

**Ridgefield Economic & Community Development Commission**  
**(Approved) Minutes - Meeting – June 6, 2022**  
**6:30 pm Lower Level Conference Room - Town Hall**

**Commissioners in attendance:** Chair Glori Norwitt, Geoffrey Morris, Bob Knight, commissioner-elect Kay Gelfman; Sean Dowd (Zoom), Jonathan Winn (Zoom), Christa Carone (Zoom)

**Guest** Emily Pambianch, Social Graces Communications; Colleen Cash, Chair of the Ridgefield Arts Council

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

**May Minutes** Morris motioned to approve without changes, Carone 2nd and unanimous approval.

**Emily Pambianchi.** First Selectman Rudy Marconi contracted with Social Graces Communications to perform Facebook and Twitter updates from Town Hall, in order to provide information to residents about town events, news, etc.. All departments, commissions can utilize her services. Town of Ridgefield is the handle for FB and Twitter. Facebook has 4,000 followers, Twitter 3,425 followers. No efforts are made to expand the following. No money is spent on ads/boosting. Says it's OK to boost ECDC promotions.

**Colleen Cash,** chair of Ridgefield Arts Council. She explained how RAC is examining its mission to see if its charge should be altered. Figuring out whether to just work with non-profit art groups or to include for-profit groups too. Generally it likes to advocate for all and promote the arts council members equally. RAC also wonders how ECDC and RAC can collaborate on projects together. She mentions that the RAC calendar allows all arts & culture groups to share their programs and events and becomes the basis for marketing. RAC finds it frustrating that there is no effective way to collect money digitally—for donations, event sales, etc. People end up giving cash and there is so much opportunity left on the table without a real digital option. ECDC and RAC will discuss how this can be changed. Glori Norwitt, Jonathan Winn, and Colleen Cash will meet separately to discuss.

**34 Bailey Avenue.** A developer has proposed plans to Planning & Zoning to build a 25-unit residential/commercial building at 34 Bailey Avenue. ECDC has written a letter, shared in the May meeting, expressing agreement in theory with the plan but wants to ensure the building meets all appropriate guidelines. Norwitt suggested that a commissioner attend the June 14 Planning & Zoning meeting to read into the record ECDC's letter.

**Small Business Initiative.** Norwitti reported on the compilation of a list of businesses and the intern has updated the spreadsheet with more email addresses. Commissioners discussed what sort of marketing platform we can use to communicate with businesses.

**Parking** No word from First Selectman Rudy Marconi on his approval of the proposed license agreement for the town to use the now-unused parking area behind the US Post Office building on Catoonah Street.

**New resident postcard** Norwitt shared the completed postcard that will be mailed to 2,000 new homeowners soon, encouraging them to take a survey that will help us find who these new residents are, where they came from, and why they moved to Ridgefield. Discussion of info these residents will receive upon completing the survey, and where that info will be placed on the ECDC website.

**Update to expand ECDC to 9 members** We discovered that we need to make the change by charter not ordinance. We are proposing putting Kay Gelfman before BOS first, as a seventh commissioner while we await the change.

**ARPA funding for broadband** Funding for a broadband study was requested before the BOS by Glori Norwitt and Bob Knight on March 1 and May 18. Additionally, the request was put in front of the seven-member working group that is recommending how the remaining ARPA funds be distributed. If we do the study we are well-positioned to receive state and/or federal funding for infrastructure funding. Bob Knight did mention that if there is an RFP that he needs to recuse himself because of his professional relationships in the broadband world.

**Cultural District** The subcommittee met in late May as required by the cultural district guidelines. The group approved the design and production of two road signs, one that will capture eyes coming south on Main Street near Ballard Park and one for those going north near Keeler Tavern. The highway department has taken on the task of having the signs made and installed on Main Street. ECDC will advocate for more Cultural District signs on Catoonah Street approaching Main Street, and on Governor Street approaching Main Street.

**Make Music Day** MMD is Tuesday, June 21, internationally, and Ridgefield will have a second day on Sunday, June 19 (called “Music and Art in the Park”), so that it can be celebrated on a weekend also. The Ridgefield Arts Council wants help promoting it and ECDC has agreed to do so. ECDC is awaiting materials in order to promote.

**Urban Land Institute** This organization planned a walking “Placemaking Tour” of Ridgefield for its members, who consist of architects, city planners and developers, land use lawyers, and more. Originally scheduled for this Wednesday June 8, it has now been postponed until September or October. Glori will be a speaker, discussing the Cultural District application and designation by the Town.

**The Metropolitan Transportation Plan** Organized by WESTCog, MTP is seeking project recommendations. Sean Dowd and Kay Gelfman suggested the bicycle link system and will get that to WESTCog by the deadline.

Glori motioned to go into Executive Session pertaining to a real estate matter and Bob Knight 2nd. All in favor, the ECDC went into Executive Session at 8:07pm.

Executive Session ended at 8:38 p.m. No vote was taken.

Motion to end the meeting by Glori, and Bob Knight 2nd. All in favor. The meeting ended at 8:39 p.m.