

RIDGEFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Town Hall, 400 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
November 2, 2025

Policy: Historic District Commission meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.

APPROVED SITE VISIT AND SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

A Site Visit and Special meeting of the Ridgefield Historic District Commission (“HDC”) was held at 44 King Lane, Ridgefield CT 06877, on Sunday, November 2, 2025 and beginning at 12:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

Dan O’Brien (Chair), Sean O’Kane (Vice Chair), Rhys Moore, Kathleen Daughters, Harriet Hanlon and Sara Kaplan (alternate)

AGENDA

44 King Lane – Viewing of current roof and discussion of possible roof material replacement

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Dan O’Brien at 12:01 p.m. Homeowners, Mr. Martin O’Malley and Mrs. Marina O’Malley, were present.

Mrs. O’Malley said they bought the home in 2015. They had spoken with roof companies who advised that the wood shingle roof was in poor shape and in need of replacement. Mr. O’Malley said the estimates for replacing either asphalt and wood cedar shingles were \$50,000 versus \$172,000, respectively. They’ve had two estimates already and would be obtaining a third estimate. Mr. O’Brien said their neighbors at 63 High Ridge recently replaced their wood cedar roof with new wood shingles and it looked terrific.

Mr. and Mrs. O’Malley said the roof was replaced in 2015. And ten years later, it needed to be replaced again. Mrs. O’Malley said maintenance was tricky. It couldn’t be power washed and only certain chemicals could be used. Mr. O’Kane said pressure treated wood shingles could be power washed. Mr. O’Kane questioned the quality of the wood treatment and workmanship of this earlier work. Mr. O’Kane said there was a lot of roof. He mentioned they might be interested in contacting White Plains Roofing, located in Elmsford, NY.

Mr. O’Kane said that for a wood shingle roof to last only 15 years indicated a problem. Maintenance was key. They should use cedar tone every 3-4 years. Or think about getting pressure treated wood cedar shingles.

Mr. O'Malley said the front of the home was original. The back was added in the last 20 years or so. Mr. O'Kane said the former owners did a great job in matching the original home. They used great materials, but did a bad job on the roof.

Mr. O'Malley said there are other homes in the historic district which had asphalt roofs. Mrs. O'Malley said she has friends who have used asphalt that looked very similar to cedar. Mr. O'Malley said they did not want to spend three times the amount to use wood shingles. Mr. and Mrs. O'Malley said they owned two other historic homes in Washington, CT and Fire Island, and they are considering listing their house at 44 King Lane for sale. They believe they know what people look for in purchasing historic homes. People's concern were that there were no leaks, the upkeep had been good, the septic was okay.

Mr. O'Brien said their home was an historic 1870 house. It currently had historically appropriate wood cedar shingles. To now substitute a lesser historic material as asphalt shingles would significantly diminish the historic appearance of this 155-year-old house.

Mr. O'Malley said there were older homes on the sides of her property that have asphalt roofs. Did they look bad? Mr. O'Brien said they would look more historically appropriate if they had wood cedar shingle roofs, and those homes were not as historic as 44 King Lane. Mr. O'Brien suggested they seek additional estimates for wood shingle roof replacements.

Mr. O'Brien asked each of the Commission members to comment regarding the proposed roof replacement.

Mr. O'Kane said his home, which is historic but not in an historic district, had old cedar shingle roofing. When he had to replace it, he chose the same wood cedar shingles. It made an impact. It was costly; however, he knew it performed better and the longevity would be approximately 30 years with proper maintenance.

Ms. Daughters said other applicants had come before the Commission to show the textured asphalt to simulate wood cedar shingle. It wasn't the same. There was nothing like wood shingles in the market. The O'Malley's home was very important because it was on a very prominent corner of the historic district.

Ms. Kaplan said her parents' house also had a wood cedar shingle roof. Textured asphalt was not the same. She easily recognizes when a home has a wood cedar shingle roof versus an asphalt roof.

Ms. Hanlon said the roofing falls within the purview of the Commission. People can tell the difference.

Mr. Moore said not replacing the cedar would be doing a disservice to the historical significance of the home.

Mr. O'Brien said that the Commission members were unanimous in their comments that replacing the existing cedar wood shingles on this 1870 house with an asphalt product would not be appropriate in this circumstance.

Mr. O'Brien mentioned that there was a very historic home on Rockwell Road that wished to replace its wood shingle roof with asphalt shingles also. The Historic District Commission did not approve. The owners replaced their roof with wood cedar shingles and returned to the Historic District Commission to let them know their roof looked fabulous and thanked them for the decision.

Mr. O'Malley said there was no question it would look better. It's just that it was so expensive. Especially since they may soon be putting this house up for sale because they would be downsizing. So they needed to repair the leak, which meant fixing the roof.

Mr. O'Malley said they would obtain a third estimate. Ms. O'Malley said they didn't want to pay three times the price for using cedar shingles. Ms. Kaplan said perhaps they could just do the front and patch the back. Ms. O'Malley said the roofers told her they couldn't do that. Mr. O'Malley said it would look odd. Ms. Kaplan said the front of the house was the worst condition of the roof.

Mr. O'Malley said they would circle back and let the Commission know what they find out.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fields
Recording Secretary