

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – CITIZENS COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 21, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, 400 MAIN STREET
RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877

Present: R. Larson, A. Behymer, E. Burns, D. Daughters, L.Hanley, M. Miller, T. O'Connor, E. Tyrrell, J. Zawacki.

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Option Evaluation Principles
4. Survey Status
5. Charrette Agenda
6. Beverages/Snacks for Charrette
7. Communication Strategy for Charrette
8. Review of Minutes from August 14 and 31 meetings
9. Next Steps
10. Adjourn

1. Call to Order - R. Larson called the Citizen's Committee Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Public Comment –There were no comments from the public.
3. Option Evaluation Principles
R. Larson said that five to ten principles could be used to evaluate the 34 opportunities?

D. Daughters stated how 12 of the 42 acres have already been agreed upon for their function – already established residential pattern of the ten acres that have been sold for housing.

M. Miller asked how does one define affordability? Is it when someone currently living in Ridgefield wants to downsize? Or does affordability refer to higher density of development to attract people who could not otherwise afford Ridgefield but still not project housing and not low-income housing?

Becky Mucchetti, Chairman, Planning & Zoning, explained the housing classification 8-30g which is not federally subsidized. Ridgefield has a

moratorium right now on affordable housing, which is for four years and we are one year into the four year time period. It will be interesting to see the results of the survey.

Evaluation Criteria Thoughtstarter was reviewed (put together by D. Larson, A. Behymer and T. O'Connor in conjunction with Section 2 of the Ridgefield Plan for Conservation and Development)

- Major Conservation Strategies
 - 1) Community Character
 - 2) Open Space
 - 3) Historic Resources
- Major Development Strategies
 - 4) Community Structure
 - 5) Housing and Residential Areas
 - 6) Business Development
- Major Infrastructure Strategies
 - 7) Community Services and Facilities – Prepare for future development of the town - Utilities
 - 8) Transportation – Address traffic congestion
- Site Specific Considerations
 - 9) Town Infrastructure
 - 10) Town Revenues and Costs

G. Bishop asked how these criteria would be used vis a vis public input. R. Larson suggested that all of the 34 opportunities could be established in the 30 acres, but there are revenue, cost, traffic, impact on local community, etc. that are also important and could impact the desirability of the uses on the 30 acres. These considerations will be part of the workshop on Oct 21.

Committee members agreed to fill out the template this coming week and forward to J. Zawacki who agreed to consolidate the input.

M. Miller stated how we as the Committee are trying to unearth all possibilities. We maybe will get some idea that we hadn't thought of.

R. Larson stated that the thought is to send out a second survey in early November. We will then have a "breathing space" until early January. The second and final charrette would be scheduled for mid-January.

4. Survey Status – 1322 survey responses on-line, 15 on paper – should the end-date for the survey be extended or not? There are a couple of organizations who have indicated they have yet to contact their members to encourage completion of the survey. This may result in a few more responses but we have probably received most of what we can expect. It was agreed to keep the survey open until 9/25 which is what was previously publicized.

5. Charrette Agenda

J. Zawacki reported on the recent Branchville charrette – about 50 people in attendance. There were two distinct groups present – 1) those that want Branchville commercial growth and 2) those in Branchville that wanted nothing changed. Daytime sessions were poorly attended. Different sessions focused on economic development, housing, and transportation. Some tables did whatever they wanted to do – others followed directions. There were suggestions for better landscaping between the buildings on Route 7 and sidewalks to the rear of the buildings.

Our first charrette is scheduled for the evening of October 21st at the Rec Center.

6. Beverages/Snacks for Charrette

Food makes the meeting seem more friendly. We will see if we can get donations – water bottles, homemade cookies, cider, coffee. R. Larson will speak with R. Marconi to see if there is a budget available for the refreshments. 6:30 p.m. will be the start-time with the discussion starting at 7:00 p.m.

7. Communication Strategy for Charrette

R. Larson questioned whether we should we send a flyer out to the same groups as before? He asked the Committee members if they are comfortable contacting those they contacted previously? The focus is not on “asking” but on “informing” – we are going to have a Charrette. The message can be 1) thank you for your support, 2) the results of the survey can be found in this summary, and 3) come to our Charrette scheduled for October 21st. D. Daughters stated how to be going back to our individual contact lists two and three times is perhaps not a good approach. He also commented on how the use of the two pictures of the Schlumberger property are “so good”. We can say, “Let us tell you what you told us”. E. Burns stated how she had nothing but positive feedback about the survey.

It was agreed to do the following –

- 1) Develop an image to be used with the electronic media (suggest a simple change to the flyer we already used) – E. Burns
- 2) E. Tyrrell will check with the Press to see how much an electronic ad costs
- 3) Communicate the Charrette time, location, etc. starting week of October 5. Should we send out a “save the date” notice prior? Perhaps there is not enough time before October 5th to do so.
 - Print – News-Times (D. Larson) – Letter for October 8 Press (E. Tyrrell, E. Burns) – probably a repeat in the press on October 15
 - Ridgefield website, Facebook and Twitter – D. Larson
 - Private Facebook – E. Burns
 - Hamlet Hub, Path, etc. – E. Tyrrell, E. Burns

- Each Committee members will contact a few organizations from their contact list, but only those eager to help – we do not want to overdo our requests.
- 8. Review of Minutes from August 14 and 31 meetings – Reschedule for later meeting
- 9. Next Steps – Next meeting scheduled for Monday, September 28 – 7:30 p.m., Town Hall/Large Conference Room
- 10. Adjourn – E. Burns moved and A. Behymer seconded a motion to adjourn the Schlumberger Citizen’s Committee Meeting at 9:15 p.m. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson