

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 2, 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		via Zoom
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner	X		
Joe Sorena	Commissioner		X	
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		
Aarti Paranjape	Director, (Staff)	X		

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:01 PM; Quorum established.

1.1. 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>).

Ms. Paranjape is the new Director of Planning and Zoning after ten years with the Planning and Zoning Department. A town planner will infill Aarti's previous position.

Discussion of the calendar for the upcoming year – the PZC would like to review early this year.

Discussion of a PZC member functioning as a secretary/designated note taker internally for upcoming site walks and meetings.

1.2. Approval of agenda.

New this meeting, open enforcement items are now on the agenda each meeting as a reminder of ongoing complaints/enforcement actions. Ms. Paranjape discussed the history of the violation including the requirement of a Special Permit for smokers outside. The violation has continued and increased with time. Enforcement action continues.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

2.1. 362 Old Sib

Ms. Paranjape discussed the history of excavation/grading/fill on the property. A neighbor complaint triggered an inspection. A permit was issued by the PZC in 2024. Neighbor complaints continued. Ms. Paranjape has scheduled a meeting with both the property owner and the neighbor at the same time to understand both sides of the story. The homeowner states that the work is approximately 99% complete. Enforcement action continues.

2.2. 967 Ethan Allen – Hoo Doo Brown

Ms. Paranjape discussed the history of the violation including the requirement of a Special Permit for smokers outside. The violation has continued and increased with time. There are still multiple smokers. Enforcement action continues.

2.3. 34 Bailey Avenue

Ms. Paranjape discussed a violation with heat pumps at this site. There is a combination of heat pumps and gas. The applicant submitted different information to the PZC for heating with heat pumps and then submitted gas heating to the building department for the building permit. Enforcement action continues.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1. **(Continued) SP-25-5:- 29 Prospect Street:** Revision for Special Permit (Per 9.2.A) File #2014-008-PR-SP-VDC for a modification to the General Condition #11 to use the emergency access for exit to trucks on Grove Street in CBD zone. *Owner: 29 Prospect Street LLC; Appl: Michael Loya.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101457>

As of today, 29 documents have been submitted.

Michael Loya, Area Operations Manager of Ridgefield Supply, presented. He requested Ms. Paranjape pull up the photos from August 23. Six tractor trailers had exited the site and all had turned left on Prospect and then presumably right on Grove. A map was presented that showed traffic flow and the apron onto Grove Street which is 20 feet in length. After meeting with the Fire Marshall, there were no conflicts stated. The police recognize the benefit of not having trucks take a left from Prospect to Grove and recognize that trucks on Grove should be avoided. Chief of Police, Kreitz recommended a traffic study.

Ms. Okrongly stated that she doesn't have enough information to make a decision on 18-wheelers. Mr. D'Acunto asked about the number of safety incidents with cars and trucks on site. Mr. Loya stated that an ingress and an egress only route as proposed would be safer than requiring trucks to turn around on site in a loop which is what they currently do. Mr. Loya explains the current parking lot maneuvering on the map.

Ms. Okrongly states that she would like to understand what change in onsite conditions has occurred to allow for a revision to the existing permits. Mr. Loya explained that a change is in the level of activity – business activity has increased and therefore truck traffic has increased.

Mr. Loya asks if the traffic study is required. Mr. Hendrick states we will come back to it.

Staff input was given by Ms. Paranjape. Ms. Paranjape states that it is currently a three-way intersection but adding an accessway would create a four-way intersection. Will it be posted that trucks and no private vehicles or contractors cars will be using the accessway. Mr. Hendrick states that per the application, the truck exit will be gated with centrally controlled access via a gate or key or code. Ms. Paranjape discusses lights. Mr. Loya states no exterior lights.

Hearing no further staff or PZC comments, Mr. Hendrick allows public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Joanne Murray, 62 Cooper Hill Road spoke. Concern is unsafe conditions with large trucks exiting on Grove Street.

Lori Mazzola, 24 Quincy Close. Spoke at last meeting and after hearing additional testimony she still is against this application.

Hearing no additional public comment, the applicant returned to the table. Mr. Hendrick states a traffic study on turning feasibility would be a good idea.

Applicant will withdraw and the Board will decline without prejudice. The applicant will reapply with the material currently presented as part of the application and get a traffic study, engineering study with the turn radius provide additional information to the board.

Ms. Paranjape states the withdrawal will be required in writing and submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department.

- 3.2. **SP-25-8: 258 Main Street:** Revision to Special Permit per (Per 9.2.A and 3.1.C.2) for allowing to host outdoor private events not related to museum in RA zone. *Owner: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum Inc; Appl: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101885>

Ms. Paranjape read the published legal notice.

Applicant, Mr. Jewell, represented the applicant on behalf of the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Inc. Executive Director, Ms. Maylone, was present. He gave a brief background of the museum and permit history.

Previous permits restricted the use of outdoor museum space for private events. Mr. Jewell is requesting permission for private events with possible restrictions. He suggested a few restrictions including no more than approximately ten for year, a strict curfew, no all day music events, and a prohibition against amplified music but possible amplified speech as needed. The use is well established because the museum has permission for these types of indoor private events and museum associated outside events, just not private outside events.

A site plan was shown for Mr. Jewell to explain the lawn space that could be used for events. Ms. Maylone stated that a large tent for a recent museum gala seated approximately 250 but it would be difficult to seat any more than that. Parking should not be an issue.

Ms. Maylone spoke on improving the relationship with the museum and the town. During her seven years at the museum, they have done a lot of work on the outside space to make it more usable and accessible to more Ridgefield residents. In conversation with other museums, she realized she is the only museum that has the prohibition of private outside events on site. Because of the work and improvements done on site, there are more inquiries to use the space.

Ms. DiSalvo discussed noise and amplified vs unamplified music on site. Ms. Maylone envisions these private events to include inside/outside space. Approximately ten years ago there was a noise complaint, prior to her directorship. She states that she has kept lines of communication open with neighbors and improved their relationship.

Mr. Hendrick discussed events and town-owned spaces that can have private events. He thinks the Aldrich Museum is a unique case because it is a non-profit museum surrounded by private residents. Ms. Okrongly suggests a 100-person cap.

Mr. D'Acunto stated that there could be an unlimited number of museum-related galas with a string quartet and 250 people outside. But the same party could not be held in that venue by the Chamber of Commerce even though it would be the same impact to the neighbors.

Mr. Nissim asks questions about the material change in circumstances. Mr. Jewell believes that the condition being discussed can be changed because there was a material change in circumstance with the renovation of the outdoor space and the current ask is different than the request in 2016 for outdoor concerts specifically. Mr. Jewell read into the record his responses to concerns stated previously.

Ms. Okrongly expresses concerns with the comparable venue examples Mr. Jewell is using. She believes they are not apples to apples as a resident cannot privately rent a lot of these other event spaces because they don't seem like similar sites.

Mr. Hendrick opens staff comment from Ms. Paranjape. Ms. Paranjape stated PZC background information relevant to this application. The DOT has stated that no parking should be in the state right of way. WPCA stated that they have enough capacity to handle these events. Police department had concerns with noise from events. Public comments have come in support of and opposition to the application. Conditions have been prepared to discuss if approved or denied.

Ms. Okrongly asks about the denial from the PZC from 2016. Ms. Paranjape read the denial into the record.

Mr. Hendrick summarizes the content of the letters that have been submitted by the public both in support and opposition to the application.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mike Murray, 62 Cooper Hill Road. In support of the application. Mr. Murray thinks it would be nice for the public to have outdoor events at such a beautiful space with limitations as discussed.

Dan O'Brien, 267 Main St. In support of the application. He believes it is an unnecessary restriction on the site.

Christine Boris, 7 Morganti Court. In support of the application. She believes the museum does events thoughtfully and respectfully and they should have the opportunity to host events like other similar organizations in town.

Don Ciota, 236 Main Street. Does not support the application. Concerns include changing previous approvals, number of events with sound and sound amplification, parking, traffic, length of events, financials, and the change of focus of museum from an art destination to an event destination.

Amy Pal 20 Clayton Place. In support of the application. She believes comparable properties have private events in their outside space and Aldrich should not be treated differently.

Rebecca Ciota, attorney representing 236 Main Street LLC and 250 Main Street LLC. Does not support the application. Concerns are for both properties and include reversing 2003 conditions. She does not believe that a large enough change has occurred to warrant permit modification, concerns for outdoor noise, amplification of sound, and lighting. She does not believe that the comparable museums and events spaces stated by Mr. Jewell are apples to apples and that those venues should not be considered. Concerns with traffic and accidents, events increasing congestion of traffic, concerns that this was not requested two years ago when the applicant came to the PZC for an application to make improvements to the outdoor space.

Ms. Maylone stated that efforts were made to reach the home owners at 236 and 250 Main Street but they have not responded to any of the museum outreach until this public comment.

Don Ciota, 236 Main Street. Returned to the table to disagree with Ms. Maylone. He claims to not have gotten outreach.

Ms. Okrongly has suggested that resolutions of approval need to be more detailed moving forward to educate the future PZC of the history of a property when a permit comes back to the table.

Mr. Nissim stated that the PZC needs to take the time to read the meeting minutes.

John Kazzi, 20 Rowland Lane. Suggested changes to the conditions proposed, please consider no amplified sound during any event, the second condition would be that there are no concert of any kind. Concerns include an aggressive marketing campaign that could make the museum a venue for more public/private events. He believes that two events per month would be satisfactory but even ten events with loud music concern him. He can hear the annual gala. Mr. Kazzi spoke on behalf of Ms. Perrie, his next door neighbor. Her concerns include her child's bedroom being 20 feet from the property boundary. Mr. Kazzi can hear amplified sound but cannot hear non-amplified sound including string quartets at his home.

Dan O'Brien, 267 Main st. He mentions that the historic district is not germane to this application and the Aldrich has always been very forthcoming with conformity to historic preservation. The historic district does not have any say on use.

Ms. Maylone states that the gala is the only amplified music event.

Tom Noone and his wife Margarita, 57 Main Street. They submitted a letter but wanted to speak. In support of the application. They were both surprised to hear that the museum did not have this type of event option. They live by the Benjamin and are not impacted negatively by amplified sound. They believe that getting people into the museum for any reason, including events, further supports the mission of the museum in a positive way.

Hearing no further public comment, Mr. Jewell had a few additional comments. He addressed a few comments the public had stated. They are not introducing any new change that does not already exist, it is allowing this use to extend to the public. Ms. Malone stated that there are no events on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings so there are no parking lot issues with the church shared parking lot. The largest event that has historically occurred on the property includes approximately 300 individuals over hours coming and going. There have never been parking issues to Ms. Maylone's knowledge.

Mr. Hendrick suggested continuing the public hearing awaiting further information.

Mr. Jewell asked for specific questions or outstanding needs prior to the next meeting. Mr. Hendrick would like Mr. Jewell to meet with the neighbors to have a discussion to see if any relationships can change. Mr. Hendrick recaps that we are requesting ten outdoor events, willing to accept a curfew, restriction on amplified music, and enforce a capacity limit that would predicate around 107 cars and be approximately 200 people or less. Mr. Hendrick states that the Commission would like more public engagement. Mr. Jewell would like to know that if there is an indoor event, the individuals can go outside to wander around during a private event. Mr. Hendrick suggests running that past the zoning enforcement officer. Ms. DiSalvo states that she felt Mr. Aldrich would have supported this request.

Public Hearing continued to next regular meeting on September 16, 2025.

- 3.3. **FP-25-1: 0 Simpaug Tpke:** Flood Plain site plan application (Per RZR 6.1 and RZR 11) for trails and boardwalks in the flood plain area on State of Connecticut parcels H13-0057 and H13-0051. *Owner: State of CT DOT; Applicant: Charles Robbins-TOR and Antonio DiCamillo-Stantec.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102049>

Ms. Paranjape read the published legal notice into the record.

Mr. DeCamillo is the engineer presenting the application on behalf of Stantec and the Norwalk Valley River Trail (NRVT). A description of the greater scale project was given to understand the Norwalk River Valley Trail project. The Ridgefield portion of the trail is called the Ridgefield Ramble running from Redding to Jensen field on Route 7. Goal is to begin construction in spring of 2026. Most of the land is owned by the state. A significant effort has been made for public outreach and input of the community. Based on public input, a Bobby's Court parking lot was eliminated, and a few reroutes of the trail have occurred, and personalized screening has occurred when the trail comes close to a neighbor's property. It is a 10-foot stone dust trail with boardwalks across the streams. The regulated activity within the floodplain is all within state property. The state will look at floodplain and wetlands impacts within their property. The trail is a depth of 4 inches of sawdust on 6 inches of processed geofabric. Parking lots are depth of 8 inches gravel. A small bioretention swale was proposed. Neighborhood feedback has been positive since the applicant has responded to the concerns initially stated by the public.

The applicant has been in front of the IWB and there are floodplain/wetland impact which were discussed. Boardwalks are designed to support an F250 truck. The bioretention swale designed adjacent to Bobby's Court help with runoff.

The PZC asked for a list of plantings. Mr. DiCamillo did not have that on hand but stated that there would be approximately 20 trees and erosion control measures. For screening a fence will run from the street down the property line. The fence will be maintained by the NRVt.

Mr. Hendrick asked if we needed the landscape plan. Mr. DiCamillo stated that he is not a landscape architect, and it was not needed for this application but they are within the set that was submitted. Ms. Paranjape found the plantings as noted on the plan sheet and discussed.

Mr. Nissim asks if the trail crosses private property anywhere. Yes, but not for this application that is in front of the PZC.

Ms. Paranjape asked about monitoring and inspection. Mr. DeCamillo states that the engineer will be there daily. Ms. Paranjape states that a weekly report should be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Department with updates and project status, if approved. Ms. Paranjape states that a special permit is required, and a condition will require a special permit to be issued within 180 days of the project start date. It cannot start within 180 days, it will be April at the earliest because the applicant still needs approval from DEEP, DOT, and State of Connecticut.

Mr. Hendrick turned the comment to the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sheryl Lussier, 94 Riverside Drive. The project was a rough start but the applicant did a great job of listening to neighbor concerns. She would like clarification if there will be gates or doors within the fencing and also screening on the property owner side of the fence for her property. Mr. DeCamillo has no concerns with fencing and additional plantings for screening should not be an issue for aesthetics.

Isaac Manhiemer, 525 Ethan Allen Highway. In support of the project. He is a bike rider and the trail is near his house. He is looking forward to spending time on the trail with his children because he currently goes with his family to the NRVt sections in Wilton and Norwalk. He has attended meetings from Friends of the NRVt. He is optimistic about the section in Ridgefield because it also supports education.

Mr. Hendrick recapped the discussion. A special condition will be stated in the approval to include plantings for screening on the side of the fence and a door for access. Another condition is the applicant agrees that within the 400-foot area of fence the applicant will make available to the residents, the option to have a door and landscape screen added and the office can approve it.

Hearing no objection or further comment, the public hearing closed at 10:05PM.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-5:- 29 Prospect Street:** Revision for Special Permit (Per 9.2.A) File #2014-008-PR-SP-VDC for a modification to the General Condition #11 to use the emergency access for exit to trucks on Grove Street in CBD zone. *Owner: 29 Prospect Street LLC; Appl: Michael Loya.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101457>

The application was withdrawn.

- 4.2. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-8: 258 Main Street:** Revision to Special Permit per (Per 9.2.A and 3.1.C.2) for allowing to host outdoor private events not related to museum in RA zone. *Owner: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum Inc; Appl: Robert Jewell.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101885>

The public hearing was continued to September 16, 2025.

- 4.3. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: FP-25-1: 0 Simpaug Tpke:** Flood Plain site plan application (Per RZR 6.1) for trails and boardwalks in the flood plain area on State of Connecticut

parcels H12-0057 and H13-0051. *Owner: State of CT DOT; Applicant: Philip Katz.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102049>

The following Special conditions were stated:

1. Applicant will provide within 400- foot area of fence to the residents an option to have a door and landscape screening. Office staff can approve it.
2. Revised plan with the fence and screening submitted to office.
3. Weekly monitoring report shall be submitted to Planning & Zoning office.
4. The Siteplan approval shall expire 365 days from the date Commission approved-02/09/2025

Ms. DiSalvo makes a motion to approve the application with conditions as discussed. Mr. Nissim seconded. Unanimous approval.

4.4. Temporary Moratorium Activities

4.4.1. Administrative – Town Planner

Discussion on staff reorganization internally. Working on finalizing a job description for Town Planner with a goal of posting within the next week. Mr. Hendrick suggests that individual members of the PZC meet with potential candidates prior to meeting in front of the entire PZC.

4.4.2. General Regulation Review

This item was not discussed and will be continued onto the next meeting.

4.4.3. MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101786>

Very little recent project progress FHI's individuals being out of town. Mr. Hendrick and Ms. Paranjape will have a meeting to discuss in the near future. Ms. Okrongly suggests a meeting specifically for this agenda item so it doesn't always fall late in the evening at the end of the agenda. There were two meetings held on this topic with the potential to add more later. There will be a public meeting whenever there is a regulation change. Mr. Hendrick would like to really sit down and understand what we have heard so far and what we now need to move forward as a Commission.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **VDC-25-6: 467 Main Street:** Village District Application (per RZR 5.1.B and 7.2.E.1) for installation of building and pylon sign "Cask and Cork" in CBD zone. *Owner: Ridgefield Equities LLC; Applicant: Ashlea Andrews. (For receipt. Discussion on Sept 16th after AAC/VDC meeting)*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102167>

Motion to receive and discuss on September 16th made by Ms. Okrongly , seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Unanimous Approval.

- 5.2. **SP-25-10: 76 Canterbury Lane:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for construction of barn in the front yard. *Owner: Bruce and Linda Kallner; Applicant: Jay Contessa. For receipt and schedule public hearing. (Staff suggests sitewalk October 5 and public hearing October 7).* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102210>

Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on September 14th and Public Hearing on October 7th made by Ms. Okrongly and seconded by Mr. Nneji. Unanimous Approval

- 5.3. **SP-25-11: 5 Palmer Court:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for construction of inground pool in the front yard. *Owner/Applicant: Steven Bronfield. For receipt and schedule public hearing. Staff suggests sitewalk October 5 and public hearing October 7).*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101707>

Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on September 14th and Public Hearing on October 7th made by Ms. Okrongly and seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Unanimous Approval

5.4. **East Ridge Historic District Proposal – c/o Historic District Commission**

Mr. O'Brien presents East Ridge to be proposed as a historic district. This would be the first new district since they were established since the 1960's. This requires 2/3 town vote and it will then go to a Town meeting. It is the voters of the town that make the decision to approve this. This goes the entire length of East Ridge and includes 18 houses. He suggests the PZC read through the document about the onus of the houses near the police station. Mr. O'Brien believes that you will maintain the character of the neighborhood by creating a historic district and regulatory oversight of the area. It also helps maintain real estate value. The ECDC and PZC role is to read the report and state whether there are comments or a positive referral. If no comments are received by the PZC within 65 days then it moves forward without them.

Motion for a positive referral on the document as presented made by Ms. Okrongly and seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Unanimous Approval.

- 5.5. **Bond Release:** Request for release of bond posted for Erosion and Sediment Control and Stormwater management for amount of \$9,000.00, File # 2009-032-S-SP.

Ms. Paranjape states that the applicant did not develop the parcels until recently which is why the town held the bond.

Motion to release the bond in full made by Mr. Nissim and seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Unanimous Approval.

5.6. **Approval of Minutes:**

5.6.1. [July 15, 2025](#)

*Motion to approve the above meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by **Ms. DiSalvo** seconded by **Mr. Nneji**. Unanimous Approval.*

6. **ADJOURN**

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM

Submitted by Beth Peyser,
Recording Secretary (via video recording)

FOOTNOTES:

PZC = Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission

RZR = Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations

CGS = Connecticut General Statutes