



## TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

### APPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

August 28, 2025

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Alan Pilch, Secretary; Keith Carlson, Carson Fincham, David Smith

Members Absent: Tim Bishop, Noah Berkowicz

Also present, Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent; Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary.

#### Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

#### II: Discussion:

1. **(Contd) IW-25-31; 9 Maplewood Road;** Summary Ruling application for installation of an above ground swimming pool, patio and stormwater management system within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Harris Kaplan. Applicant: Samantha Brant.  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101807>

Ms. Brant discussed an extension and believes a withdrawal is the best way to move forward due to the ZBA approval required and upcoming meeting schedule. They intend to rework the stormwater plan and asked if the IWB could wave the application fee for resubmission.

Mr. Johnson states that if it is resubmitted within 6 months the fee is waived. The town needs a letter or an email for a withdrawal from the applicant.

Ms. Brant states they will resubmit their revised application within 6 months.

2. **(Contd) IW-25-32; 10 Shady Lane;** Summary Ruling application for construction of a sauna and deck within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Vincent Nagle. Applicant: Victoria Baird. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101844>

Ms. Baird discussed additional plantings and updated planting plan. She proposed a new swale at the back of the sauna to follow sheet flow. The new planting plan proposed infill downstream of the construction site and along the line of the wetlands to area of existing firepit. Ms. Baird explained quantity and type of planting as shown on plan. Exact number could fluctuate slightly depending on how the plan translates to the onsite conditions.

Mr. Fincham asked about the FEMA floodway boundary on the map. Plantings are on the lakeside of that line. He asks if it is an issue for the IWB or if anyone has any concerns. He isn't sure if the FEMA floodway line is the same as the stream channel encroachment line. He proposed discussion by the IWB.

Ms. Baird states that Zone AE means topography has not been offset and therefore they mimic the topography of the lake. She shows photos of the corridor with existing plantings up to the water line. She is willing to infill if needed, but is currently proposing to infill a layer back. She points out that there is a bit of a drop.

Mr. Fincham does not see a specific concern but wanted to state that the ACOE may have concerns but the IWB does not. Therefore, he suggests maybe pulling the plantings back a bit so it does not become an issue adding to the potential flood zone.

Mr. Carlson asked if Ms. Baird could present more photos.

Ms. Baird showed photos of proposed planting area current conditions at water's edge.

Mr. Pilch stated that it seems appropriate for the additional planting to add more to what is already there. No comment on the floodplain. Perhaps if impervious surfaces were presented and not the plantings as proposed it would be a concern. But he does not see this as an issue. He states that it is steep and well vegetated and close enough to the actual lake that it is a good opportunity to provide additional plantings to protect the resource.

**Mr. Carlson motioned to approve the Summary ruling as described with no additional conditions. Mr. Pilch seconded. Motion carried 5-0.**

- 3. IW-25-36; 25 Chestnut Hill Road;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation of site work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner/Applicant: Michael Daher.  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102280>

Mr. Johnson stated that the applicant is not present but the application was received at the last meeting.

Ms. Baker stated is a violation that is currently stable but does need to be addressed.

The applicant did not show before the meeting ended, and the item was rescheduled for the meeting on September 11, 2025.

- 4. IW-25-39; 1 Hidden Lake Court;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation of site work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner/Applicant: Anthony Belardi.  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102430>

Mr. Belardi is the applicant and Mr. Katz is the Landscape Architect. Mr. Katz stated that he is new to this application and has been brought on board very recently. He recognizes the level of crudeness of sketch but is helping with a last minute approach to move forward. He acknowledged the violation and request for a mediation plan from the IWB. This is a concept representation while they are working on a topographical map to be more to scale. This is planting and plant material. He believes this would be appropriate for this terrain but suggests the intention is clear to remediate the area and revegetate the disturbed area and not encroach on any wetlands as shown on the map.

Ms. Baker asks for clarification on orientation of wetlands.

Mr. Katz explains the orientation.

Ms. Baker asks about the wooded area and its relationship to the wetland line.

Mr. Katz states that he has just encroached on the wetlands area to the east. He has not disturbed any rock mass or formation but land and a small portion of wetland.

Ms. Baker asks that it is mostly upland review area and not the wetland itself.

Mr. Katz confirmed Ms. Baker's statement but he created the map based on site visit. He confirmed that the hatch area is the extent of the disturbed area. Planting plan is seeded and hydroseeded in bulk of upper area and in area below near house, wherever it is disturbed they are planting. He is waiting on a survey on site. He is proposing the

vegetations to be in the wetland buffer to restore the wetland buffer. The numbers may fluctuate when a more accurate map is produced.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for a more accurate map rather than a concept plan, which will show the 100 foot upland review area and the location of the plantings. The pool will not be part of the application for remediation of the violation.

Mr. Pilch commented that he believes the historic maps show the entire backyard was once entirely wooded as far back as 2012. The violation was the clearcutting of a good portion of the backyard. It was restored with grasses. He would like to understand the purpose of clearing the vegetation and wants to understand what the actual intention is for this property. He believes this is a new plan being presented. He wants to understand if there were restrictions of clearing the wetland because of the extensive of wetlands on the property.

Mr. Katz explained that this is the remedy to a violation for Mr. Belardi. He doesn't know how many trees were cut. He could count stumps. He believes they are still there. No land movement has occurred that he is aware of. But he did not see the original condition.

Mr. Pilch believes it was a wooded area and the violation is extensive clearing in the wetland.

Mr. Johnson stated again that this application should just be the remediation planting plan for what was disturbed and trees or vegetation that should be removed. As far as future work such as pools or retaining walls, those applications will have to be submitted in a separate application.

Mr. Belardi removed mostly brush and a couple of trees. Directly behind the deck there were four trees approximately 5 inches in diameter that overhung the house on a slope which now is covered in hay. His intent was to create a space for his two kids to play on the 3 acres of backyard. He stopped clearing when Mr. Johnson stopped in. That is when he brought in Mr. Katz.

Ms. Baker states that it was a fairly steep slope that was being cleared. The IWB is concerned that the canopy of trees has been removed near the wetlands. The IWB would like to see the replanting of trees specifically in the recently cleared location of that property – particularly in the location of the wetlands.

Mr. Katz agrees with Ms. Baker. He didn't have all this information but he agrees that revegetating with trees could happen. He doesn't think that will impact his future plans. He believes he can address the concerns.

Ms. Baker states that the replanting of trees doesn't have to be in exact locations of those removed but there needs to see a remediation plan for reforestation. Suggest continuing for more time to have a survey completed.

Mr. Belardi has hired a surveyor to come within the next two weeks.

Ms. Baker asks if Mr. Johnson feels the site is stabilized enough to continue.

Mr. Johnson suggests that the removal of wood chips would help but silt fence, seed, and hay has been put down.

Mr. Belardi asks if it needs removed by hand or scraped.

Mr. Johnson states to remove them with no disturbance so all of it should be removed by hand because we aren't sure of the depth of wood chips. Also states that if he intends to reuse the wood chips, to let the IWB know where.

Ms. Baker asked the applicant to continue updating Mr. Johnson with the survey and plan and hopes to have this back on the agenda no later than the IWB meeting on September 25, 2025.

5. **IW-25-40; 12 Wooster Street;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation of site work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Richard Phillips. Applicant: Aran Wiener.  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102435>

Mr. Phillips states that the applicant is not present because he is on vacation so the owner is showing the plan. He asks for Mr. Johnson to show the plan onscreen.

Mr. Johnson scrolls through the plan and detail sheet for vegetation.

Mr. Phillips asked if the plan was sufficient or if there are suggestions or changes from the IWB.

Ms. Baker asked about the driveway surface and the location of the fuel tank.

Mr. Phillips states the driveway will be gravel and the tank is the same location as previous tank.

Mr. Phillips states that the native plants are on the corner. He believes trees are diseased and wants to remove a few as shown on the plan and planting three native species in that location. Previous owner had a cement patio coming out of the back of the house. He would like to remove and add gravel to keep it clean and permeable. He might add 3 or 4 stepping stones to walk around the house.

Mr. Pilch asks if the town is okay with him planting in the right of way.

Mr. Phillips stated that there were plants there in the past but he took the trees down because he didn't want the tree hanging over his kids room. He said he will look into it.

Mr. Johnson suggests checking with the highway department due to having the bridge there and understanding how the wide the right of way is on Wooster.

Mr. Pilch states that there is a substantial floodway and is concerned about the location of the propane tank. He believes there is a broad floodway there.

Mr. Phillips says he anticipates flooding and will put hoses in the catch basins but it would have to be a 500 year flood to get up that high.

Mr. Pilch suggests checking the FEMA maps for safety.

Ms. Baker asks to check the FEMA map for that area and confirm where the line is. She asks if there is work that has been done recently and the map may not be accurate if so.

Mr. Phillips says that the elevation has changed.

Ms. Baker suggests the location of the propane tank is not for the IWB to be concerned with.

Mr. Phillips says he spoke with the propane company and they have it at an elevation higher than before and is on feet.

Mr. Fincham says that because work and fill has been done, a stream channel encroachment line is the concept of a bathtub. So the stream channel is a very serious issue and federal agencies regulate it. Compensation has to occur including fill removal or fill change elsewhere so the water has the same space to flood into. He is the most concerned about the elevation change. He asked to confirm no change in elevation because he believes there was leveling near the house.

Mr. Phillips also asks to keep in mind that the town will change the bridge in the next couple of years.

Ms. Baker states the need to continue for a few weeks to more thoroughly research and understand previous approvals and highway department on bridge construction and how it would impact the property. The IWB would not suggest plantings that would be removed in short order. The area is stabilized so the IWB will get this back on the schedule when the research has been completed.

This application was continued to September 25, 2025.

**III: Applications for Receipt(s):**

None

**IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:**

None

**V: Other Business:**

**1. IW-21-35; 48 Lewis Drive – Planting bond release (\$8,640.00)**

Mr. Pilch motioned to release the bond in full. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**2. IW-22-8; 56 Shadow Lake Road – Planting bond release (\$631.13)**

Mr. Pilch motioned to release the bond in full. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**3. IW-23-19; 60 Langstroth Drive – Planting bond release (\$2,568.00)**

Mr. Smith motioned to release the bond in full. Mr. Carson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

**VI: Approval of Minutes:**

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** August 14, 2025

Mr. Carlson motioned to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Fincham seconded. Motion carried 3-0-2.

- **Sitewalk Minutes:** August 24, 2025

Mr. Fincham motioned to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Pilch seconded. Motion carried 3-0-2.

**VII: Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:17 PM.

Submitted by

Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary