



**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
APPROVED**

February 5, 2025 at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Sean Connelly, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners, Rudy Marconi, Chris Murray

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

1. Public Comment

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, expressed concern about the Proposed Flag Ordinance Petition and potential future litigation.

2. Appointments & Reappointments

a. Ridgefield Arts Council (RAC) Appointment: Renee Brown-Cheng

Renee Brown-Cheng, Colleen Cash, RAC Co-Chairperson, and Jennifer Dineen, RAC Co-Chairperson, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Ms. Brown-Cheng shared her background in acting and the arts, and her desire to be involved in an organization that supports the arts.
- Sean Connelly asked about specific areas of interest. Ms. Brown-Cheng confirmed working on the website, communications, and marketing strategy.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about what drew her to Ridgefield. Ms. Brown-Cheng confirmed the arts and culture, and the active, involved community.
- Ms. Cash shared Ms. Brown-Cheng's candidacy was unanimously approved by the RAC, and they are particularly excited by her marketing experience. Ms. Dineen highlighted Ms. Brown-Cheng's dynamic personality and doer attitude.

Barbara Manners motioned to appoint Renee Brown-Cheng to the Ridgefield Arts Council. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

b. Conservation Commission Reappointments: Jim Liptack, James Coyle, Jack Kace, Roberta Barbieri, Allan Welby, Erik Keller, Peter Nichols

Erik Keller, Conservation Commission Vice Chairman, and Commissioners Jim Liptack, Jack Kace, Allan Welby, and Peter Nichols were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Welby shared the Conservation Commission has pledged almost 500 birds in the past four years. Mr. Kace shared they updated the natural resources inventory. Mr. Nichols shared he's in charge of the ranger program, where volunteers walk Town Open Spaces and notify the Conservation Commission

about necessary maintenance and/or repairs. Mr. Liptack shared his passion is building and maintaining trails, and shared they receive 2-3 Eagle Scout proposals per month. Mr. Keller shared they are applying for a forest management plan grant for Hemlock Hills and Pine Mountain.

- Rudy Marconi asked about Open Space. Mr. Keller confirmed ~2800 acres.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about a map of potential Open Space. Mr. Keller shared he conducted a study of parcels 10+ acres or contiguous to existing Open Space, and the amount of land that suits those criteria has decreased in recent years. Sean Connelly asked about a way to be alerted should a desirable property come up for sale. Mr. Keller shared they could have a commissioner look at property as it comes up, but sometimes properties don't reach the market and they would need funds available to make a purchase.
- Mr. Keller shared they're working to preserve as much of the Candee's Pond and the Binn property as possible to ensure the Norwalk River Valley Trail could extend north beyond Branchville, as planned.

Sean Connelly motioned to reapprove the following members of the Ridgefield Conservation Commission: Jim Liptack, James Coyle, Jack Kace, Roberta Barbieri, Allan Welby, Erik Keller, and Peter Nichols. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Proposed Flag Ordinance Petition:

- a. **Acceptance of the Resubmitted Petition**
- b. **Set a Special Town Meeting**

Rudy Marconi shared he spoke with counsel and completed the necessary research, which suggest for government speech, it should be a BOS Policy and not an Ordinance, which would allow future BOS to decide on the policy with respect to government speech. Mr. Marconi confirmed the current policy is to fly the American, State, POW-MIA, and the GRAAD flags.

Chris Murray, Barbara Manners and Maureen Kozlark expressed support for staying with the existing policy. Sean Connelly shared the timing issue (some of the signatures being over six months old) was due to the Town asking the petitioners to withdraw and resubmit their petition, and the petition should be accepted. Mr. Marconi expressed he agrees with Mr. Connelly, and anyone is welcome to come in with a petition for a Town Meeting as long as they have received sufficient signatures that have been qualified by the Town Clerk.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, withdrew his earlier comment, based on the advice Mr. Marconi shared the BOS received from counsel.

4. Resolution – Neglected Cemetery Grant

Tom McManus, Graveyard Restoration Committee Treasurer, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. McManus shared they apply for the Neglected Cemetery Grant every two years, which is specifically for inactive, neglected cemeteries and funded by the State through burial permit fees. Mr. McManus confirmed this resolution is for the BOS to authorize Rudy Marconi to sign as the First Selectperson and on behalf of the BOS.
- Chris Murray asked about famous burial sites. Mr. McManus discussed a 0.5-acre cemetery on Old Redding Road with amazing gravestones, including Revolutionary War veterans and many untraditional stones.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to accept Rudy Marconi's signature as the First Selectperson and Endorser on the Neglected Cemetery Grant communique. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Tax Collector Refunds

Barbara Manners motioned to approve the Tax Collector Refunds totaling \$10,909.95. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. January 16, 2025 Special Meeting

Maureen Kozlark clarified, on page 2, "after the vote failed 3-1."

Ms. Kozlark clarified "not recommend other large projects until the bundle was paid off."

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting, as amended. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

b. January 22, 2025

Chris Murray noted, on page 5, "the proposed \$1100/mo rent increase is unjustified."

Sean Connelly clarified, on page 3, "Museum in the Streets Updates included..."

Maureen Kozlark corrected, on page 3, the spelling of Jim Carone's name.

Mr. Connelly corrected the spelling of Mr. Wehking's name.

Mr. Connelly noted, on page 8, the owner of 84 Mamanasco Road "wants to donate her property to the Town and have the Town build a park."

Ms. Kozlark noted, on page 5, "fair market rate" instead of "standalone rental rate."

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

7. Selectperson's Report

Rudy Marconi shared the second Public Hearing on the P&Z Moratorium will be continued to March 4, 2025, and as instructed by the BOS, he read a letter into the record clarifying several issues of concern. Mr. Marconi expressed, of concern to the BOS, is this proposed ordinance will override a State statute, which is not permitted. Mr. Marconi mentioned the WPCA sewer project is 98-99% complete, and noted the WPCA should do an examination prior to multifamily or high-density development. Mr. Marconi shared many concerns were about traffic.

Mr. Marconi shared he received a letter from Clemencia Saleeby, resigning from the Commission on Aging, which leaves a vacancy on the CoA.

Mr. Marconi shared the ECDC submitted a letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission, and shared they did address and make modifications to the special permit process.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the Board of Selectpersons Meeting at 7:27pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.