



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

400 Main Street • Ridgefield, CT 06877 • 203-431-2700

Glori Norwitt - Chair
Geoffrey Morris – Secretary
Sean Dowd
Kay Gelfman
Jennifer Gioffre
Brittney Howell
Bob Knight
Mark Riser
Jonathan Winn

Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson
ridgefieldct.gov

Economic & Community Development Commission
Approved Minutes
August 5, 2024, at 6:30 pm
Town Hall Large Conference Room

The meeting called to order at 6:34 pm

In attendance: Chair Glori Norwitt, Secretary Geoffrey Morris, Commissioners Mark Riser, Kay Gelfman

Guests

Tristen Connelly

Announcements

Next meeting: September 9, 2024

Public Comment

No public comment.

Recap of Recent Events/Info

Norwitt met with Peter Shanley, the Treasurer at St. Stephen's Church. The Church may consider alternative uses for some of its buildings.

Norwitt met with Shay Nagarsheth, advisor for SBDC, the Small Business Development Center, which provides free advisory services to CT businesses through UConn.

The Commission on Aging is holding a "Ridgefield Senior Spectacular Expo" on Saturday April 26, 2025 at Founders Hall and the Rec Center. Their Commissioner Dan Tewes and also Tony Phillips are chairing the event. It will feature exhibits, screenings, talks, networking, food, entertainment, an awards ceremony, prizes, and a take-away print program filled with information for seniors to use throughout the year. Norwitt met with them and Joe Ternullo (Chair of the Commission on Aging) to discuss the event, marketing and more, and will serve as an advisor to the event.

Commissioner Morris was appointed by the Board of Selectpersons to co-chair with Ridgefield Arts Council member and Ridgefield Theater Barn Executive Director Pamme Jones to lead the Committee: Ridgefield Celebrates America at 250. The committee will organize events that will commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence starting on July 4, 2025, and culminating on July 4, 2026. The committee of 11 members plans a kickoff event on Friday, July 4, 2025, at Keeler Tavern, with a reading of the Declaration of Independence and a barbecue, and also on July 4, 2026, with a Main Street parade and festival in Ballard Park.

Database / Inventory (Knight, Winn, Dowd, Riser)

Jessica Green at Info Desk. Issue about # of hours working for Town, per Laurie.

Interns (Dowd, Gioffre)

Our summer intern Tristen Connelly is assisting with several projects. She has completed updating the information for the Downtown Map. She has created an inventory of parking spots in the greater Downtown area. She is assisting with additional projects.

- Where/how to store ECDC documents & info (google docs)
- Hang TST flyers around Town

Norwitt and First Selectperson Rudy Marconi met with resident Raquel Robinson, a recent Southern CT State University graduate in Business Administration, who offered herself as an ongoing intern. Subsequently Robinson spoke with Commissioner Gioffre about creating a draft Marketing Calendar. Robinson will engage with the Chamber of Commerce and cultural organizations in town to get their input on content and how they could engage with the Western CT Tourism District in order to promote events and activities.

The ECDC thanks Commissioner Dowd for overseeing the RHS interns.

Business Programs (Riser)

Working with the Chamber to do more programs in the fall and will tweak the LinkedIn page to be a business page and to get more followers.

Business Connections

Commissioner Gioffre reported that she continues to connect with BluDot, and with the Chamber and Downtown Ridgefield group.

Cultural District (Morris, Norwitt)

The Friends of Ridgefield Board gave final approval, so the "Cultural District of Ridgefield" is now part of the Friends of Ridgefield, and is able to fundraise as a 501c3.

The Cultural District group met on July 9 and discussed influencers who visited Town and posted about various businesses and events in the Cultural District and throughout Town. CTFoodBae visited town on Saturday, June 22, and posted her video on July 15. She has 70.7k followers. Her video got 165,000 views, 5,899 likes, 93 comments, 4,204 shares, and 3,241 saves. TasteCT also visited and posted.

The next Cultural District meeting is scheduled for September 10.

Norwitt was informed of "Creative Grounds" website which is for artists, creatives, culture bearers, arts and culture organizations and creative businesses in New England to create and maintain online profiles.

Cultural District Sculpture (Morris, Gelfman)

The Town entered into a contract with local sculptor Chris Curnan to create a sculpture previously discussed.

Currently the plan is to install the sculpture on the Main Street end of the alleyway the leads between the two buildings that hold Baja Cucina and Botanika.

Tiger Shark Tank

Tiger Shark Tank will be held on Monday, October 28, at the Ridgefield Playhouse. The deadline for applicants to submit their proposals to the ECDC will be Tuesday October 1, 2024. \$5,000 of Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce gift certificates have been purchased as prizes for TST 2024.

Assistance with Film Locations (Gelfman)

Commissioner Gelfman will work with residents Dan Levine and Amanda Gabbard to respond to any queries regarding potential filming in Town. On the ECDC website, a new page will be created with relevant information and links.

Annual Report (Norwitt)

Norwitt is creating a draft Annual Report and will share with the Commissioners in order to discuss in September.

Morris motions to end the meeting, Gelfman 2nd. All in favor. Meeting ends at 7:58 pm.