

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held via Zoom Only
Tuesday, January 27, 2026
(Revised/Approved)

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
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Joe Sorena	Commissioner		X	
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner		X	
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Aarti Paranjape	Director, (Staff)	X		via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

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

1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

Mr. Hendrick stated the meeting was moved to Zoom due to storm Fern bringing snow and the unknown of road conditions.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

Mr. Hendrick suggests to allowing item 5.1 to be discussed before 4.2 temporary moratorium activities to work with applicants before manners of the PZC.

Ms. Okrongly makes a motion to move item 5.1 ahead of 4.2 on the agenda. Mr. Molyneaux seconds. Motion carries with no opposition.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

2.1. 34 Bailey Avenue

Mr. Hendrick states that not much movement has occurred. Ms. Okrongly asked what the next steps are because it had been indicated that the applicant would have had a response by that meeting and the applicant had not offered their proposed resolution and we are still waiting on the applicant.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1. **SP-25-19: 20 Dogwood Drive:** Special Permit Application (per 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for the construction of a car port in front yard in RAA zone. *Owner: Richard & Katherine Cea; Applicant Ridgefield Pet/Ronald Rucolas/William Greene.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103462>

The hearing was opened. Mr. Rucolas was present to discuss the application. Ms. Paranjape read the legal notice into the record. There was no correspondence from the public entered into the record. Mr. Hendrick discussed the process of the public hearing. Mr. Rucolas discussed the overall design plan which began with a driveway and then included a car port. Ms. Paranjape requested the drawings of the car port to be shared on the screen. Mr. Hendrick shared the plans that were submitted for the record on his screen. Mr. Hendrick asks if the carport will be on existing asphalt. Ms. Paranjape discussed the rendering with house, driveway, and a photoshop version of the carport. Ms. DiSalvo asks if there will be a roof. Mr. Rucolas states that it will be a post and beam with no sides and just a roof. Mr. Hendrick states that the AAC reviewed and approved with a suggested 6 evergreens planted for screening toward the neighbor's house to the south and a metal roof with gray and flat finish. Ms. Okrongly asks about a piling off of asphalt that was noted during the sitewalk behind the asphalt. Mr. Rucolas states that a shed was taken off the pilings and the shed is temporarily near the driveway but will be removed from the property. No other questions from the PZC. Mr. Hendrick turned it over to Ms. Paranjape for the staff report. Ms. Paranjape read her report topics into the record.

Mr. Hendrick then opened the floor to public comment. No members of the public came forward for comment.

Ms. Okrongly asked if the neighbors had any comment. Mr. Rucolas stated that the neighbors were approached and there was no neighbor comment.

Mr. Rucolas gave final comment.

Hearing no further comment, Mr. Hendrick closed the public hearing at 7:19PM.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED:** Special Permit Application (per 9.2.A and 3.4.C.2) for the construction of a car port in front yard in RAA zone. *Owner: Richard & Katherine Cea; Applicant Ridgefield Pet/Ronald Rucolas/William Greene.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/103462>

Mr. Hendrick states that the public hearing is closed and the PZC can discuss the application or make a motion. Mr. Nneji states that this is straight forward and they met all the requirements.

Mr. Hendrick states that this is in front of the PZC because the car port is in front of the house because it is the space that makes sense on the lot. The front yard triggers approval from PZC.

Mr. Nneji makes a motion to approve with Special conditions discussed by Ms. Paranjape in her staff report. Motion seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carries with no opposition.

- 4.2. **Temporary Moratorium Activities**

Mr. Hendrick discusses the progress that has occurred over the last few meetings.

4.2.1. **MISC-26-1: General Regulation and Zone Reviews**

Mr. Hendrick opens the table for discussion. Mr. Nissim would like to discuss the fee schedule that was circulated to the PZC. He researched other towns' fee structures and how Ridgefield compared. Mr. Nissim met with Ms. Paranjape to discuss his ideas prior to distribution. He felt that instead of revamping the entire

structure, he thought it would make sense to keep the same fee structure and just update the prices to match time and what other towns are using. Ms. Okrongly mentioned the tree management cost being included. Mr. Hendrick suggests thinking about the site plan application summary review and the new state legislation that will be impacting the regulations. With a likelihood of much more movement with Summary Ruling applications coming forward with those changes, it might make sense to revisit whether there should be more categories within Summary Ruling. Mr. Hendrick also thinks that in Summary Ruling the PZC would also have the authority to ask for consulting parties, but there will be much more burden in house. Mr. Hendrick also suggests reviewing the text change application. He thinks it should be higher than the proposed \$500. He would like to see the cost of that reflect the burden on staff and the PZC. Ms. DiSalvo agrees with what Mr. Hendrick states. She also discusses tree management and thinks that it should be more of a – “see attached sheet”. She inquires about the Certificate of Location Approval. Ms. Paranjape explains that ZEO can now review motor vehicle licenses for something like a motor vehicle operation as a desktop review. It used to require a Special permit. Ms. Paranjape has not seen any of these applications in her ten years in the Planning and Zoning Department. Mr. Nissim shows the Zoning Permit Fee Schedule. Ms. DiSalvo asks what the extent of the cost is. Ms. Paranjape states the entire project cost, which is the same as what is placed for building. Ms. DiSalvo thinks this should include site work as well. Discussion ensued between Mr. Hendrick and Ms. DiSalvo on how to move forward with this. Ms. Paranjape discusses how their OpenGov software calculates and populates information moving forward. Mr. Nissim makes a statement that his goal is to make sure there are adequate fees to support staff. Ms. Paranjape states that other than legal notice fee increasing by \$30 nothing has increased during her tenure.

Mr. Nissim has been in touch with the Conservation Commission to discuss his other topic of steep slopes.

Ms. DiSalvo states that she will have stuff ready for the next meeting. Mr. Hendrick believes that they are in fairly good shape.

Mr. Nissim states that he is also going to add enforcement language but that is a town ordinance and not a PZC regulation. Mr. Hendrick states that those topics can be written to the Board of Selectpeople meeting and it would have to go to a public hearing by them to potentially be adopted. No opposition from the PZC. Mr. Hendrick discusses scheduling an information discussion with them to get on their agenda at a regular meeting to socialize what we are working on before handing them the proposal.

4.2.2.MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review

This item was not discussed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **MISC-26-2: 559 & 563 Main Street:** Pre-submission concept (per RZR 9.2.E) for potential rehabilitation & residential development. Applicant: Jason Klein. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104425>

Mr. Hendrick explains pre-submission concept review. Mr. Klein is promoted to panelist for discussion. Mr. Klein discusses his potential development and the willingness to discuss feedback. Mr. Shay is part of the applicant team and shares his screen for discussion. The focus is on the single-family structure that was constructed in 1730 that is included in the National Register of Historic Places. The structure was impacted by a fire in the 1960s which initiated some renovations which took some historic character away. The location and structure drew the property owners’ interest in looking at the possibilities for redevelopment. An architect was hired to look at rehabilitation opportunities along with the development of additional dwelling units on the property. A concept plan was discussed to celebrate and centralize the historic building. The applicant wants to allow the character to remain a part of the community as opposed to cutting it off from the character of the neighborhood. Mr. Klein wants to know if there is an opportunity for the building to be publicly accessible. Mr. Grotheer, architect, discussed he concept plan. He views this property as a gateway into the historic district and downtown.

Mr. Hendrick asked for discussion of the current conditions of the site prior to the details of proposed development.

Mr. Grotheer pulled those up on the screen. The current site includes a residential structure, a garage, and the remainder is undeveloped. This is actually two lots. Mr. Grotheer goes back to discuss the concept plans for the town homes surrounding the historic structure. He notes the screening to prevent neighbor concerns. The town houses are all directed to a "commons" in the center of the site to allow the historic resource to be a central piece to the site. The architectural design is not yet finalized. Mr. Grotheer shows a few examples of historic properties they have designed in the general area of Connecticut.

Mr. Hendrick inquired about parking on existing designs. Mr. Grotheer explains parking for the other property examples. Mr. Klein clarifies that the driveway will loop around the site, but each townhouse unit will have a parking space and garage beneath the living unit. Ms. Okrongly inquires how the buildings are being built for the future and not today. Mr. Grotheer explains how his designs meet current and proposed future needs. Ms. Okrongly states the need for green designs in the POCD. Ms. DiSalvo makes architectural comments. She has concerns on the south side of the historic home and feels that that row of homes is really squeezed in there. She feels that the historic home will be swallowed by the modern design of the town homes. Mr. Nneji inquires about affordable housing possibilities. Mr. Klein discusses that site layout and tightness are not in a firm design plan. What is on the table is just an idea looking for feedback. Mr. Klein is assuming the use of the historic structure within this plan is for a publicly accessible amenity, or possible commercial use, or open to ideas that aren't for use as a residence. He feels the public aspect of this building will bring it into the community.

Mr. Hendrick wants to stay on the strategic site plan part of the discussion. He suggests being on the same page about what is allowable today versus what is being asked for. Mr. Klein discusses what he believes is allowable based on the regulations. Ms. Okrongly feels that making the historic structure a public space would be of value to the community. Mr. Klein understands zoning density and would likely would allow 8 or 9 units on the site. Mr. Klein envisions an increased number of homes within reason of what is respectable and accessible to the public. Mr. Hendrick explains what is currently allowable within the zoning of the property. He believes nine units are available under current zoning with the possibility of a higher density if there is an affordable component which could increase density to approximately 12. Ms. DiSalvo would like to know more about coverage.

Mr. Lancor, engineer, discusses public safety components as a civil engineer. He states that coverage has not been calculated but approximately a ballpark of 50-60% impervious coverage with roofs and paving. He discussed the Connecticut DOT and possible concerns. He states that traffic density entering and leaving the site under this design would increase. With two entrances, they are wondering if the DOT would like to see an in/out or if one entrance is an emergency exit only. The DOT will have a statement on how many curb cuts will be present. He also discusses the current sidewalk. He will also have plans to make the sidewalk more pedestrian friendly with site lines in the current design. They have not finalized design plan but are looking for feedback. Ms. Okrongly states that traffic backs up there. She also states that while people can walk, they will also drive. Ms. DiSalvo states that a lower density of homes would be more ideal in her opinion.

Mr. Klein states that he has been following the PZC regulation amendments and will take those into consideration if/when an application comes forward. Mr. Klein mentions a letter from SHPO interested in historic preservation on the site and the Office of State Archaeology expressing interest in conducting due diligence on the site for burials and artifacts. Mr. Lancor discusses what the historical structure is that needs to be preserved since the structure was altered over time due to the fire impacting the structure in 1960. After the fire, the structure increased in size. So, it is possible that the rear addition would be removed to preserve the historic character of the original design of the structure.

Mr. Klein gave final comments and welcomes additional questions and comments if anything else comes up. He wants to understand highlights and concerns to make this a special opportunity.

Ms. Okrongly discusses the Battle of Ridgefield occurring within that general area. She would like to see more consideration in this historic event than occurred when Casagmo was developed because the community was very concerned at that time. Mr. Hendrick likes the public component of the historic structure. He also asks if the house has been considered as residential units as opposed to adding more townhouse units. He would also like them to consider using a single curb cut instead of the two curb cuts. He feels that adding a curb cut is one of the more concerning components of the application. Mr. Lancor responds that if you don't have a second curb cut for emergency vehicles, specifically fire trucks, it would be difficult to exit without a second curb cut. Ms. Okrongly says you don't know unless you ask. Mr. Hendrick states that it exceeds the current zoning and a Special Permit would be required to get halfway there. It would also require amendments to existing regulations to accommodate. He feels sustainability, traffic, historical preservation, site massing, etc. has all been useful in discussion. Mr. Hendrick suggests another pre-submission review either with staff or with the PZC prior to submitting an application.

Ms. Okrongly said for the actual application to truly demonstrate that you have read the POCD and are presenting to the board an application that strives to achieve the goals set out in the POCD, not cross that item off the list by conforming to a sentence from the POCD.

- 5.2. **SP-26-1: 66 Grove Street, Unit 1:** Revision to a Special Permit (Per RZR 5.3.D.10) for a change in use from fitness facility to child day care facility on the upper level of existing building, including outdoor play area and second building/wall sign. Owner Lisa Eng Props LLC, RWTR 66 Grove LLC, Kris Eng Props LLC, and Lydia Li Trust Props LLC ET AL; Applicant: Robert Jewell. *(For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion/public hearing).* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104358>

Mr. Hendrick states that this is a revision to a Special Permit. It is up to the PZC to decide if they want to hold a Public Hearing or not. Ms. Okrongly would like to have a Public Hearing.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to receive the application for discussion/public hearing on February 24, 2026 and to schedule a sitewalk on February 8, 2026. Motion seconded by Mr. Nissim. Motion carries. No opposition.

- 5.3. **REF-26-1: 195 Danbury Road:** 8-24 Referral for proposed pickle ball court, located at 195 Danbury Road, land is part of lot number E13-0175. Owner/App: Town of Ridgefield. *For acknowledgement.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104467>

This referral was bundled together with SP-26-2: 195 Danbury Road. No motion was made. Mr. Hendrick believes they should defer the referral until a decision is made on SP-26-2.

- 5.4. **SP-26-2: 195 Danbury Road:** Revision to Special Permit (per 9.2.A and 3.2.C.1) for development of pickleball courts and related parking area. Owner/Applicant: Town of Ridgefield. *(For receipt and schedule sitewalk and discussion/public hearing).* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104333>

Ms. Okrongly suggested a referral to a wetlands specialist. Ms. Paranjape stated they already went through the IWB in October. Ms. Okrongly asks about traffic impact to the police and fire. Mr. Dowdell asks about noise. No additional referrals.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to receive the application for discussion/public hearing on February 24, 2026 and to schedule a sitewalk on February 8, 2026. Also, to make a referral to the Fire Department, Police Commission, Police Department specifically on traffic impact and concerns with noise ordinance. Motion seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. No opposition and the motion carries.

- 5.5. Meeting Minutes

5.5.1. Regular Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2026

Mr. Nissim noted the typo for the votes for item 3.2. Ms. Paranjape will amend the votes to reflect the correct motions taken.

5.5.2. Special Meeting Minutes – January 6, 2026

Motion made by Mr. Nissim to amend the minutes as discussed. Motion seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. No opposition and the motion carries.

6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Notes

Lis pendens: Addressi vs Planning & Zoning Commission Re 389 Main Street.

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