

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 13, 2026
(Revised/Approved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		
Joe Dowdell	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nneji	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner		X	
Joe Sorena	Commissioner		X	
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner		X	
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		
Aarti Paranjape	Director, (Staff)	X		

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:03 PM; Quorum established.

1.1. Distribution of agenda & previous minutes. (Published on Commission's webpage prior to meeting.)

1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

New correspondence related to applications that will be discussed later. Administratively, there are two things coming up. An application for 653 Branchville Road – new scope and work on pond dredging – has been withdrawn and will not be discussed on the agenda. There will be a delay on 59 South Street – the sewer plant and modifications to the pumping station – will have to be postponed because the notices were not done properly. They will likely be on the calendar again on February 10.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

No changes to the agenda.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

2.1. 967 Ethan Allen: Hoo Doo Brown

Mr. Hendrick briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement action. This violation has been ongoing for some time. They had a court date with attorneys. They have retained attorneys at this point and have asked for continuation until February 22.

2.2. 34 Bailey Avenue

Mr. Hendrick briefly discussed the violation and recent communication with the owner. This discussion has been ongoing to understand what can be done to move this forward. Mr. Hendrick suggests having a more detailed conversation, if necessary, in executive session. Mr. Hendrick anticipates more information and suggestions on how to resolve this. Ms. Okrongly mentions cost associated with resolving. Ms. Paranjape updates the PZC that the cost will be approximately 1.2 million dollars. Ms. Okrongly asks about the environmental and air quality component and offsetting the natural gas but also creating a monetary fund. Mr. Hendricks states that the owner has suggested he has an idea of what he needs to do to make the Commission happy. Ms. Okrongly would like to make sure a precedent is not being set here where an applicant does not follow through with what is required by the Commission.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1. **(Cont.) SP-25-16: 834 North Salem Road:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 3.2.C.12) for “Bed and Breakfast” use in existing accessory dwelling unit. *Owner: Naomi and Glen Broomberg; Applicant: Zachary Trippodo.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103426>

The hearing was opened. This is the second night of Public Hearing. A site walk had occurred between the two public hearings. Two pieces of correspondence have been received since the last meeting: one letter in support and one letter in opposition. Mr. Hendrick explains the process for the evening: applicant, staff, and then the public comment period. Mr. Trippodo is present to represent the applicant. He gave a brief summary of the project while sharing his screen.

Discussion ensued by the PZC. Mr. Nissim inquired about ADU vs a Bed and Breakfast. Mr. Trippodo explains that he is currently working on the building permit to finish the site. The owner of the property would like to create a Bed and Breakfast but if denied, they will make this an ADU by approval, because it is an as of right. Mr. Hendrick inquired about a comment made at the site walk. The property owner said something along the lines of – it is not really going to be a bed and breakfast anyway. Mr. Hendrick asked what was meant by that. Mr. Trippodo stated that the homeowner was frustrated by the process and had considered not doing the bed and breakfast because of the process. Mr. Trippodo believes this is a passion project for the homeowners and not necessarily an income unit. Mr. Hendrick inquires whether a special condition limiting the guest count was acceptable to the applicant. Mr. Trippodo said the client agreed to 2-4 guests at one time, but he has concerns if a family with two parents and three children wanted to stay. Mr. Hendrick also asked about limiting the frequency of rental. Mr. Trippodo did not have a number but asks what the process for this is. Mr. Hendrick explained the process and if this was a special condition, the Commission would need to pick a number, and it would be conditioned in the approval. Mr. Hendrick asks if the property owner would be ok with limiting the number of vehicles per stay. Mr. Trippodo believes that the driveway is big, and he cannot imagine that with a limit of 4 guests, the number of cars would be a problem.

Mr. Hendrick then opened the floor to public comment.

Public Comment:

In person, Laura Lehman, 873 North Salem Road, asks about the letter that she has submitted. She has extra copies. She would like to wait and comment after Ms. Rautionmaa speaks.

Via Zoom, Alexandra Rautionmaa, 836 North Salem Road. She has a crying baby but is doing her best to speak. She wanted to add that she has submitted two letters, and her main concern is that she has three very young children and they take the bus every single day. She has to walk on the main road/accessway because there is no shoulder and no sidewalk. She is very concerned about cars that don't know the road speeding down and not paying attention and not understanding that this is an area where there are multiple children under 6 that could be riding their bike, walking, going to school, coming back to school, or in the middle of this access road. She doesn't believe there is much to do about the kids being there. She believes that people who are there not as a resident will not be as apt to consider safety of children. She is concerned that there would be an accident before this was taken seriously.

Ms. Okrongly explained that if a condition was added as a special condition of approval, it would be specific to the property and not the property owner. So, the zoning permit would live for the duration of the Airbnb.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, restates that she believes her property value will go down. She is concerned because this is an extension of her driveway. The application only has 1/3 right to the access road. She believes that Ms. Rautionmaa and Ms. Leeman own the majority of the road because they are 2/3 of the ownership. She believes it is expensive to upkeep the road. She has concerns what the next property owners might do with the property. She is in opposition and has ideas on conditions if it is only for the present property owners. She asks for 48-hour advance notice, 14 days maximum rent per year, and a license plate number for the car.

Ms. Okrongly states that the condition would remain if issued.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, states that these are conditions she would like to have in place if approved.

Mr. Hendrick states that there is often an easement between the property owners on an access road. Often these easements have language with documents that show shared ownership.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, states that there is no document as Mr. Hendrick referred to in the town clerk's office. Ms. Leeman also states that if two cars meet each other one will have to back up. She believes that there are safety issues on the road.

Mr. Hendrick asks about the right of usage and what legal right they have.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, believes that their ownership does not give them the right to run a bed or breakfast.

Mr. Dowdell and Mr. Hendrick state that these suggestions from the public are not relevant to a Special Permit.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, explains the history of the property. She subdivided with her late husband. They upgraded the accessway due to drainage issues. She is upset that she is paying taxes on the road that all these people will use.

Via Zoom, Alexandra Rautionmaa, 836 North Salem Road. She states that the ownership of this permit will go with the property and not the property owner. She has nothing against the applicant, but she is upset that this is happening because she wants to maintain a good relationship with her neighbor. But she believes that if this exists forever then the next owners could do something much more than these owners will. At the end of the day, if it is all or nothing, she and Ms. Leeman would prefer it not be approved if the ownership does not remain with the current property owners in the event they were to sell their home.

The PZC inquires about Ms. Leeman paying taxes on the property. She asks the neighbors to help pay the taxes. The accessway has its own lot number. Mr. Nissim asks if the property owner has come to speak with the neighbors. They have not. Ms. Leeman did not think she was given enough notice as required by the town and not in person notice at all with the property owner. Ms. DeSalvo feels uncomfortable with the limiting of days because if a person rented for two months, they would be safer than a short-term stay because they would be familiar with the property. Mr. Hendrick explains that the word "transient" is used in the regulations because it refers to short term or Bed and Breakfast. Historically transient has been interpreted as 30 days so PZC typically applies those assumptions but there is no definition in the PZC regulations for transient. Ms. DiSalvo visits the idea of frequency and changing of people as opposed to the number of days rented. Ms. Okrongly asks about the ownership of the accessway. Current owners stated include Ms. Leeman, Ms. Rautionmaa, "et al". The et al should include the applicant. Mr. Nissim and Mr. Dowdell discuss that this is a private property agreement and issues and not a PZC issue. Mr. Hendrick was inquiring about it to see if there was something in

the agreement that specifically restricted usage. Ms. DiSalvo discusses the concept of majority ownership of the accessway. Mr. Hendrick states that no evidence states there is a limitation.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, discusses the narrowness of the driveway and that she doesn't want people coming off the road.

Ms. DiSalvo states that she disagrees with the narrowness of the driveway. She felt there was room on the accessway.

Mr. Hendrick gives the floor back to Mr. Trippodo to see if he has more to state. Mr. Trippodo does not believe that the majority ownership of shared driveway shouldn't be relevant, per se. The property owner would be open to discuss limiting the days and number of occupants.

In person, Laura Leeman, 873 North Salem Road, suggests 14 days.

Mr. Hendrick brings up the example of not making an approval personal to an individual. Mr. Hendrick suggests putting an expiration date on an approval as a ticking time bomb in that a few years will allow everyone to feel it out. The owner can ask for an extension when a permit expires, but the neighbors at that time would have evidence if something is not working. He asks Mr. Trippodo if he can ask the client if they would be willing to work with an expiration date. Mr. Trippodo states that Airbnb carries the use but asks if new ownership wanted to use the property as an ADU, whether the Airbnb approval would remain. Mr. Hendrick discusses the concept of abandonment of use and its grey zone in the regulations. Mr. Hendrick states that a condition would be that the applicants have the ability to come back and ask for an extension, but it may cut the middle ground and make more neighbors happy. Mr. Trippodo assumes that the client is not going to like the expiration date because it would then require this process again with additional fees and the client confirmed while he was speaking. But the owner would agree to a 14-day limitation. Mr. Hendrick states that this public hearing cannot just be a discussion between Ms. Leeman and Ms. Rautionmaa. Mr. Trippodo would not agree to 14 days per year but would agree to 14 days per month.

Mr. Hendrick suggests at this point with no further comment the Public Hearing could be closed. Ms. Okrongly also suggests limiting the number of different parties as opposed to limiting number of nights. If it is the same people coming repeatedly, it would eliminate some of the transiency. Mr. Hendricks asks for clarification from Ms. Okrongly. Mr. Hendricks is wondering how to enforce that. Mr. Dowdell suggests requiring an annual report. Ms. Okrongly has had to submit her license plate to stay at an Airbnb in North Carolina recently. They had to submit information and get a bracelet as part of a condo association. Ms. DiSalvo likes the idea of limiting how many families can stay, such as two per month or something. Mr. Dowdell and Ms. Okrongly believe that 14 days per month sounds like too much.

Mr. Hendrick suggests throwing any other ideas to Mr. Trippodo or close the public hearing to discuss as an agenda item. Ms. Okrongly asks Mr. Trippodo what quantification would be acceptable to the owner as a compromise. The owner would compromise 14 nights per month. Mr. Trippodo inquires how this would be enforced and what would be required of the homeowner. He feels that it would be a lot of work for the homeowner. Mr. Hendrick clarifies that these are all ideas and not necessarily the exact language that was suggested by the public. Mr. Hendrick feels it would be unprecedented for the owner to supply this information to the PZC and agrees that it sounds laborious. He might suggest limiting frequency, number of cars, and things that are easily enforceable because he believes that is the key to successful enforcement. Ms. Okrongly asks if the PZC can wave a renewal fee. She believes the expiration date would be the best way to move forward. Mr. Trippodo appreciates talking it out. Mr. Trippodo suggests that the construction time would be 2-3 months to complete the interior. Mr. Hendricks asks whether the owners have any suggestions that they believe would be good, reasonable, and easy to implement that might help make the neighbors more comfortable. They suggested limiting the days of operation, the number of occupants that could be there at one time to 2-4, and that is it for now.

Ms. Okrongly makes a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Hendrick asks for final comment before closing. Mr. Trippodo thanks the PZC. Mr. Hendrick asks Ms. Leeman for final comment. She states her concerns are cost and wear and tear to the accessway, and safety on behalf of Ms. Rautionmaa. Mr. Trippodo confirms that the owner is agreeable to an expiration date but would like it to be 5 years as opposed to 2 years. Ms. Leeman states that they should contribute more substantially to the upkeep of the road. She also believes that the tennis court and swimming pool are a draw to the individuals who stay. Ms. Okrongly asks if guests would have access to the recreation facilities. Mr. Trippodo states that he would assume so. Ms. Rautionmaa gives final comments that this is a health and safety concern for her. Her house is 50 feet from the unit. She is also concerned about noise and garbage. She is very concerned. She would be open to the expiration just to see how it goes. But she would prefer 2 years because 5 years is a very long time.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Nissim to close the public hearing. No opposition. Motion carries and the public hearing is closed.

- 3.2. **A-25-2:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to Section 8.10 – Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. *Commission initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104073>

The hearing was opened, and a quick overview was given on behalf of the Commission by Mr. Hendrick. This was adopted in order for the PZC to have the time to update the regulations in a variety of areas. He also mentions working on hiring a planner. Mr. Hendrick would like a little more time. The first draft was for a year but walked back 6 months based on comments in the public hearing. Mr. Hendrick feels that 1 year would have been a good idea and suggests that the moratorium should be extended for an additional 6 months. The 6 additional months would expire at a suggested July 1, 2026.

Discussion ensued by the PZC. They checked to see if any members of the public would like to discuss this. No public comment interest.

Mr. Hendrick believes that it makes sense to extend the deadline June 30 or July 1 to align with the deadline imposed by the State of Connecticut. No further discussion by the PZC or staff or public.

Mr. Nissim made a motion to close the public hearing. Seconded by Ms. Okrongly. No opposition and motion carries and it was unanimous.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-16: 834 North Salem Road:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 3.2.C.12) for “Bed and Breakfast” use in existing accessory dwelling unit. *Owner: Naomi and Glen Broomberg; Applicant: Zachary Trippodo.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103426>

The public hearing was closed. Ms. DiSalvo feels the PZC is in an uncomfortable position of playing judge and jury between neighbors. Ms. Okrongly finds the worry for small children relatable because she has small children. She feels she would be comfortable only if it had the expiration date and she would waive the reapplication fee as part of the special conditions

Special Conditions:

- *Expiration after three years but could come back to ask for an extension at that time and the fee is waived.*
- *A maximum of 4 guests at any time.*
- *No more than two rentals per month and no more than 100 days per year.*
- *Limiting the number of parking spaces and cars as 2.*
- *Vehicles must be parked on the applicant property and not on the accessway.*
- *Special Conditions as stated in the Staff Report.*

Mr. Hendrick is not sure they can allow additional monetary value associated with maintenance of the access road due to additional usage. He would suggest discussing it with Town Council.

Mr. Nissim believes 4 guests and 2 cars make sense. He does not have concerns with use of the tennis court because it is well fenced and he does not believe it should be limited. He is inclined to allow the permit for three years. He does not have opinions on the other discussed conditions. He also asks to revisit the number of nights allowed. He does not feel comfortable asking for name, gender, or age.

Mr. Dowdell felt the accessway was narrow but there is a lengthy line of site. There are limited pull-off spots, but he does not believe it would be a significant safety issue and no more than a delivery truck.

Mr. Dowdell makes a motion to approve with Special conditions discussed. Motion seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Ms. Okrongly opposed and motion carries 5-1-0

- 4.2. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-25-2:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to Section 8.10 – Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. *Commission initiated.*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104073>

No additional discussion.

Ms. Okrongly makes a motion to approve the application as discussed to extend the temporary limited development moratorium to June 30, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Nissim. No opposition and motion carries unanimously.

4.3. Temporary Moratorium Activities

Mr. Dowdell has a new updated document to circulate. Ms. Okrongly would like to set a date on the calendar as a deadline to move forward. The legality was not discussed whether the PZC can use Google Sheets. Mr. Hendrick believes there could be concerns from a FOIA standpoint. Mr. Hendrick believes this is a mountain to climb. Ms. Paranjape has created a portal for these documents. Mr. Hendrick has asked whether Ms. Paranjape can upload the excel sheet. She will upload each version and will not take any outdated version down. Focus will be on the A priority list. Ms. Okrongly would like to get through these over the next two months. Mr. Hendrick believes that by the end of March what we have is what we have. Ms. Okrongly believes this topic has been too passive. She would like to fill out the name and date columns with a master deadline for all drafts.

4.3.1. General Regulation Review. c/o chair

Mr. Hendrick would like to think about the strategy for what we want to do and how to move forward with the Bed and Breakfast regulations. Mr. Dowdell had discussed the language for this and has shared it with the PZC for discussion. He thought adding short term rental would be part of the change. He thinks there should be a definition for short-term rental which means you don't necessarily provide breakfast. Ms. DiSalvo also suggests the quantity of rooms might be a determining factor. Ms. Okrongly believes that owner is not on premises for short-term rental whereas they are on the premise for Bed and Breakfast. Mr. Dowdell explains his rewrite and that the owner must be there. So overall consensus is that it should be its own new standalone section. Short term rental is not the same as Bed and Breakfast. The bed and breakfast section might also be tweaked now that we are talking about a distinction between short term and bed and breakfast. Short term rental is 30 days maximum. There is currently no number of days. The state statute defines short term as 30 days. PZC regulations go off the state statutes. Ms. Okrongly brought up discussion on management of bed and breakfasts and the concept of owner occupation. Ms. DiSalvo finds a bed and breakfast vastly different than a short-term rental or Airbnb because the number of individuals and associated car traffic is much higher with a bed and breakfast. Mr. Dowdell sees it as one use. Mr. Hendrick believes owner occupancy and owner presence is the

key difference between short term and bed and breakfast. Ms. DiSalvo suggests owner presence for both short term and bed and breakfast. Mr. Hendrick would like to continue the discussion by coming back with definitions of what defines and separates short-term rentals from bed and breakfasts. Mr. Hendrick believes the PZC regulations need flush out the language but most importantly needs to clarify what there is consensus for. Ms. DiSalvo would like to clarify number of renters in a bed and breakfast versus number of people in one rental for a full home bed and breakfast. Mr. Hendrick would also like to discuss signage. In a short-term rental, there should be no signage whereas in a bed and breakfast there should be a sign. Ms. Paranjape suggests renting bedrooms. Ms. DiSalvo suggests only one party renting in a short-term rental whereas there can be up to six individuals renting within the same structure. Ms. Okrongly suggests that she is not opposed to less than 30-day rentals for someone visiting family, but she would like to find a way to regulate that. She discusses the concept of house swaps. Mr. Nneji inquires about the document and agreement necessary for short term and bed and breakfast. Ms. Paranjape clarifies that the PZC does not review any commercial documents. After the discussion, Mr. Dowdell felt he had direction from where the PZC would like to go and will revisit his draft language. Mr. Hendrick feels the key thing in the drafted language by Mr. Dowdell is - do we really want to say that short-term rentals should have a resident owner on site or are there other ways we could define that. Ms. DiSalvo suggests that maybe we could define it as the owner must be present a certain percentage of the time, but they can still go on vacation and in similar situations. Mr. Hendrick believes it could be a periodic activity and it is not a business. PZC lead to discussion of primary residence vs a resident that might rent six individual properties. Mr. Dowdell also suggests criteria and conditions including number of nights, signage. Ms. Paranjape suggests that enforcement is difficult for some things. Mr. Hendrick suggests limiting the number of people to define party. Ms. Okrongly states that we are looking for what makes sense with the least amount of enforcement. Ms. Okrongly suggests that by the next meeting the spreadsheet will be in the portal and Ms. Paranjape will send an email, so each PZC member has easy access. Ms. Okrongly suggests that if your name is on the list and there is a date associated. If you are not prepared for your designated meeting, this regulation will not move forward. Ms. Paranjape likes the concept of a short-term rental fee. Mr. Dowdell has an idea to submit a report and the associated fee to review the report. Mr. Hendrick will recirculate the excel document he has because it is the most updated. Mr. Dowdell would like to consider making the notice to neighbors more than 10 days. Mr. Hendrick thinks this should get its own line item. Mr. Hendrick would like to look in general at the abutter notice requirements for everything to lengthen the time and in a zone with more distance, the notice should stretch further than the current 100 feet. The PZC discussion leads to more discussion on larger lots necessitating more like 500 feet notification requirements as opposed to the current 100 feet. Ms. Paranjape shows examples on her screen of how this could be problematic. Mr. Hendrick would like to add this to the A list. Ms. Okrongly suggests giving it to Mr. Molyneaux. Mr. Hendrick would like to consider the possibility of providing more advance notice to all Special Permits and also increasing the radius of abutter notices in low density areas (RAA and RAAA).

4.3.2.MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101786>

Mr. Hendrick states that a lot of time was spent on this subject at the last meeting so it will not be discussed this evening.

4.3.3. RFP – Re: Planning Services

A large stack of applicants have been submitted. Ms. Paranjape believes there are 13 applicants and 5 are qualified. Mr. Hendrick will share the applications with the hiring group.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Meeting Minutes

5.1.1. Regular Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2025 and December 16, 2025

November 18, 2025: Ms. Okrongly and Ms. DiSalvo had changes sent via email for the November 18 meeting.

December 16, 2025: No amendments.
October 21, 2025: Ms. Oksongly sent changes.

Motion made by Ms. Oksongly to Approve the regular meeting minutes for November 18 with edits discussed. Also approve the December 16 minutes as is. And to change the October 21 meeting minutes per the email sent by Ms. Oksongly. Seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Motion carries unanimously.

5.1.2. Special Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2026

These minutes are tabled until the next meeting.

6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:31 PM

Submitted by Beth Peyser,
Recording Secretary (via video recording)

FOOTNOTES:

PZC =Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes