



**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

Brittany Howell

Peter Kearney

Bob Knight

Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson

ridgefieldct.gov

Economic & Community Development Commission

Approved Minutes

March 3, 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: Secretary Geoffrey Morris, Commissioners Sean Dowd, Kay Gelfman, Bob Knight, and Peter Kearney

Guests: Peter Olson, Mark Riser, Corrin Arasa, Arun Thachi, Jim Classey

Morris motioned, Knight 2nd, that we approve the February 3, 2025, meeting minutes. All in favor.
Morris motioned, Knight 2nd, that we approve the February 20, 2025, special meeting minutes. All in favor.

Public Comment

No public comment

Recap of Recent Events/Info

- On February 19, BOS appointed Peter Kearney to the ECDC for a two-year term by the BOS.

- Commissioners Gioffre, Gelfman, Morris, and Norwitt attended the “State of the Town” Breakfast at Lounsbury House in February. First Selectperson Marconi thanked ECDC for their work in attracting businesses to town and helping promote new and existing businesses.
- On Sunday, May 18, the Ridgefield Playhouse will have a Town Party from noon – 6 pm at Governor Park with food trucks and free entertainment and headliner Guster.
- Local resident Mona Thorpe is organizing a Leaders Edge Experts event with AI experts in Briarcliff Manor on April 3 and 4, 2025.
- Commissioners Kearney and Norwitt met with the Prospector Theater to discuss their growing popcorn business “Prospector Popcorn”, and their campaign to raise capital in support of their new leased space of almost 5,000 sq ft in the Nod Hill Brewery and new equipment needs. The Commissioners connected the Prospector to AdvanceCT to learn of grant opportunities.

Guest: Dan O’Brien, Ridgefield Historic District Commission

Guest Dan O’Brien from the Historic District Commission discussed the proposed designation of 11 Barlow Mountain Road as a Local Historic Property. The designation allows certain preservation measures for the home and the designation is requested by the homeowners. The Historic District Commission is required to get approval from BOS, P&Z, and ECDC. **Morris motioned, Dowd 2nd, and all in favor of the Historic District Commission to label 11 Barlow Mountain Road, Ridgefield as a historic house.**

Interview of candidate Jimmy Classey

Commissioners interviewed Jimmy Classey as a contender to become a member of ECDC. He provided various details about his background, personal life, and commission interests. No decision until other candidates are interviewed.

Assistance with Film Locations (Gelfman)

Details of ECDC’s oversight of the Film Commission were discussed. Commissioner Gelfman, who oversees it, reported that HGTV requested permission, got a permit, and filmed an episode of “Zillow Gone Wild,” at the home of rock band Meatloaf’s songwriter. The plan is to start with outreach to attract more filmmakers.

Tiger Shark Tank (Dowd)

Tuesday, October 28 is the next date for Tiger Shark Tank, to take place once again at the Ridgefield Playhouse, which is asking for \$3,800. Hard costs: \$700. In the past, there has been no charge, since it is part of the Playhouse’s community outreach. Commissioner Kearny suggested that sponsorship could be raised in order to cover the costs. But another tug on funds is to increase the prize money. We have already approved funds for the 2025 Tiger Shark Tank event and if needed we can either use those funds to pay the Playhouse or allocate more in May or June as the end of the fiscal year ends. Final submissions October 13, with early submissions on October 1.

Marketing (Gioffre, Morris, Howell)

Morris reported that he, Gioffre, and Norwitt communicated about updating the ctivits.com tourism page and updated venues, restaurants, and a hero photo were submitted to the state tourism bureau.

Cultural District Award (Morris, Gelfman)

Eight nominations were sent for the 2025 Cultural District Award. A vigorous conversation ensued – weighing the pros and cons of each candidate – and ultimately the consensus fell on Pamme Jones of the Ridgefield Theater Barn. **Morris motioned, Dowd 2nd, that we select Jones as the 2025 honoree. All in favor. The award will be bestowed on May 8, 2025, at the Ridgefield Arts Council Behind The Scenes Awards taking place at the Ridgefield Playhouse.**

Planning & Zoning Update including Applications for 43 Danbury Road and 371 Wilton Road West (Gelfman)

Peter Olson, who represents the owner and developer of 43 Danbury Road (the Red Rooster Apartments) presented information regarding the plan, which goes before the Planning & Zoning Commission on March 4. He shared plans and discussed how the in-and-out design of the driveway will facilitate good traffic flow and he reported that a traffic study revealed that the location containing 20 apartments would create 50% less (250/day) car movements than when it is a restaurant.

Commissioner Gelfman shared details of the opinion that the ECDC wrote and approved approving of the plan, with certain conditions related to traffic.

Morris pointed out the 371 Wilton Road West submission had been postponed at P&Z until April 1, but we agreed to send our opinion to P&Z, which had requested it.

Commissioner Knight recommends setting up a working group on affordable housing. The commission discussed the topic for 20 minutes, agreeing that we should all do research on the topic of affordable housing in Ridgefield and continue the discussion at the next meeting, in April.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.