



**Town of Ridgefield
Public Hearing Minutes
UNAPPROVED
January 7, 2026 at 7:30PM
Town Hall Annex – 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

BOS Present: Sean Connelly, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners (remotely), Rudy Marconi, Geoffrey Morris

BOS Absent: None.

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Rudy Marconi shared that the purpose of this public hearing is to discuss the creation of another historic district running along East Ridge Road from Route 102 (Branchville Road) north to Prospect Street.

Historic District Commission chair, Daniel O'Brien, presented the commission's support of the proposed historic district and reasons to preserve that area. It tells the story of Ridgefield but also allows for change. The commission manages change in such a way as to protect the town's history. The commission purview only encompasses the building facade as viewable from the street. There is no authority over, or impact to, the use of any structures. He explained the process required by state statutes. The majority of the owners in the proposed district are in favor of the proposal.

Public Comment

Bob M. asked for clarification regarding the commission's statement of intent.

Chris Vahlsing 382 North Street asked why certain properties were added to the proposal. Mr. O'Brien explained that statutes require historic district lots to be contiguous.

Robert Hendrick 17 East Ridge Road thanked the Historic District for the work on this proposal. Speaking as a resident of that neighborhood, he is in favor of the historic district. As the planning chair, he reminds the community that the state is mandating housing construction throughout the state. This effort lays the groundwork to protect and preserve the town's architecture and aesthetic values.

Roger Campbell 120 Prospect read his statement in support of the proposed historic district but limiting to the east side of East Ridge not including the commercial buildings.

Sharon Dornfeld 64 Ridge Drive stated that her concern is the timing of this proposal. It could create an impediment to finding a suitable building alternative for the public safety facilities.

Elizabeth Disalvo stated that as an architect she believes that a historic district designation will add only a small cost to a construction project because it mostly requires more thoughtful design planning.

William Garafalo 11 Grandview Drive stated that the proposal is an overreach and should be limited to the private homes that are historic. The commercial buildings should not be considered historic.

Chris Vahlsing North Street opposes the proposal. It should be limited to the east side of the road.

Mr. Ledbetter 109 East Ridge Road supports the proposal and is concerned that the opposition is based on assumptions that there could be challenges to building modifications for the public safety building.

John Yors supports the commission and the work they do. However, he is concerned that the building committee yet to be appointed may reach solutions for the public safety facilities that may be restricted or limited by this proposed designation.

Betsy Reid 132 Gray Hill Road asked if there were no historic district, and a building is proposed for demolition, wouldn't it have to go through an approval process? The public would probably not support that either.

Sean Connelly commented that oversight is needed to preserve the town's character.

Geoffrey Morris asked for commission comments regarding the implications of a historic district on a potential demolition in the future, for example, the BP. Mr. O'Brien responded that demolition isn't as concerning as construction or remodels. What goes up is more important than what comes down.

Rudy Marconi asked why the homes on Roland Lane are not considered. Mr. O'Brien responded that the commission considered them but didn't see their relevance.

Paul Gotti 57 Whitebridge Road asked if the building side not facing East Ridge is also restricted by historic district regulation. Mr. O'Brien clarified that the regulation applies only to building facades visible from East Ridge Road.

Stephen Bartkus, Ridgefield Historical Society Executive Director, read a letter of support from the Historical Society.

Gina Carey, 107 East Ridge Road, submitted a written statement of support for the designation to preserve the unique character of this street.

Maureen Kozlark asked if converting fields to astroturf would be restricted, but Mr. O'Brien stated that he doesn't see how that would be within the Historic District purview, unless it is fixed.

William Garafalo 11 Grandview Drive stated that any final decisions regarding government buildings should fall on the shoulders of the elected officials, not a commission.

There being no further comments, Rudy Marconi closed the public hearing and reminded the community that the Town Meeting for this vote is at Veteran's Park Elementary School, January 21st at 7:30 pm.

The public hearing ended at 8:35 pm.