



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

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Bob Knight – Chair
Kay Gelfman – Vice Chair
James Classey - Secretary
Corrin Arasa
Nadia Blair
Jennifer Gioffre
Peter Kearney
David Perlmutter

Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson
ridgefieldct.gov

Meeting Minutes

July 6th, 2026, at 6:30pm in Town Hall Large Conference Room

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:39pm.

In attendance: Commissioners Nadia Blair, James Classey (Secretary), Kay Gelfman (Vice Chair), Jenn Gioffre, Peter Kearney, Bob Knight (Chair), David Perlmutter, and consultant Jessica Medoff by telephone. Guest Pamme Jones also attended. Absent: Commissioner Corrin Arasa.

Announcements: Next meeting is Aug 3rd, 2026 and will be held in the small conference room in Town Hall at 6:30pm.

Motion: Knight moved to formally congratulate and thank the Ridgefield 250th Committee for its efforts and successful community events that brought the community together and several out-of-towners to the community to visit, shop, dine, stay, and enjoy.

Second: Gelfman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Motion: Knight moved to amend the agenda by adding an interview of Pamme Jones who expressed interest in joining ECDC for the Commission's open seat.

Second: Gelfman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Chairman Knight provided an outline for new structure around the ECDC Priorities and Activities as adopted by the Commission at the ECDC Fall Retreat Special Meeting during the Fall of 2025. This will be reflected in our agenda/minutes and will focus around the following five pillars:

Commercial Real Estate Vitality (Business Attraction & Retention); Community and Cultural District; Gateway District/North Village; Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and Marketing and Administration. This is not intended to represent a change in mission or direction. Rather, it is an effort to better align ECDC activities around the strategic priorities previously established by the Commission and the Town while creating greater accountability, communication, and visibility into our progress.

Public Comment:

Neil Chollick of 4 Fillmore Lane explained that he enjoys auditing ECDC meetings and is interested in the work that the Commission does. He also expressed support for Pamme Jones as a potential ECDC Commissioner. Chairman Knight thanked Mr. Chollick for attending and expressed how much ECDC genuinely enjoys when members of the public attend ECDC meetings and encouraged more members of the public to attend to get a firsthand look at the work the Commission is doing that is often not reported.

Interview of Pamme Jones:

The Commission interviewed Pamme Jones, who serves as Executive Director of the Ridgefield Theater Barn, and participates actively in the Town's Cultural District. Pamme shared that she moved to Ridgefield during high school, returned to the community in 2002, and is interested in serving the Town through further civic engagement. She discussed her involvement with the Cultural District Working Group and her experience helping advance the Cultural District designation process.

Motion: Gelfman moved to recommend Pamme Jones to the Board of Selectpersons for appointment of the vacant seat on the ECDC.

Second: Classey

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes - June Meeting:

Motion: Gioffre moved to approve the June 2026 meeting minutes.

Second: Perlmutter

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Commercial Real Estate Report & Tracking:

For the last several months, Commissioner Perlmutter has been working on a tracking system for the Town. He and Consultant Medoff debuted a draft of an evolving Commercial Real Estate Report that tracks inventory and availability across the CRE throughout Ridgefield, which would be updated monthly in alignment with ECDC goals. The Activity Tracker will show changes in vacancy rates across all asset types: i.e. Industrial, Office, Retail, etc. This will be used to monitor business and property activity throughout Town. One metric we are exploring is the

best approach to track the growth of home-based businesses. Knight will follow up with the Tax Assessor's office on tracking down that data for the Activity Tracker. The ECDC will finally be able to track and report occupancy/vacancy rates and other key metrics.

Community & Cultural District:

Commissioner Gelfman and Guest Pamme Jones provided an update on Cultural District initiatives. Ridgefield has been selected as one of two towns to participate in the State's Cultural District Pilot Program. The CD will be assigned Beth Flowers, a consultant from the Arts & Culture sector, to develop a growth plan for the Ridgefield Cultural District.

There is a call for artists to participate in the Traffic Box Art Program with artist submissions due July 15. Four downtown traffic boxes will be wrapped with artwork that is expected to remain in place for approximately two years. Future expansion of the program to additional areas throughout Ridgefield was discussed. ECDC Commissioners acknowledged that while the initial focus of the program was in the downtown, the next round of grant funding would cover traffic box beautification in the town's other business districts including Branchville, Cops Hill, and the Northern Gateway.

In previous ECDC meetings, there was discussion of shifting the formation of a Cultural District sculpture to a mural. Artist Chris Curran is requesting an addendum to our original agreement to change the project scope as such. The next Cultural District meeting is scheduled for July 15.

Development Activity – Gateway District / North Village:

The Commission will be discussing a confidential commercial real estate matter during Executive Session pertaining to the Gateway District/North Village. ECDC also discussed ongoing traffic and safety concerns along the Route 7 corridor. Chairman Knight reported discussions with Police Commissioner John Frey regarding possible traffic-calming measures, including speed camera programs. It was noted that Route 7 is a state highway and implementation would require state approvals. The Commission also discussed a recently awarded traffic study grant received by the Police Department. The next step will be engagement with the Police Commission to determine how the ECDC can assist in advancing potential solutions. Chair Knight reminded the Commission that although we've heard from businesses along Route 7 who are expressing concern for traffic safety, ECDC's purview is impact on business and that we can advocate for traffic calming measures. However, ECDC is not qualified to determine how the traffic safety matter is addressed. ECDC will continue to advocate on behalf of Route 7 businesses for solutions with other Town agencies and departments.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation:

Tiger Shark Tank

Consultant Medoff reported the following: a press release has been distributed to local media outlets, coverage is expected in local newspapers, and proactive outreach is underway to

recruit contestants. Commissioner Gelfman reported there has been outreach efforts to secure potential judges and business organizations.

Ridgefield Connect

The next Ridgefield Connect event is scheduled for September 15 at Prospector Popcorn Factory. One future event suggestion was hosting home-based business leaders for business networking at a location like the Lounsbury House this winter.

Marketing & Administration:

Commissioner Gioffre reported that outreach efforts to the Western Connecticut Tourism District have not yet generated a response. Earlier this year, ECDC and the Board of Selectpersons appointed Commissioner Gioffre to represent Ridgefield on WCTD.

Recap of Recent Events & New Business:

Chairman Knight reported on his attendance at the WestCOG Regional CEDS Input Session in Norwalk. Regional economic development topics discussed at the session included: Infrastructure improvements, transportation, housing, workforce development, broadband and internet connectivity challenges, MTA Danbury Branch rail service and ridership growth.

The Commission discussed recent Planning & Zoning approval of Ridgefield's Short-Term Rental regulations and how this should benefit the economic vitality of the town by attracting more visitors.

Commissioner Blair reported that she will assist “Margo” with efforts to dedicate a street in honor of Richard Scarry, author and former Ridgefield resident. It was noted that his son, Huck Scarry, has agreed to create an illustrated map of downtown Ridgefield. The Commission agreed to send a letter expressing ECDC support for the initiative.

Commissioner-Elect Pamme Jones also reflected on the success of the recent Ridgefield 250th celebration events. This included The Lounsbury House event, which attracted strong participation across all age demographics, as well as the community event in Ballard Park, which was also well attended.

Executive Session:

Motion: Classey moved to enter Executive Session to discuss a confidential Gateway District commercial real estate matter.

Second: Gelfman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 8:26 PM.

Motion: Kearney moved to exit Executive Session.

Second: Gelfman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

The Commission exited Executive Session at 8:55pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.