone another ordinance is needed setting forth a plan of how this is to work. It has to be done in a way that does not violate Md. Zoning Law that prohibits spot zoning.

Mr. Hall and Ms. Ogletree will talk about it tomorrow to decide what is needed, and try to get the project moving.

Martin Sokolich said it is listed as a redevelopment district now; it is not spot zoning. The Planning Commission is starting to meet to start looking at changes in the Zoning Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan issues, and the permitting process comes after that. This does not have to be done in a big piece, it can be done in increments.

Mr. Hall said some Zoning Ordinance changes would alleviate some of his concerns. Business License Extension – Commissioner Casey said they were going to vote on this tonight but are going to wait until President Mumford is here next month.

Dave Walls said if you're going to do it every business in town needs to be included.

P & Z Replacement – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to appoint Leo Stepp to serve on the Planning Commission, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Passed.

Charter – Commissioner Epperly-Glover said there has been a meeting of the Charter Review Committee. Some folks wanted a side by side comparison but the attorney wanted at least \$10,000 to do that. The committee wants to look at the existing Charter and take out things that are illegal; want to fix what we have.

Diane got a newer copy from the state – 2008 version.

Cathy Schwab asked if they had any suggestions for changes if they could submit them for committee review.

New Business – Health Insurance – Stephanie said we have decided to stay with Avery Hall as our insurance broker. We are looking for a change in the type of coverage because we currently have Blue Choice HMO and the premiums are going up considerably for the town, and the employees, to keep it. Since the employees have not

had raises in quite some time we are looking for other options. Coventry has an option that is a PPO with a \$1500 for individual and \$3000 for family deductible. Even if everyone uses all of the deductible with the Town paying it, there will still be considerable savings (\$17000+) over the current plan. If all of the deductible is not used, that is more savings for the Town. She asked that the commissioners vote on it tonight so we can get it started.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion to accept the Coventry PPO, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Approved.

TGM Group – Commissioner Epperly-Glover made a motion authorizing President Mumford to sign the 2010 audit letter, seconded by Commissioner Casey. Passed.

Vacancy P & Z – Commissioner Casey made a motion to appoint Robin Eaton as Zoning Administrator, seconded by Commissioner Epperly-Glover. Passed.

WARF (water/wastewater allocations) – It was decided to hold until a later date.

Urban Renewal – Jack Hall said this relates to the only way a town could take a blighted house. It was in our property maintenance code how to repair a house that was decrepit. We don't have anything in there to acquire a house that is an eyesore if it is structurally sound. We got the State to pass a law which stated Ridgely had urban renewal for one property. That was all there was. He has proposed a new section in the Charter to deal with this.

Vehicle Bids – The Commissioners opened the bids and Commissioner Casey read the high bids as follows: Purnell Shortall – Lumina - \$300, and ambulance - \$3,000; and Bob Shearer – Jeep - \$1,550. Bids will be given to Chief Foster tomorrow and he can handle.

Town Administrator Report – Diane reported that she is still working on finding funding for the Fire Station. Has 2 small grants lined up to total about \$30,000. Have found a very low cost loan through the Md. State Firemen's Assoc. at 2%, better than USDA at 4%.

Diane said she would like to submit an application to USDA Rural Dev. for a Section 533 Grant for repairing low income homeowner's houses similar to the program she had with CDBG. This can be transacted by the Town. We do not have to go through the County. There is a percentage allowed for Administration but the lower the percentage, the better your points. It is a very competitive application due June 28th.

Diane reported that she and Cary were supposed to go to a training for EPA certification. She is in contact with the sponsors. She had Lead Paint Supervisor certification and wants to keep up on those for any Housing Rehab project.

Diane went on to say that she has had a lot of trouble getting bids for the work on the Energy Grant items. She received one written bid on the doors and one written, one oral on the furnace energy saver. She has also been considering insulation because there is none in the building. It would be very easy to put insulation in the top floor. She has been in contact with the funders and they are sending a rep to perform an Energy Audit very soon.

Diane expressed her concern about the Postal Service closing part of the Easton service and reminded everyone that there will be a meeting on June 15 at the Easton High School from 6 to 8:00 pm. Encouraged attendance or correspondence.

Diane said she recently put a packet in the Commissioners' boxes concerning the Carriage House. It belongs to the Town but is sitting on private land which is in the County. The County has given Ms. Dorr until June 26 to solve the problem of the building sitting there without a building permit or zoning certificate. For a short term solution, should we offer to pay for a permit and then get the building moved as soon as possible?

Commissioner Epperly-Glover and Robin agreed that it was agreed when this was done there were to be no Town funds spent.

The Schwabs said it was not given to the Historical Society.

Diane will talk with JOK Walsh.

Cathy Schwab said Betty Ballas's group came in town and planted some flowers and trimmed some roses. They did a very good job.

Commissioner Epperly-Glover asked Diane to write a thank you letter.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson
Clerk