

COMMISSIONERS OF RIDGELY
OCTOBER 16, 2025
WORKSHOP



The Commissioners of Ridgely met on the above date at 6:00 pm in the town hall for a workshop meeting. The following were in attendance: President Clarence Sears, Commissioner John Hurley, Commissioner Chad Leister, Clerk-Treasurer Stephanie Berkey, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer Melissa Leonard, Town Attorney Patrick Thomas, Andrew Myer, Christine Eckrich, Norma Pinkney, Tricia Arrington.

President Sears opened the meeting. Four citizens submitted their concerns/suggestions for the charter amendments and proposed changes to the town code (attached). President Sears addressed concerns regarding the problematic charter changes for candidate qualification and said that they have been removed. All decisions will be made in public. This is a multi-step process to allow for public input. Revisions will be addressed at the November town meeting.

The attached Charter document was reviewed and read aloud by President Sears. The red sections represent changes made with the town attorney. During the review the following changes were discussed:

- Section 5C, change to have only two of the listed documents required to produce for proof of primary residence.
- Section 5D, Clerk-Treasurer appointing election judges. The Commissioners agreed to all proposed changes.
- Section 7 Tie Votes, The Commissioners discussed incorporating the suggestion by John Buckle to have a run-off election in the case of a tie vote. Doing so will likely require the date of the election to be changed to allow for the run-off and the May oath of office.
- Section 8 Vacancies in Office. The Commissioners agreed to the proposed changes.
- Section 10 Meeting of Commissioners. The suggested revisions would be unnecessary if changes to Section 7 were made and the election date is moved. The Commissioners discussed John Buckle's suggestion to have districts in the town for elections, and one Commissioner represent each district. This raises potential discriminatory issues and uneven voting pools. The Commissioners decided to table the suggestion for now.
- Section 11 Clerk: appointment, compensation. The Commissioners reviewed Scott Barron's email encouraging the position to remain as it is with annual appointments. Melissa Leonard discussed the research she did with many neighboring municipalities and Maryland Municipal League and President Sears discussed his research. Both concluded that most Maryland municipalities only appoint the clerk

at the time of hire. This is to maintain administrative continuity. After discussion the Commissioners agreed to the proposed changes to eliminate the annual appointment for the town clerk and make the appointment only at the time of hire.

- Section 22 Removal. The Commissioners agreed to proposed changes.
- Section 23 Police: appointment, powers and duties, bond. The Commissioners agreed to table the discussion of this section due to pending litigation.
- Section 24 Same; special and Section 25 Same; fees. Both were tabled due to pending litigation.
- Section 34 Powers. The Commissioners agreed to proposed changes.
- Section 37 Ordinances; powers. The Commissioners agreed to proposed changes.

Chapter 64 ANIMALS

President Sears read aloud the attached revision of Chapter 64 Animals of the town code. Revisions are noted in red. The review yielded the following change:

§64-14 remove (5) Notarized neighbor consent forms.

The Commissioners discussed how to handle homeowners with existing chickens. It was decided that they would be given 60 days' notice to comply.

ZONING CODE AMENDMENT

President Sears reviewed the attached proposed changes to the zoning ordinance to allow for chickens in town. The Commissioners agreed to the changes but will also require any building over 160 square feet to obtain a building permit.

Chapter 12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

President Sears read aloud the proposed draft of Chapter 12 Economic Development Commission. It was suggested to change the meetings/reports from monthly to quarterly. President Sears asked to review the chapter with the County Commissioners. The other Commissioners agreed. No other changes were suggested.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Stephanie L. Berkey, CMC
Clerk-Treasurer