



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

**Meeting Agenda
April 7, 2025 at 6:30pm
in Town Hall Small Conference Room**

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

**Glori Norwitt - Chair
Geoffrey Morris – Secretary
Sean Dowd
Kay Gelfman
Jennifer Gioffre
Brittney Howell
Peter Kearney
Bob Knight**

**Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson
ridgefieldct.gov**

**Economic & Community Development Commission
unApproved Minutes
April 7, 2025, at 6:30 pm**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm in the small conference room in Town Hall.

In attendance: Chair Glori Norwitt, Secretary Geoffrey Morris, Commissioners Sean Dowd, Kay Gelfman, Bob Knight, Jenn Gioffre, and Peter Kearney

Announcements

Next meeting May 12, 2025

Approval of March Minutes: Commissioner Gioffre motioned that we approved the March minutes without changes; Knight 2nd, all in favor, Norwitt abstained since she was not at the March meeting

Public Comment

No public comments

Recap Of Recent Events / Info

CT Open House Day is Saturday, June 14. Make Music Day is Saturday, June 21.

The Ridgefield Playhouse is hosting a free “Town Party” on Sunday, May 18, and there has been an overwhelming response. Arts & Culture nonprofits in Ridgefield can contact Ashley Paltauf directly in order to have a booth at the event.

Interview Of Candidate Corrin Arasa

Corrin Arasa sat for an interview with the commission to be considered for an open seat. She moved to town four years ago and started the Farmers Market and runs her own business called Patina, with 22 employees. Commissioners discussed her ideas on a marketing strategy for the commission.

Knight moved and Gioffre 2nd that we add two agenda items: Discussion of ECDC candidates and discussion of budget items. All in favor.

Assistance With Film Locations (Gelfman)

Gelfman reported that we got a second request for permission to film, hoping it would be in open space. In discussions with the Parks & Recreation Department Gelfman learned that there is a list of locations. She sent the sign-up form to the interested filmmaker and is waiting for the next step.

Tiger Shark Tank (Dowd)

Motion by Norwitt, seconded by Morris, to allocate an additional \$400 to cover costs related to Tiger Shark Tank 2024, which exceeded the total previously allocated. All in favor.

Commissioner Dowd is looking for sponsors for this year’s Tiger Shark Tank, which is Tuesday, October 28 at the Ridgefield Playhouse. A bank in town is interested in sponsoring and the idea might be to have the bank be the presenting sponsor. Dowd has begun to solicit participants and is hoping to grow the purse to be able to give a larger prize.

He is exploring bringing back the same judges as last year, but adding a fifth judge for this year.

Business Gatherings (Kearney)

Commissioner Kearney is working with Mark Riser, hoping to organize a business networking event in May. Nod Hill has expressed interest in hosting it.

Healthcare Roundtable (Knight)

Commissioner Knight has gathered healthcare execs to take part in a roundtable discussion.

Marketing (Gioffre, Morris, Howell)

The Town's webpage for the Cultural District on the State's Tourism website CTVisit.com needs updating. Commissioner Gioffre said that she is going to get the state to update the page with new assets and new images.

See the Cultural District Award section for more.

Cultural District (Norwitt, Morris)

The State Tourism website CTVisit.com will now highlight the seven Cultural Districts in the State. We are working with them now to fix the links and listings. The other cultural districts are Torrington, Bristol, New London, Stonington, Mystic Bridge, Manchester, and Wethersfield.

In the coming months, Fox61 Morning News on Fridays around 10 am will highlight all the State Cultural Districts. Ridgefield will be highlighted first, in April. On April 11, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum will be featured, with Executive Director Cybele Maylone and longtime volunteer Cecilia Fradet. On April 18, the Prospector Theater will be featured, with Founder Val Jensen and Prospect Rachel. On April 25, the Ridgefield Playhouse will be featured, with Executive Director Ashley Paltauf and Norwitt from the ECDC. We are asking the organizations to discuss the multitude of arts & culture organizations in Town during their 60 to 90-second segment.

To supplement these features, Morris had a 15-second ad for Ridgefield created at the cost of \$500. The ads can run on each Fox61 Friday show in April for \$200, and can be streamed on Fox61 website for most of the month for an additional \$200. **Motion by Morris, seconded by Norwitt, to allocate \$900 to cover the cost of creating, running, and streaming the Ridgefield ad. All in favor.**

On March 10, Norwitt virtually attended the quarterly meeting of the Cultural Districts in the State, organized by the State Office of Tourism. The group discussed how CDs might create a Management Plan with data, metrics and storytelling.

The State is partnering with the company "Art Pharmacy" for the prescription of art for physical and mental health. Art Pharmacy is a tech-enabled healthcare company that partners with healthcare providers to enable the prescription of arts and culture programming for anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The solution Art Pharmacy provides is innovative and for many a completely new type of treatment, but it is based on 40+ years of research and practice that have demonstrated the effectiveness that the arts & health field has on improving mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Local arts & culture nonprofits can enroll their organization in the program so that healthcare providers can prescribe to their venue & events.

Cultural District Award (Morris, Gelfman)

Ridgefield Theater Barn executive director Pamme Jones will receive the Cultural District Award during the Arts Council's "Behind the Scenes" event on May 8 at the Ridgefield Playhouse.

Morris motions to allocate \$104, Knight 2nd for the Cultural District Award, and an additional \$300 for all the food and drink for the event.

Planning & Zoning Updates (Gelfman)

Commissioner Gelfman reported that 371 Wilton Road West has withdrawn its proposal. The neighbors around the Red Rooster apartment application have raised objections and that application is being returned to P&Z at a future meeting.

Affordable Housing Discussion (Knight)

Commissioner Knight is meeting with people and other commissions to begin a discussion about affordable housing, as discussed through an economic development point of view. If we can preserve the aesthetic it helps the economic development of town.

Budget Discussion (Norwitt)

A budget review to check on current and future allocations for the FY2025 that ends on June 30, 2025

Knight motions, Morris 2nd that we go into executive session to discuss potential commissioners. Subsequently, Executive Session ends at 9:09pm.

The Commissioners note that both applicants to the ECDC are very well qualified, and both would bring needed and special skills. However, at this time there is only one Commissioner position open. Morris motions, Knight 2nd that we recommend Jimmy Classey to the Board of Selectpersons. All in favor.

Knight motions, Gelfman 2nd that we recommend Corrin Arasa as non-voting member if that is possible. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.