



**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
Pamme Jones
Peter Kearney
David Perlmutter**

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

Meeting Minutes

Sept 14th 2026, at 6:30pm in Town Hall Large Conference Room

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 PM.

In attendance: Commissioners Corrin Arasa, Nadia Blair, James Classey (Secretary), Kay Gelfman (Vice Chair), Jenn Gioffre, Peter Kearney, Bob Knight (Chair), and David Perlmutter. Absent: Commissioner Pamme Jones. Consultant Jessica Medoff was in attendance as well. Guests Mark Riser and Mona Thorp were also in attendance.

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

Public Comment:

No Public Comment

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: Perlmutter moved to approve the August Meeting Minutes.

Second: Gioffre

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Commercial Real Estate Report & Tracking:

Commissioner Perlmutter met with the owners of ARC, who purchased 650 Danbury Rd., earlier in the summer. Perlmutter also met with a technology vendor, Zoom Prospector. They are a real estate platform used for GIS, demographic information, population, and income metrics to

help identify the best locations for business owners. Wilton is currently using this software. Perlmutter also mentioned that three commercial deals were signed in Ridgefield – two condo units at 90 Grove St. and the sale of 650 Danbury Rd.

Kearney and Perlmutter attended the Fairfield County Commercial Broker Network meeting this past month. Kearney has offered to host an event in Ridgefield on April 30th, 2027. Location to be confirmed closer to the date.

Community & Cultural District:

Commissioner Arasa attended her first Ascend meeting with Air Collaborative and the Office of the Arts. The working group educated the consultants on the challenges we face and the importance of building out Ridgefield's cultural economy. Two important topics discussed were identifying alternative funding options and the continued development of the Cultural District as a radiating economic hub for the town.

Arasa also reported that the CD Instagram is on fire, with 30k views for the ARC post and 100k views for the post inviting folks to spend a weekend in Ridgefield. The CD finalized its logo and applied for an encroachment permit to decorate the traffic boxes along the road. Waiting to hear back from the DOT.

Gateway District / Route 7 Gateway Updates:

Moving forward, we will be updating this agenda item title to: Sugar Hollow – as it was part of Sugar Hollow Turnpike.

Chair Knight will draft a letter to WestCOG sharing the ECDC's vision for an official Sugar Hollow District plan. Can they help identify a consultant and funding to develop the plan?

Commissioner Blair mentioned that most items from the Branchville Plan have been executed from the town's perspective. Any further development would be private and should happen organically.

The Commission circled back to traffic concerns from the business community on Danbury Rd. in Sugar Hollow and how Town and State officials are working toward progress on traffic safety. The ECDC is socializing an idea of an additional traffic light, reducing curb cuts, and introducing easements between properties to create connecting driveways, similar to Danbury Road in the Cops Hill area. This would be identified in the WestCOG plan, should it come to fruition.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation:

Tiger Shark Tank

Gelfman reported that interviews have begun for TST and will need to be completed by October 1st. We have over fourteen applicants and will narrow the field down to five finalists over the coming weeks.

Ridgefield Connect

On September 15th, the ECDC will host the next Ridgefield Connect event, spotlighting Prospector Popcorn at Nod Hill Brewery. We will tour the new popcorn manufacturing facility and will also be offered an opportunity to view Nod Hill's new brewing process.

Marketing & Administration:

Commissioner Gioffre inquired about the Ridgefield 250 Instagram account. She is looking to determine if there was a transition of ownership of the account.

Recap of Recent Events & New Business:

- Chair Knight has reached out to ECDC Chairs in neighboring towns, including Redding, Danbury, and Wilton, and will arrange a quarterly lunch to discuss regional/mutual economic development opportunities, and challenges particularly along the Route 7 corridor, news from each town, current initiatives, challenges, etc.
- A meeting conducted by WestCOG for Ridgefield, as part of the Regional CEDS plan was held today and was attended by Commissioners Arasa, Blair, Jones, and Kearney. One general takeaway was the importance of stakeholder alignment when creating and implementing overall economic plans throughout the towns. What can we be doing as a commission to build upon these relationships and encourage economic growth in our towns? One comment shared during the meeting from WestCOG was that Ridgefield's ECDC sets a high standard in the region. WestCOG pointed out that Ridgefield should begin working toward a cohesive economic development strategy, rather than department-by-department initiatives. Chair Knight asked that we begin thinking about how we can further deepen intra-governmental relationships across Ridgefield.
- Commissioner Arasa met with Ian Duncan regarding the CT Artisans program, and he would like to position CT as an artisan hub. He asked if we could offer Ridgefield as one of the starting points for the program. Arasa also mentioned that last year's Holiday Stroll was a huge success and will take place on the same day this year. It will expand to include other Cultural District establishments, such as the Keeler Tavern and St. Stephen's Church, where there will be a European-themed Holiday Bazaar.
- Chair Knight received a note from resident Michael Romano, who is seeking to purchase an existing business as an owner/operator.
- Founders Hall has requested that the ECDC participate in a tour of Founders Hall when availability permits.
- Chamber Executive Director Annie Fandl would like the ECDC to attend Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies. Chair Knight requested that the Chamber send ECDC e-mail communications about upcoming ribbon cuttings.
- A comment from the public: Mona Thorpe asked if we have anything set up for entrepreneurs and startups in town regarding helpful information when starting a business. As a five-time entrepreneur and business owner, she would like to see more resources available to help businesses and founders in town.
- There was a pause for a short Executive Session on a real estate matter (see below). After the Executive Session, Chair Knight informed the Commission that he has been

asked to speak in his official capacity about data centers at a telecommunications conference in New Orleans this November. In his professional life, he has data center expertise and is visible in the telecommunications industry. He wanted to go on the record to say that there are no plans whatsoever to either attract or build data centers in Ridgefield and his participation as a panelist was purely informational.

Executive Session:

Motion: Knight moved to enter Executive Session to discuss Real Estate Matters.

Second: Perlmutter

Vote: Unanimously approved.

The Commission entered Executive Session at 8:24pm.

The Commission exited Executive Session at 8:38pm and wrapped up the meeting.

Motion: Perlmutter moved to adjourn the meeting.

Second: Gelfman

Vote: Unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.