

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 13, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held both in person and via virtual meeting portal Zoom Meeting, pursuant to the Town's Electronic Participation Policy.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. In attendance Councilors Grambley, Kroger, Schuyler, Thomas, Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and Mayor Clark. Councilmember Lakin was absent.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of Regular Meeting of November 8, 2023.
2. Minutes of Budget Workshop Meeting on November 16, 2023.
3. Register of Demands for December 2023.
4. Renewal of Retail Liquor Store License for San Juan Liquors.
5. Renewal of Tavern Liquor Store License for Ouray County Fairgrounds.
6. Renewal of Hotel and Restaurant Liquor License for Chipeta Lodge-Resort.
7. Renewal of Restaurant Liquor License for Lazy Dog Saloon Bar and Grill.

ACTION:

It was moved by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer, seconded by Councilor Kroger and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kathy Elmont presented a press release dated 12-4-23 from the Ouray County Republican Central Committee requesting the Town, City and County "take a temporary credit" to lower the 2024 mill levy rate to partially compensate for "the extraordinary valuation increases" that will result in "significantly" higher property taxes next year.

POLICY MATTERS

8. Adoption of Ridgway Athletic Park Master Plan

Staff Report dated 12-7-23 from the Town Manager presenting a summary of the public comments received pertaining to the latest version of the Athletic Park Master Plan.

Manager Neill reported three public meetings were held to receive input on the Athletic Park Master Plan. Written comments regarding the draft plan were solicited at the last meeting when the final revision was presented, and 21 emails and comment letters were received. He noted the staff report contains a summary of all comments, along with a copy of all the written comments. The summary categories were baseball, pickleball, tennis, soccer, dog

park, drainage, parking, bike park, exercise equipment circuit, cost estimate, solar array and lighting.

Cammie Willis with DHM Design presented the final Master Plan dated 12-13-23. She highlighted some of changes and edits made to the prior draft document based on comments received at the last public meeting. She noted it was agreed the parking area should remain gravel and this “reduced the estimated price by a third”.

Speaking from the audience Tanya Ishikawa stated it is “important to support facilities for younger people” and supported “amenities and resources to attract younger families”.

The Town Manager noted the Master Plan is a guiding document that will be revisited every year, “especially during the budget cycle”.

There were comments and questions from the Council.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Kroger, seconded by Councilor Grambley and unanimously carried to approve without modifications the Master Plan for the Ridgway Athletic Park.

9. Updated Landscape Plan for Wetterhorn Homes Subdivision PUD

Staff Report dated 12-8-23 from Contracted Planner TJ Dlubac presenting a request to amend the landscape plan for the Wetterhorn Homes Subdivision PUD.

Planner Dlubac explained the Council approved the Wetterhorn Homes Subdivision Final Development Plan with conditions on 10-11-23, which included the landscape plan. Since approval the applicant and contractor have identified amendments to the landscape plan that reduce the overall cost of the affordable housing project, and increase sustainability and water wise design. The applicant is requesting to amend the landscaping plan to change species of trees, reduce ground cover, the number of trees and shrubs and planting locations. The Planner noted the request meets code requirements, but is different than what was previously approved, including removing ground cover and using mulch.

Applicant Paul Major addressed the Council and explained the proposed changes will significantly reduce costs.

There were questions from the Council.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilmember Schuyler to approve the amended landscape plan and direct staff to incorporate it into the Wetterhorn Homes Subdivision PUD Guide. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Grambley and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

10. Extension request to meet conditions of approval of Preliminary Plat of property at SE corner of Sherman St./Hwy 62 and Railroad Street; Applicant Ridgway Cohousing, LLC

Staff Report from the Town Manager dated 12-7-23 presenting an extension request to meet the conditions of approval of the Preliminary Plat for the Ridgway Cohousing project.

The Town Manager explained the applicants for the Cohousing Project are requesting a two year extension to the Ridgway Cohousing Preliminary Plat granted on 10-9-19, subsequently extended on 9-8-21 to expire on 10-9-23. If approved the extension would allow the applicants two more years to meet the conditions assigned at the Preliminary Plat approval. He noted from staffs perspective the applicant is still meeting challenges pertaining to infrastructure.

Speaking from the audience applicant representative Kip Neper explained the applicants are “moving forward” but have “significant hurdles to overcome” the “biggest hurdle with a civil issue with the storm drainage”.

There were questions from the Council.

ACTION:

Councilmember Schuyler moved, Councilor Thomas seconded, to approve an extension for the Ridgway CoHousing Preliminary Plat for a period of two years with the conditions assigned at the October 9, 2019 approval and to allow for up to two years to meet those conditions. The motion was unanimously carried.

POLICY MATTERS

11. Ordinance Increasing the Lodging Tax and Revising the Use of the Proceeds Thereof and Other Provisions in Accordance with the Voter Approved Ballot Issue

Staff Report from the Town Manager dated 12-7-23 presenting a voter approval to increase the lodging tax.

Manager Neill explained at an election held on November 7th the voters authorized an increase to the lodging tax and a modification to how the proceeds are used. After ordinance approval the increase would take effect on March 1, 2024.

ACTION:

Councilor Kroger moved to introduce Ordinance No. 08-2023 Increasing the Rate of the Lodging Tax and Revising the Use of the Proceeds Thereof and Other Provisions in Accordance with the Voter Approved Ballot Issue. Mayor Pro Tem Meyer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Submittal of Community Business Preservation Program grant application to the Office of Economic Development & International Trade

Staff Report from the Community Initiatives Facilitator dated 12-13-23 requesting approval to submit a grant to the Office of Economic Development on behalf of business owners.

Facilitator Wick explained business owners Sally Jo Ocacio, Nathan Miller, Amy Gray and Erika Young have requested the Town to submit a grant application on behalf of their businesses which are facing financial challenges with “rapidly increasing rent and unfavorable rent terms”. She explained the grant is due to the State on January 7th, and if approved the Town would receive a small stipend to offset costs to administer the grant. The Town would be the sponsoring entity and receive and administer the grant funds, and prepare reporting for the co-applicant businesses.

ACTION:

Councilmember Schuyler moved to authorize staff to prepare and submit a grant application as the sponsoring entity in collaboration with Cora Fitness, Ridgway Pilates, Ridgway Wrench and The Vault; authorize the Mayor to sign a letter on behalf of the Town Council expressing support of the grant application. Councilor Kroger seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Agreement for Legal Services with Bo James Nerlin, P.C.

The Town Attorney presented an agreement for legal services for fiscal year 2024. He explained there are no changes from the current year.

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Meyer moved to renew the service agreement with Bo James Nerlin, PC. Councilmember Grambley seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The Council took a recess at 7:45 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

The Council received the annual Rights of Nature Report.

The Town Manager also presented the draft 2024 Strategic Plan.

Manager Neill highlighted some items contained in the monthly Managers Report.

There were committee reports from Councilmember Thomas and Mayor Pro Tem Meyer.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk