



**Ridgefield  
Economic &  
Community  
Development  
Commission**

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John B. Devine, Jr, Chairman  
Geoffrey Morris, Vice Chair,  
Amanda Duff, Secretary  
Cameron Cole Carcelén  
Bob Knight  
Glori Norwitt  
M. Augustus Ryer

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman

Unapproved RECDC Meeting Minutes  
January 6th, 2020 at 6:30pm  
Town Hall Large Conference Room

In Attendance: John Devine, Geoffrey Morris, Amanda Duff, Gus Ryer, Cameron Cole Carcelén, Bob Knight, Glori Norwitt

Guests: None

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. The next POCD meeting takes place on 02/04/20 at 7:00PM. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
2. The next ECDC meeting is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, 6:30PM

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION.**

### 1) Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

- a) Cameron Cole has been preparing a letter for distribution to EV charge station to gain information for initial budgeting purposes and to start a conversation with the town, landlords, etc. Several companies have been targeted, and Geoff Morris will be meeting in person with one company to learn more about their process. A discussion followed regarding the scope of the project and next steps.

Glori Norwitt spoke with Patrice Kelley at CT DEEP, who reported that the state funds designated for EV charging is on hold at the state level. Through their Electrify America initiative, Volkswagen is starting to install chargers in the state – CT is waiting to see where it goes before committing its own funds. A discussion followed about whether we should/could seek VW funds. Glori Norwitt noted that they are seeking higher population areas. It was

determined that the ECDC would continue its research into EV charging stations in Ridgefield.

Cameron Cole has started a list to of private landlords/entities with parking in town in order to organize the EV charger project's next phase. Geoff Morris noted that we should look for a development (possibly residential) that has charging policy in order to design our own best practices.

- b) Next Steps: the inquiry letters will be sent to EV station providers, getting pricing and process information from vendors. Cameron Cole will also draft a letter to private landlords to introduce the subject of EV charging stations.

## 2) Connecting Ridgefield, Downtown Wi-Fi Initiative

- a) Bob Knight prepared a presentation outlining public wi-fi, its benefits, and possible paths forward. A connected community has a number of advantages in the realms of transportation, work (remote workforce), education (homework gap), smart cities (air quality sensors, etc.), healthcare (connected emergency vehicles), smart homes, and entertainment. Demographics in town are shifting, and both older and younger generations benefit from connection online.

Public Wi-Fi networks are typically mesh networks, mounted on utility poles and other strategic areas (with access to broadcast range and electricity). There are several models for funding: free, free w/ advertising, pay-for-use, carrier-deployed w/ paywall. There is little ROI data available, so Bob Knight is developing a Community Needs Assessment. He expects it to be complete by the February ECDC meeting.

A discussion followed regarding the benefits and drawbacks of public Wi-Fi, as well as a draft timeline for review. Bob Knight will return in February with the Community Needs Assessment.

## 3) Cultural District Designation

- a) Glori Norwitt and Geoff Morris attended the rollout of the CT Cultural District Designation. John Devine spoke with CT representatives and confirmed that the town will need a seven-person committee in order to apply for the designation. Per a prior Ridgefield Town meeting, that Committee will report to the ECDC, but the State is still determining the official process. They advised Ridgefield to wait until the application process has been formalized. The State estimates only 5-7 communities in the state will achieve designation.

## 4) 2020 State/Regional Marketing Strategy

- a) Amanda Duff is going to continue the CT Visit effort in 2020. This will entail updating the tourism partner page as often as needed along with changing the photography seasonally with our own high-resolution images. She will be attending the annual conference in Hartford, usually held in early April. The ECDC will also be more proactive in reaching out to town organizations in search of content for the page. Amanda Duff has drafted an email that will be used to procure March 2020 content. While doing this, the ECDC will also encourage town organizations to create their own content.

The Western District Tourism Board is CT funded, and there are at least 30 towns in the Western District. Amanda Duff is the Ridgefield representative. She will be working with the Tourism Board (quarterly meetings) to ensure Ridgefield is properly represented.

## 5) URL Acquisition

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- a) We do not have the login credentials for our current website. John Devine met with Andrew Neblett and discussed the transfer of admin rights between our old and new websites. Andrew Neblett will be the registrar for the new site.
- 6) 2020/2021 Budget Process
- a) John Devine discussed Ridgefield's budgetary process, ensuring all commissioners were informed of the timing and steps.
  - b) Sen. Murphy reached out to John Devine to discuss ways in which he might help the town from a Federal level. Transportation seemed the largest area of synergy. However, it was also determined that he can advocate for Ridgefield with the 'Our Town' grant, something that may be achievable with a Cultural District Designation.
- 7) Approval of Minutes
- a) Gus Ryer motioned to approve minutes of the December ECDC meeting w/ John Devine's revisions, seconded by Geoff Morris. Motion passed 5-0-2 abstaining.
- 8) Retail Updates
- a) John Devine gave an update about the various retail spaces in Ridgefield.

A motion was made by Bob Knight to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. and seconded by Glori Norwitt. Unanimous approval.