



Ridgway Creative Main Street Group

Meeting #1 Report

Tuesday, May 11, 2021
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Attendance

Alison Etheridge – Remote worker
Amanda Gabrielson – CAT, Creative
Arielle Bielak – Creative (“ARRRIelle”)
Brenda Ratcliff – CAT, Creative
Clifford Pastor
Guthrie Castle – Nonprofit board member, Creative
Hilary Lewkowitz – Chamber Staff
Jill McCord - Creative
Joan Chismire – CAT, Nonprofit Rep, Creative

Kevin Grambley – Town Council Rep, CAT
Tammee Tuttle – Business/building owner, culinary Creative
Vanessa Backer – Business/building owner, Creative
Brian Hoefling – Forest Service
Preston Neill, Town Manager
Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator
Sheryl Trent, COMS Consultant (notes)

Not in attendance: Greg Everhart (*couldn't connect*), Sue Husch, Michi Countryman

Purpose of the meeting

The purpose of this first meeting of the Ridgway Creative Main Street Group was to learn a bit about each other, share information about the history of Ridgway Main Street and Ridgway Creative District (RCD) (now merged as Creative Main Street), learn more about Main Street and Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) at the state level, brainstorm some Vision components for the downtown, and share ideas and thoughts.

Background on Main Street and Creative District

Diedra gave a comprehensive overview of Ridgway Creative Main Street and the merger of the Main Street and Creative District ideas. From the start, the Town’s intention has been to encourage a strong, local economy and strong community with all its sectors aligned toward a unified creative downtown. She also covered the projects that Main Street has accomplished over the years through photos and updates of the work, including four multi-year efforts. The Town of Ridgway has utilized its Creative District and Main Street initiatives for purposes of community development and economic vitality under the leadership of the Town Council, Town Manager, and Community Initiatives Facilitator since 2012.

Guided by the Town's Master Plan, both community initiatives seek to develop a vibrant and thriving downtown. The RCD has focused on a broad group of individuals and businesses defined as "Creatives." Main Street aims to serve the entire downtown business community and property owners. The work plans for both Town initiatives have overlapped significantly in the last few years and have been merged administratively, for the most part, as Ridgway Creative Main Street. The Town has supported both initiatives since their inception in 2012 with budget and staff. Ridgway was certified by CCI as a creative district in 2013, after one year as a prospective district, and recertified for five more years in 2018. Starting as a Colorado Main Street Candidate community in 2012, Ridgway became a Designated community in 2014, and achieved Graduate status in 2020.

Past Achievements

This new group will build on achievements of the Ridgway Creative District and Main Street initiatives since their beginnings in 2012. The following examples might inspire future action:

Town and Creative District logos	Meet and Greet events
MoonWalks/MoonTalks	Heritage Park Improvements planning
Ridgway First Fridays	Collaborations with Ridgway Area Chamber, Sherbino, Weehawken, etc.
Bridge and N. Lena/Hwy. 62 sculptures	Ridgway Independent Film Festival
RAMP Up Ridgway furnishings	Communications with business owners
Space to Create support and artwork	Support for Old West Fest
Wayfinding signage and maps	Exhibits of locals' creativity
Colorado Creative Corridor	Support for Ridgway Noel Nights
Participation in Town planning	

Sheryl covered Colorado Main Street program history, Four Pillars, and Transformation Strategies, and the basics of both Main Street and Creative Districts. Both State programs offer annual funding opportunities to the Town for projects connected to the work plans of these initiatives. State funding usually totals about \$22,000 per year, plus at least a \$15,000 value in technical assistance annually. Both State programs have offered financial and technical support to this reorganization process, if desired. In addition, the ability to leverage the Town's involvement in these programs contributed to Ridgway's selection for and funding of Ridgway Space to Create, a \$10 million, 30-unit workforce housing development breaking ground in 2021, as well as the funding for the RAMP Up Ridgway downtown sculptures and amenities completed in 2017.

Focus and Purpose of the Group

The Ridgway Creative Main Street Group merges two Town initiatives, Ridgway Creative District and Ridgway Main Street, into one community engagement effort to benefit the downtown district (the first ever in the state under one roof!). Through the Town, this new group is associated with Colorado Creative Industries and Colorado Main Street at

the State level, with both programs offering technical assistance, certification, and some funding for the district. The Group is appointed by the Town Council and is advisory in nature. Diedra staffs the Group to help guide conversations, facilitate the Creative Main Street budget process, implement the work plan, and ensure all the requirements of the state of Colorado are being met.

Vision for the Future of Downtown

The Group brainstormed their Vision for the future of downtown Ridgway by asking and answering three questions:

1. What does it feel like?
2. What does it look like?
3. What will we do?

What does it feel like?

- Sense of exploration
- Alleys, out of the way spots, come upon by surprise
- Fun stuff to find
 - Poetry
- Like it is a discovery, a surprise
- Accessible
- Approachable
- Sense of excitement and wonder
- Desire to explore new things
- Engage with new things when you come into town
- Spark curiosity – want to check that out, that is cool
- Fun
- Colorful
- Busy
- Windy/curvy feel to the way you can explore it
- Murals and art
- Carry forward: warm, community, engaged in creating the space, I could be engaged
- Organically cohesive vibe, not planned like a resort town, not too stiff
- Distinct and authentically Ridgway personality
- Do not want it to feel like a fortress for millionaires (like Vail or Telluride)

What does it look like? What do you see?

- Mobile home is gone (the one next to Provisions), maybe a multi-use lot
- More paved roads
- More things happening
- Climate conditions will change the landscaping (vegetation)

- Water usage will change
- Restaurants
- Shops
- Multi-use lots
- Fewer parks
- Taller buildings (redevelopment)
- Denser development, more space
- Make sure we maintain the railroad and ranching history, supporting the mining towns
- Keeping historical buildings
- East of 550 more happening
- Near Chipeta more happening
- Town/Hartwell Park is a focal point for downtown

What will we do?

- ✓ Go to Jill's house
- ✓ Be outside
- ✓ Hit the Ranch History Museum
- ✓ Railroad Museum
- ✓ Complex of museums
- ✓ River walks
- ✓ RAT trails
- ✓ Specialty hikes
 - Flowers
- ✓ Eat out all weekend
 - Amazing eateries
- ✓ Restaurant tours/eating tours
 - Have enough
- ✓ Visiting artists' studios
 - Round town
 - Space to Create
- ✓ Mural Walks
- ✓ Biking tours
- ✓ Running tours
- ✓ More heritage into the town
 - Sculptures
 - Hands-on learning to appreciate the past
- ✓ Rodeo
- ✓ World class restaurants
- ✓ Riverside patios
- ✓ Visit businesses
 - New: lots of good sustainability and environmental friendliness
- ✓ Cooking schools

- ✓ Mobility increased
- ✓ Art classes
- ✓ School for the arts, like Anderson Ranch

Next Meeting

The next meeting for the Ridgway Creative Main Street Group will be held on Tuesday, May 18th via Zoom (link to follow in a separate email). A number of members preferred to still meet by Zoom, instead of in person. The general topics of conversation will include:

Information Items

- Financial Structure

- Budget – around \$15,000

- Line Item

- Use It or Lose It

- Revenues

- Expenditures

- Structure of the Creative Main Street Group

- Advisory to the Town Council

- Committees

- By Laws

- Leadership

- Possibilities for Projects

- Open Discussion