

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – CITIZENS COMMITTEE MEETING

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015 – 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, 400 MAIN STREET

Present: R. Larson, A. Behymer, E. Burns, D. Daughters, L.Hanley, M. Miller, T. O'Connor, E. Tyrrell, J. Zawacki. Also present – Rebecca Augur of Milone & MacBroom

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Initial Survey Results
4. Charrette Workshop Agenda
5. Communication Strategy for Charrette
6. Review of Minutes form August 14 and 31 meetings
7. Next Steps
8. 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. Initial Survey Results

Rebecca reported 1396 survey results – the survey was closed last Friday, 9/25. 1800 responses included comments – These comments will be helpful for discerning people's thoughts. The responses include a mix of ages, etc. There are still some paper surveys that will be added to the survey results. The paper surveys were divided among the members of the Committee for entry into the electronic survey.

D. Daughters stated his recollection that Rebecca had said that we would be doing well if we received 800 survey responses – we are way above 800 which is very good.

Rebecca stated how the survey results indicate clear direction on options that we can now look at. The responses were strong for public open space. We need to look at the responses from those who live near the center of town. Over one-half

of the surveys indicated support for a recovery of the \$7 million investment by the Town of Ridgefield in the property. 52% said it was important to recover this dollar investment whereas only 19% said this was not important at all. Older respondents had higher numbers for residential use but still favored open space.

Rebecca reviewed the Executive Summary which she has prepared summarizing the results of the Vision for 30 Acres Community Survey. This survey was the initial step in an extensive public planning process to build consensus on potential future uses of this town-owned property. This Summary includes graphs indicating “Survey Respondents’ Age”, “Survey Respondents’ Neighborhoods”, and “Interest Levels by Area of Residence”. There was strong interest by older residents for open space but also interest in cultural offerings. Active open space such as athletic fields and playgrounds received strong interest levels by those in the age group of 35 to 55 - also, strong interest in biking, walking/running trails and picnic areas. The response in favor of an outdoor stage was strong – 70% and especially by younger adults. The responses for interest in a museum was 46% and 42% for municipal services. Questions when asked about mixed use of the property, again open space and cultural offerings received high interest.

Rebecca will revise the Executive Summary using some of the comments raised at the Citizen’s Committee Meeting.

4. Charrette Workshop Agenda

Rebecca reviewed the proposed Charrette Agenda.

1. Introduction – Committee and Consultant. She plans to bring four additional consultants from her firm.
2. Goal of the workshop (obtain input on potential long-term uses)
3. Brief history of Schlumberger site
4. Community survey results
5. Existing conditions analysis of site
6. Quick intro to concepts
7. Planning stations – each attendee will rotate through each of three or four stations in 15 minute sessions. In each session, consultant staff will explain a specific conceptual plan, such as passive open space, and solicit feedback both verbally and in writing. The specific concepts will be determined by the survey results. The “trick” is to get people while at a discussion group to think of “different” ideas.
8. Wrap-up discussion – consultant staff will report to the whole group on themes heard at each station and facilitate final discussion
9. Next steps – where do we go next from this meeting?

D. Daughters stated how we need to look at the Philip Johnson Building and others on the property. The use of these buildings gives us a whole different perspective.

M. Miller stated how people in the community have no real concept of the Philip Johnson Building. The building remains as it was when Philip Johnson opened it and celebrated it. We need to talk about it and the significance of this building in the architecture world. The survey votes for a museum came out “in the middle”.

E. Tyrrell pointed out how we as the Committee need to point out the cost of maintenance of this building and the possible revenue that can be generated from use of the building.

E. Burns noted that the results of the financial questions, with over 50% of respondents believing it was important or very important to recover the initial purchase price and generate future revenues, were inconsistent with the desire for open space/cultural opportunities. This will need to be clarified.

Rebecca stated how the consulting staff will manage the discussions at the individual tables. They will provide a summary of the results of the survey. They will provide some info about the actual site, possible streets and traffic pattern. Also they will have overall maps of the property available for the Charrette.

R. Larson asked how an individual group will take a subject such as “open space”. What should we provide to fit into this request? Could cultural offerings be part of the open space? What about residential and/or commercial? Could professional offices be part of the open space?

D. Daughters stated how the elements of the property will help to determine the possible use. We don’t want the Sky Dome in the middle of a ball field! The consultants will serve as the primary facilitators and will crystalize what has been said and report back. The individual groups may well not have answers but instead may well raise additional questions.

D. Daughters asked Rebecca what will the consultants expect from us – the Committee? Rebecca responded that the Committee members will be introduced. The members of the Committee need to be listeners. The members of the Committee will be broken up among the various discussion groups. The schedule for the Charrette will start with the 6:30 to 7:00 Drop-In, Intro kick-off and then 20 minutes at each table from about 7:00 to 9:00. 9:30 will be the closing time. D. Daughters and E. Burns stressed how it is important that the meeting should not feel “rushed”.

E. Burns asked if we can introduce as a focus what should be done with the buildings on the property – keep or tear down?

5. Communication Strategy for Charrette

Rebecca said that the Committee should not underestimate the value of refreshments. The Committee wants people to feel that they had a good

experience overall. The overall impression of the evening can influence attendance at the second workshop as well as response to the second survey.

J. Zawacki will oversee the refreshments – decaf, water, cider, cookies, fruit/grapes. The expectation is for 50 to 100 people. Joan has a large coffee urn and Becky Marchetti will check on the use of an additional coffee urn to be borrowed from Betty Brosius.

There are stacking chairs available in the Parks & Rec large room. Dick, Don, Tim, Andy, and Ed will help set up the tables/chairs – perhaps meet at 4:30 on the 21st for set-up.

Schedule for advertisement of the Charrette is as follows:

Week of September 29 to October 2

- 1) Develop image/poster for Charrette - See E. Burn's draft
- 2) Develop tagline for posting – click on xxx for more info. Link will be titled, “Vision for the 30 Acres”.
- 3) How to set up link so person sees image when clicks on the link or should the info on the Charrette be on the first page of the Executive Summary?
- 4) D. Larson will get the posters needed by October 2 and deliver to Ellen's store.
- 5) Save the Day letter will be in the October 1st press.

Week of October 5.

- 1) Info to the News-Times – D. Larson
- 2) Ridgefield Press – October 8 Announcement – Ed/Ellen (possibly a repeat of this in the October 15 press)
- 3) Ridgefield Website, Facebook, & Twitter – D. Larson
- 4) Private Facebook – Ellen
- 5) Hamlet Hub, Path, etc. – Ed/Ellen
- 6) Contact individual organizations if appropriate
- 7) D. Larson wrote possible email note –

Thank you for sending our survey link to your members. We had a terrific response to the survey that will provide a strong foundation for the project.

The next step is a Charrette or Workshop, October 21, Ridgefield Rec Center, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

At the Workshop the survey results will be introduced in small groups to help formulate more detailed recommendations. You can access a summary of the survey at xxxx and get more detailed information about the Charrette at xxxx.

6. Review of Minutes from August 14 and 31 meetings –

D. Daughters moved and E. Tyrrell seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the August 14, 2015, Schlumberger Citizens Committee Meeting. Motion approved.

L. Hanley moved and D. Daughters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the August 31, 2015, Schlumberger Citizens Committee Meeting. Motion approved.

7. Next Steps – Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 14 – 7:30 p.m., Town Hall/Large Conference Room.
8. Adjourn – **L. Hanley moved and E. Tyrrell seconded a motion to adjourn the Schlumberger Citizen’s Committee Meeting at 9:20 p.m. Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson