

Ridgely E.D.C. Meeting
June 13, 2007

In Attendance: John Balderson, Joe Mangini, Portia Dunst, Brenda Walls, Nancy Gearhart, Young Woo, Sara Wright

6:30 pm: Meeting called to order by John Balderson

Joe started the meeting by discussing DBED grants, including the local revolving loan program and the strategic revitalization restoration program. Joe also said the elevated water storage tank project is in limbo. The tank project will be discussed at the next Commissioners Work Session. Currently Ridgely is trying to get DBED to help out with a block grant similar to the one which partially funded Denton's tank in their tech park. Nancy asked what the ratio was for a block grant; it is 51% load to modern income.

Joe spoke of a recent trip back to the Governor's office, where he discussed Ridgely's projects. The projects discussed were Rails to Trails, the upgrade to Ridgely's treatment plant, and the water storage tank project. Treatment Plant upgrades are currently in motion and are being paid for by Ridgely Park.

Mr. Brodie's plans for the shopping center were approved. The center will have a subway, an Italian restaurant, and a dry cleaner. There will be drive through windows on both ends. The old New Roads building, now owned by Mr. Brodie, expects to have a billboard company moved in by July 1, 2007. There will be thirty (30) job openings at the company to be filled. Nancy said she believes Mr. Brodie should fix up the exterior of the building and also enclose the pump station.

Joe said that the situation at Vicky's Restaurant doesn't look very good; they only have one cook now. Mr. Woo and Vicky's have made an agreement that Vicky's will purchase all their meat from Tri-Me at cost. Brenda asked if it was true that Vicky's is for sale. Joe said no, it is not for sale, but someone has made an offer to buy it.

Joe also discussed planned development for Ridgely, including Ridgeway Estates and Walnut Farms. Joe mentioned that the DRRA for Ridgely Park had been signed, and that he would be meeting with Tommy Vendemia and Kevin Shearon to discuss water tie in for Ali's Cove. As well, he informed the E.D.C. that there is a second person interested in opening a steakhouse at the Cowbarn if Bryan can not.

Joe gave an update on Ridgely Rails to Trails, stating that their last meeting went well and that the project is moving along. Federal Government recently gave Maryland Department of Transportation the authority to transfer rights to the Department of Natural Resources, who in turn can lease to Ridgely. Ridgely has received a \$200,000 grant from the State of Maryland, as well as \$250,000 from developers. The State would like for Ridgely to start drawing down money from the project account so that it doesn't get taken away.

Nancy noted that Kesley's Kloset opened on May 27, 2007.

Mr. Woo discussed his businesses and properties on Central Avenue. He said that his daughter would like to open a business of her own in his vacant building and has considered a pet supplies store. Mr. Woo would like to open a gym and spa in that building. Brenda recommended opening a Curves fitness center for women, Portia thought a florist would be a good idea for the business and Joe suggested a Dollar Tree. All members agreed on the Dollar Tree idea and although Mr. Woo seemed interested, he said he had not talked to anyone from Dollar Tree yet. Mr. Woo said that someone had asked him about renting the space to open a furniture store, but Mr. Woo is hesitant to rent out because he doesn't want to see the business open, just to close down a few months later.

Mr. Woo spoke about the condition of Tri-Me, saying that it is an aging building and it frequently gives him trouble. He is interested in replacing the roof, as well as the trusses, and said that he would like to remain open for business during the construction. Mr. Woo plans to install a temporary ceiling and lights, and is aware that he must stay in compliance with the health department. The company he will be using for the project will not be a local one because the project is so advanced. No help is needed from the E.D.C. yet, but Mr. Woo did want to let everyone know what he was planning. Brenda asked how long it will take to complete once construction starts; Mr. Woo said it should be approximately six to eight weeks.

Joe advised Mr. Woo to come to the E.D.C. as soon as possible if he needs any help, and to also talk to J.O.K. Walsh of the County E.D.C. to let him know what his intentions are. Nancy also recommended that Mr. Woo talk to J.O.K. to find out what help would be available should he encounter a problem (example: Health Department asking for all remodeling to be done at once). John B. agreed, saying that J.O.K. could give direction and steer Mr. Woo in the right direction. Nancy asked Mr. Woo if he was still interested in having someone do something with the window of his vacant property; his answer was yes.

John B. brought up the member absence policy, because as noted by Joe, Woody and John G. are not attending regularly, if at all. Nancy said with Planning and Zoning if a member misses three (3) meetings without notification, they're ousted. Joe asked John B. if he had spoken with John G. or Woody about their intentions. John B. said he had talked to Woody about it, and Woody said he would only be able to continue on the E.D.C. if the meetings were rescheduled for another night. Brenda mentioned that if the night was changed, it would affect someone else. Joe recommended John B. write a letter asking Woody and John G. what their plan is. Brenda asked how new members get on the E.D.C., and Nancy explained that the current E.D.C. members could make recommendations, but ultimately that Commissioners will appoint someone.

Portia told the E.D.C. members that she would not be able to attend the next meeting due to vacation. Joe asked if it was okay to change the date of the next E.D.C. meeting so that there is a quorum. The next meeting will be on July 18, 2007 at 6:30 pm.

Brenda asked to reserve Martin Sutton Park for October 13, 2007. The Ridgely Pharmacy is interested in putting on a car show to benefit the Ridgely Fire Department.

John B. received information from Happy Mayer of Federalsburg for loaning out E.D.C. money. Richard Loeffler processes the applications for E.D.C. loans, then passes them on to the bank board to complete the loan. John B. said that in Federalsburg there are four bankers, all from different banks, who sit on the bank board. If one of these bankers decides that they would prefer for their bank to loan the applicant the money, their bank has to give the applicant as good a deal as the E.D.C. will.

Joe thought that perhaps Ridgely E.D.C. could put the money in a C.D. for the applicant to borrow against, rather than doing a standard loan. Rick Harris has already offered his help, and Brenda mentioned that Talbert Rowe would be another good person to talk to. John B. noted that Federalsburg's plan is just a guideline, and said that perhaps Ridgely should get a copy of Denton's as well. Nancy asked if it would be possible to have someone come in and explain the plan to Ridgely's E.D.C. John B. agreed to ask Happy to come go over the plan.

Joe would like to go through the tax roll and check over the figures. If 20% of the Town's taxes are coming in through businesses, the town is doing well, if it is less than 20%, the E.D.C. needs to help out more.

Brenda and Nancy discussed the new website. Brenda hopes to have the new summer hours for the pharmacy on the website, and would like to see a monthly "featured business" type story. Nancy said that a picture of the E.D.C. as well as some background information is needed to post on the website. When Brenda mentioned how she would like to see a monthly Town newspaper, Nancy explained that it is very time consuming and that it is often hard to gather information from all the organizations. Nancy said she hopes the new website becomes an alternative to the Town newspaper.

8:12 pm: Meeting Ended