Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 8, 2026
(Revised/Approved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		Via Zoom (left for public hearing)
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		
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**

- 3 letters were received from Christopher and Beth Ingram re: Bennett's Meadow Subdivision.

1.3. **Approval of agenda.**

Motion to move 4.2 to the end of the meeting by Mr. Sorena. Mr. Hendrick suggests pushing that topic to the end of the meeting. Ms. Okrongly wants to discuss the native plants to start the receipt and schedule public hearing process. Mr. Hendrick suggests moving this topic to the end of the meeting prior to approval of meeting minutes.

Motion passes unanimously.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

- **225 Bennetts Farm Road:** Ms. Paranjape explains the potential violation surrounding a home occupation of voice lessons at the residence. Ms. Paranjape sent a potential notice of violation. On June 3 the building inspector and Ms. Paranjape visited the property because more emails had come in to express concern with structures built on the same property with no permits. An in-ground pool, cabana, and pergola were constructed without permits. The home owner was instructed to submit after the fact approval applications for the pool, cabana, and pergola. The home owner submitted an application for a home occupation. He also submitted after the fact applications for the pool, cabana, and pergola. It is a minor home occupation under a Zoning approval. Ms. Paranjape gave additional details on the specifics of the operation and the process. Discussion ensued by the PZC. This is currently

in front of the IWB for the detention basin. This item will remain on the agenda until it is remedied and closed out.

3. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

3.1. **SP-26-7: 0 Ethan Allen Hwy: Special Permit Application** (per RZR 9.2.A and 5.3.D.13) to create a golf driving range, parking area and related improvements in B-2 Zone. *Owner: EAP Property; Applicant: Robert Jewell.* https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106587

Mr. Hendrick explains the Public Hearing process and then moves it over to the applicant. Ms. Okrongly has a conflict of interest and recused herself. Ms. Paranjape read the legal notice into the record. Mr. Jewell introduced the project team. He also goes over the specifics of the Golf Driving Range. This property is not ancillary, but related to the Golf Performance Center. This is a driving range with 9 tee spots.

Mr. Hendrick asks the potential future use for this land locked parcel. Mr. Jewell discussed the past proposed use and opportunities for use on this lot based on the current zoning. Mr. Trinkaus is the Project Engineer. Mr. Jewell notes that the engineer design plan is showing what is proposed. The rendering is not accurate.

Mr. Trinkaus described the engineer plan. Mr. Sorena asked about the signage proposed for the entry drive to the property. No additional signage is proposed. Mr. Sorena asked about the distance from Route 7 to the edge of the driveway. Mr. Trinkaus stated 163 feet from Rte 7. Mr. Jewell repeated that there was no proposed signage. Mr. Hendrick asked if there was an existing A-2. Mr. Trinkaus said the survey existed from the last application. Mr. Hendrick is looking for the inventory of existing trees. Mr. Trinkaus said there are three trees that will be removed. Mr. Hendrick asked for the proposed trees to be noted that would be removed. Mr. Hendrick asked what the expected driving range surface would look like, soil conditions, and drainage expected. Mr. Trinkaus directed the question about the range to the Golf Performance Center. Mr. Trinkaus said no stormwater plan. Mr. Knick described the surface and stated that the surface is permeable. Mr. Hendrick and Ms. Paranjape state that it is impervious if it is compressed gravel. Mr. Sorena requests an engineer to provide information on whether it could be pervious or impervious. Mr. Hendrick suggests being really clear because it is the whole system and not just what is at the surface to be a fully permeable system. Mr. Sorena asked if there would be automation. Mr. Knick said there are no automated returns and it would just be an old school driving range model. Mr. D'Acunto asked why not ingress and egress on Route 7. Mr. Jewell said they do not want to add traffic to Route 7 and the traffic analysis said this would be very low impact. Mr. Hendrick asked for more information on hours, frequency, traffic, frequency, customers, how many days each week. Mr. Jewell said only during daylight because no lights. Mr. Knick suggested 8AM to dusk for hours of operation seven days a week during best weather days. Inclement weather shuts it down. Mr. Sorena asked if any noise studies were completed in the event it impacted neighbors. Mr. Jewell stated that no noise studies had been complete. Mr. D'Acunto asked about traffic on Route 7 and Haviland. Mr. Jewell feels that it is better to put ten cars on Haviland instead of ten cars on Route 7. Mr. Sorena agrees with Mr. Jewell on Haviland being a better ingress and egress than Route 7. Mr. Sorena asked for a noise survey. Mr. Dowdell asked if this application came in before the regulation checklist and additional neighbor notification.

Ms. Paranjape referenced her staff report including comments, concerns, and recommendations. The staff report is shared online.

Mr. Sorena asked about the netting system and whether it will be designed by an engineer. Mr. Jewell will get that answer for next week.

Mr. Hendrick asked about the fence height of netting. Mr. Hendrick stated that fence height should be on record. Mr. Jewell asked Steve if he was prepared to speak about the netting on all four sides. Mr. Sorena asked about maintenance. Mr. Hendrick said just height and a few more details for the engineered plan for the construction of the plan. He also asked if Mr. Jewell could address staff report comments on crosswalk. He also wondered if there was a plan to facilitate back and forth vehicular movement. Mr. Jewell had a list of comments that needed addressed including: impervious/pervious surfaces, and the walkway detail, and fence

height and engineering of the posts. Mr. Hendrick stated there were comments on water and irrigation. Mr. Sorena didn't believe there was water servicing the property.

Ms. Paranjape stated this would be back on the agenda for the next meeting on September 22.

Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Arbucci at 220 Haviland Road. He is directly across from the driveway. He would like to ask the PZC whether the application meets Special Permit application requirements. He does not believe that this will be occasional noise. He has concern about the noise from golf clubs hitting golf balls. He is also concerned about safety of the driveway entrance and distance from the light. He believes it is encroaching residential at 160 feet. Haviland Road is residential. His daughter got hit backing out of the driveway. He asks the Commission to not assume impacts will be insignificant. Mr. Hendrick asked if the resident has had any interaction with the applicant. Mr. Arbucci says he has had interaction and the proposed application shows no lighting, but Mr. Arbucci said the applicant told him there would be lighting in the future. Mr. Hendrick stated that the site can be developed. So, he is curious what would be a better development for the property. Mr. Arbucci mentions the trees in 10 years. He does not want to wait three years. He wants to see something in place now. He sees the traffic concerns currently on Haviland Road. He believes there will be an accident. He also restated that there is noise hitting golf balls. Mr. Hendrick asks if a change in driveway and intensive screening would change his opinion. Mr. Arbucci stated that he doesn't believe anything will change the noise. Mr. Sorena stated that a previous application had a noise barrier and asked Mr. Arbucci if the noise barrier blocked the sound, if it would change his mind. Mr. Arbucci said that, yes, if the noise was blocked then he would be less concerned. There was a brief exchange about what the threshold for violation is. Mr. Arbucci thought "above that" (55) is violating. "Maybe 80 or 90" was discussed between commissioners, then Ms. Paranjape corrected the threshold is actually 90.

Mr. Bonanno, 193 Haviland Road. His house does not abut the property but he asked about the noise level which was already discussed with Mr. Arbucci. He finds it funny that someone running a golf center does not know the noise of the impact of golf. He is a golfer. He believes the sound coming off a golf ball is louder than the decibels of the leaf blower. He believes the noise will begin at daylight. He also has concerns about the traffic pattern. The driveway coming out of the development has a poor line of site. He has almost been hit coming out of his own driveway. He would like to see an impact site light study.

Mr. Robbin, 191 Haviland. He abuts the property. His greatest concern is traffic and safety. Beginning at 7AM there is a bus stop and six children meet the bus there until 9AM. Buses run for high school through elementary school. He said the proposed new driveway is 20 feet from the bus stop. He has concerns about drainage. Mr. Hendrick asks for photos of evidence of any of his concerns to express the concerns to the PZC in photos. He describes the shared driveway and number of children that will use the bus stop. Mr. Robbin then says the proposed driveway is 20 feet from the back of my property. Ms. Paranjape shared her screen to show.

Ms. Arbucci, 220 Haviland Road. She asked what is the footage allotted between the lot and driveway. Ms. Paranjape said that isn't a calculation. Mr. Hendrick suggests she might be thinking about state DOT guidelines and best practices for driveway cuts. Mr. Hendrick clarified that the PZC tries to limit curb cuts. But it is a guideline.

Ms. DiSalvo asked for an up to date civil engineer design of the curb cut. Mr. Jewell said the drawing is control and correct. Mr. Sorena suggested a space to maneuver and recommendation that they must drive nose out to traffic. Ms. DiSalvo is suggesting it doesn't look like the drawing. Mr. Jewell said the engineer is correct. Mr. Jewell suggested they would do a site line analysis. Mr. Sorena suggested line of site photos might be helpful. Ms. DiSalvo suggested sound control including a sound wall. Mr. Jewell said they could look at that.

Mr. Bonanno 193 Haviland. He has been there 25 years and is questioning where the curb cut would have been in the past for other proposed uses of the property. Mr. Hendrick said it is not their question to answer. Mr. Jewell does not have an answer.

Hearing no further comment from the public, Mr. Hendrick turns it back over to Mr. Jewell.

Mr. Jewell said the outstanding items for the September 22 meeting were:

- Circle back on noise topic
- Come back with more information on surfaces
- PE certifying that entire system was functional and correct
- Fence height and overall engineering system
- Crossing and questions around sidewalk and gravel.
- Need for water for landscape and water usage
- Evaluate the landscape buffer on Haviland side and see if it could be beefed up
- Site line information and traffic counts on Haviland

Mr. Robbin, 191 Haviland asked about electric. Mr. Hendrick said that is not something they typically get involved in.

Hearing no further comment, the hearing is continued to September 22.

4. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

4.1. **IF PUBLIC HEARING IS CLOSED: SP-26-7: Special Permit Application** (per RZR 9.2.a AND 5.3.D.13) to create a golf driving range, parking area and related improvements in B-2 Zone. Owner: EAP Property; Applicant: Robert Jewell. https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/106587

Public hearing was not closed.

4.2. **Zoning Regulations Update**

4.2.1. **MISC-26-1:** Zoning Regulations review. c/o Chair.

Ms. Okrongly discussed the native planting plans to receive and schedule a Public Hearing. Mr. Hendrick recapped that this was strong support and just getting it into writing and regulation format and then putting it on for discussion. Mr. Dowdell did not see the language but Ms. Okrongly stated that it is in the file and if it is received, it can be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Hendrick asked for changes and edits to get them in to Ms. Paranjape or Ms. Okrongly before the next meeting.

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

No discussion at this meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. **FP-26-2: 0 West Branchville Rd: Flood Plain Application** (per RZR 6.1 and RZR 11) for safety improvements at Portland Avenue and Depot Road railroad crossing: under the State project No 117-164, located at the intersection of Portland Ave and West Branchville (Parcel ID I17-0114), Town of Ridgefield. *Owner: State of Connecticut and Town of Ridgefield. Appl: Jeffrey Fontaine. For receipt and to schedule Sitewalk and discussion. (Staff suggests sitewalk September 20 and discussion September 22nd.)*
https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/107276

Motion made by Ms. DiSalvo to receive the application for sitewalk on September 20 and discussion September 22. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes.

5.2. **SP-26-9: 63 Powdermaker Drive: Special Permit Application** (per RZR 3.3.C.1) for major home occupation to run a dog care/dog rescue for a property located in RAAA zone. Owner: Kimberly Aharon and Alon Aharon Co

Trustees; Appl: Kimberly Aharon. For receipt and schedule sitewalk and Public Hearing. (Staff suggests sitewalk on September 20 and Public Hearing on October 13th.) https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/107279

Discussion held by PZC whether this falls under the definition of a kennel or a home occupation. Mr. Hendrick asks whether it should be defined before the public hearing or during the public hearing. Mr. Hendrick suggests hearing and holding off on scheduling the Public Hearing.

Motion made by Mr. Nissim to receive the application and schedule discussion on whether it meets the definition of a kennel or is a major home occupation on September 22. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

5.3. **SP-26-10: 900 Ridgebury Rd: Revision to prior Special Permit** (per RZR 5.5.D) for installation of storage structure in CDD zone. *Owner: Boehringer Ingelheim; Appl: Stephen Snell. For receipt and schedule discussion. (Staff suggests discussion on September 22)* https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/108397

Motion made by Ms. DiSalvo to receive the application for discussion on September 22. Seconded by Mr. Nissim. Motion passes unanimously.

5.4. **VDC-26-8: 421 Main Street: Village District Application** (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.b AND 7.2.e.3) for second wall/building sign "Monet Nails & Spa" located in CBD zone. *Owner: GAJ LLC; Applicant: Hui Su. For receipt and schedule discussion. (Staff suggests discussion on September 22 or October 13th)* https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/108431

It was clarified that this cannot be combined with the next application because one is for a sign and the second is a Special Permit for a second sign.

Motion made by Mr. Sorena to receive and schedule 5.4 and 5.5 and schedule Public Hearing for October 13. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

5.5. **SP-26-11: 421 Main Street: Special Permit Application** (per RZR 8.3; 5.1.B and 7.2.E.3) for second wall/building sign "Monet Nails & Spa" located in CBD zone. *Owner: GAJ LLC; Applicant: Hui Su. For receipt and schedule sitewalk and Public Hearing. (Staff suggests sitewalk on September 20 or October 13)* https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/108446

Motion made by Mr. Sorena to receive and schedule 5.4 and 5.5 and schedule Public Hearing for October 13. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion passes unanimously.

5.6. Meeting Minutes - Regular Meeting, July 28, 2026

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:08 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