



## 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, September 17, 2024 Present:

### IN PERSON

Robert Hendrick, Chair  
Joseph Dowdell, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth DiSalvo  
Mariah Okrongly  
Sebastiano D'Acunto  
Ben Nissim  
Chris Molyneaux  
Joseph Sorena

### VIRTUAL

Absent: Ben Nneji

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

*Robert Hendrick, Chair, called meeting to order at 7:01 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>).

Review of Commissioner disqualification/recusal was discussed.

Chair Hendrick summarized some key points regarding disqualification and recusal from an application. Three options of recusal in terms of procedure were discussed. It is the Commissioners duty to disclose conflict of interest when there may be one.

There were letters from residents regarding 439 Silver Spring regarding pickleball as well as a letter from M. Autori regarding Branchville T.O.D. which can be found under correspondence on Planning and Zoning page of Town of Ridgefield website.

There was public comment regarding construction on Bailey Avenue. The concern is parking along Bailey Ave. Street is clean, but fence seems to be getting pushed out and making road narrowed. Photos were shown. Staff will notify police and local traffic authority regarding concerns.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

A-24-2 should be 58 Prospect Ridge, not Prospect Street. Public Hearing will not be held tonight and application will be re-noticed and all three Public Hearing regarding 58 Prospect Street will be heard at next regular meeting, October 8. RZ-24-1 and SP-24-21 were received on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, they were opened and immediately continued on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Per State statute, public hearings must be closed within 35 days unless extension is granted by applicant. Staff will reach out to applicant to request extension for RZ-24-1 and SP-24-21.

Motion to defer A-24-2, continue RZ-24-1 and SP-24-21 (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by J. Dowdell*)  
*Unanimous Approval.*

Motion to add discussion regarding 653 Branchville to Agenda under “New Business”. (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by E. DiSalvo*) *Unanimous Approval*

## 2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 2.1. **A-24-2: 58 Prospect Street:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to amend text in Section 4.5 - MSDD floating zone. *Applicant: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97773>

Deferred to next regular meeting with corrected address.

- 2.2. **(Contd.) RZ-24-1: 58 Prospect Ridge:** Rezone application (Per RZR 9.2.C and 4.5.A.1) for existing RA zone properties F15-0063 and E15-0206- two parcels of the affected following properties with Assessor’s ID E15-0204 and E15-0274, E15-0205; F15-0006; F15-0007; F15-0008; to floating zone MSDD. *Owner: Thomas Montanari; Appl: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97517>

Continued to next regular meeting.

- 2.3. **(Contd.) SP-24-21: 58 Prospect Ridge: Special Permit Application** (per RZR 9.2.A and 4.5.A) for construction of four new dwellings and associated site work at 62 East Ridge and 58 Prospect Ridge. *Owner: Thomas Montanari; Appl: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97519>

Continued to next regular meeting.

## 3. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 3.1. **If Public Hearing is Closed: A-24-2: 58 Prospect Street:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to amend text in Section 4.5 - MSDD floating zone. *Applicant: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97773>

Deferred to next regular meeting with corrected address.

- 3.2. **If Public Hearing is Closed: RZ-24-1: 58 Prospect Ridge:** Rezone application (Per RZR 9.2.C and 4.5.A.1) for existing RA zone properties F15-0063 and E15-0206- two parcels of the affected following properties with Assessor’s ID E15-0204 and E15-0274, E15-0205; F15-0006; F15-0007; F15-0008; to floating zone MSDD. *Owner: Thomas Montanari; Appl: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97517>

Continued to next regular meeting.

- 3.3. **If Public Hearing is Closed: SP-24-21: 58 Prospect Ridge:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 4.5.A) for construction of four new dwellings and associated site work at 62 East Ridge and 58 Prospect Ridge. *Owner: ANB Enterprises LLC; Applicant: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97519>

Continued to next regular meeting.

- 3.4. **AH-24-3: 5 North Salem Road:** Revision to an Affordable Housing Application per CGS §8-30g to reduce the size for trash enclosure. *Owner: 5 North Salem LLC; Appl: Elizabeth Merrihew.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98199>

Michelle Micoli of Artel Engineering presented. The Special Permit application was presented in 2019 and approval was granted in November of 2019. Applicant is requesting to reduce the size of the trash enclosure to 8X9 in order to add one additional parking space. Currently there are 13 spaces and would like to add one more space to bring to 14 total. Pictures were shown of a similar trash enclosure at 7 North Salem Road. Discussion of

dumpster location and ability of trash truck's ability to maneuver around site was had. If enclosure is reduced to 8X9 there would be space for one trash dumpster and recycling totes, not a large recycling bin the size of trash bin. Applicant is willing to make a 9X9 trash enclosure.

Motion to approve with special conditions that the enclosure pad be adjusted to 9 ft by 9 ft and 3 recycling totes be inside as well. (*Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by J. Dowdell*) Motion carries 5-2-0 with J. Sorena and M. Okrongly objecting.

### 3.5. Signage Regulation Review

Chair Hendrick gave brief summary of the challenges of the current signage regulations and discussed how they are out of date. Chair Hendricks requested a Commissioner research signage regulations. Clarification of signage in Ridgefield regulations was discussed. Ben Nissim volunteered to research signage regulations.

- 3.6. **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-24-17: 15 Bailey Avenue:** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3 and 7.2.E) for window sign "Z Boutique". Owner: Regency Centers. Applicant: Zofia Bober. *For receipt and possible discussion.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98373>

Zofia Bober presented. Applicant is requesting window sign. Design was shown and has been approved by VDC.

Motion to approve as recommended by VDC (*Maker: J. Dowdell, second by E. DiSalvo*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.2. **REF-24-1: 8 -24 Referral Application for Board of Education to use 66 Grove Street for Alternative School and Transitions program.** *For acknowledgement and comment.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98429>

There has been correspondence on this referral which was acknowledged. Some concerns include the gun club, which is located approximately 800 feet away, and environmental concerns. Selectperson Rudy Marconi was in attendance at meeting and gave an overview. The Board of Education is looking for additional space for the transition and alternative school. The building at 66 Grove has been available and is ideal as far as square footage. The Board of Education and the Board of Selectman are in agreement with the terms of the lease. The current lease goes through 2027 and has three 5-year renewal options. There is plenty of parking for proposed school. Selectperson Rudy Marconi has requested Town attorneys to review the location of school in proximity to gun club and to review compliance. A Special Permit will be required for this project. Sidewalks and safety at intersection were discussed. Selectperson spoke regarding environmental concerns. Mention was made regarding water table depth which is in excess of 30 feet below building. Possible utilization of current location of alternative high school if moved was discussed.

Motion to send positive referral (*Maker: J. Sorena, second by J. Dowdell*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.3. **REF-24-2: 8-24 Referral Application for Donation of 1.03 acres Open Space (ID D12-0023) on Ketcham Rd. to Conservation Commission.** *For acknowledgement and comment.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98431>

Motion for positive referral (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by J. Sorena*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 4.4. **SP-24-32: 680 Danbury Rd:** Revision to prior Special Permit (Per 9.2.A and 7.2.E.3 and 7.2.G and 7.8.C) two wall/building signs and site lighting. Owner: 680 R E LLC; Applicant: Robert Jewell. *For receipt, and discussion. (Staff suggests discussion October 8)* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98470>

Motion to receive and schedule discussion on Oct. 8 (*Maker: M. Okrongly, second by C. Molyneaux*) *Unanimous Approval*

4.5. **Item added to Agenda: 653 Branchville discussion**

E. DiSalvo recused herself from discussion.

M. Okrongly has met with Alice Dew, Director of Planning and Zoning, regarding the pond dredging and the excessive number of trees that were cut down. Alice contacted the permit holder. There has been a substantial amount of trees taken down on the Branchville Road side of the property. There was discussion of the interpretation of the Special Permit approval in regards to which trees were to be removed. There is a definition of a significant tree in the Planning and Zoning regulation which defines a significant tree as more than 18-inch trunk. When a Special Permit is submitted “significant” trees should be identified. Significant trees are to be marked for removal when a special permit is submitted. According to Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Regulations, significant trees shall be preserved. Alice has talked to the applicant and is going to go around far side of pond and mark trees which will be kept. Applicant currently is not doing anymore work and is waiting on DEEP permit. Applicant does have to clear any tree within 25 feet of dam. Alice spoke with applicant and he does not remember taking any “significant” tree down that was over 18 inches. The commission requested an update at the October 8<sup>th</sup> meeting as to possible photos of site prior to removing trees versus current photos. It was suggested that for future applications trees/pictures be documented. A system will be put in place so that significant trees will be preserved in future. A possible cease and desist was discussed.

4.6. **Approval of Minutes**

4.1.1: Meeting Minutes: September 03, 2024.

[2024.09.03.pzc\\_draft\\_meeting\\_minutes\\_1.pdf \(ridgefieldct.gov\)](#)

Motion to approve (*Maker: S. D’Acunto, second by C. Molyneaux*) *Unanimous Approval*

**5. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM

Submitted by Misty Dorsch,

Recording Secretary

FOOTNOTES:

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes