



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

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday, September 10, 2026

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

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Tim Bishop; Vice Chair; Alan Pilch, Recording Secretary; Carson Fincham; Noah Berkowicz

Members Absent: David Smith; Keith Carlson

Also present: Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent

I. Call to order:

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

II: Discussion

1. **IW-26-27; 0 Carriage House Drive;** Summary Ruling application for proposed septic system and driveway construction and grading and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: AERIE AT F4-007 LLC. Applicant: Gaurangkumar Rana.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106611>

Ms. Baker introduced the application. She then stated that this application will be discussed in conjunction with agenda item 5, IW-26-34.

Ms. Micoli with Artel Engineering was there on behalf of the applicant. She shared screen showing the site plans and explained the proposed plan. The plan is below the threshold of requiring a stormwater design.

Discussion continued by the IWB. Mr. Bishop asked about slope and capacity of the retention and wetland area. He also asked about the ground cover along the driveway. Mr. Pilch asked about the contour line along the edge of the wetland. Mr. Pilch requested the depth of the wetland basin should be included on the plan. Mr. Bishop asked about the pitch of the driveway prior to entering the existing wetland. Mr. Bishop asked about the planting mix proposed. Ms. Baker asked for an easement to prevent tree cutting upslope particularly within the upland review area. Mr. Bishop asked about proposed planting plan and to identify any existing significant trees to the design plan. Mr. Bishop had concerns with disturbed steep slopes and asked whether steep slope sediment would wash downslope and fill in the wetland over time. Mr. Pilch believes once the slope is well vegetated and hydroseeded it would go a long way over the septic area at the base of the slope to eliminate concerns with instability. Stabilizing immediately is the way to go. Mr. Pilch asked about timeline of the project.

Special Conditions:

- To add a no mow area above the culvert with a semi-circle in boulders around the inlet pipe.
- Wetland seed mix around the plants will be noted and specified which wetland seed mix.
- Upland review area 100 feet from the wetlands is a conservation easement area where no trees can be removed without permission from the IWB.
- Add existing trees to the plan.
- Maintenance notes added to the plan.

- Seed and mulch the area above the driveway to stabilize the slope.
- Submit an updated planting plan to the IWB office.
- Provide additional spot grades in low points and 409 contour and wetland on both sides of the wetlands to note depth of depressions.

Motion made by Mr. Bishop to approve with conditions as discussed. Seconded by Mr. Pilch. Motion passes. 5-0. Publication date September 17 and effective date September 18.

- 2. IW-26-29; 225 Bennetts Farm Road;** Revision to Summary Ruling application #2013-014-SR-REZ-A-S-SP for work done without approvals within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Justin Stoney. Applicant: Michael Mazzucco.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106788>

Ms. Baker introduced the application. The IWB received a request for an intervenor and discussion was held on intervenor status. Ms. Baker discussed the process of Intervention and highlighted points of the Intervenor document.

Discussion by the IWB included clarification that the application was submitted in response to the violation which was related to the drainage ditch at the lower end of the property. Ms. Baker believes there are points within the Intervenor document that are not within IWB jurisdiction. She does not feel that “Septic system location and after-the-fact improvements” is not under the jurisdiction of the IWB. Mr. Bishop states that septic systems are under the jurisdiction of the Health Department and not under the jurisdiction of the IWB because there is no earth disturbance related to the septic because it is existing outside of the upland review area. Mr. Fincham agreed that the septic system is outside of the jurisdiction of the IWB. Mr. Pilch stated that there is no evidence the septic system is failing and it is outside of their jurisdiction.

Ms. Baker then moved on to the remaining topics aside from the septic system within the Intervenor document. Ms. Baker and Mr. Fincham agree that while there is no current evidence that “Documented Alterations to Retention Basin RB #3” occurred, they could entertain this point and it would be within their jurisdiction. The remaining points are within their jurisdiction.

Ms. Baker suggests excluding #4 on the list about the septic system and accepting the Intervention only as it applies to numbers 1, 2, 3, (not 4), and 5.

Motion made by Mr. Bishop to grant Intervener status for items described in 1, 2, 3, and 5 but excluding Item 4 because it is outside of their jurisdiction. Seconded by Mr. Pilch. Motion passes 5-0.

Mr. Mazzucco presented his application first. He stated that there was no wetland based on a soil scientist evaluation and the channel does not meet the definition of a watercourse. It was visited twice during a heavy storm event and there was no flow from the inlet structure with the flared outlet of the 15-inch pipe. Mr. Mazzucco removed the rock on the structure and removed the log that was stuck within the pipe beneath the rock, so it is clear.

Mr. Mazzucco shared his screen and discussed site conditions and wetlands boundaries. Ms. Baker asked Mr. Mazzucco if there was a way to determine if there was damage on the neighboring properties from the pipe. Mr. Mazzucco does not see the merit of the Intervener accusations. He does not believe there was alteration of the contours or grading. Discussion continued by Mr. Pilch and Mr. Mazzucco on the pipe. The pipe is 6 inches and has the potential to clog. Mr. Bishop asked if there were actions that could prevent plumbing failure in the house. Mr. Mazzucco said to keep it clean and observable. Mr. Bishop asked if vegetation dumping could be clogging. Mr. Mazzucco said that this is all grass.

Ms. Baker suggested bringing the Intervenor into the discussion. Mr. Ingram came to the floor as the Intervenor. He said there were a number of statements made that were factually inaccurate. Specifically, that having deciduous trees present could lead to drainage clogging. He stated that Mr. Stoney and/or his landscapers placed a large tree next to the drainage swale. Topographical maps were outdated because all work occurred after 2023. He would expect to be granted an opportunity to speak when he is prepared at a future meeting. Ms. Baker asked if he plans to have Mr. Trinkaus present to speak. Mr. Ingram said he would like to have Mr. Trinkaus present. Mr. Ingram asked that Mr. Stoney allow him to fix his property, so he does not have continuing property issues. Mr. Mazzucco said he has discussed this with Mr. Stoney and Mr. Stoney is not precluding Mr. Ingram from fixing his pipe. Mr. Ingram asked for something in writing to have permission to fix the pipe on Mr. Stoney's property. Mr. Ingram's other question was the volume the basin is able to handle. He believes the calculations are from 2016 or 2023. He said Mr. Stoney has doubled the amount of impervious surface on his property and asked if the volume calculations incorporate all impervious surface.

As Mr. Ingram stated that he was not ready to do his presentation, Mr. Baker suggested the discussion be continued at the next IWB meeting.

Mr. Fincham asked about volume of the basin, and he asked if there have been observances of the basin overtopping. That would be a good indication that something has changed. If there have not been instances of the basin overtopping, then that would be good information to have. Mr. Mazzucco will review this question at the next meeting.

The 65 days for this statutorily ends on September 26 so no extensions are needed to discuss this application again on September 24.

3. **IW-26-31; 157 Spring Valley Road;** Summary Ruling application for construction of a detached garage within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: David and Susan Jeffries. Applicant: Doug MacMillan. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106010>

Mr. Johnson shared his screen. Mr. MacMillan was present to discuss the application. He presented the application specifics. Mr. MacMillan described the planting plan surrounding the water body. The wetlands map was old, but the flags were updated on the property. Mr. Pilch suggested replanting the wetland, so it is not a mowed lawn but is a wetland area that provides benefits and functionality of the wetlands. Mr. MacMillan will provide a sketch to accommodate Mr. Pilch's request.

Special Condition:

- Provide updated planting plan for the next meeting.

This will be back on the agenda for September 24.

4. **IW-26-33; 100 Holmes Road;** Summary Ruling application for construction of an addition, deck, patio, and stormwater system within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Timothy and Melanie Dascenzo. Applicant: Kevin Bennett <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106549>

Mr. Bennett was present to discuss the application on behalf of the homeowners. He is the general contractor. He has a soil scientist and is looking for an approval to build an addition to the back of the house. He shared his screen to show design plans. The patio shown on the plans will not be built at this time. The 50-foot upland review area boundary is shown on the plan but basically the entire home is within the 100-foot upland review area. Mr. Pilch said that the current design for the septic tank meets the required setbacks, but the applicant might want to consider moving it further out in the event they do choose to move forward with the proposed patio in the future.

Special Condition:

- Driveway water must be channeled into the chambers.

Motion made by Mr. Pilch to approve the application as discussed with standard conditions and one special condition. Seconded by Mr. Bishop. Motion passes 5-0. Publication date of September 17 and effective date September 18.

5. **IW-26-34; 0 Carriage House Drive;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation for clear cutting trees within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: AERIE AT F4-007 LLC. Applicant: Guarangkumar Rana.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/107232>

Discussed in conjunction with Item 1. See discussion for Item 1.

Additional condition:

- Try to complete the planting plan by November 1. Notify the IWB office if more time is needed.

Motion made by Mr. Bishop to approve with conditions from IW-26-27. Seconded by Mr. Pilch. Motion passes. 5-0. Publication date September 17 and effective date September 18.

6. **IW-26-36; 141 High Ridge Avenue;** Summary Ruling application for construction of a pool and patio with trellis within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Seagriff Rosemary Trustee. Applicant: Doug MacMillan.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/107306>

Mr. MacMillan was present to discuss the application. Mr. Mazzucco was also present as the engineer.

Discussion ensued by the IWB. Mr. Bishop asked about the grade for runoff around the pool and about soil testing. The property owner is not opposed to adding plantings around the end of the drain.

Special Condition:

- Add three to five native plants that flower and have fruit. There must be a male and female if Winterberry is chosen.

Motion made by Mr. Bishop to approve with standard conditions and one special condition. Seconded by Mr. Fincham. Motion passes 5-0. Publication date September 17 and effective date September 18.

III: Application(s) for Receipt:

No applications for receipt.

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

Mr. Johnson referred to the planting plan at 25 Seymour Lane. All plantings were present at the site walk today, and substituted plants will be updated on the plans and submitted to the IWB office. Mr. Johnson will let town counsel know that the work has been completed.

V: Other Business:

1. Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations discussion

This was not discussed at this meeting. It will be discussed on September 24.

Ms. Baker believes the description of wetlands and watercourses needs to be revisited.

2. 599 Branchville Road – Discussion on Resolution of Approval

Ms. Baker asked what conditions would have been included had the application been approved. Ms. Baker states that only the bridge is relevant. There are no sequencing plans. Mr. Pilch states that they need additional plans for the bridge construction. He needs to know more about the stormwater management structure, the grading/fill on the sides of the bridge, the west end and east end could be sitting 10 feet in the air. He needs to know what bridge construction is composed of. They need erosion control plans.

This will be back on the agenda for discussion on September 24.

VI: Approval of Minutes

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** July 23, 2026 and August 27, 2026

The dates for 225 Bennett's Farm Road receipt were missing and added to the July 23 minutes.

Motion made by Mr. Bishop to approve the minutes for July 23 with edits as discussed. Mr. Berkowicz seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1. Mr. Fincham abstained.

Motion made by Mr. Fincham to approve the minutes for August 27 as presented. Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1. Mr. Berkowicz abstained.

- **Sitewalk Minutes:** September 6, 2026

Motion made by Ms. Baker to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried 3-0-2. Mr. Fincham and Mr. Berkowicz abstained.

VII: Adjourn

Mr. Johnson is going on vacation September 16-23. Office staff will upload the new submissions and can be viewed online. Ms. Paranjape will monitor Mr. Johnson's email.

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:34 PM.

Submitted by

Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary via Zoom Recording