



WRITTEN REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor Clark and Ridgway Town Council
From: Preston Neill, Town Manager
Date: October 11, 2021
RE: **Town Manager's Report**

INTRODUCTION

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

RIDGWAY SPACE TO CREATE PROJECT RECEIVES STATE'S FIRST COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION GRANT

In late September, Colorado Creative Industries, a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, announced the first Colorado Community Revitalization Grant award has been designated for Ridgway's Space to Create Project! The grant was established in Senate Bill 21-252, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Steve Fenberg and Minority Leader Chris Holbert and signed into law by Governor Jared Polis. The Colorado Community Revitalization Grant provides gap funding for projects in creative districts, historic districts, main streets or neighborhood commercial centers. The grant opportunity is intended to support creative projects that combine creative industry workforce housing, commercial spaces, performance space, community gathering spaces, childcare centers, and retail partnerships for the purpose of economic recovery and diversification by supporting creative sector entrepreneurs, artisans, and community non-profit organizations.

NEW PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE OPERATOR HIRED

I'm pleased to announce the hiring of Bobby Barnes as Public Works Maintenance Operator 1! Bobby worked for the Town this summer as a Parks Seasonal Employee. The Public Works Department had a vacancy that was created when Chase Jones left last winter/spring. As per the Town's Personnel Regulations, staff endeavored to fill the position internally prior to releasing a general advertisement for the position. As a seasonal employee, Bobby demonstrated a tremendous work ethic and that he's a great team player. We are thrilled to have him as a regular member of our team!

2021 BALLOT MEASURES

Three initiatives were certified for the upcoming ballot. They are as follows:

- Proposition 119 would create an out-of-school education program and increase the marijuana sales tax rate to partially fund the program.



- Proposition 120 would reduce property tax rates and authorize the state to retain \$25 million in revenue above the state's TABOR spending cap for five years, which it would otherwise be required to refund to taxpayers.
- Amendment 78 would transfer the power to appropriate custodial funds (state revenue not generated through taxes) from the state treasurer to the state legislature.

Once the Colorado Municipal League Executive Board has voted to take positions on the three initiatives appearing on the November 2021 statewide ballot, I will forward those positions to Council.

ANNUAL REPORT TO INTERNATIONAL DARK-SKY ASSOCIATION

In July of 2020, the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) named Ridgway as an addition to the IDA Dark Sky Places Program. Ridgway became the second IDA “Dark Sky Community” on the Western Slope of Colorado and only the third in the State.

As a condition of the continued accreditation of International Dark Sky Places, IDA asks that each place submit a report on activities related to dark skies by October 1st of each year. The annual reports are important to the relationship between IDA and their International Dark Sky Places. It’s an opportunity to check in each year and let IDA know about events and progress toward improving nighttime conditions, as well as whether there are any problems or ways in which IDA can help. IDA mines the annual reports for information and success stories that they can share with their membership and the world through their member communications and social media.

Val Szwarc and Dave Jones of the Ridgway Ouray Community Council’s Dark Sky Committee spearheaded the development of this year’s annual report, which was finalized and submitted to IDA in late September in advance of the submittal deadline. *While there are a variety of folks who contributed to the report, Val and Dave deserve the most thanks and recognition!*

CDOT MEETING RECAP

Last month, Marshal Schmalz and I met with Julie Constan, Region 5 Transportation Director, and Jennifer Allison, Traffic and Safety Program Engineer, to get their perspective on the Hwy 62 speeding issue and talk through potential speed mitigation tactics/devices that could be deployed. It was a great meeting with a variety of outcomes. First, Jennifer said she would provide us with an estimate for permanent, solar-powered speed radar signs to install on both sides of the highway. The estimate has been procured and the cost for two signs has been proposed in the Draft 2022 Fiscal Year Budget. Second, Jennifer and Julie committed to present options to CDOT headquarters on additional advisory signage or any changes in signage to help with speeding vehicles on westbound and eastbound Hwy 62. Finally, they committed to talking with CDOT headquarters about added temporary pedestrian signs on both sides of Hwy 62 and the prospect of adding medians on either side of town. Stay tuned!



AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES GRANT PROGRAM

HB21-1271 created three new programs to offer grant money and other forms of state assistance to local governments to promote innovative solutions to the development of affordable housing across the state. The Affordable Housing Development Incentives Grant Program provides grants to local governments to develop one or more affordable housing developments in their community that are liveable, vibrant, and driven by community benefits. These incentive grants can help cover tap fees, infrastructure, parks/playgrounds and other needs and amenities that support the affordable housing project. Local governments are encouraged to pick one or two shovel-ready projects that can spend all of the funds by June 2024 and provide gap funding. Projects must provide community benefits (e.g., covering tap fees or infrastructure costs for an affordable housing project and/or with a childcare center, for example). A small portion can be used for needs and amenities in the neighborhood where the affordable housing development is located. To qualify, local governments must adopt at least three strategies from the menu of policy and regulatory options listed in the program guidelines.

Staff has talked with DOLA's Community Development Office about this program, and it appears that the Town may already be qualified based on the policy work and code changes that have been enacted in recent years. As directed by Council, staff will continue working with Telluride Foundation staff and DOLA reps to prepare a Letter of Interest for the first application round of the Affordable Housing Development Incentives Grant Program. The due date is November 1st.

MONTHLY SPACE TO CREATE PROJECT UPDATE WITH STRYKER & COMPANY

Each month, the Town hosts a virtual project update meeting on the Ridgway Space to Create Project. The next meeting will take place on October 27th at 5:30 p.m. Reps from Stryker & Company, the contractor for the project, attend each meeting to provide the updates and answer questions. The recurring Zoom meeting information can be found below. To read the blog tracking these public meetings during the construction process, visit <https://ridgways2c.blogspot.com/>. For more background information on this project, visit <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/i-want-to/space-to-create-ridgway>.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81166252778?pwd=VElvVWZOYllwSXY5ajRBZzhraY2UT09>

Meeting ID: 811 6625 2778

Passcode: 778450

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US

+1 312 626 6799 US

STAFF TRANSITIONS AT RIDGWAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Hilary Lewkowitz has moved on from the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce (RACC) after accepting a position with the Colorado Tourism Office as their new Destination Development Manager. Her new position makes her the main point of contact with Ridgway for any future



state tourism grant or partnership opportunities. We enjoyed working with Hilary and while we're sad to see her go, we'd like to congratulate her and wish her the best in her new role!

Ashley Perkins is now serving as RACC's Interim Director. She had been serving on RACC's Board of Director's for the past two years. We look forward to working with Ashley!

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP RE AMELIA STREET PRELIMINARY DESIGN

On October 21st at 6:00 p.m. Council will hold a Workshop to review a preliminary design for Amelia Street from Sabeta Dr. on the south to the north end of Yates Subdivision. The Town's engineering consultant, Consolidated Consulting Services, Inc., has done a tremendous amount of work in producing the current design iteration. Work completed to date includes a topographic survey, ownership mapping, modeling of existing conditions and identification of encroachments. The design includes curb, gutter/valley pan, sidewalk, asphalt, and ADA elements.

On September 20th, the Town mailed a letter to a number of Amelia Street residents to inform them about the workshop and the design work to-date. We want them to have an opportunity to learn more about long-term impacts of this project and specific impacts to their property based on the current design. A few of the residents have already reached out to staff to arrange individual meetings to review and talk through the design in advance of the Workshop.

OURAY RECREATION AND CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

In June 2021, the Ouray Recreation and Conservation Alliance (ORCA) was awarded a \$60,000 grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Grand Outdoors Colorado.

ORCA will collaborate to dramatically expand land, water and wildlife conservation as well as advance their shared goals of outdoor recreation, natural resource management, priority setting, and planning for our surrounding areas. The necessity of managing visitors and maintaining infrastructure to provide a positive outdoor experience while limiting resource impacts, has been identified as a top priority. ORCA strives to strengthen public and private relationships and collaborate in their efforts to connect more people to on-the-ground activities, enhancing habitat restoration and conservation.

ORCA is comprised of regional partners, including Ouray County, the City of Ouray, Town of Ridgway, Gunnison County, Hinsdale County, Ridgway State Park, the Ouray Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, the Bureau of Land Management, the Uncompahgre Field Office, and the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership.

The official ORCA kickoff event was held on September 21st at Ridgway State Park. It was a great meeting with a number of takeaways. The next meeting is currently being scheduled and it looks like it will be held on either Thursday, October 28th or Friday, November 12th. I'll let you all know once the meeting date and time are confirmed.



SHORT TERM RENTAL WORKING GROUP

In late July, Ouray County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) related to short term rental (STR) enforcement, as they are seeking a firm to assist its Land Use Department in monitoring and enforcing STRs in the unincorporated area of Ouray County pursuant to Ouray County Ordinance 2018-003. Ouray County invited the Town of Ridgway and City of Ouray to also consider STR enforcement services. The County received three separate proposals by the August 18th submittal deadline.

An STR Enforcement Working Group, comprised of representatives from Ouray County, the City of Ouray, and the Town of Ridgway, was convened to review the three proposals and to recommend one contractor. The Working Group held a meeting to collectively discuss the proposals and then held a separate meeting to interview two of the proposing firms. Each company delivered a presentation on their products and services and the Working Group had an opportunity to ask questions. The Working Group considered pricing, service features, customer references, and company experience in their evaluations.

Currently, the Working Group is finalizing a recommendation to deliver to the Board of County Commissioners later this month. All of this will be discussed in greater detail for final direction from you all during the Town Council Budget Retreat on October 23rd.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES UPDATE

From Diedra Silbert, Community Initiatives Facilitator:

Ridgway Space to Create

At the September 23rd celebration of progress on construction of the Space to Create facility, Tim Schultz, who chairs the Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) Advisory Council, made a big announcement about our project to the approximately 150 people present. Ridgway Space to Create was awarded \$2M in the first award made by CCI from the Community Revitalization Grant Fund, recently created by the State legislature. These funds finalize the facility's construction package, and Andrew Michaelson of Artspace announced that, barring unforeseen difficulties, the facility should be ready for tenants by mid-summer 2022! Walls are going up already, so if you've not stopped by the site lately, it's worth a look.

Please thank these people who generously contributed to the community celebration:

- Music and sound by Heather & Douglas and David Nunn
- An opening poem by Erika Moss Gordon
- A community art activity led by Kellie Day (with advance preparation help from volunteers Ashley Perkins and Arielle Bielak)
- Food by Taco del Gnar and El Agave Azul Mexican Restaurant



- Youth dance by Weehawken Creative Arts (thanks to Natasha Pyeatte and the dancers!)
- The speakers, especially Ashley King-Grambley (also Tim Schultz, Andrew Michaelson, Chris Lopez from the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, and Chantal Unfug from the State Department of Local Affairs)
- Beer and wine from Colorado Boy and Ridgway Liquors
- Flatbed stage from Eric Dickerson
- Water and electricity access from Stryker & Co.
- Assistance with set-up and serving from Creative Main Street volunteers Jill McCord, Arielle Bielak, Alison Etheridge, Joan Chismire, and Brenda Ratcliff (also Jim Courson, Preston Neill, and Andrew Michaelson)
- Assistance from Mayor John Clark in all aspects of planning and set-up!
- Great customer support from Alpine Events and Sani-Serve

Public construction update meetings continue to assist with understanding the work that Stryker & Co. are doing on the lot. The next virtual meeting will be October 27th at 5:30p. A blog with a synopsis of each meeting can be found here: <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/i-want-to/space-to-create-ridgway>.

Heritage Energy Pilot Project

The Town has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from Colorado Main Street's Main Street Open for Business Grant in collaboration with the historic Bank Building team. This grant will be utilized for façade and energy efficiency improvements on that building's south and west exterior walls. The planned improvements are currently being reviewed by History Colorado, and work is expected to be authorized shortly.

Ridgway Roundup

The Creative Main Street Group, especially volunteer Alison Etheridge, organized Ridgway Roundup in support of Ridgway Old West Fest on Friday, September 24th. Businesses stayed open late, and six musicians shared their talents: Mark Berenson, "Red Dirt Compadres" (Guy Poulin and Anna Tewes), David Nunn, "Perfesser Blue" (David LeBlanc), and Ken Miller. Despite sparse attendance by Old West Fest guests and others, the music did enliven downtown to a certain degree.

Ridgway Independent Film Fest

Nearly 90 short film submissions were received by the October 1st deadline for this two-evening festival to be held in-person at the Sherbino, November 12th and 13th. A team of local judges is reviewing films to select those that will be shown. Award winners from that group will be selected by five professional judges this year: Taylor Rees, Craig Childs, Renan Ozturk, Peter O'Fallon, and Michael Stipes. The audience will also select an award winner from each evening showing. Because of the fundraising done by the volunteer organizers, each awarded filmmaker



will receive \$400 in cash. The organizing team this year is composed of Lexi Trachy (chair), Amanda Gabrielson, Andy Nasisse, Liana Schmidt, Angela Ferrelli, Joan Chismire, and Mayor John Clark. They've been working hard at this for months already! Please support the event with your attendance!

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – October 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at Ridgway Town Hall and on Zoom
- **Town Council Workshop Re Amelia Street Preliminary Design** – October 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at Ridgway Town Hall and on Zoom
- **Town Council Budget Retreat** – October 23, 2021 @ 9:00 a.m. at Ridgway Town Hall
- **Planning Commission Regular Meeting** – October 26, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at Ridgway Town Hall and on Zoom
- **Monthly Space to Create Project Update Meetings with Stryker & Company** – Last Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. on Zoom. Next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 27th. Click [HERE](#) to check out the full schedule.
- **COVID-19 Multi-Agency Coordination Group Meeting** – November 3, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- **Town Council Regular Meeting** – November 10, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at Ridgway Town Hall and on Zoom
- **Town Council Budget Workshop** – November 18, 2021

JOKE OF THE DAY

Did you know that dogs can't operate an MRI machine?

But cats can.