

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS OF RIDGEFIELD
MINUTES OF MEETING

September 15, 2025

NOTE: These minutes are intended as a rough outline of the proceedings of the Board of Appeals on Zoning of Ridgefield held on September 15, 2025. Copies of recordings of the meeting may be obtained from the Administrator.

The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. Sitting on the Board for the evening were: Mark Seavy, Terry Bearden-Rettger, Alexander Lycoyannis, Joseph Pastore and Michael Stenko.

ROTATION OF ALTERNATES

The rotation for this meeting was first, Mr. Byrne, second Mr. Cole; third, Mr. Stenko. Mr. Byrne was unable to attend. Mr. Byrnes was unable to attend. Mr. Seavy returned to the Board after not being present at the last meeting, so he heard the continued applications for Mr. Byrnes. Thus, the rotation for the next meeting will be remain the same: first, Mr. Byrne; second, Mr. Cole, third Mr. Stenko.

CONTINUED APPLICATIONS

Daniel DeWoskin and Rebecca Cao

Application 25-013

19 Ned's Lane

Applicants both appeared for the continued hearing. Ms. Cao stated to the Board her understanding of the role of the ZBA and her belief their property was unusual due to the high elevation and 1300 ft. long driveway. She stated there was safety issues both personal and public with the driveway in winter weather. She further stated that the square footage of the proposed ADU corresponded to the Connecticut fire code which recommended 200 sq ft per person per resident. Regarding the concerns of the neighboring property and Board members, Ms. Cao stated that there would be minimal impact to those properties and only truly seen by one neighboring lot and from one way while driving on Ned's Lane. Landscaping was planned and presented to screen the structure with evergreens and prevent light pollution further from the road. Revised plans were submitted after the September 8 meeting. Three feet from the structure was removed, total square footage was reduced from 899 to 834 sq ft. The structure would still be 10 ft. from the setback with no increase in that setback. Only motion sensor outdoor lighting was planned.

Neighboring properties at 10 24, and 34 Ned's Lane appeared for the hearing. All these neighboring properties again expressed concerns about granting the variance primarily the propose structure being out of character with the neighborhood and potential light pollution. Also mentioned was Ned's Lane being very narrow heavily traveled roadway due primarily to neighboring farm properties. Neighbors also stated the structure could be seen from their properties and again stated they doubted the applicants claim that the driveway was unsafe in inclement weather since delivery trucks were often present and suggested there were other alternatives to the structure being close to the property line.

Board members expressed concerns the full structure remained completely within the 50 ft. setback. The submitted plans would result in an increased footprint of the nonconforming structure. The current garage was 22 x 18. Ms. Bearden-Rettger asked if they considered plans to solely build a second story on the existing structures footprint or convert the garage portion to living space as well with the second story. Ms. Cao stated it would not be large enough for their needs and would not be economically feasible for such a small structure. The Board asked Ms. Cao if she wished to explore with her architect a second story or revising the current proposed plans. She agreed. A continuance was granted until the next ZBA meeting.

Kyle Stupi
Application 25-009
16 Midrocks Road

Heather Stupi appeared for the application which was continued from the August 4 meeting. The application was to add a side deck to their house 20 ft from the property line in the RA zone which requires a 25 ft. setback. The lot was .5 acres and Mrs. Stupi stated the undersized lot, upzoned to RA was the hardship. She further stated that the deck could not be built in the rear of the house due to the location of the septic fields in the backyard. The right side of the lot contained a shared driveway. After the August 4 meeting, applicants presented plans to show the deck being screened for neighboring properties by trees and other landscaping.

Board members questioned the exact location of the rear septic fields since a survey was not submitted. Members stated that the rear could be a reasonable location for the deck if fields were outside the allowable building area for a deck. A continuance was suggested to allow the applicants to obtain a survey showing the septic fields or location confirmation from their septic company.

A continuance was granted until the next ZBA meeting.

27 Catoonah Street Associates, LLC
Application 25-014
27 Catoonah Street

Attorney Robert Jewell again represented the applicants. Company representative Tish Vredenburg was present. The property real estate broker, Barbara Reiss was also present. As requested by the Board at the September 8 meeting, Ms. Reiss summarized a previously submitted letter to the Board describing why the property not longer is viable for commercial tenants. She compared the lot to other multi-use properties in Town and discussed the challenges in retail business over the past years and issues with Catoonah Street surrounded by mixed zones.

Mr. Lycoyannis expressed concerns that too many economic factors were being considered for the hardship. Ms. Bearden-Rettger asked why limited commercial options were not being explored. Ms. Reiss stated that many potential tenants looked at the property but were not interested in any commercial space, residential only.

Mr. Jewell stated the history of the property as a hardship. When purchased in 2006 it was still being used completely for residential. Applicants decided to refurbish the building, making it fully ADA compliant. A 2007 zoning regulation change stated that properties in the CBD (Central Business Zone) can no longer have 1st floor residential. The property would have been grandfathered into the former regulations but the owners decided to get a special permit to use the property for retail. Applicants however stated they did not want to abandon the fully residential use even though most, not all, of the building was demolished in 2007 after purchase.

Some Board members suggested other avenues from the Town were available to find a solution, like a zone change. Mr. Jewell replied that a zoning regulation change was very unlikely and any similar application by other properties, would have to be reviewed by the ZBA. Connecticut Superior Court cases submitted by Mr. Jewell were discussed. Those cases did not overturn the decisions of a ZBA because the ZBA did not act arbitrarily in their decision, regardless of reasoning for the hardship. Hardships were also listed as the CBD designation close to residential zones and the location away from the heavy commercial areas of the CBD off Main Street.

No one appeared for or against the application. A decision can be found at the end of these minutes.

ADMINISTRATIVE

The Board voted for approval of the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes.

DECISION

27 Catoonah Street Associates, LLC
Application 25-014
27 Catoonah Street

REQUESTED: A variance of Section 5.1.D.6., residential uses, to allow the conversion of the full property to six residential units for property in the CBD zone located at 27 Catoonah Street.

DATES OF HEARING: September 8 and 15, 2025
DATE OF DECISION: September 15, 2025

VOTED: To Grant, a variance of Section 5.1.D.6., residential uses, to allow the conversion of the full property to six residential units for property in the CBD zone located at 27 Catoonah Street.

VOTE: To Grant: 5 To Deny: 0

<u>In favor</u>	<u>Deny</u>
Bearden-Rettger, Lycoyannis	
Pastore, Seavy, Stenko	

As there was no further business before the Board, the Chair adjourned the hearing at approximately 10:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Ryan
Administrator