

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 24, 2026
(Unrevised/Unapproved)

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

1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

- In the last week Ms. Paranjape and Mr. Hendrick have done several interviews with future planners. The second round will be with any PZC Commissioners who are interested. It seems likely Mr. Nissim and Ms. DiSalvo will be conducting the next round of interviews. There are four applicants at the present time.
- Lewisboro/South Salem – In 2025, the Lewisboro Town Board passed a local law related to Zoning that allows by special permit a helipad on residential property but only if the property is more than 50 acres in size. A few weeks ago, the first application came in. It came to the attention of the PZC in the last 48 hours. The property abuts a number of properties in Ridgefield, CT on Minuteman Road. They are concerned about safety, flight path, and noise. Mr. Marconi has been in contact with Lewisboro’s Zoning Board of Appeals. The hearing is 3/25/26. Mr. Hendrick drafted a letter that he shared around the table asking for more time for the Ridgefield PZC to look at the details, operational plans, and public safety issues. The PZC ask for Lewisboro, is to continue the public hearing for a bit more time. Discussion ensued by the PZC on concerns and procedure. The Planning and Zoning office is getting a lot of concerns. Mr. Hendrick has not had a chance to talk to Mr. Marconi but intends to. Ms. Okrongly thinks notification is the neighborly thing to do. No objection from the PZC members to send the letter.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

2.1. 967 Ethan Allen Highway – Hoo Doo Brown

Ms. Paranjape stated that the Town attorney and the owners' team had a productive discussion. The owner wants to do the work soon to start the construction and relocation of the smoker. Ridgefield gave them until April 30 to complete the work. If they are not able to complete the work by April 30, it will be revisited at court. Mr. Paranjape said the contractor was on top of the project. Ms. Paranjape asked for weekly updates on the progress.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

3.1. (Contd) SP-25-15: 59 South Street: Special Permit Application (per 9.2.A and 5.3.D.3 and Sec 4.2.B) for relocation of Pump station, decommissioning on pump station and construction of new gravity sewer from new pump station to South Street WWTF at 59 South Street (E14-0158), F15-0056 and F15-0057. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield; Applicant: Matthew Formica.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98507>

Mr. Formica was there via Zoom to represent the applicant. Information was provided in response to requests by the PZC at the March 10 meeting. The tree clearing information was not complete. A proposal for survey work is in progress. They will complete the work within four weeks. Mr. Formica asked for an extension until April 29. There was an issue with the public hearing notification letters. Based on discussion with owners at Prospect Woods it was incorrectly stated that notifications were provided to all unit owners. Some individual owners were missed in the notification process. To remedy this, Mr. Formica would like to give extra time and therefore believes the padding into the future meeting should be sufficient.

Mr. Hendrick wanted to discuss the notice topic. He clarified that the HOA is the condo owner but is technically not the property owner. It is not sufficient to just notify the HOA. He stated that this was a deficiency of notice based on language in the regulations. He suggested withdrawing and resubmitting to remedy the issue. Mr. Soreno questioned whether a timeline is a concern for public comment. The residents that were not notified could want to rehear the application. Mr. Sorena suggested that the tree survey may be done in time. Mr. Dowdell commented on public opinion on this. Mr. Nneji supports withdrawing since it wasn't properly noticed. Ms. Paranjape suggests renotifying everyone if notifications are sent out.

Mr. Formica has information in response to requests at the last meeting. There was discussion on whether he should continue presenting these responses. The responses were shared on the screen. Mr. Hendricks preference would be to go through the responses once the neighbors have been noticed. The PZC general consensus was agreement.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to the public.

Mr. Roger Kavanagh, 120 Prospect, Unit 21 – He wanted to make a request to the PZC to not add any conditions to the special permit above and beyond typical conditions. He has concerns about the cost to the sewer payers.

Ms. Tine, 120 Prospect Street – She is reading from unit 66 owner real time text to her phone. He is on his phone and cannot figure out how to raise his hand. He is happy sending the notice out again. Mr. Hendrick asked if she was ok as president of the HOA association, to notice instead of withdraw and resubmit. She said yes. That is fine.

Mr. Formica asked what meetings his attendance would be required.

A resident of 120 Prospect asked if the entire application would be explained again. Mr. Hendrick said it would not be required but an abridged version would be likely.

The public hearing was continued until April 14. An extension will be given through April 29 by Mr. Formica in the event it needs extended one more meeting.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-15: 59 South Street:** Special Permit Application (per 9.2.A and 5.3.D.3 and Sec 4.2.B) for relocation of Pump station, decommissioning on pump station and construction of new gravity sewer from new pump station to South Street WWTF at 59 South Street (E14-0158), F15-0056 and F15-0057. Owner: Town of Ridgefield; Applicant: Matthew Formica.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/98507>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.2. **(Contd.) FP-26-1: 0 West Branchville Road;** Flood Plain Application (per RZR 6.1 and RZR 11) for replacement of Bridge No 05510, Portland Ave over Norwalk River, under the State project No 117-163 located at Portland Ave, State of Connecticut and 0 West Branchville Road (Parcel ID I17-0077), Town of Ridgefield. Owner: State of Connecticut and Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Jeffrey Fontaine.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104581>

Mr. Hendrick stated that the applicant was there. The question is about long-term maintenance. Mr. Fontaine was present to explain long-term maintenance. It is a Town bridge even though it is not town funded. From construction onwards – contractor is responsible for maintenance during construction. The Town is responsible for minor maintenance, but the bridge will still be part of the state program and inspected every two years. If the bridge deteriorates it will be considered through the same process as this application – but it is anticipated that should not be required until 20-50 years down the road.

Mr. Nneji had a question about bridge design and maintenance. Mr. Fontaine references inspection reports and notice of deficiencies. Mr. Sorena commented on standards for care and design. Mr. Hendrick recaps that it is built in, but nothing really needs to happen. Mr. Fontaine gave an example where a freak accident happened, and it became a fast-tracked emergency repair for stabilization. That would be something that would be discussed as it happens. All active bridges are inspected every two years. If a bridge has identified concerns, they would be inspected more frequently. Mr. Fontaine will follow up with the town and provide an answer to the questions Mr. Nneji had on Town vs State responsibility for maintenance.

Special Conditions from Staff Report:

- *Pre-construction meeting with Zoning, and Inland Wetlands staff and other town agencies.*
- *Work should begin once Depot Road is reopened, restoring full access to Branchville Train Station, West Branchville Road, and the surrounding public roadway network.*
- *The proposed widening and improved hydraulic opening should reduce long-term flood vulnerability compared to the existing structure.*
- *Submission of CTDEEP and USACE permits prior to issuance of zoning permit. Coordination with CTDEEP and USACE supports regulatory compliance.*
- *All site work shall be monitored by a professional CT licensed engineer. Prior to the issuance of a Zoning Certificate of Compliance for the work done in the Floodplain, the Applicant shall provide the Zoning Enforcement Officer with a verification of elevation from a Connecticut licensed engineer that the site work within the Floodplain has been completed in accordance with the Approved Plans.*
- *Submission of final signed no-rise certification.*
- *The Flood plain application expiration of 180 days will start from the commencement of work in 2026. Contact the Planning & Zoning Office before work begins.*

- *The person/team responsible for the daily monitoring will contact the Planning & Zoning Department with the weekly/fortnightly report.*
- *In order to ensure proper implementation of the plans and compliance with the conditions of this approval for site construction, installation of stormwater facilities, and erosion and sedimentation control, the applicant developer, successor or assigns shall designate an individual for the project whose responsibility shall be to implement the erosion and sedimentation plans, and to report to the Zoning Enforcement Officer following major storm events and at other times that may be requested by the Town agent, to ensure that erosion and sedimentation controls are continuously maintained and repaired.*
- *The Applicant shall comply with State of Connecticut DEEP application requirements regarding earth disturbances.*
- *As-built drawings verifying bridge elevations and any compensatory flood storage.*
- *The site will be stabilized with grass turf, and any trees removed during construction will be replaced with appropriate native plantings to support habitat quality and long-term ecological restoration while maintaining the structural integrity of the bridge.*

Ms. Sorena makes a motion to approve the application with special conditions as stated in the staff report. Seconded by Mr. Nneji. Motion passes and its unanimous.

4.3. Temporary Moratorium Activities

4.3.1. MISC-26-1: General Regulation and Zone Reviews c/o Chair

Mr. Hendrick discussed updating the notification requirements and whether this had been brought up before. Ms. Okrongly said it had been discussed along with timeline in previous conversations. Mr. Hendrick would like to add this to the regulation updates and draft language. Ms. Okrongly thinks it should be done. Ms. Okrongly discusses the others she was responsible for that need more work. She would like to know next steps. It was suggested that these will be discussed on April 14.

Mr. Nneji has additional comments on the amendments he has focused on. He will send the edits to Ms. Paranjape.

4.3.2. MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review

Mr. Hendrick stated that FHI should be contacted for an update.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **VDC26-1: 23 Governor Street;** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3 and 7.2.E.1) for exterior wall sign “Elegant Ridgefield Annex” located in CBD zone. *Owner: RVNA Health Inc; Applicant: Keith Gerety. (For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggests discussion on April 14.)*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104884>

Motion made by Mr. Sorena to receive and discuss on April 14. Seconded by Ms. Dowdell. Motion passes unanimously.

- 5.2. **SP-26-3: 223 West Mountain Road;** Revision to Special Permit (per RZR 3.2.C.2) for addition to academic building and associated site work on the “Ridgefield Academy” campus located in RAAA zone. *Owner: Ridgefield Academy Inc.; Applicant: Kurt Lavaway. (For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggests discussion April 14.)*
<http://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104670>

Mr. Hendrick is a former Board member and parent. He has discussed this project during his time on the Board and is willing to recuse. Ms. Okrongly says he is no longer a Board member and child no longer attends so recusal doesn't seem necessary. He will not recuse.

Ms. Okrongly believes this application should require a Public Hearing because it is in a residential neighborhood.

Ms. Paranjape said application was referred to AAC and APA and the Boards have reviewed the application. Ms. Okrongly would like to refer to Conservation Commission. Mr. Hendrick suggests referring to Board of Police Commission for traffic, Police and Fire.

Motion made by Mr. Okrongly to receive and schedule site walk on April 26 with public hearing and discussion on April 28 and make referrals to the Conservation Commission and Police Commission, Police and Fire. Seconded by Mr. Dowdell. Motion passes unanimously.

- 5.3. **VDC-26-2: 9 Bailey Ave:** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3 and 7.2.E.1) for Building sign "Make Modern" and change to façade color in CBD Zone. *Owner: Regency Centers; Applicant: Erika Allen (For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggest discussion April 14)* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104992>

Motion made by Mr. Sorena to receive and discuss on April 28. Seconded by Ms. Okrongly. Motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Allen came at the end of the meeting to discuss 9 Bailey Ave. She had just left the AAC meeting across the hall.

Mr. Hendrick read the AAC comments into the record:

1. Atrium White
2. The bracket should be reviewed by the building inspector
3. 25% glass area for signage on glass

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to approve signage as presented in the statement of work and to approve the VDC comments #1 and #2 with confirmation by the Zoning Enforcement Officer and the second sign should be permitted which is similar to many other signs existing on Bailey Avenue and bracket approved by Building Official. Seconded by Mr. Sorena. Motion passes unanimously.

- 5.4. **SP-26-4: 9 Bailey Ave:** Revision to Special Permit (per RZR 9.2.A and 7.3.E.3) for second wall/projecting sign "Make Modern" in CBD Zone. *Owner: Regency Centers; Applicant: Erika Allen. (For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggests discussion on April 14)* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104997>

Motion made by Mr. Sorena for discussion on April 28. Seconded by Ms. Okrongly. Motion passes unanimously.

Ms. Allen came at the end of the meeting to discuss 9 Bailey Ave. She had just left the AAC meeting across the hall.

Mr. Hendrick read the AAC comments into the record:

1. Atrium White
2. The bracket should be reviewed by the building inspector
3. 25% glass area for signage on glass

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to approve signage as presented in the statement of work and to approve the VDC comments#1 and #2 with confirmation by the Zoning Enforcement Officer and the second sign should be permitted which is similar to many other signs existing on Bailey Avenue and bracket approved by Building Official. Seconded by Mr. Sorena. Motion passes unanimously.

a. Meeting Minutes

i. Regular Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2026

Ms. Okrongly mentioned that the minutes are very comprehensive and thanked recording secretary Ms. Peyser for her work.

Motion made by Mr. Okrongly to approve as amended, if amended. Seconded by Mr. Sorena. Motion passes unanimously.

4. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 8:32 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