

Planning and Zoning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, September 16, 2025  
(Unrevised/Unapproved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		Left at 9:20PM.
Joe Dowdell	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nneji	Commissioner	X		
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner	X		
Joe Sorena	Commissioner	X		
Sebastian D’Acunto	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		arrived late via Zoom
Aarti Paranjape	Director, (Staff)	X		

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- *Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:01 PM; Quorum established.*

1.1. Distribution of agenda & previous minutes (Published on Commission’s webpage prior to meeting.)

1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

(Note: Correspondence *related to an application* will be uploaded to the relevant application file (see links on agenda items) and reviewed/acknowledged during the relevant public hearing. Correspondence unrelated to an application will be acknowledged as this point in the meeting, and uploaded to the Commission’s webpage at <https://www.ridgefieldct.gov/planning-and-zoning-commission/pages/correspondence>).

None.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

No adjustments.

**2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)**

2.1. **362 Old Sib**

Meeting with the property owner and neighbor.

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing complaints from the neighbors.

2.2. **967 Ethan Allen – Hoo Doo Brown**

Legal Counsel overview.

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement actions.

### 2.3. **34 Bailey Avenue**

Meeting with Counsel and applicant.

Ms. Paranjape briefly discussed the violation and ongoing enforcement actions.

## 3. **PUBLIC HEARING**

### 3.1. **(Contd.) SP-25-8: 258 Main Street:** Revision to Special Permit per (Per 9.2.A and 3.1.C.2) for allowing to host outdoor private events not related to museum in RA zone. *Owner: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum Inc; Appl: Robert Jewell.*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101885>

Ms. Paranjape announced the new documents that have been submitted and uploaded to the record.

Mr. Jewell represented the applicant at the table. Ms. Maylone, Executive Director of the museum, was also present at the table. He responded to new comments on the record since he last spoke at the previous public hearing. New comment from the public included fairness or lack thereof, zoning law, purpose of application, financial justification, historic districts, property location and surrounding properties, and density of Ballard Green. Mr. Jewell reviewed the history of Planning and Zoning permits on this property.

Mr. Jewell restated a number of conditions discussed at the last meeting and agreed to by the applicant. Terms include no outdoor events exceeding 10 per calendar year, no amplified music but amplification can be used to amplify the human voice, outdoor events end promptly at 10PM but amplification would cease at 8PM, attendees would not exceed 150 people per event, and to agree to not come back for ten years for an amendment to allow more than what is discussed above. Discussion that the last term, an agreement to not come back for ten years for an amendment, is not enforceable and the applicant can not be restricted to not come back for ten years for a modification on the conditions above but the applicant does currently verbally agree to that. The museum agrees to not have activities/events that over lap with church activities. Discussion ensued on time limits and ability to follow up and see if these conditions are working. Ms. Paranjape showed photos submitted to the record for context while Mr. Jewell described the concept of events envisioned by the museum. Ms. Maylone discussed neighbor input and agreed that a start time limitation would be agreeable and suggested no events starting before 10AM.

Staff comment from Ms. Paranjape asked whether ten events would be spread out over the year or whether they would all be in busy seasons such as the summer months and December. Ms. Maylone stated that she hopes they would be spread out over the year.

Hearing no further staff or PZC comments, Mr. Hendrick invited public comment.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Doug Barile, 34 Market Street. Expressed concerns of noise from events occurring every Saturday for the duration of the summer. He would like to see a clause in the approval to check-in on how it is working for the community and museum after a year.

Debra Franceschini, 72 Spireview Road. Expressed concerns of too much foot traffic at this space. She believes that the original conditions should be held in place over time and not modified.

Page Perrie, 26 Rowland Lane. Expressed concerns that the space is tight and her back yard is only approximately 20 feet from the museum property boundary. The bedroom that her children occupy face the sculpture garden. She would like to see limitations on the number of events to less than ten and also suggests possibly having indoor/outdoor combination events where both spaces can be used to distribute the crowd instead of entirely outdoor events. The lights from the gala shine into the windows of her home and she would like to see restrictions on those.

Rebecca Ciota, of Ciota Legal Group, representing neighbors. She went through some of the history of Planning and Zoning permits and modifications. Expressed legal concerns with the desire to not have a reversal or further impacts. She felt the meetings with the neighbors were beneficial since the last meeting and would like more time to continue those. Has concerns that this will not be the last time the museum requests a permit modification and over time it will degrade the quality of the neighborhood. She also has concerns about the proximity of the neighbors pool to the sculpture garden. She would like to continue the conversation between the applicant and the neighbors.

John Kazzi, 20 Rowland Lane. He has concerns that noise travels through the neighborhood and suggested maybe no more than one event per month to make it more palatable and spread out throughout the year. He has concerns with amplification of sound and how many hours an event with music might occur because a day long event might negatively impact him.

Don Ciota, 236 Main Street. He discussed the history of the permit and believes that the last time the museum brought an application to the table, the community had similar if not the exact same objections. He would like the PZC to consider the historic nature of the town.

Caroline Dankowski, 300 Nod Road. She agrees with Debra Franceschini and has concerns with traffic and over population in Ridgefield.

*Recap of the proposed draft conditions at this point by the PZC:*

- *Frequency of events –*
  - *Discussion of 10 per year or lower and distribution throughout the year?*
- *Curfew*
  - *8PM for spoken voice amplification, 10PM event over, limit on days events could happen (no Wednesday afternoon of Sunday morning)*
- *Length of time*
  - *Number of hours event can occur*
- *No musical amplification*
- *Limit of 150 in attendance*
  - *Is that the right cap?*
- *Lighting*
  - *Should not be facing the neighboring property.*
- *Conditions and rules will be posted in the contract with the individual having the event*
- *If approved, give it a two-year expiration date with the acknowledgement that they may renew but they must come back to renew*

Mr. Jewell responded to the PZC conditional recap and he suggested two per month might be a reasonable cap. He also suggested a cap of 4 hours for the duration of the event in addition to the cleanup and break down.

Ms. Maylone, clarified that an event such as a reunion would be an indoor and outdoor event that would be counted toward this cap of ten.

Mr. Hendrick clarified that he is trying to clarify the conditions now before there is no longer the ability to enter new information into the record but these are not the final conditions. The PZC and applicant continued to discuss nuances and clarifications of the conditions currently and moving forward.

Final comments from Ms. Maylone of the museum, she felt that the Board of the Museum was very comfortable with the conditions and that the museum cannot continue to come back. They did not support any private agreements. Mr. Jewell stated that they were not included to enter into any third party rights or agreements.

Ms. Ciota returned to the table to suggest more case study could be submitted into the record and therefore would like the public hearing to remain open. Mr. Hendrick stated that PZC counsel would give an opinion on that and that would enter it into the record during the discussion as part of the deliberations.

*Hearing no objection or further comment, the public hearing closed at 8:55PM. Motion made by Mrs. Okrongly to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carried and it was unanimous.*

#### **4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS**

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-25-8: 258 Main Street:** Revision to Special Permit per (Per 9.2.A and 3.1.C.2) for allowing to host outdoor private events not related to museum in RA zone. Owner: *Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum Inc; Appl: Robert Jewell.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101885>

The public hearing was closed and the discussion was rescheduled for the next regularly scheduled meeting on October 7, 2025 to have an opportunity to consult with legal counsel.

- 4.2. **VDC-25-6: 455 Main Street:** Village District Application (per RZR 5.1.B and 7.2.E.1) for installation of building and pylon sign “Cask and Cork” in CBD zone. Owner: *Ridgefield Equities LLC;* Applicant: *Ashlea Andrews.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/102167>

This is an application to change the business signage of an existing liquor store. Ms. Andrews was present to represent the application. Another sign was placed by her business in the plaza and they have agreed to brace the sign so it doesn’t warp from weather as they have experienced in the past. This condition will be included in the approval as a requirement.

*Motion to approve as approved by the VDC with condition as discussed made by Ms. Okrongly, seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carried and it was unanimous. Publication date of September 25, 2025 with an effective date of September 26, 2025.*

#### **4.3. Temporary Moratorium Activities**

##### **4.3.1. General Regulation Review. c/o Chair**

This is the first discussion on this topic. The PZC has asked for input on what regulations could use alteration or clarification moving forward. After taking the feedback into consideration, over time, the PZC should discuss what to prioritize and language to move forward.

Two ideas on this list have been circulated to the PZC for discussion. Approximately seven additional ideas came from AAC/VDC.

Kent Rohrer, 287 Danbury Road, came to the table to discuss affordable housing. His ideas surround an existing affordable housing application. He feels that the parcel of 3 Halpin Lane is in a pocket of zoning maps that doesn’t really make sense for development. ARHD zones state 1 acre and above can have three dwellings per acre but accommodations for smaller parcels less than one acre but greater than a half an acre he would like to see up to three dwelling units but with the restriction that they would all be deed restricted affordable. IF it is less than a half acre but greater than ¼ acre, that would allow one dwelling unit if deed restricted as affordable. His intent is to make sure these parcels are not excluded from developing affordable housing. Alternately, consider changing zoning of small parcels to MFDD to allow affordable housing.

John Kinnear, head of AAC/VDC discussed seven conceptual proposed regulations for consideration. 1) Retaining walls and steep slope regulation to prevent building a 20-foot-high retaining wall, it has to be done in steps/terraces no higher than 4 foot tall based on an existing Wilton regulation.

- 2) Active open recreational space required at/near all multi-family development. Perhaps 75 square foot of open space per bedroom.
- 3) All approvals require a master plan. No Phase 1 approvals without a full plan set of what will ultimately be done on a property. He would like this to include demolition permits.
- 4) Tighten up the language in the regulations to prevent everyone from putting signage on their gas station canopies.
- 5) On multi-family projects, tandem parking (one car parked directly behind and sharing a space with another car) should not count as two spots when providing the total number of required parking spaces as the act of shuffling cars around should be considered detrimental to the health safety and welfare of the occupants of the unit.
- 6) Grass should be limited to a maximum 50% of permeable areas and the remainder should remain planted with larger vegetation.
- 7) Strengthen lightings regulations, particularly window/exterior “trim”

PZC continued to discuss some of these ideas. Individual Commission members are encouraged to volunteer to lead some of the drafting for proposed changes and reach out to the Chair if they have particular interest in one.

#### 4.3.2. **MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review**

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101786>

This agenda item was not discussed.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

### 5.1. Approval of Minutes:

#### 5.1.1. [September 2, 2025](#)

*Motion to approve the above meeting minutes as presented. Motion made by **Mr. Molyneaux** seconded by **Ms. DiSalvo**. Unanimous Approval.*

## 6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM

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