

Planning and Zoning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 18, 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		via Zoom
Aarti Paranjape	Director, (Staff)	X		

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:00 PM; Quorum established.*

**1.1. Distribution of agenda & previous minutes. (Published on Commission's webpage prior to meeting.)**

**1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence**

ECDC sent a referral letter associated with the regulation amendment undertaking.

Ms. Paranjape gave the PZC an update on the CT Planning meeting she attended.

A brief discussion was held by Ms. Paranjape and the PZC on budget.

**1.3. Approval of agenda.**

***Motion to add below three items to agenda. Motion made by Ms. Okrongly seconded by Mr. Nneji. Unanimous Approval.***

1.3.1 Election of officers.

1.3.2 Discussion on Budget

1.3.3 Discussion on HB 8002

**2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)**

**2.1. 362 Old Sib**

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement action.

## 2.2. 967 Ethan Allen: Hoo Doo Brown

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement action. A letter has been sent from the Town to the owner of 967 Ethan Allen.

## 2.3. 34 Bailey Avenue

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement action.

## 2.4. 94 Soundview Road

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement action.

## 2.5 389 Main Street

Mr. Chair and Ms. Paranjape updated the Commission with the steps where Atty Frank has sent notice to the applicant regarding the appeal.

## 3. PUBLIC HEARING

3.1. **Sp-25-14: 58 Ethan Allen Hwy:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 7.2.E) for additional signs on mobile vans used for business. *Owner: Design Studio 54 LLC; Applicant: Matthew Taylor.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103044>

Ms. Paranjape read the legal notice into the record. Mr. Hendrick discussed the public hearing process for the applicant and the process for this evening. Mr. Taylor explained what they are asking for in the application. Ms. Paranjape gave staff comments on her view of the application and how it relates to the regulations. Discussion ensued on whether an application was required at all and specifically if a Special Permit is actually required. Public Hearing closed at 7:47PM.

Ms. DiSalvo stated during the meeting that she did not believe this issue should have been discussed with 'an applicant' present. Given the fact that we do not currently have any rule against mobile signage in the regulations, this issue should have been brought up as a question of standard policy and opened to general discussion about clarifying the regulations well before an individual /company was given a violation. Ms. DiSalvo also stated that this should be standard practice going forward. If there is not a violation on the books but there is something (of a general nature, not specific to any particular individual, such as this one) noticed by the ZEO or any other member of the commission that seems questionable, the subject should be brought up for discussion by the board and regulation clarification or changes discussed, written and ratified before any entity is given a violation.

## 4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-14: 58 Ethan Allen Hwy:** Special Permit Application (per RZR 9.2.A and 7.2.E) for additional signs on mobile vans used for business. *Owner: Design Studio 54 LLC; Applicant: Matthew Taylor.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103044>

Motion to approve the application as presented for the specific reasons that in this case in this site there seems to be no alternative in terms of where the vehicles can be parked. The vehicles are subtle and there should be a condition that the vehicles be parked in the reverse where the sign is less visible. In these conditions, which may not always be the case everywhere, but the PZC believes that in this instance it makes sense and meets the PZC regulations.

Following Special condition was stated:

- The two vans shall be parked in reverse as shown in the images submitted on November 18, 2025 so that minimal sign is visible from the street right of way.

***Motion to approve above application with Special condition as stated above. Motion made by Mr. Nneji. Seconded by Mr. Sorena. Mr. Dowdell and Ms. DiSalvo abstained. Motion carries 6-0-2.***

#### **4.2. Temporary Moratorium Activities**

##### **4.2.1. General Regulation Review. c/o chair**

Discussion ensued to hold a working session to discuss the regulations. Mr. Hendrick has created a word document listing the regulations where members will work on. It was discussed at the sitewalk meeting scheduled on December 14; members will have a working session. It will be a special meeting.

Mr. Sorena agreed to be the owner of traffic updates in our regulations

The tree discussion included how the new regulations would apply to new builds and making sure the legislation would allow for a new build but not the clear cut of a property. Also discussion was included that called for a tree /invasives fund that applicants could contribute to if tree plants where not feasible on their property. The updates also include a tree replacement ration that references canopy size and also that replacement trees should all be native and consider a balance of deciduous and coniferous. Commissioner Okrongly had included caliper sizes for replacement and to assign value but wanted the commission to weigh in on this to what was fair and reasonable to applicants.

Mr. Dowdell also offered to own the administrative clean up of Regulations such as the defined terms.

The Village District expansion went into specifics including possible areas such as up to high ridge on both side, over to east ridge and potentially all the way down through the Stop and Shop plaza. The commission weighed protecting the town but making sure regulations that we implement are not unnecessarily onerous on applicants.

##### **4.2.2. MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101786>**

Discussion continued on Branchville Strategic Review with the outside consultants.

##### **4.2.3. RFP – Re: Planning Services**

Discussion continued on staffing needs for a Town Planner.

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **5.1. SP-25-18: 653 Branchville Road;** Revision to Special Permit (per RZR 9.2.A and 7.1) for removing invasives, dead trees and select significant trees associated with the prior pond dredging application. *Owner/Applicant: Stephano Zandri. For receipt and to schedule sitewalk and Public Hearing.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103673>.

***Motion to receive the above application. Sitewalk scheduled for January 11 and the public Hearing on January 13, 2026. Motion made by Mr. Sorena seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Unanimous Approval.***

**The referrals to be made to Inland Wetlands Board, Conservation Commission.**

## 5.2. Proposed 2026 Calendar Discussion

Members discussed the meeting dates for the week of Thanksgiving and Christmas, will be not convenient for public to attend due to the holiday time.

Members agreed to remove the week of November 22 and week of December 20 from the meeting calendar.

***Motion to approve the above meeting calendar with changes mentioned. Motion made by Ms. Okrongly seconded by Mr. D'Acunto. Unanimous Approval.***

## 5.3 Budget 2026

Discussion ensued regarding the budget. Chair and Staff mentioned adding new personnel besides a Planner and Director, who will be a designated ZEO. The budget included to have a Nearmap Software, which is a satellite imagery updated every 6 months. This tool will be useful not just for planning and Zoning, but wetlands, conservation, assessor and building and more.

## 5.4 Election of Officers.

Members discussed having a recording secretary.

***Motion to name Robert Hendrick as Chair and Mariah Okrongly as Vice Chair. Motion made by Mr. Sorena and seconded by Mr. Nneji. Unanimous Approval***

## 5.5 Approval of Minutes:

### 5.5.1 November 5, 2025 – Regular Meeting

***Motion to approve the above meeting minutes for both Regular Meeting, as amended. Motion made by Mr. Sorena seconded by Mr. Nneji. Unanimous Approval.***

## 6 ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:20 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