



Town of Ridgefield
Economic Development Commission
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Approved Meeting Minutes
Ridgefield Economic Development Commission – Special Meeting
October 5, 2016 – 6:30 pm
Town Hall Large Conference Room

Present: Arnold Light (Chair), John Devine, John Collins, Bob DeFalco

Guest: David Yagnesak

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

John Collins recorded the minutes

1. Announcements: The next EDC Meeting will be held on November 7th, 2016 in the Town Hall Small Conference room.
2. September minutes were revised and approved. (Motion: Collins, Second: Devine; 4-0 vote)
3. The Commissioners discussed the plan for the EDC presentation at the 10/5/16 Board of Selectmen meeting. It was decided that the presentation would include:
 - Introduction – Chairman Light
 - New EDC web-site overview and Tour – Commissioner DeFalco
 - Ideas and plans for marketing the new EDC web-site (Time Permitting) – Commissioner Devine

All Commissioners will try to attend and be available to the Board of Selectmen at this meeting.

4. A. SCRE Parking Task Force Report: Commissioner Collins reported that he was happy with the progress made by the Task Force as well as the draft presentation made by SCRE at the last Task Force Meeting. Recommendations to include additional resources for the Parking Authority (people and technology). SCRE will present the final findings of this Task Force at the 10/19/16 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

B. SCRE Retail Task Force Report: The latest Retail Task Force Meeting was productive with problem areas identified. The Final presentation will include the hiring of a paid person with a focus on retail development (1 person - \$80 K to \$90K salary per year) as well as a change in zoning for “Retail Only” on ground floor space on Main Street. Reminder that the EDC retail plan includes many initiatives that are not part of the SCRE consulting project.

5. There will be a Planning & Zoning meeting on 11/1/16 regarding the Branchville TOD (Transit Oriented Development). EDC Commissioners will make every attempt to attend that meeting.

6. New Business:

- a. EDC Commissioners (Light, DeFalco, Devine) will meet with First Selectman Marconi on 10/11/16. One of the topics for discussion will be possible additional funding for the EDC.
- b. Commissioner Devine reports that the Ridgefield Chorale and the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra are trying to work out some issues with East Ridge Middle School.
- c. Commissioner Devine attended the recent Downtown Ridgefield Merchants Annual meeting. He gave the DRM an update on the new EDC website as well as some of the EDC initiatives.
- d. A new retail small business owner indicated that he/she was frustrated with the amount of “red tape” that was required by the town in order to get his/her business up and running.

- e. Commissioner Devine is going through the regulatory process to start a business in town so that we post process on the website as well as have a working understanding of the procedures.
 - f. Chairman Light led a discussion on the current EDC answering machine and the change to a new Answering Service. Going forward, anyone who calls in will speak to a live person. The information gathered will then be immediately sent to an EDC Commissioner who will respond / take action.
 - g. Commissioner Devine compiled a listing of open commercial space and town and reviewed with the reviewed with the Commissioners.
 - h. Commissioner Devine led a discussion on the Town Planning process and how the EDC can be more proactive with the Town Planner and the Planning & Zoning Commission. A meeting between the EDC and P&Z is being scheduled to better understand and support each other.
 - i. The need of conducting quarterly meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Ridgefield Merchants Association was discussed as an effort to improve relations with both groups.
 - j. Discussion about different ways to get the EDC messaging to the public was led by Commissioner Devine. Two examples discussed were posting to the Hamlet Hub and the Patch on line media outlets.
 - k. A discussion about re-visiting the topic of inducements for new businesses was held.
 - l. A discussion about using the EDC website to promote open commercial space occurred. Idea is to reach out to landlords and commercial real estate brokers and get them to list their properties on the EDC website as another channel to reach potential businesses.
 - m. The need for a new EDC Logo was discussed. This will be part of discussions with the Board of Selectmen.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM. (Motion: Collins, Second: Devine; 4-0 vote)