



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

400 Main Street • Ridgefield, CT 06877 203.546.2547

Arnold Light

Chairman

John Devine, Vice Chair & Secretary

Amanda Duff, Paul Levine, Geoffrey Morris, M. Augustus Ryer, Karen Sulzinsky

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman

Ridgefielddevelopment.com

**Approved RECDC Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2019 at 6:30pm
Town Hall Small Conference Room**

Arnold Light called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Karen Sulzinsky to approve January minutes. Seconded by John Devine.

General Discussion:

BID Project

Guest Nicholas Kitorides.

Nick is working on the project to build a matrix between landlords and services. Focus is on where landlords spend their money. Gus and Nick are to meet to compare notes. Nick's meeting with some landlords he found them welcoming and went better than expected. The key is to start with Main Street, then work with marginal properties.

Arts Council

Karen Sulzinsky updated the commission on collaboration with the Arts Council to investigate upgrading arts spaces in Ridgefield. Performing art groups in town are looking outside of Ridgefield. Space in Ridgefield is limited. There's an interest in keeping groups in town to drive local economy. Some groups are Symphony, Chorale, Conservatory of Dance and West Conn Orchestra. As a start, Jennifer, Daniela and Karen visited the ERMS stage to discuss short-term solutions to noise and lighting issues with Joe Morits, of RPS. The next step is a professional theater

consultant to give input. Arts Council is working on a town-wide arts inventory to discover which spaces can be optimized, improved, rented out.

Retail Vacancy & FFR

Inventory by John Devine with square footage. Need an additional \$20,000 for the real estate tax incentive and \$20,000 that would be matched by landlords. The Raveis Real Estate and Johnny Gelato spaces could be gone in this fiscal year. More funding for the incentives needs to be addressed with Rudy Marconi.

Web & CERC

John and Amanda reformatted and brought in new content. Section reformatted for permits and forms to make more easily available. Direct links to forms will be much simpler current format is not user friendly. Work will be complete this week. CERC- We have been allocated five free listings in new CERC format. Suggest we charge landlords \$100.00 for 12-month listing.

Social Media Policy

The social media policy has been approved by the Town legal counsel and posted on the ECDC web site.

New Business

Geoff attended the Fairfield town ECD Chamber breakfast. Very worthwhile. Fairfield has approximately 65,000 population with an active First Selectman. They have two colleges and two railroad lines. Fairfield and Fairfield County are doing great economically. Fairfield is teaming with 4 other local towns for combined marketing. Fairfield County to possibly become an economic entity to receive grants. Ridgefield could represent the Northern part of the county. Discussed combining 911 call centers, waste management, recycle centers etc. Ridgefield would need to present a case as to what they have to offer to join the teaming with other local towns. This would be inclusive of all of Fairfield County.

Restaurant Week

The Commissioners discussed timing for this event. Summer is the restaurants' slow time of year. Restaurants will support the marketing. Restaurant initiative can be tied with Spring Stroll or SummerFest. The need and desire are there.

RIFF & Jazz/Funk/Blues Weekend

RIFF launches February 24, with an Oscar party at the Lounsbury House. The Oscar party is planned and hosted by Lisa Lampanelli at the Loundsbury House. The same venues and possibly more are planned for September 13-15, the Jazz Funk and Blues weekend. The ECDC organizes the calendar to ensure no double bookings. There have been dozens of requests from bands to participate.

POCD

Ridgefield is updating its Plan of Conservation and Development. This is a 10-year document looking at areas of growth, trends, sustainability of town. The ECDC is scheduled for 1 on 1 meeting with consultants on April 2. Looking at a total picture of the town. This is an opportunity for the town to present what its future needs could look like.

ADA-Americans with Disabilities Act

Christina Calabro and Jessica Mancini were guests, asking about how to make retail spaces and Main Street more accessible, per the ADA. The Commissioners discussed how the ECDC could be of help in this effort. Education and communication is key. Improved accessibility is a selling point for the town. Marketing campaign promoting accessible businesses could be done. Karen Sulzinsky agreed to attend the Commission on Accessibility's next meeting.

Chamber of Commerce

Kim Bova, Executive Director at The Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce, was a guest in attendance. There is an Annual Chamber breakfast March 15 at 7:30 a.m. at the Silver Spring Country Club honoring the Prospector Theater. Rudy Marconi will also deliver his "State of The Town" address.

Technology

Paul Levine expressed an interest in an analysis of what the town can do for improved technology and attracting technology businesses. He doesn't want to see Ridgefield fall behind in technology.

Next meeting March 4, 2019

Meeting adjourned 8:10. Motion by Geoffrey Morris. Seconded by Karen Sulzinsky