



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

**Meeting Minutes
May 12, 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

James Classey

Sean Dowd

Kay Gelfman

Jennifer Gioffre

Brittney Howell

Peter Kearney

Bob Knight

Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson

ridgefieldct.gov

Economic & Community Development Commission

Approved Minutes

May 12, 2025, at 6:30 pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 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, James Classey, and Peter Kearney

Announcements

Next meeting June 2, 2025

Approval of March Minutes: Commissioner Dowd motioned that we approved the April minutes without changes, Knight 2nd, all in favor.

Public Comment

none

Recap of Recent Events / Info

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

Jimmy Classey was appointed as an ECDC Commissioner by the Board Of Selectpersons on April 23.

A summary from the BOS meeting on April 23: The ECDC would like to add two alternate members to their commission. Alternates are members who attend meetings, and provide input, but are not able to vote unless they are needed to form a quorum. The BOS discussed creating a blanket ordinance that would give all Boards, Committees, and Commissions (BCCs) the option to add two alternate members. The ordinance would enable BCCs to add members in order to meet a quorum when needed without increasing the percentage of members required for the quorum.

Guests

Chair Debra Franceschini and Vice Chair Lori Mazzola of the Affordable Housing Committee discuss affordable housing, how 8-30g credits work, how they expire, and how this may impact Town commercial space in the longer term.

Affordable Housing Discussion (Knight)

Commissioner Knight discussed the importance of having affordable housing — to provide a wide level of places for many income levels to dwell and therefore work in town. The challenges addressed by the two members of the Affordable Housing Committee suggests we should continue the conversation as a commission, he said.

Tiger-Shark Tank 4 (Dowd)

Dowd proposed launching a sponsorship program, with a one- or two-year sponsorship arrangement in which a business would pay to get visibility at all ECDC events.

Dowd is approaching last year's judges about this year's event: last year included Jay Walker, Chris Bishop, Suni Harford, and Jay Bornstein – Bornstein has moved to Florida and is not likely to participate.

Kearney wants to hire a videographer, Peter McCue, is considering covering the task to create a video for contestants.

Norwitt motioned, Dowd 2nd, that we allocate \$5,000 to purchase Ridgefield Chamber gift certificates for Tiger Shark Tank.

Ridgefield Connect (Kearney)

Former Commissioner Mark Riser has organized a business networking event in partnership with the Ridgefield Library on Wednesday May 28, from 5:30 to 7:30pm at the Nod Hill Brewery, entitled "Brewing Up a Business." Kearney, Dowd, Morris and Norwitt are assisting with the effort. The Library has created a registration link.

Sean Dowd will be the emcee, talking about Tiger Shark Tank and welcoming others.

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MOTION by Norwitt, 2nd by Knight, to allocate \$3,000 for costs related to this event such as renting space at the Brewery, covering the first round of drinks for attendees, food, and other items. All in favor.

Kearney will attempt to secure The Golf Performance Center for the next Ridgefield Connect in September – either September 10 or September 17.

Marketing (Gioffre, Morris, Howell)

ECDC LinkedIn needs to be revamped.

Jonathan Winn has been hired to add to and correct some items on the ECDC website of ridgefieldct.com.

Healthcare Roundtable (Knight)

Nothing to report this month

Cultural District (Norwitt, Morris)

Fox61 Morning News highlighted the Aldrich, the Prospector Theater, the Ridgefield Playhouse, and Ridgefield’s Cultural District at large, on three Fridays in April. Additionally, a 15-second ad for Ridgefield organized by Morris ran on the Morning News and also was streamed on the Fox61 website for most of the month. The shows and ad were well received, and the ECDC was happy to have organized it.

Cultural District Award (Morris, Gelfman)

Pamme Jones received the Cultural District Award during the Arts Council's "Behind the Scenes" event on May 8 at the Ridgefield Playhouse. The Playhouse charged \$250 total for using their space that evening; the Arts Council and the ECDC could split the cost.

MOTION by Morris to allocate \$125 to the Ridgefield Playhouse for the May 8 event; seconded by Norwitt. All in favor.

Planning & Zoning Updates (Gelfman)

The P&Z Commission has requested the ECDC to comment on a proposed amendment to the Zoning Regulations concerning allowing duplexes in all zones. It would (1) permit 2-Family Dwellings as a permitted use in all residential zones, (2) amend the Accessory Dwelling Unit (“ADU”) Regulation to permit ADUs accessory to both one- and two-family dwellings, and (3) permit ADUs on properties that are not owner-occupied provided the ADU is deed restricted at 80% AMI in perpetuity. The application notes that the proposed amendments are intended to help the families of Ridgefield and provide affordable and alternative housing in the midst of the housing crisis declared by the State of CT.

Light Industrial Businesses (Kearney)

Kearney’s contact John Hannigan at Choyce Peterson provided a list of 14 buildings that are identified as industrial or flex (part warehouse/assembly etc. and the other part office).

Budget (Norwitt)

Morris applied for two separate grants from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop. The RTS granted the ECDC \$3,500 for bunting and other items related to the celebration of America’s 250th. MOTION by Morris to allocate this \$3,500 to the Ridgefield Commemorates America at 250 Committee; seconded by Norwitt. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm