

**Town of Ridgefield
Economic Development Commission
Meeting held December 14, 2009
Town Hall/Moved to 9 Bailey Avenue
(Across Bailey Avenue from Town Hall)**

Unapproved Minutes

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

The meeting was scheduled to be held in Town Hall. Access to Town Hall was not possible and the meeting place was moved across Bailey Avenue from Town Hall to 9 Bailey Avenue. Notification of the move was posted on the door to Town Hall.

In attendance: Bob Knight, Bill Markus, Paul Levine, Chris Fisher, Magdalena Fincham.
Absent: Rick O'Brien, Mark Robinson.

Guest - Mark Waterhouse/Garnet Consulting Services, Inc., Rebecca Mucchetti/Chairperson Ridgefield Planning & Zoning Commission, Marian Roth/Executive Director Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce, Tom Gartrell/Sunburst Plumbing & Heating, Inc., John Pambianchi/Pamby Motors Inc., Mark Mulvaney/Mulvaney Properties, George Mulvaney/Mulvaney Mechanical.

Bob Knight called the meeting to order at 7:12PM.

Due to the absence of Mark Robinson, the agenda was amended to delete the web site progress review.

Bob Knight summarized the process of developing the Ridgefield Economic Development Plan and stated that after an offsite EDC session to review the Ridgefield Economic Development Plan and each of the commissionaires doing several reviews, discussing the details and making revisions to the plan, the EDC would do a final review of the 2nd Draft of the Ridgefield Economic Development Action Plan. He gave a brief overview of the plan.

Bill Markus stated concerns on the ambitious timing/progress dates in the plan. Magdalena Fincham joined this perspective later in the meeting. At two points in the meeting a general discussion by all the commissioners present regarding the plusses and minuses of an aggressive timeline was conducted. The dates of each initiative were reviewed individually and as they related to the timing of the overall plan. It was agreed to make some minimal changes to the timeline (s) to ensure initiative goals be kept on an achievable schedule.

Bob Knight gave a summary review of each initiative and the success measurements for each initiative. Following is a recap by initiative:

- Initiative #1 – Investment Attraction and Retention: No Changes.
- Initiative #2 – Route 7 Developability Study: Bob Knight stated that the EDC was not advocating big box stores on Route 7 and that the report earlier report to P&Z stated this. There were no changes to this initiative.
- Initiative #3 – Retail Leakage Study: Bob Knight stated this initiative would be useful for Route 7, Downtown and Branchville. There were no changes to this initiative.
- Initiative #4 – Downtown Development Blueprint – Reviewed with no changes.
- Initiative #5 – Development Process Review – Brief discussion on the background on this initiative. Research/interviews for the plan highlighted a perception that Ridgefield was not a business friendly town. The purpose of this initiative is to identify the causes and correct the perception. Initiative reviewed with no changes.
- Initiative #6 – Incubator Without or Without Walls – Initiative reviewed with no changes.

Bob Knight read Rick O'Brien's email to the commission regarding his implementation suggestions.

Paul Levine suggested we each join the Connecticut Economic Development Commission – CEDC. He also said we should look into joining Connecticut Economic Resource Center – CERC.

A general discussion was had regarding the move for EDC to adopt the plan or first ask for Board of Selectmen review and approval. It was agreed to adopt the plan before presentation to Board of Selectmen.

Bob Knight opened the floor for public feedback. Below are the highlights of the comments and discussion:

George Mulvaney – Complemented the tone and effort of the EDC.

Paul Levine asked George Mulvaney what the perception of Ridgefield was in the business community. George responded anti business.

John Pambianchi – Echoed George Mulvaney's comments and perception.

Magdalena Fincham – Stated that the EDC wants a balanced approach to business development that will work with the Ridgefield culture and ambiance.

Paul Levine made a motion to adopt the plan as modified.

Bill Markus second the motion.

The Ridgefield Economic Development Plan was adopted by the EDC by a vote of 5 - 0.

Paul Levine made a motion to thank Mark Waterhouse for work he did on the plan. Seconded by Chris Fisher. Motion carried 5-0.

Chris Fisher made a motion to for the commissioners to authorize Bob Knight to draft a transmittal cover letter to send the adopted economic development plan to the Board of Selectmen for approval and funding. Motion was seconded by Paul Levine. The motion carried 5-0.

It was also noted that EDC commissioners would individually meet with the Selectmen prior to their January 6, 2010 meeting to help them understand the EDC's process in developing the plan.

Bob Knight stated the business for this meeting was completed and thanked Marion Roth for hosting the meeting at the Chamber of Commerce office.

At 9:05PM Bill Markus made a motion to adjourn.

Magdalena Fincham seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Markus