



Ridgway Creative District Creative Advocacy Team • (RCD CAT)



Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2021

3:00 – 5:00 pm on Zoom

C.A.T. Members in attendance: Betsy Baier, Joan Chismire, Amanda Gabrielson, Andy Nasisse, Kevin Grambley; **Staff:** Diedra Silbert (chairing), Karen Christian (minutes); **Guests:** Vanessa and Bruce Backer

The focus of this meeting was to gather community input to assist in transitioning the RCD C.A.T. to a new stakeholder group that merges further and more inclusively with Ridgway Main Street.

1) Call to Order - @ 3:01p.m by Diedra; per agenda, the focus of this meeting was to further discuss steps toward transitioning the RCD C.A.T. to a new stakeholder group that merges further and more inclusively with Ridgway Main Street.

2) Agenda Review – no additions or deletions

3) Approval of 1/19 Minutes* - approved via consensus

4) Review of Community Engagement Document – Diedra had emailed a Draft Proposal on *Community Engagement for Ridgway Creative Main Street* to the CATs before the meeting. Diedra noted the document was shared with the stakeholders invited to the meeting today, as well as the Chamber of Commerce Marketing Director, Hilary Lewkowitz, and asked the CATs for feedback about the document. The group discussed how to help businesses feel included in this new effort who may think they were excluded from RCD’s efforts by virtue of not being classified as “creative.” (Examples: realtors, liquor stores, banks, etc.) It was recommended to invite business representatives who might have felt disconnected from RCD to a meeting to receive a better understanding of how their businesses tie into this new effort. The Team agreed the document is helpful. Diedra thanked Brenda for her suggestions which were included in it. The group brainstormed a list of business owners to invite.

5) Discussion about Proposed Concept with Invited Visitors – Sue Husch and Amanda Swain had also been invited to this meeting but were unable to attend, though interested. Vanessa and Bruce Backer, sculptural lighting artists and soon-to-be Ridgway business owners, were invited as guests to provide feedback about merging the RCD and Main Street initiatives. Diedra posed the following questions for discussion with them:

1. What have you appreciated about the Town’s RCD or Main Street efforts?

Vanessa and Bruce were quick to mention outdoor events that normally occur such as the Concert Series and events with street closures. They commented the town was visibly improved by the RAMP project with the benches, flowers, and streetscape. Vanessa and Bruce are also excited about the new library renovation, proposed culinary school, and residential developments. They have lived here part-time for decades and appreciate the ways that Ridgway has developed recently.

2. What would you like to see offered through the two initiatives to help with downtown vibrancy?

Vanessa and Bruce hope to see more frequent outdoor and on-the-streets activities, pop-ups, markets, music on the streets, closed off streets, more little surprises in the alleys, like Alley Poems, and interesting window displays on the alley in their new business in the

historic Herran House. They described their business as more of an installation space than a traditional art gallery.

3. What is important to you as the community moves forward post-pandemic?

Vanessa and Bruce stated that they are excited for people partying in the street and finally being together outside after all this. They will be planning an opening event for their new business and said they could use help promoting the business opening. A variety of ideas were suggested by the whole group: providing seminars, group marketing efforts, including non-profits, sanitizer stations around town, bringing people into different outdoor areas to do things together like art in the soccer fields or by the river, and chalk parties.

4. Are there any other concerns or thoughts?

Signage that gets people into the nooks and crannies of our town. Buildings should “tell their historic tales.” A notification as people drive into Ridgway suggesting they stop to check out what’s happening. Make Ridgway even more of a walking town.

5. Are we moving in the right direction by combining RCD and Main Street?

Vanessa and Bruce agreed the initiatives should be combined from their perspective and had been confused about all the different groups (RCD, C.A.T., Main Street) and what they do. Diedra clarified that RCD and Main Street are both about community engagement and a vibrant downtown. She further explained RCD has geographic boundaries (which are the same for Main Street) and the initiatives include the downtown and River Park Light Industrial businesses but currently not the businesses to the east of the river. The C.A.T. has been the citizen engagement piece to RCD. The Main Street initiative is about creating a great downtown environment, utilizing vacant space and buildings, and offering an environment and resources to help businesses succeed. The RCD focus is on creative businesses, organizations and individuals, while the Main Street focus is on all businesses. Vanessa and Bruce expressed interest in being part of the new group. *(Note: No process has been determined yet to apply for this.)*

7) Draft Purpose Statement review – Diedra asked the team to review the document for discussion at the March meeting, and she will edit it based on comments received.

8) Next Steps-Facilitation Opportunity – Diedra explained that Colorado Main Street offered to provide a facilitator to help the Team develop the new stakeholder group. The CATs agreed a facilitator would be helpful. Diedra will arrange for this.

9) Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.