

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Special Meeting - Tuesday, September 30, 2025
(Unrevised/Unapproved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

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

Also in attendance were Rory Jacobson and Francisco Gomes of FHI Studio.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:02 PM; Quorum established.

2. DISCUSSION

- 2.1. **Commission Discussion re: strategic review of regulations & zones.** In accordance with the statement of intent and purpose within the Temporary & Limited Moratorium (RZR 8.10) adopted June 2025, the Commission is undertaking a comprehensive review of its regulations and zones. Prior to adoption of the moratorium, the Commission separately initiated a review of the Branchville area for possible rezoning and regulation changes, in furtherance of the “TOD” study completed in 2017. After receiving input from the public and community leaders from July to early September, this meeting is intended for the Commission itself to debrief, discuss, and begin developing a sense of shared priorities for focus in the coming months.

2.1.1.Branchville Area

2.1.1.1. Commission debrief w/ FHI (consultants) on public engagement sessions.

Rory Jacobson and Francisco Gomes of GHI studio have been conducting public engagement and gave a brief overview of what they have been working on with a summary of the community discussion. Over 100 people were present from the community during their engagement session with concerns including: traffic, congestion, TOD, lot coverage, density, rezoning (RA and RAA), septic systems, bike and pedestrian connections, improvements to rail service, interconnectivity with neighboring communities, flooding, increase in school enrollment, more diverse range of housing in Branchville, and broader community.

A slideshow prepared by FHI was shared from the community engagement event summarizing thoughts presented at the public engagement meeting.

2.1.1.2. Commission discussion w/ FHI re: Branchville regulation & zone updates

PZC engaged in discussion with FHI studio on various topics including: the concept of establishing a Village District in Branchville; flood zones; zoning districts (are they working or would new zoning make sense); Transit Oriented Development as a priority; limited sewer and water services in Branchville; open space and greenways; and draft recommended zoning amendments.

FHI studio stated next steps include coming up with ideas for how to rezone the area based on discussion this evening. Mapping out districts, roughing out permitted uses and densities, and coming back to the Commission for discussion on how to execute these next steps. FHI needs time to prepare and could come back in end of October or early November during a Special Meeting to discuss further.

2.1.2. Other Area(s)

2.1.2.1. Commission discussion re: other (non-Branchville) suggested regulation & zone updates

PZC went through the list of ideas for regulation and zoning updates from PZC members and AAC. New ideas discussed included pre-application conferences; solar ready designs; community solar farms; sustainability and green development; dark sky compliance; traffic impact assessment requirements; second floor residential in the village district; building coverage vs impervious coverage; bicycle parking; pedestrian friendly Main Street; density bonus for affordable housing units; increase max setbacks or reduce max lot coverage to preserve open space; sustainability requirements; broaden mixed use overlay; update fee schedule; forum based codes; transferred development rights; strengthening flood zone regulations; live work units; definitions clarifications; co-housing; short-term rental definitions; EV charging stations; and home based businesses to include at home work. A recap discussion ensued on prioritizing these suggestions.

The list shared on the screen will be circulated to the PZC Members. The PZC will designate a Commission member to research each topic and will be given a deadline to briefly present their research further to the Commission. Discussions on research will begin at the end of October and be included in multiple meetings.

3. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:56 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