

Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, June 30, 2026
(Revised/Approved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		
Joe Dowdell	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Ben Nneji	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Elizabeth DiSalvo	Commissioner	X		via Zoom
Chris Molyneaux	Commissioner		X	
Joe Sorena	Commissioner	X		Via Zoom
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 6:33 PM; Quorum established.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. MISC-25-3: Branchville Strategic Review

This was the first PZC discussion after the consultants put together and submitted a draft. After the discussion at this meeting, Mr. Hendrick would like to provide comments and edits to the consultant. Mr. Hendrick thinks it is difficult to conceptualize all of this without a buildout analysis of what could happen in 20 years. He would like to get that done but it doesn’t make sense to do that until something is fairly formed for language. Topics like sewer and water are not the PZCs focus. The zoning language needs to be established before anything happens with that. It sounds like the PZC has been leaning toward village district in the past as opposed to the state TOD. Ms. DiSalvo asks if we are required to do TOD based on the presence of the train. Mr. D’Acunto stated that the density in TOD does not seem like something the infrastructure could support. Mr. Dowdell explained that there are other requirements outside of just the TOD. General consensus is that the village district makes the most sense and should be their language moving forward instead of state TOD. Mr. Hendrick says we are not required to use a state TOD just

because we have a train. Mr. Nissim asked about the grants and Mr. Hendrick explained that it would be applied toward infrastructure and eligibility. Mr. Hendrick went around the room to have an understanding of where the PZC members currently stood. Mr. D'Acunto, Mr. Dowdell, Mr. Nissim, Ms. Okrongly, and Mr. Hendrick were leaning toward local. Mr. Nneji, and Ms. DiSalvo were leaning toward TOD. Mr. Sorena did not share his vote. Mr. Hendrick shared a slide of the proposed Mixed-Use Zone. Mr. D'Acunto thinks the line extends way too far for the zone. Mr. D'Acunto would like to keep the zone for this discussion closer to Route 7 instead of expanding into the residential zone. Mr. Hendrick thinks density needs approximately a 0.5-mile radius to accomplish the goal of increasing density. Mr. Hendrick pulls up the GIS to show lots in the general area of Branchville. Ms. DiSalvo would like clarification on why the lots with small homes in the area are not included. She also believes the residential zone should not be expanded out so far. Mr. Hendrick commented on the Branchville School staying in the residential zone and that if the school closed down, it would be a good location for dense housing. Ms. DiSalvo also thinks the small houses along Branchville Road should also be included. Discussion continued on what makes sense to include in the zone. Mr. Hendrick would like to see a lot more meat in the actual design review and design standards for any lot. Mr. Hendrick suggested something like a pocket park being incentivized in development. Ms. Okrongly stated that is the goal and this helps promote it as a place where the public wants to go. Mr. Hendrick suggested a point system for the development of a site and shared a list of improvement ideas and associated points. Mr. Nneji likes the point idea a lot and suggested including additional improvements. Ms. Okrongly suggested aligning some of the improvements with the POCD checklist. Mr. Hendrick would like to see the consultant improve on the architectural/village district guidelines. Mr. Hendrick asked the PZC if anyone had any ideas or thoughts on what was presented to us. Mr. D'Acunto asked if they would be making another presentation. Mr. Hendrick reminded the PZC that the consultant was waiting on comments from the PZC. Ms. Okrongly asked if the PZC was governing what kind of mixed uses would make sense. Ms. Okrongly suggested there might be commercial uses that would not foster community growth. Ms. DiSalvo mentioned limitations on businesses that have heavy water usage. Ms. Okrongly mentioned the checklist and asked if the consultant could provide an example or guide the PZC to a checklist example. She also wanted to ask them to consider other checklist items like sustainability and underlying health and safety of those components. Mr. Hendrick brought up automatic triggers for special permits and if the

PZC is trying to encourage development they should pull back on what requires special permits. Ms. DiSalvo stated that tree-lined streets is a big draw for downtown Ridgefield compared to other neighboring towns such as Brookfield. Ms. DiSalvo suggested that there should be tree requirements to keep Branchville appealing. Ms. Okrongly wants to emphasize the walkability of this area.

Next steps will be providing feedback based on this discussion to the consultant. He is going to ask for more feedback on codes for how things should be designed in this area. Mr. Hendrick will ask the consultant to come back with another presentation for a follow-up discussion. Ms. Okrongly suggested waiting for the next iteration of the consultant and then attempting to schedule a follow up meeting with them very quickly. Mr. Nissim asked to get a quote from the consultant and Mr. Hendrick said they already stated a firm \$5,000.

2.2. Regulations updates per Public Act **PA-25-1**

Mr. Hendrick shared a slideshow. First slide was links for information on the history of Public Act 25-1.

Discussion continues on parking requirements. Ms. Okrongly suggested an expert for parking assessments.

Discussion continued on Conservation and Traffic Mitigation Districts under PA-25-1. Wilton has made significant progress in drafting regulations associated with this.

Mr. Hendrick continued his slide show on the background of PA 25-1 (Section 16, 17, and 41). Some discussion continued by the PZC asking for clarification on specifics on how this would impact the Ridgefield process. Ms. DiSalvo summarized the discussion by stating that there are very few projects that will fall into this category.

Mr. Hendrick stated that the business districts like the CBD and B-1 and Branchville and areas that are Commercially Zoned. Basically, anyone that wants to build a building with 2-9 units must be approved. Mr. Hendrick agrees with Ms. DiSalvo. Mr. Hendrick thinks the PZC needs to update the Summary Ruling regulations to make a very strict and strong clear standards to direct these areas. Ms. Okrongly asked about a checklist for Summary Review. Mr. Hendrick thinks that is what is needed. Mr. Sorena suggests that we need to add in the regulations that things are state-mandated. Mr. D'Acunto asked if there is a group of Chair's of CT PZCs that get together or if there is West Cog guidance on this. Ms. Okrongly asked about the money that was not used to update the POCD. Mr. Hendrick said it is gone. The slide show also discussed the future growth plans. But this is not in effect yet. Ms. Okrongly suggested the state and COGS should work together. Mr. Hendrick stated that it

is not the way it is working. Mr. Hendrick suggests that the housing growth plan is total growth and not affordable housing growth. Affordable units to count for overall housing though. The slide discussed transit-oriented districts. The PZC can make something that is like a transit-oriented district or a true transit oriented district. Mr. Hendrick states that this will be a difficult idea to explain.

3. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 8:33 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