

Economic & Community Development Commission
Approved Minutes
September 9, 2024 at 6:30pm
Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm.

In attendance: Chair Glori Norwitt, Commissioners Sean Dowd, Jenn Gioffre, Kay Gelfman, Brittany Howell, and Jonathan Winn.

Announcements

Next meeting: October 7, 2024

Approval of June Minutes. Norwitt moves to approve the June Minutes without changes. Gioffre seconds. All vote in favor.

Approval of August Minutes. Norwitt moves to approve the August Minutes without changes. Gioffre seconds. All vote in favor.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Guests: Peter Shanley and Scott Binger

Peter Shanley is the Treasurer at St. Stephen's Church. The Church may consider alternative uses for North Hall, to activate it in line with its mission and activities in town. Possibly create a "Mission Hub" with programming to bring together government, nonprofits and those creating jobs. Discussion of many ideas including possible evening program on AI, working with the Ridgefield Farmers' Market, and having pop-up sales from time to time. North Hall has a full kitchen.

Scott Binger owns local business Evolytix, a tech company that creates custom software for data reporting and analytics for new or established businesses. Discussion of collaborating and networking with small business owners. Discussion of democratizing data information so people can access it easily.

Recap of Recent Events/Info

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 Social Services Director Tony Phillips are chairing the event.

The ECDC received a complimentary email from Jenn Fischer and her student Matthew re the ECDC's "Open a Business in Ridgefield" webpage, and they provided a helpful suggestion.

Interns (Norwitt, Gioffre)

Discussion of projects completed by our summer intern Tristen Connelly including the parking inventory, and maintaining ECDC documents.

Current intern Raquel Robinson continues to work with Gioffre to create a draft Marketing Calendar.

Marketing (Gioffre, Howell)

Norwitt motions to select Commissioner Jenn Gioffre to be the representative to the Western CT Tourism District. Howell seconds. All vote in favor.

Gioffre now has access to post on CTVisit.com, the state's tourism website. Discussion of possible marketing expo to assist local businesses to market their businesses more.

The ECDC is tabling the prospect of partnering with BluDot in the coming months.

Cultural District (Norwitt)

At the September 4, 2024 Board of Selectpersons' Meeting, the BOS voted to recognize the Cultural District group as advisors to the many organizations in Town, fulfilling the requirements of the State of CT Cultural District.

Cultural District Sculpture (Gelfman)

Discussion of placement location.

Assistance with Film Locations (Gelfman)

Commissioner Gelfman is meeting soon with residents Dan Levine and Amanda Gabbard to discuss.

Tiger Shark Tank (Dowd)

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. Prizes will be a total of \$5,000 of Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce gift certificates

Thus far, 90 tickets have been reserved for the event. Dowd requests that Commissioners continue to push marketing the event and the deadline for applicants. Dowd has been speaking with applicants. He is also speaking with Judges who will confirm their availability. Dowd has also contacted previous presenters to get updates for a "Where are they now?" section of the evening. Discussion of possible article now on previous participants.

Discussion of a possible way to create a larger financial incentive that could sponsor our event, such as a grant to the winner (for incremental funding). Winn notes that there are over 3,200 foundation grants in relation to economic development in CT.

Database / Inventory

Tabled.

Update on Planning & Zoning (Gelfman)

Discussion of Gelfman draft statement re Branchville TOD development and land conservation in relation to properties at 599 Branchville Road and 653 Branchville Road. The Commissioners will investigate more and discuss at future meetings.

Annual Report

Winn motions to approve the draft Annual Report. Gioffre seconds. All vote in favor. Norwitt will submit the Annual Report to Town Hall.

Gioffre moves to end the meeting. Dowd seconds. All vote in favor. Meeting ends at 8:34pm.