

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 9, 2026
(Unrevised/Unapproved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:06 PM; Quorum established.

- 1.1. **Distribution of agenda & previous minutes. (Published on Commission’s webpage prior to meeting.)**
- 1.2. **Administrative Announcements & Correspondence**
- 1.3. **Approval of agenda.**

Ms. Paranjape suggests discussing 4.3 because it will be quick and the applicant is present.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to move item 4.3 to the top of the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carries unanimously.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

No ongoing enforcement to discuss.

3. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

- 3.1. **(Contd) A-26-1: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.b) to amend Section 2.2 – revise definitions for “Bed and Breakfast” and add new for “Short-Term Rentals”; amend Section 3.2.C.12 – Bed and Breakfast to include “Short Term Rentals”. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104870>

Mr. Hendrick sent the draft language via email prior to the meeting. He gave a summary of the changes. He included a background and reasons section. The draft language was shared on the screen. Ms. DiSalvo asked if we were limiting the bedroom number for a bed and breakfast. Mr. Hendrick had stated it was in the definition. Definitions included lodging party, lodging night, lodging stay, natural owner, short-term rental including a table. Mr. Dowdell asked about enforcement. Mr. Hendrick explained the levels of permits. Ms. Paranjape asked how

it would be known if it is not advertised on a public site. Mr. Hendrick went back to the language which includes procedure and reporting. Ms. DiSalvo asked if this was normal and if other towns require permits at all for Airbnb style rentals. Mr. Hendrick explains that there doesn't seem to be a standard and it is all over the board but some towns do this. Mr. Dowdell asked about the level that doesn't need a permit. Ms. Okrongly thinks the chart is great and it covered a lot. Mr. Molyneaux agrees with Ms. Okrongly. Mr. D'Acunto expressed an issue with a lack of reporting under 14 days. He thinks it should be monitored. Ms. Okrongly had a comment on signage and that it should be allowed if not too extreme. Ms. Okrongly suggests no more than two signs but Ms. DiSalvo suggests a Bed and Breakfast can have a sign but an Airbnb cannot. He will add that the PZC "may" grant a sign but not "shall" grant a sign with an Airbnb permit. Mr. Hendrick also discusses expiration and that all permits related to this section would automatically expire three years after effective date and would need to seek an approval. Renewal could be handled as a revision. Ms. Okrongly asked how existing Bed and Breakfast permits would transition into this new language. Mr. Hendrick asked Ms. DiSalvo how she felt about the proposed number of nights. She asked about a true short term rental when they came for a special permit and what the limitations were. Ms. DiSalvo stated that she is okay with it. Mr. Hendrick turned the table over to the public. No interest. Ms. Paranjape talked through the paperwork side of things and then had no additional comment.

Ms. Okrongly made a motion to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

Hearing no further discussion the Public Hearing closed.

- 3.2. **(Contd.) A-26-3: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 7.5: Excavation Filling and Grading. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104873>

Mr. Hendrick suggested continuing this public hearing. The language needs additional work.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-1: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.b) to amend Section 2.2 – revise definitions for "Bed and Breakfast" and add new for "Short-Term Rentals"; amend Section 3.2.C.12 – Bed and Breakfast to include "Short Term Rentals". *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104870>

Mr. Dowdell suggested one more read through of the language prior to adopting because he noted a typo. Mr. Hendrick pulled it up on the screen. Multiple typos were revised.

Motion made by Ms. DiSalvo to approve the text amendment as presented.

Ms. Okrongly suggested tabling it to next meeting so Mr. Dowdell can give it one more read through. Mr. Dowdell will review the language and be ready for the approval at the next meeting. Ms. DiSalvo rescinded her motion.

This was tabled until June 23.

- 4.2. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: A-26-3: Text Amendment** application (per RZR 9.2.B) to amend Section 7.5: Excavation Filling and Grading. *Commission Initiated.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/104873>

Public Hearing was not closed.

- 4.3. **(Contd.) VDC-26-3: 407 Main Street;** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.B and 7.2.E.1) for exterior walls sign "Sommlike" with sign illumination and building lights located in CBD zone. *Owner: Carnall Insurance LLC; Applicant: Robert Mordente.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/105173>

This was brought back to discuss the lighting. The lights have down lighting and no uplighting. Ms. Okrongly asked if the AAC saw this lighting. The lights are not bright white they are soft white.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to approve the application as amended with no uplighting to make sure the lights at 3000k or less. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

4.4. Temporary Moratorium Activities

4.4.1. MISC-26-1: General Regulation and Zones review. c/o Chair

Ms. Okrongly mentioned her sustainability regulation and she added language. She wanted to bring attention to it so the PZC would review. Ms. Okrongly would like to get it on a future agenda with a public hearing. Mr. Hendrick went through the document and explained how he had rearranged the language a bit to fit the regulations. The language put forward is a combination of Mr. Hendrick and Ms. Okrongly's language drafting. This also requires an update to the application checklist and add the checklist itself. Ms. Okrongly went over the language in the checklist.

Mr. D'Acunto asked if "net positive" was defined or what happens if the application is neutral. Other PZC members agreed that this should be discussed and it will come back up in future conversations.

Ms. Okrongly would like to put this on the agenda for a public hearing on July 14. Ms. Paranjape stated that it would be received as an application on June 23.

Ms. Okrongly made a motion to initiate a new regulation amendment application for receipt on June 23 and schedule a public hearing on July 14. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

4.4.1.1. Presentation and Discussion with RACE (Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment) concerning suggested regulation updates, including native species planting and dark sky/lights out. c/o Commissioner DiSalvo

Ms. Barbiari sent a few slides around and would like to discuss these. Ms. DiSalvo sent them around 4 to 6 weeks ago. Ms. Barbiari sent them this morning so they are different than the ones Ms. DiSalvo has. RACE is making a request to require native plants for developments in Ridgefield. The PZC supports adding native planting requirements and potentially to include it as a standard regulation. Mr. Hendrick asks if there is a list of recommended plantings. Ms. Barbiari suggests that ecotone 59 should be referenced as the planting zone but Ms. Throckmorton had concerns about this being a new definition that nurseries had not caught up to yet. Ms. Paranjape stated that UCONN also has a great list. Mr. D'Acunto would like to see these plant lists submitted for review. Ms. Okrongly elaborates on native plantings not only making the property better that they are on but it improves the quality of all of the surrounding properties as well. Mr. Hendrick asks about enforcing or tracking invasives.

Discussion continued on interrupting the natural world and how the degradation has been notable over the course of one lifetime. There were very few items of concern in the PZC regulations on illumination. The few tweaks that were suggested by Dark Sky are minor and technology related since improvements to lighting happen quickly. They are looking for gold certification with a goal of advancing Ridgefield to one of the most sustainable towns in regards to lighting.

Mr. Hendrick recaps the recommendations regarding lighting. There are multiple documents with comments that are included as recommendations highlighted in red.

For next steps, Lights Out will set up a meeting with office staff to discuss thoughts and ideas on moving forward. The presentation will be shared with office staff and some research will be conducted on native lists and links to MA/CT/NY/NJ invasive species.

Ms. Okrongly suggested a link would be more relevant than a list. Mr. Nneji asked a question about invasive species. For native plants, are there times when they become invasive and could be problematic. Legally, the definition of invasive species includes “not native”. Mr. Nneji suggests that since this is critical to our environment it should be a requirement.

The PZC suggested drafting language to begin a process of requiring this. Mr. Hendrick states that a timeline for adoption is 4 to 6 months.

4.4.2. **MISC-25-3:** Branchville Strategic Review

Mr. Hendrick and Ms. Paranjape both had a discussion to keep the conversation going. Mr. Hendrick suggests going back to the last conversation to review the draft regulations. Mr. Hendrick would like to make sure these suggestions are discussed next meeting for at least 30 minutes to give feedback and start public hearings. Ms. Okrongly suggests carving out 30 minutes for discussion.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

- 5.1. **VDC-26-4: 451 Main St.: Village District** Application (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.b; 7.2.E.1; 7.2.G) to replace existing sign with illuminated sign with day/night vinyl with 4000k. Owner: Ridgefield Equities; Appl: Matt Haskell. For receipt and schedule discussion. Staff suggest discussion on June 23.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/105960>

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to receive and schedule discussion on June 23, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carries unanimously.

- 5.2. REF-26-2: 66 Prospect Street, 8-24 Referral application for the construction of rain garden approximately 110’x30’ with depression of 18 inches in the lawn next to skate park to address impervious surface coverage at 66 Prospect Street aka 90 East Ridge Road Parcel ID E15-0203. Owner: Town for Ridgefield; Applicant: Jake Muller DPS/Joseph Canas. For receipt and schedule discussion on June 23rd.

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106136>

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to receive and schedule the discussion on June 23, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carries unanimously.

- 5.3. Regular Meeting Minutes – May 26, 2026

Amendments suggested by Ms. Okrongly with language in section 1.2. Ms. Okrongly would like to include that all correspondence should go to P&Z Director.

Ms. Okrongly would also like to amend under the same section 1.2 regarding the Town website where it states it is out of PZC per view. This is due to the software that is used and not the Town website.

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

- 5.4. Special Meeting Minutes – April 21, 2026

Motion made by Ms. Okrongly to approve minutes as amended, if amended. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes and it is unanimous.

6. **ADJOURN**

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:27 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