



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION Zoom Webinar Meeting Public Hearing

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

September 28, 2021 Present: Susan Consentino (Joined at: 7:01 p.m.)
Joseph Dowdell
Joseph Fossi
George Hanlon
Robert Hendrick (Joined at: 7:01 p.m.)
John Katz
Rebecca Mucchetti, Chair
Ben Nneji (Joined at: 7:08 p.m.)
Charles Robbins, Vice Chair

Also Present: Richard Baldelli, Director, Planning and Zoning, ZEO
Karen Martin, Town Planner
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

Chair Mucchetti called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. and gave an overview of Zoom Webinar and the aspects of Zoom Webinar procedures.

Chair Mucchetti stated that the Public Hearing had to be rescheduled to allow the Applicant time to provide the required statutory notification.

II: Public Hearing:

- 1. SP-21-14:** Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations to install two wall signs – “Jaipore” on the front elevation at **19 Bailey Avenue**. *Owner: Jeannette Laforte. Applicant: Malvyn Paulino*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to acknowledge that this Application has been rescheduled to October 12, 2021. Motion carried 8-0. Mr. Nneji was not present.



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III: Discussions:

1. **SP-21-14:** Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations to install two wall signs – “Jaipore” on the front elevation at **19 Bailey Avenue**. *Owner: Jeannette Laforte. Applicant: Malvyn Paulino.*

This Discussion has been rescheduled to October 12, 2021.

2. **SP-21-15:** Revision to Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per section 3.2.C to use the religious meeting room to include classrooms space and food service /coffee shop within existing building at **602 Ridgebury Road**.
Owner: Ridgebury Congregational Church United Church of Christ. Applicant: Robert R. Jewell.

Attorney Robert Jewell presented the Application, which included the history of the Ridgebury Church property, the proposed uses for Shields Hall and the Church’s vision of a Community Center in Ridgebury. Mr. Jewell also cited the parameters of RLUIPA which said that land use could not deter religious practices.

Ridgebury Church was founded in 1740 and has been in its current location since 1760. Historically, churches were the “Meeting House” where people came together as a community and held local elections.

Reverend Debra Rundlett and Mr. Bob Burke, a member of the Church, also spoke to the Application. Their comments included the concept of “breaking bread” together as a congregation, drawing people to gather and stay in conversation with one another. The need for the community to know each other has become more evident in the amount of people lining up to ring the 7 p.m. bell honoring the front-line workers during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Reverend Rundlett stated that by working with technological advisors from the United Nations, the Ridgebury congregation is revitalizing the “sacred commons,” a concept that has been in the United States since its creation as a country, by proposing that the lower level of Shields Hall be used as a coffee shop.

Mr. Jewell furthered that a traffic study was submitted for the Record and that the 37 parking spaces were more than adequate, if the proposed use of Shields Hall was approved.

Comments from the Commissioners included whether Mr. Jewell citing Regulation 3.2.C.2 was correct and whether Mr. Jewell’s argument that the Golf Course having a food service facility was the same as what Ridgebury Church is proposing is valid under the Regulations.



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Commissioner Katz stated that, while he was in favor of the Church community having a diversity of activities for gathering together, he was greatly concerned that a Special Permit Application process should not be followed, as a Special Permit Application approval would always be tied to that particular land, should the Church be dissolved.

Mr. Baldelli stated that this Application needed to be reviewed in a vacuum, with the Commissioners being unconcerned about how other Boards would view the Application. He asked that the Commissioners focus on what is in front of them.

Commissioner Fossi stated that a Resolution of Approval could be drafted to include customary accessory use, and have the Commission Counsel review the draft Approval.

Mr. Fossi motioned, Mr. Robbins seconded, for a Draft Resolution of Approval that this is a customary accessory use under 3.2.C.2 for a Religious Use, and that Commission Counsel review the draft resolution. Motion carried 7-2. Mr. Hendrick voted Nay. Ms. Consentino voted Nay.

- 3. SP-21-16:** Revision to Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per section 3.2.C to use the temporary Generac mobile light towers at **115 Barlow Mountain Road** (Scotland Elementary School). *Owner: Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Emily Mills of SCOR*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Fossi seconded, to approve as presented. Motion carried 9-0. Effective Date: October 8, 2021.

- 4. VDC-21-7:** Village District Application per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for exterior renovations at **409 Main Street**. *Owner: 85 Prospect Street LLC. Applicant: Jeff Mose.*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to acknowledge that this Application has been rescheduled to October 12, 2021 to allow the applicant to return to the VDC for further review. Motion carried 9-0.

- 5. VDC-21-8:** Village District Application per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for wall signs –“Gofer Ice cream” at **407 Main Street**. *Owner: Carnall Insurance LLC. Applicant: Brian Cullen.*

The Chair stated that the VDC Minutes had been received into the Record and that the VDC approved the sign.



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Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to approve as presented to the VDC. Motion carried 9-0. Effective Date: October 8, 2021.

6. **VDC-21-9:** Village District Application per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for wall signs “Queen Bee” at **417 Main Street**. *Owner: GAJ LLC Applicant: Heather Bellizi.*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hanlon seconded, to approve as acknowledged by the VDC. Motion carried 9-0. Effective Date: October 8, 2021.

7. **MISC-21-6** Pre-submission concept for Ponds Edge property located at **901 Ethan Allen Highway**. *Applicant: Richard Lipton.*

Dr. Lipton presented the pre-submission concept, which included a plan to build 74 Townhouses, with 10% allotted as affordable and a change of zone for the Route 35 frontage.

The Consensus of the Planning and Zoning Commission was favorable in going forward with the Application.

8. ADU Amendment changes- Update by Planner.

Ms. Martin gave a brief presentation of the memo she prepared showing that current zoning regulations are in conflict with the recent legislation.

9. Coastal Living-West COGG- Update by Planner.

Ms. Martin gave a brief presentation reading from an e-mail from WestCOG stating that, as of October 1, 2021, all of the 169 Connecticut municipalities would be responsible for coastal water protection of Long Island Sound, not just the 24 coastal municipalities.

IV: New Submissions:

1. SP-21-18: Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per Section 3.3.C.1 for a major occupation at the property located at **46 West Branchville Road**. *Owner/Applicant: Olivia Mandelbaum.*



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Statutorily received on September 14, 2021. For scheduling a sitewalk and Public Hearing.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to Receive, Schedule a Site Walk for October 10, 2021 and a Public Hearing for October 12, 2021. Motion carried 9-0.

V: Correspondence:

- Email thread between Mr. Wehking, Mr. Baldelli, and Mr. Beecher on the Retail Cannabis Moratorium.

VI: Upcoming Public Hearings:

1. **SP-21-17**, 65 Peaceable Ridge Road, Pool in front yard. *Statutorily received September 14, 2021*
2. **SP-21-18**, 46 West Branchville Road, Major Home Occupation. *Statutorily received September 14, 2021*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to Raise to the Agenda the Site Walk Minutes of September 12, 2021. Motion carried 9-0.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded to approve as amended the Site Walk Minutes of September 12, 2021. Motion carried 7-0-2. Mr. Fossi abstained. Mr. Robbins abstained.

VII: Approval of Minutes:

- **PZC Meeting-Sep 14, 2021**

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Fossi seconded, to approve as amended. Motion carried 9-0.

VIII: Adjourn

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting at: 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen White

2021-9-28

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