



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

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Arnold Light
Chairman

Robert DeFalco
John Devine, Vice Chair, Secretary
Paul Levine
M. Augustus Ryer
Stephany Sanderson
Karen Sulzinsky

Rudy Marconi,
First Selectman
Ridgefielddevelopment.com

Approved RECDC Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2017 at 6:30pm
Small Town Hall Conference Room

In Attendance: Arnold Light, John Devine, Robert DeFalco, Paul Levine, Gus Ryer, Stephanie Sanderson, Karen Sulzinsky

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Arnold Light asked for acceptance of the minutes from the October 2, 2017 meeting. Bob DeFalco motioned and John Devine seconded. Gus Ryer noted a correction. Minutes were accepted 7-0 with the correction.

First Floor Retail

The BOS presentation was discussed. Arnold and John reviewed that the BOS had deferred the proposal to a review by the Board of Finance. Bob DeFalco commented that he felt that Arnold and John were not sufficiently prepared for the meeting and cited examples of them contradicting each other when questioned. Arnold and John did not agree and noted that the proposal had been reviewed many times prior to the meeting. John remarked that he was surprised by the number of questions by First Selectman Marconi as he was very involved in the drafting of the proposal. Stephanie agreed. Others noted that it was his role to properly vet the proposal with the board and in a public session.

Ridgefield Marketing Campaign

Arnold reviewed the current status of the funds. Wayne Addressi after asking the ECDC to establish a municipal fund and to administer the fund decided after the first ECDC task force meeting to privatize the fund and assume control of fund disbursements. After the Task Force was disbanded Addressi informed the town that he would continue to use the municipal fund. However, the ECDC was informed (First Selectman Marconi response to inquiry from ECDC Chair Light) that the ECDC no longer had any responsibility for the fund governance.

John questioned how the same fund that was established by an ECDC proposal to the BOS and approved by the BOS at the request of Addressi could be used by a private citizen (Addressi). Addressi had informed the town that he would not use the fund and would instead deposit the monies in Fairfield Bank. After the ECDC Task Force was disbanded Addressi subsequently decided to use the municipal fund established by the ECDC without ECDC governance.

Bob DeFalco also noted that the actions required clarification from a legal POV. He asked Chairman Light on what authority the governance of the fund could be changed. Light commented that he was informed of the status by Marconi. Bob asked for clarification from Marconi of how the fund could be legally reassigned. Karen Sulzinsky noted that there must be clarity that the ECDC had no association with the fund or disbursements by Addressi.

Arnold was asked to provide further information at the next meeting.

Bob DeFalco raised the issue of a private group assuming responsibility for marketing a municipality without oversight of the government. He noted that in the private sector a company would not support a private organization in its efforts to market the company's brand. John agreed. He noted that there is no control of the message and the content. He offered that in similar instances that the message has a notation that stated in effect that "This content herein does not represent the views of the Town of Ridgefield and is funded by the Ridgefield Marketing Group."

Bob requested affirmation from Arnold and Paul Levine that their involvement with Addressi moving forward was not in a role representing the ECDC but as private citizens. Arnold stated that was the case; however he would provide updates to the ECDC. He also noted that the numerous changes of direction by Addressi had the inverse effect of his goal of expediting the efforts and that the new Ridgefield Marketing Task force had yet to meet.

Senior Gold Book

Bob DeFalco was recognized for his extraordinary efforts in the compilation of the printed and on-line new Gold Book. Arnold noted that Bob was recognized by the BOS at the last meeting for his efforts.

Bob prepared a summary document (Attachment A). A second and final printing of an additional 500 books was required.

He did note that the widow clings needed to be reprinted due to an error. He suggested that the clings be sent via a mailer to participating retailers with a letter from the ECDC. Others agreed that

the letter highlight the benefits that the ECDC provides the retail community and again request that the ECDC web link were added to their sites.

A request for the allocation of ECDC funds for the mailer was approved.

Ridgefield Jazz Festival

Stephanie Sanderson is the ECDC representative to the Festival and attended the first planning session. (Meeting minutes from task force Attachment B).

ECDC Web Site Update

Bob provided the monthly update. (Attachment C)

Highlights include continued growth in the number of visits. Bob also noted the addition of the search term economic development and the high ranking of the site. He also noted that event marketing drives visits. Search for “Halloween” and for “Christmas/Holiday” generate the highest number of visits. He again requested that Commissioners request that businesses and organizations add the link to the ECDC site on their sites.

December Meeting

John requested that the commission devotes time at the December meeting to identify 2018 Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Measures. Arnold asked all members to come prepared to share their thoughts.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Approved by John, Stephanie seconded.

ATTACHMNET A



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SENIOR GOLD PROGRAM REPORT 11/06/17

We're coming to fruition with my direct involvement in the **Senior Gold Program**. Since our last meeting:

- The last 200 Benefit Guides (of the 1000 contracted) have been printed and delivered to Town Hall. Social Services / SPIF should consider a new Squashes contract and print +/- 250 at a time as needed going forward. Squash's payment from Ridgefield Finance was processed about 3 weeks ago.
- I have delivered more than 550 Benefit guides to Founders Hall, 100 to RVNA and 125 to 2 remote sign-up locations since printing started. Benefit Guide inventory today is about 160 in Town Hall and whatever remains at Founders Hall.
- I've visited the RMC (2nd Wednesday in October) and signed up about 50 new Gold Card residences, as well as delivered about 90 benefit guide books.
- I've visited Ridgefield Crossings on 2 separate occasions (Oct 17 & Oct 27) to sign up 25 Gold Card residences as well as to distribute ??# new Benefit guides.
- I delivered all of the remaining newly printed Gold Cards and all of the remote location sign-up sheets to Tony Phillips at Town Hall. Lorain and Linda (Town Receptionists) will add these new sign ups in the Senior Gold Card data base. I had a meeting with Tony Phillips about the possibility of using the gold card data base (more than 2500 entries) for ECDC email blasts. This may not be as easy as I thought considering laws on confidentiality. It can be done, but "unsubscribe" programming could be a lot of work. Tony is looking into it.

- The Window Clings arrived at Squash's and had to be sent back due to a printing error. New Window Clings are due in "now"!
- Window Cling distribution to participating merchants will be a very time consuming and painful final effort if done on foot. Could the ECDC bare the expense of a mailing (120 merchants and organizations) receiving their Window Cling, as well as a **Thank You**

Letter in one envelope?? I'll first check with Social Services to see if they can support this idea with some funding. I would draft a letter that reflects our appreciation, but also add contact suggestions if they want to do any special promotions through our Website and Facebook pages.

Bob D

ATTACHMENT C



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11/06/17

October Website / Facebook summary report.

(Google Analytics submitted under separate cover).

- SEO remains very good to excellent. I added a new search phrase recently; "**CT Economic Development**". I was curious where we would place amongst economic development sites within the entire state of Connecticut. You should be proud to know that ridgefielddevelopment.com placed on **Page #1, Position #2**.
- October was another record performance month for Users and Sessions, to say the least. At **2342 Users** and **2729 Sessions**, this represented a 190% and 171% increase respectively over our previously highest month in May 2017.
- Referral traffic (759 Sessions) was excellent in October. Facebook represented 626 session, 82% of all referrals.

- Landing Pages: The Halloween Street Festival posting led all post visitations @ 1206 sessions. Also popular in October were; Calendar Featured Events, Home Page / video, Fall in Love with Ridgefield, The Holiday Stroll event for Dec 2nd, and of course, The Senior Gold program.
- New Website seasonal slider photos were added. We are receiving good feedback on these and other new posted photos.
- Gus and Stephany are now involved with the ECDC Facebook. Stephany has been added as a Co-Administrator and Gus has been added as an Author. Stephany already contributed some great posts to our Facebook page. She and her “friends” are making a significant impact as they share the ECDC Events and Posts. Eventually, I will shed Facebook entirely and Stephany will remain as the lone Administrator.
- I am still in need of **Website Referrals** from our ECDC commissioners. We want ridgefielddevelopment.com linked to our logo on as many websites as possible. PLEASE, this should be easy for those of you with any contacts at all.

Bob D