



Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 25, 2025
(Revised/Approved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		Via Zoom
Joe Dowdell	Commissioner	X		
Ben Nneji	Commissioner	X		
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		Via Zoom
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner		X	Excused
Joe Sorena	Commissioner	X		Via Zoom
Sebastian D'Acunto	Commissioner	X		Joined at 7:04
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		
Alice Dew	Director (Staff)	X		
Aarti Paranjape	ZEO (Staff)	X		

Others

- **Steve Foundoukis** (Recording Secretary). Individuals who actively participated are identified in minutes below.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- **Mr. Hendrick** commenced the meeting at 7:01 PM at Town Hall Annex, Meeting Room #2, and via Zoom; a quorum was established. *This is a special meeting to discuss only items on the agenda as published.*

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>).

Mr. Hendrick opened the meeting by stating he had received a note from the owners of 11 Barlow Mountain Road asking for historic designation. A very thorough report was submitted in support of this recommendation. Members agreed that Ms. Dew will send a favorable report to HDC for supporting the designation of Historic home for 11 Barlow Mountain Road.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

No changes to the agenda.

2. PRESENTATION ON MBR (Membrane Bioreactor Wastewater Treatment) Solutions for Wastewater

Stefano Zandri owner of property at 653 Branchville Road, introduced **Michael Caso**, Technology Sales Associate of Fuss O'Neill from Veolia Membrane Systems to provide an overview and slide presentation of private sewage system on this community based septic system which can support homes or multi-development units. The system is an environmental friendly and would take as little as an acre of real estate to install. This would give the Commission members an opportunity to learn about this system before any application for its use. Veolia was established in 1980 and has over 1500 installations globally. Membranes are made in Hungary and consist of a hollow fiber that acts like a straw. Clean water gets sucked into the straw and the waste is pushed out. There are over 70 plants in New England and most are unmanned. Contract operators come in for a few hours a day. This is a failure proof system for the most part. It is reliable, robust, and simple.

The system is highly automated and brings several processes together. The water is clean enough for reuse but not for drinking. It has been installed at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, MA and half the island of Nantucket has been equipped with a membrane system.

The size of the system depends on what the state regulations are. There are Small (S), Medium (M), and Large (L) units. These units have a lot of flexibility and can absorb a huge amount of shock.

These units can be designed to look like a barn, a house, or a structure that doesn't resemble a plant. There is a turbidimeter on the unit to measure the cleanliness of the water.

Units are monitored from Toronto, CA and can be operated from there. The company provides 24/7 technical support.

Kurt Mailman of Fuss & O'Neill gave a presentation on the dispersal, permitting, and regulatory environment in CT. **Dave Formator**, also of Fuss & O'Neill addressed the decentralization of water treatment facilities. Connecticut DEEP regulates any wastewater to a maximum of 1.2 gallons/day per square foot. There is a requirement for a 21-day travel time to an environmentally sensitive receptor and limits on nitrogen and phosphorous in the wastewater. For this reason, the permitting approach requires meeting regulators (CT DEEP guidelines), evaluating site capacity, preparing a hydrogeological report, conducting a pilot test on larger sites, and finally, designing and constructing the full-scale system.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

3.1 (Contd.) A-24-3: Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to add a Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. Commission initiated. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/99421>

- *Mr. Hendrick stated that this was the third evening the Commission would be holding a public hearing on A-24-3, the Text Amendment Change to add a Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium (not to exceed 6 months). To date, the Commission has received written correspondence and heard from 69 people – 48 in support, 9 in opposition, and 12 neutral or unclear. Mr. Hendrick acknowledged all letters received since the February 5th meeting:*

Anita and Nick Donofrio—SUPPORT

Affordable Housing Commission—SUPPORT

Christopher Messina -Support

Robert Jewell-OPPOSED

Mr. Hendrick then proposed that the public hearing be closed, which would allow the Commission to decide on the proposed moratorium. Most determinations are made within 65 days once a public hearing is closed, although there is no time limit for a determination. Once a public hearing is closed, the Commission will not hear any public comments on the matter.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor for public comments via zoom and in person.

Kirk Carr stated that Mr. Beecher and the attorneys should have an exchange prior to any legal action brought against the PLZ Commission.

Greg Kabasakalian spoke in support of the moratorium.

Caroline Dankowski (via Zoom) spoke in support of the moratorium.

Keryn Cerbone spoke in support of the moratorium. Stated that people in town are upset about the Red Rooster Development.

Collette Kabasakalian spoke in support of the moratorium.

Thomas Olkoski stated that the moratorium will direct all applications to go the 8-30g route by default.

Mr. Hendrick asked for a vote on closing the public hearing.

Mr. Nissim is in favor of closing the public hearing so the Commission can move forward with deliberations.

Mr. Nneji expressed fears that by closing the public hearing the Commission would expose itself to litigation. He is in favor of keeping the public hearing open to gather more evidence to support a policy decision.

Mr. D'Acunto stated that the Commission appears to be deliberating this matter. Deliberations should be reserved until after the hearing is closed.

Mr. Hendrick stated that the moratorium is temporary, and the proposed time has been reduced from one year to six months and its scope has been narrowed. The moratorium will allow the Commission to clear its calendar and update its regulations. As of the 2020 Census, the town has 9500 housing units of which 281 are affordable housing units. To comply with the state threshold of 10 percent, the town would have to have 671 affordable housing units by the end of 2023. The town has not added many housing units (69 units built in 2018 and 79 units built in 2019), either affordable or otherwise.

Mr. Sorena stated that if the Commission is concerned about being challenged in court, have other towns that have enacted moratoriums been challenged in court? Courts have upheld moratoriums in other towns.

A MOTION was made to CLOSE this Public Hearing (made by Ms. DiSalvo, seconded by Mr. Nissim). Closed 7-1 (Mr. Nneji nay).

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. If Public Hearing is closed: **A-24-3:** Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to add a Temporary and Limited Development Moratorium. Commission initiated.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.open.gov.com/records/99421>

n/a (public hearing not closed)

Mr. Hendrick suggested Commission members think about whether the moratorium should be applied to 8-30g to provide clarity. The numbers in the applicability sections will be discussed at the next meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. A-25-1: Text Amendment change (Per RZR 9.2.B) to amend section 3.2B.1; 3.3 B.2.b and 3.2.B.2.d for following language (1) Permit 2-Family Dwellings as permitted use in all residential zones; (2) Amend the Accessory Dwelling Unit ("ADU") Regulation to permit ADUs accessory to both 1 and 2 family dwellings; and (3) To permit ADUs on properties that are not owner-occupied provided the ADU is deed restricted at 80% AMI in perpetuity. Applicant: Robert Jewell. For receipt and scheduling a public hearing.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/100229>

Recommendation by Ms. Dew to schedule a public hearing April 1, 2024. Mr. Nissim made a MOTION to RECEIVE the above application, SCHEDULE a Public Hearing on April 1, 2025. Seconded by Mr. Dowdell. APPROVED unanimously.

5.2. Approval of Minutes

5.1.1: Meeting Minutes: January 21, 2025: MOTION to APPROVE: Mr. Nissim, SECONDED by Mr. Nneji, Motion carried 7-0-1 Ms. Okrongly abstained.

5.1.2: Meeting Minutes: February 4, 2024: MOTION to APPROVE: Mr. Nissim, SECONDED by Mr. Okrongly. Motion carried 7-0-1. Mr. Nneji abstained
APPROVED with 1 ABSTENTION.

5.1.3 Sitewalk December 15, 2024: MOTION to APPROVE: Mr. D'Acunta, SECONDED by Mr. Dowdell. Motion carried 6-0-2 Mr. Nneji and Ms. Okrongly abstained

6. ADJOURN

Meeting ADJOURNED at 10:11 PM

Submitted by Steve Foundoukis
Recording Secretary