

**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Economic Development Commission**  
**Meeting – October 13, 2009; 7:00 pm**  
**Town Hall Large Conference Room**

Approved Meeting Minutes

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: Bob Knight, Paul Levine, Magdalena Finchman, Bill Markus, Rick O'Brien, Chris Fisher

Guests—Mark Mulvaney, on behalf of property owner, Linda Cook, Superintendent of Weir Farm N.H.S.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. Welcome new recording secretary and administrative announcements  
Bob Knight welcomed Tracey Buckley as the new recording secretary and introduction were made by the commission members.
6. Town Economic Development Plan--Mark Waterhouse, Garnet Consulting  
Mark Waterhouse was unable to attending this meeting. There will be a meeting at Leir Retreat Center to talk about the upcoming year. Mr. Waterhouse will present the plan at this time. Mr. Waterhouse will help move the plan forward by outlining the next steps to be taken. The potential dates will be sent via email.
2. Approval of 9/9/09 Special EDC meeting minutes  
This item was tabled until next meeting.
3. National Parks as economic hubs-- Linda Cook, Superintendent of Weir Farm N.H.S.  
The commission congratulated Ms. Cook for having Weir Farm representing Connecticut on the back of the new quarter. Ms. Cook discussed statics of the park including approximately 20,000 visitors a year. Main visitor include artist school, art groups, neighbors, locals, people from around the area and around the world doing day trips. Most people that come are coming because of the park being focused on art. One issue that may deter people from visiting is the lack of parking. Creating better parking or a jumping off point may increase the visitors to the park. Weir Farm is in the process of creating an artist and residents studio. Discussion followed on how to market Weir Farm to potential visitors including using shuttle buses from the Branchville train station. Currently leasing 5,000 square feet in Georgetown. In the process of looking for a new location to house a multi use building including office space. Bob Knight asked that Ms. Cook return to talk with EDC regarding open commercial space and marketing for the park.
4. Future development of Route 7 corridor –Mark Mulvaney, on behalf of Route 7 property owner  
Bob Knight congratulated Mark Mulvaney for George Mulvaney receiving an award tonight. Mark Mulvaney explained that because of his father receiving the award he couldn't be at the meeting tonight. If the Rt. 7 corridor between Rt. 35 to the Danbury line was rezoned to B-1 zone it would increase the tax base. Rezoning to a B-1 zone would allow for retail store instead of condominiums. This would require sewer expansions. Discussion followed regarding the EDC working with PZC to address this issue. Paul Levine, Magdalena Finchman agreeing, suggested

that if they had a specific location with a specific tenant please come before EDC again for there assistance. Bob Knight read into the record part of an email from George Mulvaney. Some of the benefits for a rezone would be:

1. Exceptions from PZC aren't always feasible.
2. Could stop the building of more condominiums.
3. Tax base would grow.
4. Easy access to the tax payer.
5. Sale tax increase.
6. Building business communities.

Discussion continuing regarding the potential threats and down side that may occur. EDC is on the record with PZC recommending special Rt. 7 zone. PZC is debating this issue right now. There was discussion about what the surrounding towns allowed on Rt. 7. Chris Fisher will gather additional information.

5. Task force updates—All

Rick O'Brien followed up on foreclosed properties. Most of them have resolved themselves. Miscellaneous discussion was had regarding other tasks.

7. Marketing/Web/EDC outreach--Mark Robinson or Bob Knight

Mark Robinson was not present. Bob Knight discussed the need to have a website. Meeting with John Fry to talk about the EDC plan and what kinds of incentives are available.

**Bill Markus moved and Paul Levine seconded a motion to adjourn the EDC meeting at 8:09 p.m. The motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracey Buckley, Secretary