

Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 24, 2025  
(Revised/Approved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		
Joe Dowdell	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nneji	Commissioner	X		
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner		X	
Joe Sorena	Commissioner		X	
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		
Alice Dew	Director, (Staff)	X		

Note: Planning & Zoning Commission meetings are conducted under *Roberts Rules of Order*, and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility. All meetings are open to the public to observe, but in accordance with state regulations, public comment on specific applications is generally only permitted during the Public Hearing for each application. Correspondence to the Commission may be submitted at any time to: [pzdirector@ridgefieldct.gov](mailto:pzdirector@ridgefieldct.gov). Anyone requiring special accommodations due to disability should contact the Planning & Zoning Office at (203) 431-2766.

Meeting link: [Bitly | bit.ly/45kTVqf](https://bit.ly/45kTVqf)

1. Call to Order

- **Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:03 PM via Zoom; Quorum established.**
- Chair Hendrick explained this meeting is a little different than a normal P & Z meeting. This is a public information meeting regarding Branchville Zoning Study. This is the first of several meetings. Tonight is Zoom only, but there will be an in-person public forum as well. The in-person will be held on July 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> at Town Hall Annex or library. Anyone who cannot make it to either one, may submit materials, letter or comments to [pzdirector@ridgefieldct.gov](mailto:pzdirector@ridgefieldct.gov). There was a study 2015-2017 which resulted in a full report that is online. There have been infrastructure changes since 2017 with improvements through 2019-2024. The Commission feels it's necessary to have this conversation with Ridgefield and its residents prior to working with neighboring municipalities.

2. Open Discussion re: Branchville

- a. Background & context, including recommendations from 2017 study

**Francisco Gomes** with FHI Studio presented. An introduction to the Branchville Zoning Study was discussed. The main purpose of this evening is to have an open discussion with public. This discussion is to be centered around Branchville and zoning concerns around Branchville only.

The purpose of this study is to reconsider zoning and design guideline recommendations of the 2017 Branchville TOD. That study was centered around the train station. That plan made a series of recommendations to zoning and developmental guidelines. Potential zoning changes and possible establishment of a Village District was considered. The study now encompasses approximately 1 mile radius around train station. Topography, flood zones, open space considerations, water and sewer infrastructure, and sewer feasibility study.

The 2017 Branchville TOD's plan was completed in 2017. It was led by FHI Studio and a task force was comprised of Town, Regional and State Officials. The plan's vision included new village green, mixed land use, better site organization, and reorient Branchville to a common area versus commercial area. Zoning recommendations include 3 new zones which include Village mixed use, Branchville Village medium residential density district and Branchville Village High Residential Density District. Architectural design guidelines were also discussed.

b. Overview of process and timeline for P&Z related tasks

Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> will be an in-person workshop.

August: Special meetings of P & Z Commission to review findings from public forums and potential amendments.

September-October: Draft recommended zoning amendments

c. Public input on what should be considered in next stage

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

- **Philip and Bonnie Kearns of Parley Road** – As a resident of Ridgefield, P. Kearns supports district and walkable Town area. As Chairman of Park and Rec Commission, Philip Kearns stated they strongly support open space and establishment of a park area.
- **Marc Glosser, Indian Cave Road** – Height restriction concerns. **F. Gomes** responded that generally, you need to have some height to achieve density. How much ground can you cover is important (ground coverage). Can vary throughout the area.
- **Chair Hendrick** requested everyone state their full name and address for record.
- **Joanne Murray, 62 Cooper Hill Road** – Concerns included: types of housing allowed in zones, sewer concerns, and traffic. In favor of alternative dwellings and duplexes should be allowed in all residential areas.
- **Kevin O'Connor (Susan): Jefferson Drive** – Asked about Candee's Pond area; In the 2017 study, Candee's pond was beyond the study area. Also concerned about the bridges near the train station and whether they will be repaired.
  - First Selectperson, Rudy Marconi, spoke. For the bridge replacement near the train station, trees have been removed, poles relocated and the following week will be the transfer of power lines. The contractor should be ready to start work in the next several weeks on the two bridges will be replaced, one with a pedestrian lane.
  - K. O'Connor fails to see how people will be convinced to take the train.
- **Sean Connelly, Barrack Hill Rd.** Reinforce Phil Kearns comments regarding having an active park, and a village feel. Would like to recreate a village feel and give people ability to walk and bike such as restaurants and parks.
- **Brett Gannon, 119 Florida Road** – Traffic concerns.

- **Sarah, Old Branchville Road** – concerns regarding traffic increasing. Supports Village District idea, would like more open space, does not support rezoning in RAA.
- **Emily McMillon, Stony Hill Terrace:** Supports Village District and open space. Concern that we might invite someone who wants to create housing on site with a very large septic system. Also has concern about wetlands.
  - **F. Gomes:** State carefully regulates through DEEP public water and waste disposal.
- **Walker Seaver, Cooper Road** - Concern is traffic; Is there a vision of non-automobile traffic?
  - **F. Gomes:** Vision would be to allow pedestrian and biking through Greenway or sidewalks.
  - **Chair Hendrick:** One good reason to expand study area includes how to connect Branchville to Ridgefield center.
  - **F. Gomes:** Not developing a master plan for connectivity to Branchville area but does want to take all this into consideration.
- **Linda Cruz, Stony Hill Road** - Concerned about whether we're working with MetroNorth to make the trains more usable, and the impact on Ridgefield schools.
  - **F. Gomes:** WestCog did a study last year which did not give a good argument to make substantial investments to the Branchville line. Local communities working through WestCOG should advocate for service and infrastructure improvements. Branch lines, as opposed to the main train lines, have suffered since COVID.
- **Luke Ericson, 638 Branchville Road:** Glad addressing the sewer issue. Would like to emphasize importance of open space.
- **Marc Glosser, Indian Cave Road:** Concerns include MTA service; asked about bus service and clarification of possible increase of bus service.
- **Nathan Sved, Old Branchville Road:** Traffic concerns with housing in surrounding areas. N. Sved was surprised by scale of recommendations in 2017.
  - **F. Gomes:** No benefit to Ridgefield with the new housing in surrounding areas, but Ridgefield has been recipient of the traffic.
- **Brett Gannon, 119 Florida Road:** Florida Road is used as a cut through for traffic. If an accident happens on Route 7, Florida Road is the alternate route.
- **Carl Forcheski, 12 Revere Drive:** Concern for increase in volume of traffic on Route 7. There is not good service into NY on MetroNorth.
  - **F. Gomes:** Current reality of the market (across Connecticut) is the demand for multi-family housing, but we won't get to that point unless zoning changes. Would like to get out ahead so Town is the driver rather than the developer.
  - **Chair Hendrick:** What we would see if we do nothing as demand grows, there would be proposed multi-family housing, mostly affordable. Let's lean in and be pro-active rather than sitting back and waiting for it to hit us in the face.
- **Debra Franceschini-Gatje – Spireview Rd.** Question regarding massive flooding on Rte 7 and diverse housing.
  - **F. Gomes:** TOD plan did propose diverse housing. We're still approaching it as the need for diversity to meet different types of housing needs. We're interested including ADUs, planning residential development allowing higher density. All options should be on the table.

### 3. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM

**Submitted by Misty Dorsch,  
Recording Secretary (via video recording)**

**FOOTNOTES:**

PZC =Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes