



**TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD INLAND WETLANDS BOARD**  
**Web Based Meeting Hosted on Zoom**

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Thursday, March 26, 2026**

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

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Alan Pilch, Recording Secretary; David Smith; Keith Carlson; Noah Berkowicz; Carson Fincham (joined after the public hearing at approximately 8:39PM)

Members Absent: Tim Bishop; Vice Chair

Also present: Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent; Tom Beecher, Town Attorney  
Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary

**I. Call to order:**

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. A quorum was present.

**II: Public Hearing:**

1. **IW-26-9; 599 Branchville Road;** Plenary Ruling application for construction of a 75' clear span bridge, multifamily dwellings, driveways, septic and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Moreton Binn. Applicant: Robert Jewell.  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104519>

Public Hearing opened at 7:01PM.

Mr. Johnson read the legal notice and the documents submitted into the record. Ms. Baker explained that Mr. Fincham agreed to recuse himself from the application at the last meeting. He is not in attendance. She also stated that two peer reviews will occur but have not been completed. Mr. Jewell was present to represent the applicant. Mr. Jewell introduced the application team. Mr. Jewell has requested that the previous application that was denied by the IWB be included as part of the record for this application. There is currently an outstanding appeal. Mr. Jewell agreed that Mr. Fincham should recuse. Mr. Jewell discussed his history with the Inland Wetlands Board and this application. Mr. Jewell asked the IWB if they had any questions at this point.

Mr. Jewell shared his screen to show the existing conditions survey and discuss the overview of the application. A change in the application since the first submittal is that it is submitted as an 8-30g application. Mr. Jewell discusses the process of the application, approvals, and the relationship of the IWB/PZC. Mr. Jewell discussed the accessway regulation and approval process. Mr. Jewell discussed the existing conditions of the bridge on the property. Mr. Jewell also discussed the additional costs to resubmit the application. Mr. Jewell asked for a refund of some of the money. Ms. Baker stated that she would look into it. Mr. Jewell discussed alternate plans that have been discussed for the property over the years: a PRD subdivision; a conventional subdivision; a cluster subdivision with town homes; a few additional redesigned cluster subdivisions with town homes.

Mr. Carey of LandTech presented the site design plans. Mr. Jewell elaborated on the accessway and bridge. Mr. Carey discussed the regulated activities. He would like to have the third-party review comments to address as soon as he can and will respond in the next public hearing. Mr. Carey's closing statement was that here are temporary and no long-term impacts to the wetlands or watercourses on site.

Discussion ensued by the IWB. Mr. Carlson asked about the strategy of stormwater on the site. Mr. Carey explained his strategy. Mr. Jewell noted that the applicant is waiting for fine tuning of the bridge design and comments from the third-party reviewer. The architect will be present at the next meeting. Mr. Jewell asked for continuation to the April 23 meeting because he has a conflict with the April 9 meeting. Ms. Baker reminded him that he might have to submit an extension. Ms. Baker asked Mr. Johnson to have the peer reviewers present at the April 23 meeting.

The public hearing was continued until April 23.

Ms. Baker sent a text to Mr. Fincham that he could return to the meeting once this public hearing discussion ended.

### **III: Discussion**

- 1. (Cont.) IW-26-5; 215 Farmingville Road;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation of site work within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Riccardo Arruzza. Applicant: Joe Arruzza. <http://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104347>

Mr. J. Arruzza was present to discuss this application. He asked if the IWB members had a chance to review the additional plans that were submitted. Mr. Johnson shared his screen to show the plan.

Ms. Baker opened the floor for discussion and comment from the IWB. Mr. Pilch thought the plant selection was very reasonable and appropriate for the locations. Ms. Baker stated the landscape architect stated that the soil present was going to be acceptable for these plants. Mr. Arruzza stated that it was correct. He has requested that the boulders were removed because he didn't like them. Ms. Baker stated the purpose of the large boulders for demarcation of the limit of lawn. Mr. Carlson stated that the plan looks significantly better than the last time it was in front of the IWB. Mr. Carlson also asked about the proposed shed. Mr. Carlson asked if anything has been used in the past other than boulders or what could be recommended. Ms. Baker stated fencing or something similar could be used but she is concerned that these are able to be removed. Mr. Pilch asked about what happens at the line past the shrubs.

#### *Special Conditions Suggested:*

- *The boulders demarcating the limit of lawn may be increased to 15-foot spacing.*
- *The 6 most southern boulders to the south of the elm tree and west of the stream do not need to be placed to demarcate the lawn.*
- *The boulders on the eastern side of the stream in the front lawn are not necessary.*
- *Plantings should be completed during the spring planting season – by June 1, 2026.*

***Motion made by Mr. Pilch to approve the application/remediation plan with standard conditions and suggested special conditions as discussed. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. Motion passes 6-0. Publication will be April 2 and effective date April 3.***

- 2. (Cont.) IW-26-7; 216 Florida Road;** Summary Ruling application for installation of an inground pool, patio, pool house, and relocate septic tanks and pump chambers within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Christopher and Audra Cartelli. Applicant: Steven Trinkaus. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104585>

Mr. Trinkaus was present to discuss the application. Mr. Trinkaus shared his screen. He discussed changes to the plans based on comments from the IWB at the last meeting. Discussion ensued by the IWB. Mr. Pilch stated that his concerns were addressed. Mr. Pilch asked about the unmown strip. Mr. Trinkaus stated that it would be mowed once each year only. Mr. Fincham agreed with Mr. Pilch that the concerns are addressed.

***Motion made by Mr. Carlson to approve the application with standard conditions. Motion seconded by Mr. Smith. Motion passes 6-0. Publication will be April 2 and effective April 3.***

3. **IW-26-11; 14 Market Street;** Summary Ruling application for installation of an inground swimming pool and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: CJW Fund. Applicant: Erica Cowper. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104651>

Ms. Cowper was present to discuss the application. Ms. Sesto gave an introduction to the application. Ms. Cowper shared her screen to discuss the proposed plans. She discussed the location of the pool equipment in response to a question that came up during the site walk.

Ms. Baker asked to show the location of the proposed pool in comparison to the existing pool. Mr. Carlson discusses pool and location in the same foot print. Mr. Pilch stated that the lawn goes right to the intermittent watercourse. He asked if a separation should be present and asked the remaining IWB members what they thought. Ms. Sesto stated that the homeowners are amendable to plantings. Mr. Fincham does not like the pool equipment so close to the watercourse. He feels that plantings are desirable. Ms. Cowper shows plantings along the pool patio wall. Mr. Fincham believes plantings should be added along the watercourse or between the lawn and watercourse to provide more of a filter strip. Ms. Sesto asks if Mr. Fincham is suggesting sedges, rushes, and clumping grasses. Mr. Fincham would like to see a filter strip, no mow zone, and plantings. Ms. Sesto is advocating for sedges, rushes, and clump grasses because of how they grow and that it would be a protective buffer that stays intact. Mr. Pilch thinks that in the western part of the site it was evident how much lawn there was from the tennis course to the watercourse. Mr. Pilch is more concerned from the footbridge over.

*Special Conditions Suggested:*

- *A planted buffer from the western property boundary moving east along the watercourse to a point equal to the pool equipment consisting of native clumping grasses, sedges, and rushes 18-20 inches on center according to the type of plant.*
- *These plans should be submitted to the office prior to planting.*

***Motion made by Mr. Smith to approve the application with special conditions stated above and standard conditions. Motion seconded by Mr. Carlson. Motion passes 6-0. Publication will be April 2 and effective April 3.***

**IV: Application(s) for Receipt:**

1. **IW-26-13; 160 Wilton Road West;** Summary Ruling application for grading and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Owen and Melissa Barthelmes. Applicant: Dean Pushlar. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104856>

Mr. Pushlar stated that the IWB members could go look at the site on their own since it is just an empty lot. The wetlands are at the lower level of the lot. There is a locked gate at the front of the property. Mr. Pushlar will discuss the site with Mr. Zandri to ask if the gate can be left open. Mr. Pushlar states that if the gate is locked you could park on the street and walk around the gate to view the property. The IWB will go on their own to do an unofficial site walk. It will not be formally scheduled.

***Motion made by Mr. Pilch to receive and discuss on April 9. Seconded by Mr. Fincham. Motion passes 6-0.***

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

No ongoing enforcement actions.

**VI: Other Business:**

1. **Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations discussion**

This discussion will occur on April 9. The most recent version of suggested revisions has been circulated. Ms. Baker suggests looking at the most recent version and adding any comments to Mr. Johnson by April 2. Mr. Johnson will let Mr. Bishop know that this discussion is anticipated to be on April 9. No additional discussion.

**VI: Approval of Minutes**

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** March 12, 2026

*Motion made by Mr. Berkowicz to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried 6-0.*

- **Sitewalk Minutes:** March 22, 2026

*Motion made by Mr. Carlson to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Berkowicz seconded. Motion carried 3-0-3. Ms. Baker, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Fincham recused.*

**VII: Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:26 PM.

Submitted by

Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary via Zoom Recording