

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 14, 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		via Zoom
Joe Sorena	Commissioner		X	
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		
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

- Letter from Aquarion. Mr. Hendrick stated that the letter includes training information and new guidelines for land use practices to protect watersheds. It is something for the PZC to read at their convenience.
- Sturges Park – Boy Scout Project. Ms. Paranjape summarized the master plan of approval by the PZC IN 2010. Now one of the boy scouts wants to build a 10x16 pavilion with a roof as an Eagle Scout Project. The pavilion is included in the master plan. The overall parcel is 41 acres. A plan was shared on the screen. No zoning permit is required because it is only 160 square feet. Mr. Nissim stated that his property abuts this parcel and wanted to note that for the record. Ms. Paranjape will ask the Eagle Scout to attend a future PZC meeting if interested, otherwise Ms. Paranjape has the ability to grant approval for this application.
- Mr. Hendrick discussed the helipad from the last meeting. He sent a letter with the PZC concerns to the Town of Lewisboro. The attorney for the applicant withdrew the application and specifically said the applicants did not realize that they caused such concern in Ridgefield.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

No ongoing enforcement to discuss.

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 present to discuss the application. Mr. Hendrick stated that additional notices were required for residents that were accidentally left out of the original notice process. Mr. Formica sent those out. Mr. Hendrick stated the public hearing process. Mr. Formica sent 170 certified letters on April 2. He acknowledged the current public hearing and the next hearing on April 28 in that letter. Since the last meeting Mr. Formica has held a meeting to discuss the project with the home owners and association in person. The homeowners were going to have their own meeting after that and seem agreeable to plans. The tree survey is under contract. It should be completed in April. He had follow-up information in response to questions and concerns that were brought up at the last meeting. Mr. Hendrick stated that it would be a good place to spend a few minutes reading those. Mr. Formica read that document into the record. Mr. Hendrick asked for clarification on the length of road being paved. Mr. Formica stated all areas that are impacted by the sewer will be subject to road work. This includes the road from the corner of South Street and Ligis way to the corner of the Goodwill trailer and up to the old Schlumberger driveway. Mr. Formica gave clarity on the condition of the potential trail after the sewer is installed. A new letter came into Mr. Formica late this afternoon asking what condition the trees would be in once the pipe was installed. Trees that are removed are not intended to be replanted due to the potential impact of roots to the sewer line. Ms. Okrongly asked for clarification on whether large significant trees would be preserved. Mr. Formica said it would depend on where they were and whether it was feasible. Ms. Okrongly summarized that it is hard to say without additional information. Mr. Formica agreed. Mr. Hendrick said that would be for future conversation. Mr. Hendrick asked if Mr. Formica could help create language so some of the information could be transferred into Conditions of Approval and if Mr. Formica felt comfortable with that. He also asked if more clarification could be added on maximum grade such as no more than 5%. Mr. Formica said it is typically a minimum grade because you want gravity to do the work for you. Mr. Hendrick would like to specify what the actual earth grade is at within the finished project so it is known for the future trail. Mr. Formica asked how they want that to be stated. Mr. Hendrick thinks it should be along the access of the pipe so that someday later, if there is the desire for the walking path, the excavator can take into account a grading plan for a future walking path. Ms. Okrongly asked about dump trucks driving on the pipe and what grade would be required for that. Mr. Formica said that if they want it to be relatively flat, it would require a lot of cut and fill and retaining walls which is significantly more earth disturbance than what they currently have in the plans. He looks for 4 feet of cover over the pipe at all times and a pitch of minimum slope for gravity from point A to point B. There are points where up to 25 feet of cover fill is over the proposed pipe. The information is on the profile drawings. Mr. Hendrick is looking to translate the drawings into words to make into a condition. Mr. Formica basically said he was looking for more specifics on what the PZC commission needs. Ms. Okrongly states that she is looking for the condition that the land will be in once the project is completed. Mr. Hendrick also asked if boulders of a specific size would be removed from that area. He wants to be extra clear about what the end product will look like. Mr. Hendrick said they will table this until the tree survey has been prepared but will need to put that into words at a future time. Ms. Okrongly asked if the Tree Warden could be involved for comment. Mr. Hendrick stated that the current Tree Group feels their role is narrowly defined by state statute and is limited to taking trees down as needed when they become dangerous. Ms. Okrongly asked the Conservation Commission if they could weigh in on the tree survey once it comes in. Mr. Nissim asked what happens if the tree survey comes in after the next meeting. Ms. Paranjape clarified that they have an opportunity for one more meeting in May. Mr. Formica had a question about grading on Town Property because there is also a private parcel involved. Mr. Formica has concerns about meeting grading requirements and what kind of changes and impacts that would add. Ms. Okrongly wants the best language. Mr. Formica said it would be loamed and seeded to stabilize soil. He would like clarification on grading change instead of ground conditions. Ms. DiSalvo tries to summarize by saying seeded and stabilized. Ms. Okrongly

wants it to be flat enough to walk but not like the rail trail. Ms. Okrongly would like a way to define what it will look like. Mr. Formica said to picture up to a 20-foot easement cleared with trees taken down and then turned into grass. Mr. Formica updated on Prospect Woods meetings. They came to a WPCA meeting and there was a series of emails that have been entered into the record. Mr. Hendrick discussed concerns about structural damage from the neighbors. Mr. Formica said the issues were on the uphill side of the building but not on the side that the sewer would be going. He felt it was a foundation issue and there have been no other issues. Mr. Nneji had a question on foundation issues on behalf of the residents on Prospect. He asked if Mr. Formica felt that the neighbors were satisfied with the plan. Mr. Formica felt the neighbors were satisfied. Mr. Nneji asked a question about cost. The residents submitted a document to the effect of do not do more than what is actually required because the residents have to pay for the upgrades. He asked Mr. Formica to address that. Mr. Formica thought he was referencing a letter from Robert Kavanagh and he didn't want sewer rate funds used to augment any extra work for a walking path. Mr. Kavanagh felt that if additional work was done it should be paid for by the town. Mr. Formica stated that the goal was for the contractor to stick to the plans.

Mr. Hendrick turns the table over to staff comment. Mr. Hendrick asked Ms. Paranjape to work with Mr. Formica to get draft condition language in place for presurveying ground vibration, grading, and ground coverage of the corridor.

Mr. Hendrick then turned it over to the public.

Mr. Kavanaugh at 120 Prospect Ridge claimed the letter referenced above. He just wants to make sure it makes it into the record.

The hearing will be continued to the next meeting on April 28 in anticipation of the tree survey being complete.

- 3.2. **A-26-1: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.b) to amend Section 2.2 – revise definitions for “Bed and Breakfast” and add new for “Short-Term Rentals”; amend Section 3.2.C.12 – Bed and Breakfast to include “Short Term Rentals”. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104870>

Mr. Hendrick gave a background of the initiative to update and modernize the language in the regulations. Mr. Dowdell presented this amendment since he had taken the lead in drafting language. Mr. Dowdell discussed the document shared on the screen to compare short-term vs. bed and breakfast and definitions.

Discussion ensued by the PZC as to what the intent of some of the language was and whether they are accomplishing their goal. Other topics including short term rentals and primary residence were included in the discussion in addition to definitions for language.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to the public.

Brody Howatt, 61 Shadow Lane. He has tried to use this regulation to obtain a permit for an AirBnb style rental as a disabled veteran to supplement his wife's income. He asked if it this language will make it more difficult to submit and push through an application if he is not a primary resident. He has a main house he lives in and will be renting out a standalone unit in his garage. He asked how long the process will be from start to finish. Mr. Hendrick explained the Special Permit process to Mr. Howatt.

Robert Jewell, 156 Bob Hill Road. He thinks this amendment is great and a big trend. A number of towns have initiated a registry for people who may want to do this up to five times each year or so. Other towns have created a system where you make sure the property is safe with an inspection from the Fire Marshall, make sure taxes are paid, and this could be done with a registry as opposed to a full Special Permit. Mr. Hendrick asked if it was suggested to be enforced through the ZEO and Mr. Jewell says yes. Ms. DiSalvo asked what Mr. Jewell felt about requiring the unit to be a primary residence. Mr. Jewell did not think it needed to be a requirement. Mr. Jewell suggested having two separate categories. Mr. Nissim asked Mr. Jewell if there were any examples that

he could think of to be shared. Mr. Jewell will look and share some but thinks Ledyard, CT would be a good source because they rent out units around the casino and also Martha's Vineyard because it is where the Airbnb conversation originated.

Ms. Paranjape inquired if this would be applicable to apartments and condos? Mr. Dowdell suggested the drafted language only includes single family homes and ADU units.

Mr. Dowdell commented on the draft online. He would like it to be revised to include the copy Mr. Dowdell just showed.

Mr. Nissim said that we already use single family residence in our regulations and make sure the definition aligns with that. He also doesn't believe it is the intent to say that a bed and breakfast can only accommodate one guest. He also asked for a clear definition of primary residence in Connecticut statute.

The public hearing will remain open to incorporate Mr. Jewell's examples.

- 3.3. **A-26-2: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 5 – Additional Standards – Traffic Impact analysis for the following Sections – 5.1.F; 5.2.F; 5.3.F; 5.4.F; 5.5.F; 5.6.F; 5.7.F; Section 10.2.E.13 – application checklist and add a new Section 7.17 – Traffic Impact Analysis. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104872>

Mr. Hendrick gave a background to this proposed text amendment. He wrote the language and presented the language for changes to the traffic impact analysis.

Discussion ensued by the PZC. Ms. Okrongly discussed the Traffic Analysis and if the PZC could include language that a traffic analysis could be completed focusing on areas in town that are subject to congestion and impacts from traffic.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to the public. No public interest.

The public hearing will remain open. Mr. Sorena often has comments on this topic and was not present.

- 3.4. **A-26-3: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 7.5: Excavation Filling and Grading. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104873>

Mr. Hendrick gave a background on this proposed text amendment. He worked very closely with Mr. Sorena to draft the updated language associated with excavation filling and grading.

Brief discussion ensued by the PZC. It was discussed that units of measurement were missing under the amount that triggers a permit. This should be updated and included in the most up to date strike through document. Measurement should be "cubic yards per acre". The current number in the document is 250 cubic yards.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to the public.

Bob Jewell, 156 Bob Hill Road. He requested that the public hearing remain open because he wants to look into the legality of the language. He discussed the history of the regulation. It was intended to be for earth disturbance that was not associated with an existing construction permit. He also mentioned that units of measurement were missing.

Mr. Nneji supports keeping it open and supports Mr. Jewell's comments. He suggests raising the trigger number to 500 as opposed to 250. He said 250 seems quite low. He also thinks there should be exempt sites

with something like zero net import/export to encourage working with existing topography rather than moving materials in and out.

The public hearing will remain open.

- 3.5. **A-26-4: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 10.1 – Application fees, Section 10.1.B: Application to the Zoning Enforcement Officer; Section 10.1.C: Applications to the Planning Director; Section 10.1.D: Applications to the Planning and Zoning Commission. *Commission Initiated.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104874>

Mr. Hendrick gave a background on this proposed text amendment. Mr. Nissim presented this text amendment because he had worked on this draft language.

Brief discussion ensued by the PZC. Tree management fees were discussed. It was questioned if this should be updated to be expressed as “in lieu of tree cutting”.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to the public. No public comment on this topic.

The public hearing will remain open.

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. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-1: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.b) to amend Section 2.2 – revise definitions for “Bed and Breakfast” and add new for “Short-Term Rentals”; amend Section 3.2.C.12 – Bed and Breakfast to include “Short Term Rentals”. *Commission Initiated.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104870>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.3. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-2: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 5 – Additional Standards – Traffic Impact analysis for the following Sections – 5.1.F; 5.2.F; 5.3.F; 5.4.F; 5.5.F; 5.6.F; 5.7.F; Section 10.2.E.13 – application checklist and add a new Section 7.17 – Traffic Impact Analysis. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104872>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.4. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-3: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 7.5: Excavation Filling and Grading. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104873>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.5. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-4: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 10.1 – Application fees, Section 10.1.B: Application to the Zoning Enforcement Officer; Section 10.1.C: Applications to

the Planning Director; Section 10.1.D: Applications to the Planning and Zoning Commission. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104874>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.6. **VDC-26-1: 23 Governor Street;** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.B and 7.2.E.1) for exterior wall sign “Elegant Ridgefield Annex” located in CBD zone. *Owner: RVNA Health Inc; Applicant: Keith Gerety.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104884>

The application was presented to the PZC. Ms. Okrongly asked if the signs were consistent with the other signs. Ms. DiSalvo asked if what was presented was a photoshop issue and it was. Ms. DiSalvo suggests making it all the same white because it keeps it clean. Mr. Hendrick explained that this is a VDC application. Discussion ensued about the whites matching on different materials.

Special Conditions:

- *The whites need to match the fascia.*
- *The lettering must match.*
- *No lighting on the sign.*

Ms. Okrgonly made a motion to approve with special conditions as discussed and VDC comments. Seconded by Ms. DiSalvo. Motions pass and it was unanimously approved.

4.7. Temporary Moratorium Activities

4.7.1. **MISC-26-1:** General Regulation and Zones review. c/o Chair

Discussion was had about creating time to go over the remaining items on the regulation discussion spreadsheet that have not been discussed. Discussion continued on when to continue this meeting and if it should be a Special Meeting or a Site Walk.

A discussion will be held on a Special Meeting on Tuesday, April 21 via zoom only. This will be the only topic on the agenda.

4.7.2. **MISC-25-3:** Branchville Strategic Review

This was not discussed but might be included in the Special Meeting discussion.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **VDC-26-3: 407 Main Street;** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.b AND 7.2.E.1) for exterior wall sign “Sommlike” located in CBD zone. *Owner: Carnall Insurance LLC; Applicant: Robert Mordente. (For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggests discussion on April 28)* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/105173>

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

- 5.2. Regular Meeting Minutes – March 24, 2026

Motion made by Mr. Dowdell to approve. Seconded by Ms. Okrongly. Motion passes with Mr. Nissim and Ms. DiSalvo abstaining because they were not present.

6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:42 PM.

Notes

Lis pendens: Addessi 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