

Commissioners of Ridgely
Minutes
August 2, 2010

The August Town Meeting was held at 7:00 pm in the Ridgely House on the above date. Dale Mumford, President; Anthony Casey, Commissioner; Diane Wojcik, Town Administrator; Gary Foster, Police Chief; and Carol Balderson, Town Clerk; were present.

The following folks were also present: Dan Divilio – Times Record, Joanne Stepp, Lee Stepp, Joanne Shipley, Mike Redgraves, Archie Carroll, Rick Schwab, Cathy Schwab, Jerry Sutton, and Martin Sokolich.

Opening – President Mumford opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Public Comments – Bicycle Ord. #335 – President Mumford read “It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to operate or ride upon any bicycle or other vehicle propelled by motor or foot-propelled upon any sidewalks within the Commercial District limits of the Town of Ridgely”. This is the block between Railroad and First St.

No objections.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to accept the rewording of the bicycle ordinance, seconded by President Mumford. Passed.

Water/Sewer Reservation Allocation Fees – Ord. #336 – President Mumford explained that this ordinance amends Chapter 185 (Water and Sewer Rates and Charges) by re-codifying and combining. He read, “A water reservation allocation fee shall be due and payable by the owner or owners of each separate buildable lot (as defined by the Ridgely Zoning Ordinance) which is not connected to the Ridgely municipal water system, as follows: 1.) The fee will be \$2.50 per gallon of water reserved, payment of which shall reserve the water allocation for three years after any such lot has been initially created by subdivision. Thereafter, such fee will be payable annually on the basis of \$1.00 per gallon of water allocation (a minimum of \$250. annually for each residential lot). 2.) The Town may refuse to grant renewal of such allocation unless capacity for such allocation exists under the Town’s Water Capacity Management Plan. 3.) The initial fee is due to be paid prior to, and as a condition of, final subdivision approval by the Ridgely Planning Commission. Thereafter, the fee shall be due and payable, and collectible in the same manner, as annual real estate taxes.”

The same applies to sewer. This is an unoccupied lot.

Archie Carroll asked how that is different from what the Town already has?

President Mumford said the purpose is so that buildable lots don’t just sit and tie up the allocations.

Some discussion about multiple lot properties. Agreed that this would be “buildable” lots, not cases where multiple lots are on one deed.

Joanne Stepp asked if this applies to properties where there is a house that has been there, unoccupied, not hooked up, for a long period of time.

President Mumford said unoccupied homes are a separate issue. This is for currently unconnected properties.

Commissioner Casey said he would like to hold this until the next meeting to clear up some of these issues.

Archie Carroll asked if the ordinance said anything about his situation, where the sewer and water is not available.

Not addressed.

Joanne Stepp said if you're going to have people with buildable lots paying \$250/yr. for water and sewer, what about the existing houses?

Commissioner Casey said there are minimums on the houses.

Clerk said there are some that aren't paying anything.

Commissioner Casey said he would rather see the people who have houses hooked up pay, than to charge for an empty lot.

Martin Sokolich said we're mixing apples and oranges. You have to pay connection fees for other utilities. If they don't want to pay reservation fees they may not get allocation later.

Jerry Sutton asked why can't you come up with a minimum for people who have hookups and live there part of the time, or no one lives there and the house is dilapidated but the hookups are there. The minimum based on a minimum water use is a little high.

President Mumford read portions of ordinances allowing billing discontinuance for empty properties, and suggested pulling all of these ordinances together and see if something makes sense. Need copies of Ord. 102, 105, 136, 296, and 336 for Commissioners to review for next meeting.

Archie Carroll asked them to consider possible exceptions to the allocations for multiple housing units. Paying \$500 per unit per year and already paying \$12,700 per unit impact fees; keeping developers out.

President Mumford said we have a water system that works. If you decide to build 36 units and someone else comes along and wants to build 360, we need to build a new water tower. Current residents shouldn't have to pay for that. That's part of why these fees were instituted.

Commissioner Casey made a motion to table the ordinance.

Finance Report – Clerk reported the General Fund balance at the end of July was \$55,320.98, Sewer Fund - \$25,297.97, and Water Fund - \$7,616.45.

Commissioners were presented with a bill list, most have been paid so a copy of the check register is also included in their packets.

Minutes – June 7, June 21, July 19 (correct spelling Betty Ballas) – Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve all the minutes with correction. Passed.

July 5 – Meeting with Chief – Commissioner Casey made a motion to approve the minutes. Passed.

Police Report – Chief Foster said he has a viable candidate for the contractual position. Is in the process of getting the background done, has received another application if this doesn't work out.

Moving some schedules around due to a rash of breaking into vehicles (8). 5 of those were on the same night. Reminded everyone to remove their valuables and lock their cars. Notify the police of suspicious activity.

Some discussion on calls for service.

Commissioner Casey asked about signs in the park regarding people there after dusk.

The Chief reported foot traffic at night is a problem.

Public Works – President Mumford said we need to figure out how to take care of the bamboo.

President Mumford said regarding suspension of trash fees for vacant properties, Chapter 150, Article II – 150-6 – “The quarter-annual trash collection charge will be in such amounts as the Commissioners may establish from time to time by resolution. Such charges may be unequal among different classes of producers where a reasonable basis for division into classes exists. In the case of residential producers, such charge, subject to the provisions of 150-9 of this article, shall be due whether or not trash collection by the town is actually utilized”. Right now, vacant houses pay the fee.

Diane said 150-9 says, “Trash collection from any producer or class of producer may be suspended or ended at any time for good cause upon resolution of the Commissioners of Ridgely and one month’s advance notice mailed to or posted at each affected producer’s last known address”. This seems to leave it up to the Commissioners.

Work Shop

Town Administrator’s Report – copy attached

There was some discussion on the rezoning of property that was annexed for the Ridgely Park Development.

Commissioners approved membership renewal for the Caroline County Chamber of Commerce - \$180.

Diane said she was trying to set up a meeting between the Fire Dept., Police, Public Works, and Commissioners to prepare for an emergency, i.e. hurricane, etc.

President Mumford said when Isabel came through here it was a mess.

Café bill for license has not been paid. Commissioner Casey said they pay the license fee or remove the tables from the sidewalk.

P & Z – Martin Sokolich reported that Medifast is going to host Pop Warner Football on their property off of Sunrise Ave. They will need signage, concession stand, and lights. Will come back to P & Z for these items. They will probably rent portapotties. This will be starting up soon.

Historic Commission – Cathy Schwab said the State has approved the \$30,000 grant. To receive money upfront for park benches, picnic tables, trash cans, etc. along the trail. It will take 6 to 8 weeks for receipt of the funds and they will be paid directly to the vendor.

The \$350,000 grant for the renovation of the train station is in limbo right now. Some things have to be rewritten on that; what the building will be used for, who is going to operate it, etc.

Cathy said the County granted an extension on the Carriage House. They have 6 months to figure out what to do.

President Mumford said some decisions need to be made soon, need to have a plan in place.

Some discussion on the caboose. It is part of the plan for the Interpretive Center.

Commissioner Casey suggested putting a split rail fence around it to keep people off of it. The Schwabs said Mike Redgraves cleaned some Boy Scout stuff out of the train station and they asked if they could store some things in that room. Commissioners okayed. Cathy said they need to know how many Christmas ornaments the Town wants. This year's ornament will be the Kranz Hotel.

Cathy asked if there were any objections to putting a screen door on the porch, back side. Commissioners had no objection.

Old Business – President Mumford said Sept. 7 is the deadline for suggestions for General Assembly.

New Business – MML Resolution R-03-10 requesting HUR be returned to the local government. Approved.

Joanne Stepp asked if the local fire departments could be grouped to share facilities between towns.

Diane said infrastructure would be a problem.

President Mumford said the fire departments are independent organizations.

Girl's Softball – President Mumford said a letter was received from the 11-12 year old girls. They won the State Championship and went to New York for regional. They requested financial assistance. Commissioners agreed to donate \$250.

Pool fill up – have to pay sewer?

Lee Stepp said what is the difference between a pool and watering the lawn. He has a meter on his irrigation system. It's been brought up before and wasn't resolved.

President Mumford said a pool would be a one time thing.

Discuss at Work Shop.

Labor Day – President Mumford suggested September meetings for Sept. 13 – Town Meeting and Sept. 27 – Work Shop. Okay

Archie Carroll asked when MDE would be coming to evaluate the WWTP Upgrade.

No one knows. Will try to find out.

Joanne Shipley said the Tree Commission received \$1500 and will be planting 18 trees around town on Sept. 25. Need manpower.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Balderson, Clerk