



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD INLAND WETLANDS BOARD
Web Based Meeting Hosted on Zoom

DRAFT MINUTES

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

February 26, 2026

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Tim Bishop, Vice Chair (left meeting at 9:18); Alan Pilch, Recording Secretary (temporarily dropped off due to technology issue); Carson Fincham; David Smith; Keith Carlson (arrived at 7:07)

Members Absent: Noah Berkowicz

Also present: Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent; Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary

I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. A quorum was present.

II: Discussion:

- IW-26-4; 0 Rockwell Road;** Summary Ruling application for construction of a three-bedroom single family dwelling, driveway, septic and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Joseph Donnelly; Applicant: Michael Mazzucco, <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104527>

Mr. Mazzucco shared his screen and discussed the application on behalf of the applicant/owner, Joseph Donnelly. Plans were designed for a single-family dwelling within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses on a lot that has substantial wetlands and upland review area.

Discussion ensued by the IWB. Mr. Bishop inquired about yard drains and drainage associated with the driveway. Mr. Mazzucco said it would be directed into the rain garden within the regulated area. Mr. Bishop asked for elaboration on the planting plan and if there is opportunity to add larger trees to balance the removal of trees. Mr. Bishop would like to see that addition as a Special Condition if approved. Mr. Fincham asked for clarification on layout of the lot including distances from site improvements to the regulated area. Mr. Fincham asked for elaboration on the gravel blanket and seepage as it is planned to be redirected to the rain garden and the footing drains. Mr. Mazzucco elaborated that the site has a high groundwater table. Mr. Fincham asks about the pump chambers down gradient from the wetlands. Mr. Mazzucco explained that it is a pump chamber that has to be pumped up to a higher elevation. Mr. Fincham is concerned that the small wetland is a vernal pool and negative impacts of putting the house up against it. Mr. Mazzucco does not believe it is a vernal pool and it has not been called so by the soil scientist. Mr. Pilch asked about the size of the isolated wetland because he has concerns about preserving a feature like this. Mr. Pilch asked about the surface treatment of the wetland and its proximity to a house and a porch. Mr. Pilch has concerns about the design of the rain garden. Mr. Pilch would like to see where the limit of the lawn would be considering most of the property is within the regulated area. Mr. Pilch would like to know if there is an opportunity elsewhere to create an area with some type of other wetland area on the property. Mr. Bishop has questions about the stormwater management and agrees that the rain garden might not function as wetland mitigation and would like to see alternate designs. Mr. Pilch asks if there were soil tests done in front of the house and if they could see pit logs. Mr. Bishop asks for detail on the existing rain garden as proposed including liner and explanation on vertical percolation. Mr. Bishop does not like to see the house so close to the natural wetland. Mr. Bishop asked if the Conservation Commission has commented on the easement as far as location or delineation. Mr.

Mazzucco will look into the easement language. Mr. Bishop would like to see a delineation to prevent encroachment. Ms. Baker asks if blasting will be necessary.

Comments/questions to be addressed.

- *Revise the planting plan to include additional tree plantings.*
- *Clearly define the limit of lawn to prevent future encroachment.*
- *Look into ways to reshape the design to move the home away from the natural wetland.*
- *Add language requiring placement of markers along the easement boundary to clearly demarcate it.*

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Mazzucco will address the IWB comments and be back on the agenda for March 12, 2026.

2. **IW-26-5; 215 Farmingville Road;** Summary Ruling application to correct a wetlands violation of sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Riccardo Arruzza. Applicant: Joe Arruzza. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104347>

Mr. J. Arruzza was present to discuss the application. The IWB has been to the property. Mr. Arruzza discussed the violation and associated remediation plan. Mr. Bishop complimented the planting plan. He asked if there was any change in grade associated with the initial violation. Mr. Bishop asked how much material was added in the area of the violation. Mr. Arruzza stated approximately 14 cubic yards. Mr. Bishop asked about the expanded lawn area and if it was mitigated by the proposed plantings. Mr. Bishop would like to see the shed located elsewhere on the property and handled under a separate permit and not under the corrective action. Mr. Carlson discusses the procedure for obtaining a shed permit from the building department. He also agrees that the shed should not be included in this application. Mr. Bishop suggested that the planting plan is appropriate but that the landscape architect should specify a bit more about species placement based on light and soil type and moisture. Mr. Fincham wanted to see remediation efforts in the channel where the property owner had removed vegetation. He suggested trying to plant the plants as designed on the plan, but that the soil might not accommodate the proposed plantings if it is fill. Mr. Fincham has concerns that the plants might be planted in fill which is not wetland soil and they will not survive. Mr. Bishop asked if there was room for a tree service to cut and drop and leave the Ash. Mr. Arruzza suggested the tree will have to be removed. Ms. Baker stated that if there are additional plans in the future, the home owner will need to bring that in front of the Board. Mr. Bishop revisited the soil concern because non wetlands soil was deposited in a wetlands area. Ms. Baker suggested that the fill might impede the planting plan. Mr. Arruzza suggests that the fill associated with the violation is approximately 8-12 inches in depth. Mr. Bishop would like a letter from Ms. Wilson to define the extent of the fill associated with the violation. Mr. Bishop would like to see the limit of lawn defined by two-man boulders. Mr. Pilch would like to see a response from the soil scientist, Mr. McManus, who dug into the ground to see where the wetlands were located and he provided a report which said that there were areas where the fill was 2 feet or more in depth. Mr. Pilch does not have concern about the plantings in fill. He thinks the survival rate of the proposed plantings would be high and not of concern if planted correctly.

Special Conditions Suggested:

- *Shed shall be removed from the plan.*
- *Remove dead Ash in the back on the west side.*
- *The landscape architect shall be on site to locate the plants are in accordance with the design.*
- *As Built must show the location of species in two growing seasons so the IWA can identify the proper locations in relation to the bond release.*
- *The homeowner shall provide a letter to the IWB from Mr. McManus to suggest a range and depth of fill in the area associated with the violation.*
- *Define the limit of lawn with two-man boulders or something that Ms. Wilson can advise.*

Ms. Baker suggests that Mr. McManus come take a look at the fill and provide a letter to the IWB with his results. A new plan will need to be provided that does not include the shed. Ms. Wilson should also provide a more defined list of plant locations.

Mr. Johnson will provide Mr. Arruzza a bullet pointed list via email to explain in writing what the IWB is asking prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Arruzzo will address the IWB comments and come back to the Board on for further discussion. This will be added to the agenda for March 12, 2026.

3. **IW-26-7; 216 Florida Road;** Summary Ruling application for installation of an inground pool, patio, pool house, and relocate septic tanks and pump chambers within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Christopher and Audra Cartelli. Applicant: Steven Trinkaus.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104585>

Mr. Trinkaus was present to discuss the application. Mr. Trinkaus shared his screen to describe the site plan for an inground pool and patio with associated site work. A majority of the lot is within a regulated wetland area.

Mr. Bishop discussed the approval from the Health department that exists for the septic. Mr. Fincham states that he lives on the road but has never seen the home but would be willing to recuse if necessary. Mr. Trinkaus suggested that it was not an issue. Mr. Carlson asks about the pool and patio material. Mr. Trinkaus has designed impermeable materials. Mr. Carlson asks about the play area on the design plan. Mr. Bishop mentions drainage off the pool/patio. He also asks about the lawn up to the wetland boundary and if there was an opportunity to provide a boundary or additional planting plan that would act as a buffer for mitigation and intersect anything moving downward. Mr. Pilch mentions the riparian buffer being quite narrow adjacent to the wetlands. Discussion ensued between the applicant and Mr. Pilch on buffers and expected widths for LID designs. Mr. Fincham and Ms. Baker also believe the riparian buffer is narrow and makes sense to be enhancement near proposed improvements. Ms. Baker restates that the IWB generally likes to see a 15-foot riparian buffer and doesn't believe anything less would be a good precedent to set.

Items that need to be addressed for the next meeting: plans revised, suggested buffer strips, and documentation on buffer strips from LID meeting on how the narrow strip should be done and why it is ok to have it smaller than 15 feet in width.

The comments will be addressed by the applicant team, and this application will be back on the agenda on March 12, 2026.

III: Application(s) for Receipt:

1. **IW-26-9; 599 Branchville Road;** Plenary Ruling application for construction of a 75' clear span bridge, multifamily dwellings, driveways, septic and associated sitework within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Moreton Binn. Applicant: Robert Jewell. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and Public Hearing. Staff suggests sitewalk on March 22 and discussion on March 26.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104519>

Mr. Johnson asked if the IWB thinks peer review is warranted for this application. Mr. Pilch believes there should be a biological review. Mr. Bishop agrees. Discussion ensued on engineering peer review. The IWB agreed that both biological and engineering review was necessary.

Motion made by Mr. Smith to receive and schedule a sitewalk on March 22 with a Public Hearing on March 26. Seconded by Mr. Carlson. Motion passes 5-0-1. Mr. Fincham abstained.

IV: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

No ongoing enforcement actions.

V: Other Business:

1. Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Regulations discussion

No discussion.

2. Taylors Pond Dam Removal

Ms. Baker discussed whether this is in the purview of the IWB and what will happen when the pond is empty. It seems like it is not within the purview, but Conservation Commission and IWB are interested in being informed about this project and would like to maintain awareness to have the opportunity to provide comment.

VI: Approval of Minutes

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting:** February 12, 2026

Mr. Fincham motioned to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

- **Sitewalk Minutes:** February 22, 2026

Mr. Smith motioned to approve the above minutes as is. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1. Mr. Fincham abstained.

VII: Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 9:29 PM.

Submitted by

Beth Peyser, Recording Secretary via Zoom Recording