



**Ridgefield  
Economic &  
Community  
Development  
Commission**

400 Main Street • Ridgefield, CT 0687 • 203.546.2547 • [Ridgefielddevelopment.com](http://Ridgefielddevelopment.com)

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman

Geoffrey Morris, Chair  
Amanda Duff, Secretary  
Cameron Cole Carcelén  
Bob Knight  
Glori Norwitt

ECDC Meeting Minutes  
June 8, 2020 at 6:30pm  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

In Attendance: Geoffrey Morris, Amanda Duff, Bob Knight, Glori Norwitt

Guests: DeeDee Colabella, John Devine, Mike Rodgers

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Next meeting July 6, 2020, 6:30PM
2. Election of New Chair  
Amanda nominated Geoffrey Morris as the New Chair effective immediately; Glori seconded. Vote unanimous 4-0.
3. Geoffrey thanked John Devine for his years of service, time and effort on the ECDC, and all members extended similar thank yous.
4. Approval of May minutes without amendment. Motion to approve: Bob; Amanda seconded. Passed unanimously 4-0.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- a) ReOpen Ridgefield Task Force Update (Bob)
  - i) Task Force led by First Selectman Rudy Marconi and Selectman Bob Hebert. Bob represented ECDC and was part of a team to help interpret State of Connecticut COVID-19 reopening guidelines for Ridgefield's business community. The Task Force held two webinars with the business community to summarize reopening protocols and answer any questions/solicit feedback from the business community.

- ii) Task Force met a few times before May 20 Reopening (Phase I). Created reopening guidelines which are posted on ECDC website. Task Force has not reconvened since May 20. Waiting for guidance from Town Hall.
  - iii) DeeDee noted that she has heard questions from some in town: how many allowed now in a gathering? What is a summer camp versus a gathering versus a class?
  - iv) Bob noted that the First Selectman's office has a Hotline for all questions: 203-431-2718. Available 8:30am – 4:30pm, Monday – Friday.
  - v) Bob noted that ECDC website should create holding space for Phase II opening guidelines.
- b) EV Update: Town Vehicles, Chargers (Geoffrey)
- i) Charging unit behind Town Hall (free and about 7-8 years old) was repaired.
  - ii) New charging stations were not put into this year's Budget. Perhaps in the future there will be discretionary funds. It is anticipated that the cost of the charging stations will likely break even with usage.
  - iii) 2 pickup trucks which were in Town budget (not certain if they were kept in revised budget) - perhaps they could be electric vehicles.
  - iv) Someone could reach out to owner of CVS parking lot re installing private EV chargers. Erstadt Biddle is open to discussion.
- c) Cultural District Application Update (Glori)
- i) We are awaiting a date on BOS calendar, to have community input meeting and have the BOS pass a resolution to approve the Cultural District application.
- d) Our Town NEA Grant (Glori)
- i) John, Geoffrey and Glori met with Parks and Rec and spoke with Barbara Manners of CHIRP in order to learn of needed improvements to Ballard Park in order to improve the experience for CHIRP concertgoers. Improvements could include enlarging stage, covering stage with shell, improved lighting, added benches, and possibly tables and chairs in other section of park for parkgoers and people working on computers.
  - ii) Glori received notice from the NEA that these CHIRP improvements would be considered capital costs which are not funded through the Our Town grant.
  - iii) Glori will speak with Compassionate Ridgefield about possibly partnering to seek the Our Town grant for a community art project.
- e) General Marketing Update (John)
- i) For Covid19 guidelines: Reached about 90,000 organically and thru paid marketing. But no event marketing recently.
  - ii) Geoffrey: now may be a good time to market Ridgefield as a place to live. Bob agreed that the market is stronger now.
  - iii) Work the Ridge was successful, but closed due to Covid19.
- f) Ballard Green Alternative School: WiFi Grant (Bob)
- i) Aruba, division of HP is giving grants to Bridge the Digital Divide. Nodes outside of school where insufficient wifi connectivity. Board of Education Member Sean

McEvoy who works for Aruba notified ECDC of the Aruba grant opportunity. Sean was unable to directly connect ECDC with Aruba because it would have been a conflict-of-interest with this elected position, so he connected Bob with Superintendent and BOE Chair Margaret Stematis.

(1) Tiger Hollow one day?

(2) Alternative School near Ballard Park. ECDC encouraging Sean to look at Aruba grant to put wifi in Alternative School as a BOE project. Additional access points could cover Ballard Green or Ballard Park (for park guests to use and work in park). IT Director Drew and Rudy Marconi noted no Town Hall capacity to take on this Wifi network; this will hopefully be a BOE project.

(3) Bob sent letter to BOE Chair Margaret Stamatis and new Superintendent Dr. DaSilva.

g) CT Visit and Western CT Tourism Updates (Amanda)

- i) CT Visit promoting that businesses are updating their opening information and hours. Phase 2 will include hotels; as a result Ridgefield may have more visitors to the area soon.
- ii) Geoffrey: if we put together "Day in Ridgefield" marketing material, Western CT Tourism may promote it.
- iii) Promote Ridgefield as a place for hiking, with box lunches or museum visits before or after.
- iv) Bob suggested idea of creating a "Virtual Shopping Day" for Ridgefield, with virtual deals and one website to see the deals.
- v) DeeDee will get login credentials/access for the ECDC website. Art Schovy does most website work now.
- vi) Amanda will look to update deals from Mother's Day to be applicable to Father's Day.
- vii) Bob suggested getting more information from businesses re where there are problems re funding and/or reopening, and knowing when businesses locations may empty and thus need to be filled.  
DeeDee and Bob discussed an online survey, which can populate a dashboard. Questioned whether survey responses could be confidential; Bob and DeeDee will ensure that Town protocols/policies are followed.
- viii) John pointed out that there are approximately 7 empty spaces on Main Street.
- ix) Longterm planning: question of what may be new needs if more are shopping online.

h) Nonprofit Phase Two and Phase Three Openings (Geoffrey/Bob)

- i) Many organizations working hard to keep their base and have outdoor activities.
- ii) DeeDee Bow Wow Dog event- artists decorate, and dogs placed around town. Supplier of large dog stations closed. New plan for Summer 2021. Parade (walking map to see all statues). September auction; donations to ROAR and Aldrich.

i) New Business

- i) Glori will reach out to Rudy to learn status of possible \$2.8 million Trail Grant for LINC which would connect the Rec Center trails with downtown and the Rail Trail,

A motion was made by Glori to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. and seconded by Bob. Unanimous approval.