

At the August 12, 2020 Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:30pm via Zoom, a formal Public Hearing will be held for residents and business owners pertaining to a Cultural District being officially established in Ridgefield, pending an application to be submitted by the Ridgefield Economic and Community Development Commission to the State of CT. The ECDC will request that the Board of Selectmen pass a resolution supporting the ECDC application to the State.

Following the Board of Selectmen resolution, the Economic & Community Development Commission will be applying to the State DECD for an expanded area around downtown Ridgefield to be officially designated as a “Cultural District” pursuant to a recently passed law.

In the 2019 legislative session, a bill co-sponsored by State Representative John Frey was passed which allows municipalities to create a designated cultural district, in order to create awareness and promote economic development. If received, the “Cultural District” designation for our downtown will increase the visibility of the arts on the local level, and be promoted through state and local tourism.

The proposed Cultural District area holds a large number of cultural assets including but not limited to ACT, the Ridgefield Theatre Barn, the Ridgefield Guild of Artists, the Ridgefield Playhouse, the Ridgefield Historical Society, the Ridgefield Library, the Prospector Theater, CHIRP performances, the Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance, RPAC, Thrown Stone, Lounsbury House, the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Keeler Tavern, and the West Lane Inn. As required in the State application, these assets are “walkable” and in one continuous area. Also included within the Cultural District are a myriad of annual cultural activities such as quarterly Downtown festivals, RIFF, Jazz, Funk & Blues Weekend, the BBQ Festival, Pride in the Park, and numerous musical events at our churches, as well as several athletic events like Run Like a Mother and the Turkey Trot.

Numerous profit and nonprofit organizations have joined the ECDC’s Cultural District Subcommittee in order to support the application to the State. The subcommittee members are Glori Norwitt of the ECDC, Christine Carnicelli of the West Lane Inn, Emily Devoe of the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Alison Greeley of the Ridgefield Library, Hilde Grob of the Keller Tavern Museum & History Center, Barbara Manners of CHIRP, Jennifer DiLaura of the Ridgefield Arts Council, Geoffrey Morris of the ECDC and TownVibe Media, Gary Singer, Board member of the Ridgefield Historical Society, Allison Stockel of the Ridgefield Playhouse, Pam Stoddart of the Ridgefield Guild of Artists, Briggs Tobin of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission, and Jonathan Winn of Thrown Stone.

