



**Ridgefield
Economic &
Community
Development
Commission**

400 Main Street • Ridgefield, CT 06877
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Arnold Light
Chair

John Collins
Robert DeFalco
John Devine
Mary L. Henwood
Alex Karsanidi
Paul Levine

Rudy Marconi,
First Selectman
Ridgefielddevelopment.com

Approved Meeting Minutes

Ridgefield Economic & Community Development Commission
November 7th, 2016, 6:00 pm
Small Conference Room

Present: Arnold Light (Chair), Mary Henwood, Robert DeFalco, John Devine, Paul Levine

Absent: John Collins, Alex Karsanidi

Guest: David Yagnesak

Arnold Light called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM

Minutes Taken by Mary Henwood

1. October Minutes were approved. (Motion: John Devine, Second: Paul Levine)
2. January Dinner Proposed
Arnold Light opened the meeting with invitation for the Commissioners and their spouses/significant others to meet for Dinner in January at a restaurant in town. All agreed would be a nice idea.
3. Arnold presented everyone with their own copy of SCRE final report dates 10/24/16

- SCRE recommends that the town implement the parking & retail plan.
 - Recommend hire a person for 20K to work part time from January to June FY 2016 to implement the Retail & Parking Implementation Plan .
 - Funding is being researched for a part time position- January 2017 to June 2017.
 - RECDC will request funding for a Part-time position in the budget for FY 2017-2018
 - Chair suggested that John Devine be a candidate responsible for this new position
 - Discussion around this role and the funding ensued and most were in favor.
4. P & Z meeting to discuss Branchville TOD meeting was attended by John Devine.
- Two state consultants presented the large-scale project.
 - Sewage for the site is a barrier.
 - To move forward they would have to install a sewage pipe for \$6 million or lease the sewage pipes Redding built for Georgetown which has excess capacity. Baseball field would be the leaching field.
 - They have access capacity since the Wire Mill project was never developed.
 - The Branchville project would have 300 town homes and 200 apartments with retail
 - The intersection at 102 and Rout 7 - entrance to the Branchville train - would be moved to fit the project.
 - Discussion around developing existing land parcels such as new Tusk n Cup or Little Pub could be starter projects.
 - It is unclear what resources are available for the project and if there is private investment available.
 - Next meeting in December to discuss the flood zone – 1st floor would have to be commercial.
5. Arnold proposed the creation of an Executive Committee.
- A sub group from the Commission comprised of Arnold Light, John Devine and Robert DeFalco would make up the committee.
 - This committee would “dig in” on the issues facing the RECDC and enable them to meet during normal business hours so that they could work on projects for the RECDC and report back to the commission on the project.
 - Paul Levine voiced that there may not be a need for an Executive Committee and suggested that if they need to meet, that they go ahead and do so to move things along
 - Some discussion ensued but Paul Levine and Mary Henwood were the only commissioners outside of John, Robert and Arnold who were present at the meeting so this should be reviewed with John Collins and Alex Karsanidi.
 - All agreed that all of the meetings and discussion in running the commission represents lots of hours and lots of hard work for the RECDC and these three members have done the bulk of that work and that they need an executive committee who can meet during business hours to make it function well. Some discussion about whether an executive committee made up of 3 commissioners is needed from a commission of 7 members. Much discussion about all the work for the RECDC website that Bob worked on as well as the leg work John Devine and Arnold have put in with local businesses such as Audrey Road.
 - Bob noted. that we have a 0 balance with the website vendor we hired and now we must pay \$80.00 an hour for all changes to the web. He suggested we be judicious with changes.

6. Mary Henwood proposed that the RECDC focus on talking with current and prospective businesses and see what we can do to help bring them to town and grow their business. All commissioners have also been meeting/and talking with business owners and agree. Mary's meetings with Casey Fuel, Mobile Rescue and others help to illustrate the needs that businesses have. Bob, John and Arnold all discussed how the aim of the new website is to automate the process on the new website so that it's easy for those who want to start a new business to know what to do, how to do it. All agree that is our focus to make Ridgefield a business friendly town.

John Devine gave examples of challenges with paying bills or getting permits for Audrey Road.

7. Ridgefield Economic & Community Development Commission – New name

- Arnold presented the new name and new logo designed by Design 99 LLC
- The logo will be on the website and on letterhead.

8. John Devine gave an update on vacant retail sites

- Dog and Poney – has new renter – experienced restaurateur
- Paul McNamara – Fairfield Bank – Fencing company under contract and possible pub moving in and breaking up into 2 leases.
- 50 Coins Wayne Biddle purchased the building, several possible parties interested in the space.
- Tom Tom's - maybe break up the space -pending tenant.
- Chamber space on Bailey has a possible tenant..

9. Battle of Ridgefield is scheduled for April 27, 2017

- Lead by Lions Club will close down main street with the reenactment
- John Devine and Others agreed that this is a terrific opportunity to promote Ridgefield
- Mary suggested contacting the Ridgefield/Wilton Daughters of the American Revolution as well as Ms. Kay Able the town historian for more background and for ideas for support.
- John will conduct more research on the event and how it can be enhanced.

10. Ridgefield Arts Council

The commission finished their meeting at 7:30 PM at which point they joined the Ridgefield Arts Council meeting and discussed ways that the two could work together. John presented the town website concept and functionality. Robert presented the concept and functionality of the RECDC. Much positive dialogue ensued. The Council provided a history of their website and their current use of a FB page. They are very interested in working with the town to have their webpages up and running for future growth and support. John Devine will attend the Generators meeting on Monday November 14, 2016

Adjourned at 8:30 pm