



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, January 7, 2025

Present:

IN PERSON

Robert Hendrick, Chair
Joseph Dowdell, Vice Chair
Chris Molyneaux
Elizabeth DiSalvo (7:04)
Ben Nneji
Sebastiano D'Acunto
Ben Nissim

VIRTUAL

Mariah Okrongly

Also Present: Alice Dew, Director, Planning and Zoning

Absent: Joe Sorena

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 at this point in the meeting, and uploaded to the Commission's webpage at <https://www.ridgefieldct.gov/planning-and-zoning-commission/pages/correspondence>).

Motion to add to agenda item 4.5, a discuss regarding 2025 PZC calendar with possible change of dates (*M. Okronkly, second by B. Nneji*) *Unanimous Approval*

Motion to add to agenda item 4.6, a status update regarding the signage at the gas station on Danbury Road (*Maker: S. D'Acunto, second by B. Nissim*) *Unanimous Approval*

2. PUBLIC HEARING

2.1. **A-24-3:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to add a Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. *Commission initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99421>

Before the opening of the Public Hearing, Chair Hendrick made Commissioners aware that there is a difficulty opening Public Hearing due to a mistake. There is a statutory requirement (statute 8-3a) stating when there is a regulation amendment application, that in addition to other notices, there is to be a paper copy of the proposed amendment to be on file at the Town Clerk's office. An individual went to the Town Clerk and was not able to receive a hard copy, which is considered a default under 8-3(a). This hard copy needed to be available no less than 10 days prior to the opening of the public hearing. For this reason, it is the advice of Counsel, Chair Hendrick and Alice Dew, Director of Planning and Zoning, to defer the opening of the public hearing and for it to be opened at next regular scheduled meeting which is January 21, 2025. Chair Hendrick apologized to the public and welcomes their comments regarding the proposed amendment change during the public hearing. Recommendation of Chair is to defer opening of public hearing to January 21. No objection from the Commission.

3. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 3.1. **(Continued) VDC-24-21: 385 Main Street:** Village District Application (Per 8.3 and 7.2.E) for replacement of sign “Ridgefield Ace Hardware”. *Owner: Ridgefield 385 Main Street LLC; Appl: Ashlea Andrews.* Applying for variance. PZC decision by 03/13/25 <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99317>

Robert Jewell, attorney, is representing applicant. Property owner submitted a Village District Application to replace a sign because the name of the business has changed. The AAC likes the current sign and called it a landmark. The applicant met with the Planning and Zoning staff and came up with a plan in order to preserve the sign by moving it higher and adding a second sign that indicates the name of the current business, Ace Hardware. In order to move current sign and add second sign, applicant needs Zoning Board of Appeals approval and will also need a Special Permit for a second sign. The special permit application needed for the second sign would be subject to the possible proposed moratorium. Due to timeline, application may have to be withdrawn. If application does have to be withdrawn, Attorney Jewell is requesting that it be withdrawn without prejudice. Other option is to leave this application pending and hopefully get a variance from ZBA in time.

Sign discussion ensued regarding red Ace Hardware sign. If applicant is unable to obtain a variance from ZBA, they will proceed with new sign without saving the old sign. Applicant is continuing with the application and will return to PZC when variance is complete.

- 3.2. **(Continued) 58 Prospect Ridge: Resolution of Denial for A-24-2, RZ-24-1 and SP-24-21**
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/97773>

Motion to ratify Resolution of Denial (*Maker: B. Nissim, second by C. Molyneaux*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 3.3. **SP-24-34: 3 Big Shop Lane:** Review of submission of front façade of approved addition. Needs final approval by PZC. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98616>

This application has already been approved.

The Resolution of Approval asked applicant to come back with a few modifications to be reviewed by staff and/or Commission. Staff has requested that Commission look at final drawings.

Scott Yandrasevich presented latest drawings.

Alice Dew gave comments from staff report.

Parking has been restored.

Motion to approve final details as presented. (*Maker: B. Nneji, second by C. Molyneaux*) *Unanimous Approval*

- 3.4. **If Public Hearing is closed: A-24-3:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to add a Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. *Commission initiated.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99421>

4. NEW BUSINESS

- 4.1. **MISC-24-10: 58 Prospect Ridge and 62 East Ridge: Pre-submission concept for multi-family development under 8-30g:** *Owner: Thomas Montanari; Applicant: Robert Jewell.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99327>

Attorney Jewell is requesting this pre-submission concept to be continued to January 21st.

- 4.2. **AH-24-4: 43 Danbury Road:** Affordable Housing Application per CGS §8-30g for 20 units apartment building, replacing the existing structures. *For receipt and scheduling public hearing and site walk (Staff.*

suggests site walk Feb. 2 or March 2, 2025 and Public Hearing on March 4, 2025. Owner: Ljatif Ramadani; Appl: Peter Olson. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99636>

List of required and optional referrals was handed out to Commissioners and Applicant. The list was color coded with the ones in green indicating normal or traditional referrals and, in some cases required. Applicant has already been to AAC, and has been to IWB and received IWB approval.

Motion to receive, schedule site walk on March 2 and public hearing on March 4th with referrals from items highlighted in green, the tree committee as well as a peer review (*Maker: B. Nneji, second by B. Nissim*)
Unanimous Approval

- 4.3. **AH-25-1: 371 Wilton Road West:** Affordable Housing Application per CGS §8-30g for 21-unit multi-family development with 20 units in a new building and existing cottage as one unit including related site work in RAA zone. *For receipt and scheduling public hearing and sitewalk. Staff suggests site walk Feb. 2 or March 2, 2025 and Public Hearing on March 4, 2025. Owner: Patricia and Raymond Garst; Appl: Robert Jewell. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99720>*

Robert Jewell stated that applicant is willing to build smaller project which would comply with inclusionary zoning regulations if the Commission is willing to work with applicant. Applicant was monitoring the application of T. Montanari (58 Prospect Ridge) while working on this project. When he saw the outcome of the T. Montanari project, both denial and introduction of the proposed moratorium, Mr. Garst felt his only choice was an 8-30g application. If Commission is willing to work with applicant on zone change or text amendment change, applicant is willing to build something complying with inclusionary zoning regulations and less units than what is currently proposed.

E. DiSalvo stated that the Commission is reasonable and every application is considered differently and would appreciate original application and doesn't want client assuming they are forced into 8-30g.

Attorney Jewell stated he may have to file a motion to recuse Mr. D'Acunto from this application on the grounds of predetermination based on statements during T. Montanari's hearings.

Commission appreciates pre submission conversations and would appreciate a pre-submission review on this site.

Motion to receive and schedule sitewalk on March 2nd and Public Hearing on March 4th with listed referrals with addition to Historic Commission and Historic Society, tree committee and peer review (*Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by J. Dowdell*) *Motion carries 7-0-1 with S. D'Acunto abstaining*

4.4. **Approval of Minutes**

- 4.1.1: Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2024
Sitewalk: December 15, 2024

Motion to approve December 17, 2024 meeting minutes (*Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by C. Molyneaux*)
Motion carries 6-0-2 with M. Okrongly and B. Nissim abstaining

4.5. **Added to Agenda: 2025 Calendar Discussion**

Commissioner Okrongly mentioned February 16 sitewalk and February 18th PZC meeting which are over winter break. Also, April 13th sitewalk and April 15 meeting are during Spring break for Ridgefield Schools. Sitewalk June 15th is on Father's Day. Discussion regarding these dates ensued. Alice Dew, Director, will note not to schedule sitewalks on February 16, April 13th, June 15th and November 30th and cancel these sitewalks. February 18th and April 15 will be canceled and a special meeting will be scheduled if necessary.

4.6. **Added to Agenda: status update regarding the signage at the gas station on Danbury Road**

Alice Dew, Director of Planning and Zoning, gave update. Town attorney, Tom Beecher sent a demand letter to 115 Danbury Rd. Staff had been sending this letter to FuelCo and representatives of FuelCo. There is an owner

of the property that Attorney Beecher was able to locate and she immediately responded. She didn't realize they were in violation and is going to address the issue. There have been fines issued.

5. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM

Submitted by Misty Dorsch,
Recording Secretary

FOOTNOTES:

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes