



WRITTEN REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: January 12, 2021
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

This report serves as an update to Council on key projects, activities and community issues.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to a new year! I hope you and your families had a wonderful holiday season. Last year (2020) was challenging, to say the least. We had to make sacrifices in the ways we live, some of us unable to be with loved ones because of the risks COVID posed. We had to learn new ways of working from home, shopping, connecting with others and recreating safely.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those community heroes who go to work each day helping those who have contracted the virus to recover, keeping essential services and businesses open and educating our children. I couldn't be more grateful.

While I'm glad to see 2020 in the rearview mirror, I'm keeping in mind that there will, undoubtedly, be struggles in 2021. COVID-19 is not yet a thing of the past. With vigilance and new medical developments, it looks like we're starting to see a way out of these trying times.

I'd like to give a shoutout to the folks at Ouray County Public Health who are working diligently to roll out the COVID-19 vaccine to County residents. The hard work they have put in during the last 10 months is not lost on me and I'd like to request everyone's patience and understanding as they continue to navigate this latest phase of the pandemic and work to fine tune their process for efficient and effective vaccine administration.

I'd also like to give a shoutout to all Town employees for their hard work, and the flexibility and resilience they've shown over the last 10 months. I'm proud that we have been able to maintain our core services while providing needed COVID-19 community response efforts. I'm also proud of all we have accomplished. I encourage everyone to reflect on the work that has been accomplished and take pride in your own contributions toward making our community a better place.

Thank you to everyone for making the best of a difficult year. It's wonderful to be part of such a caring and engaged community. I look forward to venturing further into 2021 and the new experiences it will bring us.



CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND PROGRAM UPDATES

- Staff submitted the Town’s third request for reimbursement in the DOLA Grants Portal on December 12th.
- The “spend by” date for CARES Act funds was extended by way of the latest stimulus bill. The new deadline is December 31, 2021. All that remains on the Town’s Spending Plan is 1) a \$16,227 payment to Economic and Planning Systems for their work on developing an Economic Resiliency Plan for Ouray County, and 2) approximately \$8,500 for other COVID-19 response efforts/initiatives.
- The Town purchased approximately \$10,000 worth of PPE to augment the County’s initial PPE order of \$25,000. All of the purchased PPE was taken to the 4H Center and distributed to Ouray County businesses during the week of January 4th.
- The Town purchased six outdoor, propane-powered heaters that have arrived at Town Hall and are available for local business to lease.
- The Town purchased an air purifier for Town Hall.
- The Town of Ridgway partnered with the Colorado Restaurant Association to develop the *Town of Ridgway – Restaurant Support Program*. The program was intended to assist Ridgway-based restaurants that are experiencing financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic and various regulations that limit the number of customers in indoor spaces. Recipients could use grants funds towards any operational expenses to keep their restaurant open. The Town allocated \$20,000 for this program from our CARES Act funding allotment. The \$20,000 was divided among eligible grant applicants and distributed at the end of December. **I’d like to say a huge THANK YOU to Sonia Riggs, President & CEO of the Colorado Restaurant Association, and her team, for all their assistance in administering this program.**

CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Since January 4th, Ridgway Public Works has been offering curbside Christmas tree pick-up for Ridgway residents. The last day for this service is January 15th. All trees must have their lights, ornaments and tinsel removed and the Town will only pick up cut trees. Artificial or flocked trees, wreaths or seasonal debris are not being collected. Thank you to 3XM Grinding and Compost for assisting the Town in disposing of the trees.

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL OPERATIONS

Last month, the Town issued an official communication that reminds residents and businesses about snow and ice control operations in Ridgway. It goes into great detail about the Town’s



policies and procedures for when it snows. If you haven't seen it, you can check it out by clicking [HERE](#).

CLERK'S OFFICE UPDATE

From Pam Kraft, Town Clerk:

Update on 2021 Annual Election

The Town's annual election process begins with the nomination period from February 1st thru February 19th. Four seats will become available. These are currently held by Angela Ferrelli, Eric Johnson, Beth Lakin and Russ Meyer. The election will be held on April 6th.

Annual Concert Series and Love Your Valley Festival

Planning is underway for the annual Concert Series and Love Your Valley Festival. There are five Thursdays this July, so there will be five shows. Two of the headliners were already booked last January and due to the cancellation of the series, chose to extend the contract to this year. As always, the names of the performers will not be disclosed until the spring. *Of course, the status of these events will be monitored and updated in accordance with CDPHE's COVID-19 Dial framework and any other state and local public health orders.*

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES UPDATE

From Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator:

Ridgway Space to Create Predevelopment

Coordination meetings continued with Artspace, the design team, and Town personnel, with breaks for the holidays. The permit application to the Town for the facility continues to be in process. Funding applications that were submitted by Artspace have also been in process. It does not look like the Colorado Health Foundation will fund the project, and the Telluride Foundation is likely to provide a grant for \$25,000. Additional fundraising will be required. Artspace and Town staff attended a Montrose County Housing Authority (MCHA) board meeting on December 9 to update them on the project and confirm their continued interest in acting as a limited special partner to qualify for tax exemption since Ouray County does not have a local housing authority to offer this. Artspace will develop a limited partnership agreement with MCHA. Final payment for predevelopment services was processed to Artspace with a final reimbursement requested from the State Department of Local Affairs. Financial closings are still anticipated in the first quarter of 2021 with the construction process beginning soon afterward. A few Facebook postings about Space to Create with architectural renderings attached generated significant community conversation in the form of questions, concerns and support, especially related to the lack of an elevator in the plans and some form of local preference in the selection of applicants.



Heritage Park/Visitor Center Improvements

A new ad hoc stakeholder group composed of Town Councilors (John Clark, Kevin Grambley, Beth Lakin and Terry Schuyler), Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce board members, businesses, and other community representatives is being developed with facilitation costs covered by Colorado Main Street technical assistance. The need for this group emerged as an outcome of the Town Council and Chamber board visit to Heritage Park and Visitor Center and subsequent Council meeting. Further discussions are needed about 5-year planning for the site, especially regarding the Visitor Center options presented in the Heritage Park/Visitor Center Strategic Master Plan (available at <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/sites/townofridgway/files/2019-06-06%20%28RidgwayHeritagePark-StrategicPlan-smaller%29.pdf>).

RCD Creative Advocacy Team

Betsy Baier and Brenda Ratcliff are stepping down from their roles as Chair and Vice-Chair of the C.A.T., after 3 years and 2-1/2 years respectively of active leadership. Betsy is also leaving the C.A.T. They deserve big rounds of applause for their steady contributions! The group's energy and membership has waned during the pandemic, in part due to the difficulty of holding events and completing objectives during this time, leading to discussion of reorganization in a new form (on Town Council agenda). Additional sanitizer, purchased through the Business Grant earlier in the year, was distributed door-to-door to downtown businesses by C.A.T. volunteers in holiday garb.

Colorado Main Street (COMS) Annual Visit

On December 17, COMS staff met virtually with Town Council representatives, staff, and volunteers to review the past year and look toward 2021. Despite the challenges of 2020, the list of accomplishments in Ridgway was larger than one would expect, including funding for Space to Create and progress on the predevelopment process, becoming a Graduate level Main Street community, and supporting our businesses in various ways through this time. One of Ridgway's historic buildings submitted an application to be selected for the Heritage Energy Pilot Project, a new program through COMS to maximize available incentives for energy efficiency and historic preservation. Only two buildings will be chosen by COMS in January from the applicants for this program.

Structure Fire in Creative Main Street District

Communications have taken place with both the building owner and the business owner involved in the December 16 fire on Clinton St. Potential resource links and connections to particular contacts were provided to them, as well as condolences, for the huge losses involved at many levels. This historic building and the local business that was inside it are beloved by many, and the community is feeling the pain and wanting to provide support.



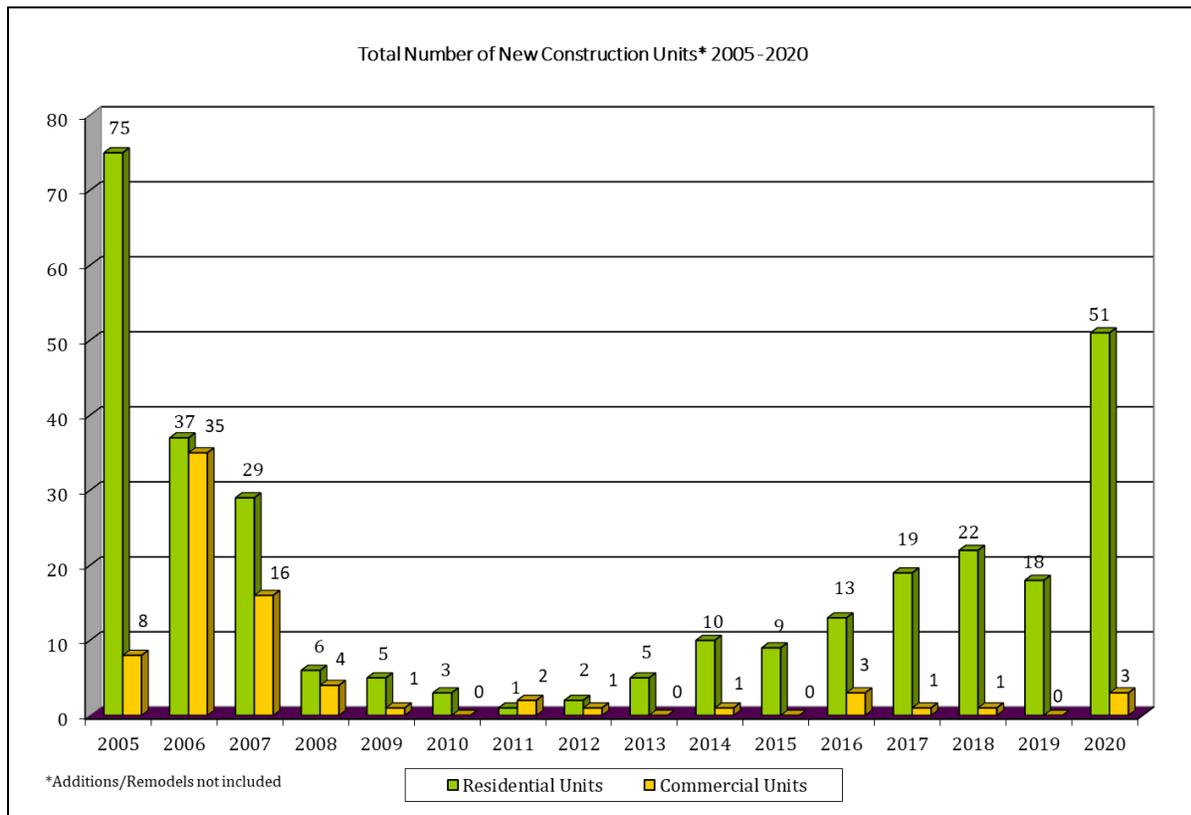
PLANNING UPDATE

From Shay Coburn, Town Planner:

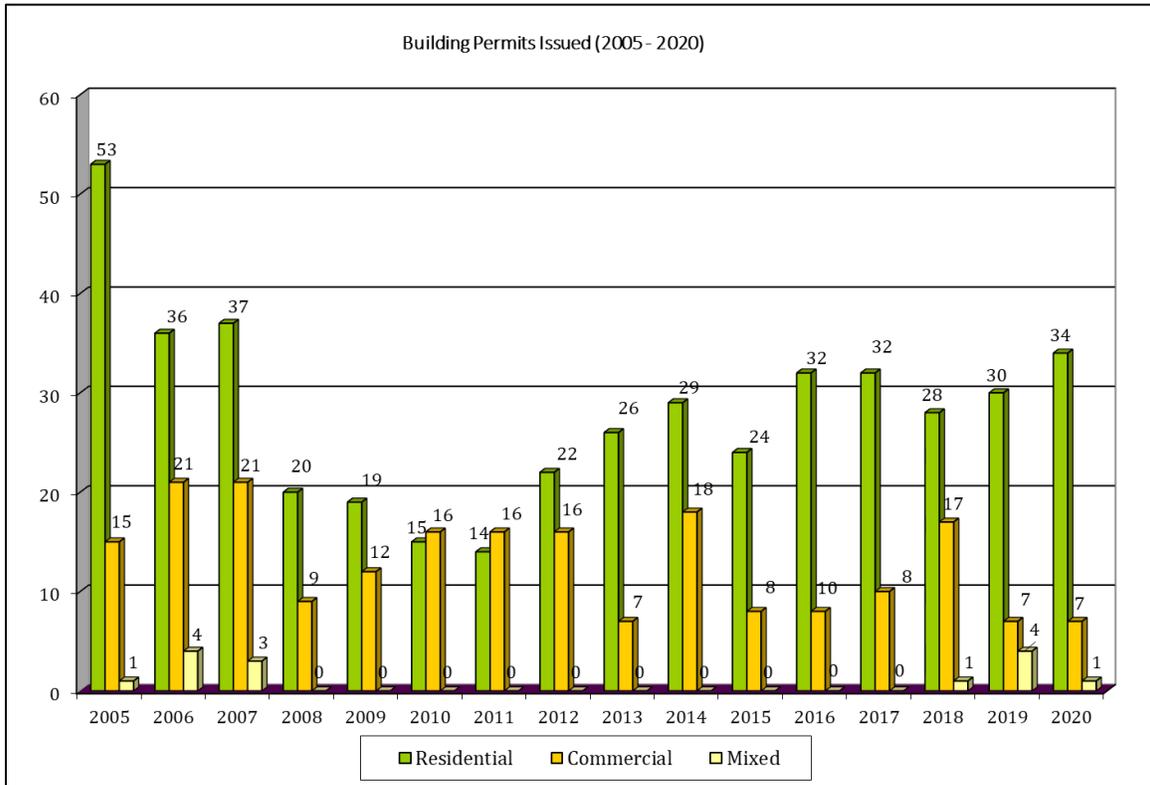
2020 Building Permit Summary

New Construction and Building Permit Activity

2020 saw a slight increase in the total number building permits issued and a significant increase in the total number of new units. The number of permits and units appears to be continuously increasing since the lows in 2010-2013 toward the highs witnessed in 2005. The number of units increased by 200% from last year with a total of 54 new units in 2020 and only 18 in 2019. While the Space to Create project accounts for 30 of those new units, there would still be an increase without this significant project.

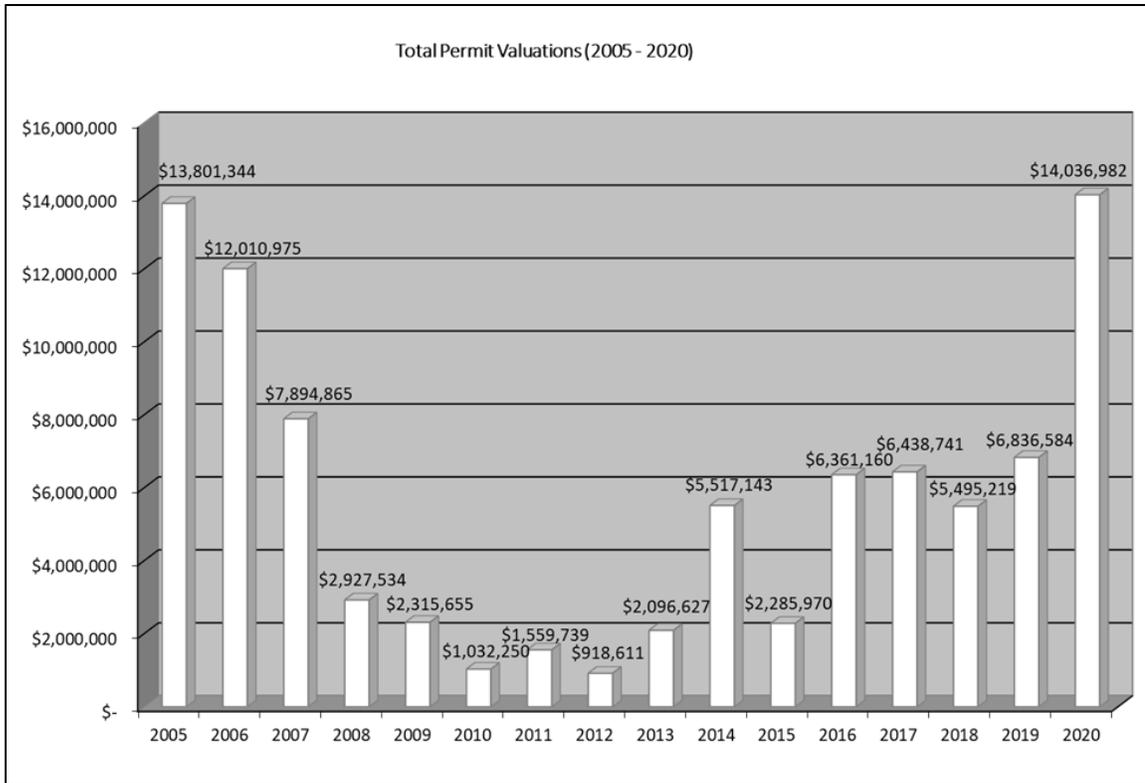


** note that this data is based upon new units only and does not include renovations or additions*



Total Permit Valuation

Building permit valuations reveal the value and generally the type of construction activity that is occurring. Higher valuations generally indicate more, higher value new construction while lower valuations often indicate more remodels, additions and other smaller projects. The total valuation for 2020 is the highest in Town history since tracking began in 1999. The last high occurred in 2005 at \$13.8 million with 2020 coming in at just over \$14 million. This high valuation is mostly due to the Space to Create project with a valuation of \$7.8 million. Without the Space to Create project, the valuation this year would be just under the 2019 value.



Building Permit Fees

Permit fees were estimated to be \$50,000 in 2020 and were projected near the end of 2020 to come in at about \$74,000. This amount doesn't account for the Habitat for Humanity triplex project and the Space to Create project where permit fees were waived. If those were included, the final amount would be closer to \$105,000. The highest the total building permit fees have been since 2006 when they total \$138,306 is 2017 at \$84,250. The 2021 adopted budget estimates building permits to come in at \$55,000.

Landscaping Regulations Update

The Planning Commission continues to work on the updating the Town's landscaping regulations. The big picture goals of the update are to promote water conservation, ensure the costs of landscaping are not a barrier to affordability, align the two sections that regulate landscaping (RMC 6-1-11 and 6-6), and generally allow for flexibility. A recommendation from the Commission will be forwarded to the Council when ready, hopefully in the next few months.



UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting** – January 13, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Regular Town Council Meeting** – January 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **Special Joint Policy Group Work Session** – January 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – January 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom
- **COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting** – January 27, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **County-wide Planning Commissioner Training** – February 3, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via a virtual meeting platform
- **First meeting of the Ridgway Visitor Center and Heritage Park Subcommittee** – February 3, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom

JOKE OF THE DAY

Did you hear that Arnold Schwarzenegger will be doing a movie about classical music?

He'll be Bach.