



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

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Arnold Light
Chair

John Collins
Robert DeFalco
John Devine
Alex Karsanidi
Paul Levine
M. Augustus Ryer

Rudy Marconi,
First Selectman
Ridgefielddevelopment.com

Approved Meeting Minutes

January 9th, 2017, 6:30 pm

Ridgefield Economic & Community Development Commission
Small Conference Room

Present: Arnold Light (Chair), Robert DeFalco, John Devine, Paul Levine, John Collins, Alex Karsanidi, Gus Ryer

Guests: Walt Wieland, Ben Morehead, Rob Gorman, John Dunn

Arnold Light called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM

Minutes Taken by Paul Levine

December Minutes were approved. (Motion: John Devine, Second: Paul Levine

1. Representatives of the Ridgefield Masons discussed the plans for staging the 240th celebration of The Battle of Ridgefield, scheduled for April 28-29th on Main Street. We discussed how the ECDC can help market this important event which will bring large numbers of visitors to town and create economic activity for the merchants, Inns and retailers. The ECDC will post

on our website and send out press releases digitally to social media sites. It was also suggested that we look for grants to help fund this event.

2. Our Commissioners approved the RECDC 2017 OGSM. A discussion followed on the various points. The main objective of the OGSM is to improve the commercial tax base with economic development focused on an inclusive and coordinated digital strategy that leverages the ECDC website. Next important goal is for the ECDC to strategically coordinate the Towns marketing which to date is non-existent. (See attachment for details of the ECDC's 2017 OGSM)
3. We will meet with P&Z on January 17th at 7:30 in the Town Hall Annex to first strengthen our relationship with P&Z and to discuss some of the objectives set forth in the OGSM. Chairman Light expressed that he expected all commissioners to attend.
4. We discussed about how the ECDC could help fill commercial space in Ridgefield. One of the suggestions was to form mini-incubators to attract many of the solo-preneurs who work from home into the commercial community. We would have to seek out those landlords who have available space and would be willing to offer low rents for a period of for example 6 months to a year. Because of Gus Ryer's ties to the commercial real estate community we asked him to see what buildings would lend themselves to the possibility. At our next meeting in February we will hear a presentation from a Ridgefield resident and business owner who has some thoughts he wanted to present to the ECDC about entrepreneurship. Plus we will hear from Nelson Merchan, Business Advisor, Connecticut Small Business Development Center Greater on how his agency can help small businesses get started and to assist existing small business
5. Bob DeFalco urged that all of the commissioners devote some effort to finding other websites to use our new logo as a link to generate traffic on the new ECDC website. He said at the February meeting he will distribute pen drives with the new ECDC logo that can be given to others for incorporation onto their websites.
6. Chairman Light brought up the subject of officers for the ECDC. He was looking for volunteers to fill the position of Vice Chair and Secretary. This will be discussed again at the February meeting.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.



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RECDC 2017 OGSM

Objective

To improve the commercial tax base with economic development focused on an inclusive and coordinated digital strategy that leverages the ECDC website.

Goals

1. Strategically Coordinate town marketing
2. Hire/assign PT resource skilled in WordPress to manage ECDC web content
3. Create economic growth with new strategic retailers to enhance the business community
4. Build awareness of ridgefeldddevelopment.com through coordinated digital marketing
5. Drive entrepreneurs and businesses to lease low cost commercial office spaces
6. Facilitate a “Make Ridgefield Business Friendly” strategy

Strategies

1. Coordination of all Events
 - i. Downtown Association President, Chamber Director & President and Arts Council Leadership attend an ECDC meeting once per Quarter.
 - ii. Partner with the Arts Council, Downtown Ridgefield, Chamber and other civic organizations to insure Town events calendar is populated to coordinate event marketing with broader reach within Fairfield and Westchester counties. Insure information is populated on Town Events calendar on ridgefieldct.org.
 - iii. Utilized PT resource trained in WordPress to facilitate all marketing press releases and to add weekly web updates with marketing content to drive ECDC site traffic and build awareness
 - iv. Offer PT resource under the management of the ECDC to Downtown Ridgefield and the Arts Council members to incent coordination and maximize marketing effectiveness and number of website visits.
 - v. Monthly review of web analytics to refine and maximize and adjust marketing efforts to maximize site visits.
2. Strengthen P&Z Linkages
 - i. Make Ridgefield Biz Friendly - digital P&Z applications and payments
 - ii. ECDC Notification of interested parties by Town Planners and referrals to ECDC site
 - iii. ECDC POV to P&Z when applicable during application review
 - iv. ECDC counseling for small businesses
 - v. Proactively Market and Fill Vacancies with STRATEGIC businesses
 - vi. Participate with P&Z on first floor retail zoning evaluation
 - vii. Provide free listings on ECDC site for Ridgefield only businesses