



## TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION APPROVED/REVISED MEETING MINUTES

These minutes and motions (votes) are a general summary of the meeting. This is not a verbatim transcription.

Tuesday, July 16, 2024 Present:

### IN PERSON

Robert Hendrick, Chair  
Joseph Dowdell, Vice Chair  
Ben Nneji  
Elizabeth DiSalvo

### VIRTUAL

Mariah Okrongly  
Joseph Sorena

Absent: Sebastiano D'Acunto, Chris Molyneaux

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Robert Hendrick, Chair, called meeting to order at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Annex, Meeting Room #2 and via Zoom and quorum was established.*

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

1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

(Note: Correspondence *related to an application* will be uploaded to the relevant application file (see links on agenda items) and reviewed/acknowledged during the relevant public hearing. Correspondence unrelated to an application will be acknowledged as this point in the meeting, and uploaded to the Commission's webpage at <https://www.ridgefieldct.gov/planning-and-zoning-commission/pages/correspondence>)

a) Planning and Zoning Commission vacancy interviews

There is a vacant seat due to the passing of S. Consentino. The Commission received two applications. Both applicants interviewed with the Democratic Town Committee and a letter of recommendation was sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission strongly supporting Ben Nissim for the vacancy.

The Commission intended to conduct two interviews. One of the applicants withdrew their application over the weekend, therefore there is only one applicant, Ben Nissim. Mr. Nissim introduced himself to the Commission and gave a quick background and why he wants to serve on the P&Z Commission. He currently serves on the Inland Wetlands Board for the Town of Ridgefield. Mr. Nissim will resign from the Inland Wetlands Board if voted into P&Z Commission. There was a brief discussion where the Commission asked Mr. Nissim questions regarding items such as regulations, planning, time investment that it takes being a P&Z Commissioner, sitewalks, meetings, and preparation prior to meeting regarding applications. Mr. Nissim understands the responsibility and looks forward to working on Planning and Zoning issues.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

## 2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

2.1. **SP-24-19; 61 Lee Rd:** Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for an accessory structure in the front yard. *Owner: George Craig and Susan Craig, Appl: Jeff Mose.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97044>

Robert Jewell, attorney, and Jeff Mose, project architect, presented. The applicant purchased the property in 1991. It is approximately 11 acres in size. The application is for an accessory structure including garage, storage space and accessory dwelling unit. The structure is considered to be in the front yard. An ariel view of the location of house, pool and accessory structure was shown. The accessory dwelling unit will be 1200 square feet. There will be a second story studio and two car garage. Questions regarding subdividing and Planned

Residential Development were asked by Commissioners however, that is not the intention of the applicants. There is no maximum number of buildings allowed on a lot as long as you meet setbacks, regulations and permitted uses. The trees that will be taken down were shown. The access to the structure will be off a private road. There is currently access to the swimming pool off this road. The road is maintained by the property owners that use the road. The current applicants do not contribute to maintenance of the private road because they do not use it regularly but understand they will be required to contribute if they use it regularly and will be working with other homeowners who utilize the private road. Reasons regarding the ADU and accessory structure location were discussed.

Mr. Joe Shapiro, resident of Lee Rd, spoke. Mr. Shapiro uses the private road discussed earlier to access his property. Mr. Shapiro spoke regarding the private road, the easement rights the private road is on, PRD and long-term viability.

Applicant is open to variety of native trees interspersed with shown trees as a buffer as stated in proposed special conditions by staff.

Public Hearing closed.

- 2.2. **SP-24-20: 3 Big Shop Lane:** Revision to a Special Permit Application (Per 9.2A and 5.1.D.1) for after the fact addition of enclosed pergola and vestibule. *Owner: 1-7 Big Shop Group LLC; Appl: Scott Yandrasevich*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97320>

SP-24-20 and VDC-24-13 will be discussed together.

J. Sorena recused himself from SP-24-20 and VDC-24-13. Both applications are after the fact permits. Scott Yandrasevich and Robert Jewell, attorney, presented. Mr. Jewell gave an overview and background of the building. The tent “structure” that was built prior (during COVID) over patio has been taken down. Applicant is seeking approval for a round window and a vestibule entryway and an enclosed 8’ x 24’ pergola that were already added. Applicant has been to the AAC and they have made recommendations. Chair Hendrick read the recommendations. Discussion regarding the round window and white veneer ensued. Applicant would like to add a roof to the vestibule that will be below the round window. Pictures of what the roof of the pergola would look like were shown. Shed roof vs. gable roofing was discussed. Roofing over the pergola was discussed as well. Roofline is being requested to be moved out 11 feet instead of the 8 feet requested in application. The change in the roofline will not have any effect on the sidewalk. Discussion of keeping Public Hearing open and going back to AAC was had. Parking was discussed and the Parking Authority had no additional comment. No public comment was made.

Public Hearing closed.

- 2.3. **VDC-24-13: 3 Big Shop Lane:** Village District Application (Per RZR 8.3, 5.1.B and 7.2.E) for after the fact addition of vestibule, enclosed pergola and sign. *Owner: Big Shop LA LLC; Appl: Scott yandrasevich.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97342>

SP-24-20 and VDC-24-13 will be discussed together.

Public Hearing closed.

### 3. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 3.1. **If Public Hearing is Closed: SP-24-19; 61 Lee Rd:** Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for an accessory structure in the front yard. *Owner: George Craig and Susan Craig, Appl: Jeff Mose.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97044>

Possible special conditions were shown and discussed. *Motion to approve with conditions as shown (B. Nneji, second by J. Dowdell) Motion carries 5-1-0 with J. Sorena opposed.*

- 3.2. **If Public Hearing is Closed: SP-24-20: 3 Big Shop Lane:** Revision to a Special Permit Application (Per 9.2A and 5.1.D.1) for after the fact addition of enclosed pergola and vestibule. *Owner: 1-7 Big Shop Group LLC; Appl: Scott Yandrasevich* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97320>

Motion to approve with the following special conditions:

1. A/C unit and heating apparatus on side/ground must be removed as per AAC recommendations.
2. Aluminum on the vestibule frame and door must be painted white with a paint specifically created for aluminum.
3. All aluminum on the 8 x 24' addition to be painted white.
4. Parking to be met as per Section 7.3.B.5.
5. Existing roof of the pergola will be matched on the new roof of vestibule.
6. Round window may remain.
7. Sign may remain where it is or be moved to right over French doors.

Chair Hendrick noted that the applicant has done a lot of work to strive to do the right thing after a long period of non-compliance. Chair Hendrick would like to commend applicant for patience throughout the process. Even though there is not currently a positive AAC referral, there has been a lot of work from the Commission to try to make the aesthetics work.

*(Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by B. Nneji) Motion carries 5-0-1 with J. Sorena recused.*

- 3.3. **If Public Hearing is Closed: VDC-24-13: 3 Big Shop Lane:** Village District Application (Per RZR 8.3, 5.1.B and 7.2.E) for exterior renovation of vestibule, pergola and sign. *Owner: Big Shop LA LLC; Appl: Scott Yandrasevich.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97342>

Motion to approve with the following special conditions:

1. A/C unit and heating apparatus on side/ground must be removed as per AAC recommendations.
2. Aluminum on the vestibule frame and door must be painted white with a paint specifically created for aluminum.
3. All aluminum on the 8 x 24' addition to be painted white.
4. Parking to be met as per Section 7.3.B.5.
5. Existing roof of the pergola will be matched on the new roof of vestibule.
6. Round window may remain.
7. Sign may remain where it is or be moved to right over French doors.

Chair Hendrick noted that the applicant has done a lot of work to strive to do the right thing after a long period of non-compliance. Chair Hendrick would like to commend applicant for patience throughout the process. Even though there is not currently a positive AAC referral, there has been a lot of work from the Commission to try to make the aesthetics work.

*(Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by B. Nneji) Motion carries 5-0-1 with J. Sorena recused.*

- 3.4. **MISC-24-7: Branchville Strategic Review.** In the fall of 2023, the Commission indicated an interest in reviewing and re-visiting the 2017 Branchville "TOD" study and recommendations, given recent progress on infrastructure improvements. After hearing from three experts over three previous meetings (from December through early February [Note: Commissioner DiSalvo is recused on this matter.]

No update.

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

- 4.1. **VDC-24-14: 368 Main Street:** Village District Application (Per RZR 8.3, 5.1.B and 7.2.E) for replacing freestanding signs, an illuminated wall and directional sign for "Wells Fargo". *Owner: Wells Fargo NA. Appl:*

*New Haven Sign Company. For receipt and schedule discussion. (Staff suggests discussion on September 3)*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97496>

Motion to receive and schedule discussion on September 3. *(Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by B. Nneji)*

- 4.2. **SP-24-23: 92 Grove St:** Revision to Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 5.2.C) for building addition in the back at “Elegant Ridgefield”. *Owner: 92 Grove Street Realty LLC; Appl: Keith Gerety. For receipt and schedule a discussion. (AAC scheduled 7/23, staff suggests discussion on September 3)*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97569>

Motion to receive and schedule discussion on September 3. *(Maker: B. Nneji, second by E. DiSalvo)*  
*Unanimous Approval*

- 4.3. **SP-24-24: 183 High Ridge Ave:** Revision to Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 3.2.C) for converting a parking lot to grass and a basketball court at St. Mary’s School. *Owner: St. Mary’s Parish School; Appl: Kevin Ambrosio. For receipt and possible discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97590>

Motion to receive and discuss tonight *(Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by B. Nneji)* *Unanimous Approval*

M. Okrongly has a 3 year old daughter who attends preschool at St. Mary’s, but daughter does not utilize this area and M. Okrongly does not feel there is a reason to be recused.

Kevin Ambrosio presented. Project would eliminate a parking lot in the back and be replaced by a play area. The school currently has 269 parking spaces. There will be 18 parking spots eliminated in order to create a play area. St. Mary’s is required to have 220 spaces so even after eliminating the 18 spaces, there is sufficient parking. Possible special conditions were discussed.

Motion to approve with special condition of no lighting of courts will be permitted with this approval. *(Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by J. Dowdell)* *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.4. **SP-24-25: 750 North Salem:** Revision to Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2 and 3.2.C.1) for temporary lighting at Scott’s Ridge Middle School. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield. Appl: Kevin Fournie. For receipt and possible decision.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95797>

Kevin Fournie, Vice President of Soccer Club of Ridgefield presented. SCOR has used these fields for the past five years. Travel soccer teams practice Monday through Fridays in the evenings. In the Fall lights are needed. Applicants are requesting lighting 5:30-9:30 PM August 12 through November 15<sup>th</sup>. They have used lighting in the past and have not had any complaints from neighbors.

Motion to approve with same product as demonstrated in application. *(Maker: B. Nneji, second by J. Dowdell)*  
*Unanimous Approval*

- 4.5. **AH-24-2: 100 D Danbury Road:** Revision to Affordable Housing Application per CGS §8-30g and (Per RZR 8.8 B) for substitution of 40-year affordability for 2 units to perpetuity at Area Median Income. *Owner: Farmingville Road LLC. Appl: Robert R. Jewell. For receipt and possible discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97667>

Robert Jewell, attorney, presented. Effective July 12, 2024, the Commission adopted a Regulation allowing a substitution of affordable housing restrictions to use the area median income instead of the state median income in exchange for extending the period from 40 years to in perpetuity. Applicant is requesting this change. It is a 3 bedroom development with a total of 6 units. The development consists of two affordable units, one at 60% area median and one unit at 80% area median.

Motion to approve *(Maker: B. Nneji, second by E. DiSalvo)* *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.6. **SP-24-26: 116 Oscaleta Road:** Special Permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for detached garage in the front yard. *Owner/Applicant: William Bernhardt. For receipt and to schedule sitewalk and public hearing. (Staff suggests sitewalk on July 21 and Public Hearing on September 3)*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97690>

Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on July 21 and Public Hearing on September 3. (*Maker: J. Sorena, second by E. DiSalvo*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.7. **AH-24-1: 103 Danbury Rd:** Informal discussion for Resolution of Approval

A draft of the Resolution of Approval was shown on screen and had been sent to all Commissioners by staff. Typically, Planning and Zoning staff write the approvals. A thorough review of the Resolution of Approval was requested prior to being published due to ground floor residences of this project.

4.8. **Approval of Minutes**

4.8.1. Meeting Minutes-July 2, 2024

Motion to approve (*Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by J. Dowdell*)

5. **Executive Session** – Planning and Zoning Commissioner Vacancy Discussion

Motion to go into Executive Session (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by B. Nneji*) *Unanimous Approval*

Executive Session ended at 9:48 PM

Motion to appoint Ben Nissim for the P&Z Commissioner vacancy (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by B. Nneji*)  
*Unanimous Approval*

6. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM

Submitted by Misty Dorsch,

Recording Secretary

FOOTNOTES:

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes