

Planning and Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 22, 2026
(Unrevised/Unapproved)

ATTENDANCE

Commission & Staff

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PRESENT		NOTES
		Yes	No	
Robert Hendrick	Chair	X		
Mariah Okrongly	Vice Chair	X		Recused before PH 7:18pm to 8:32pm
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	
Ben Nissim	Commissioner	X		joined late via Zoom (approx. 7:16PM)
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

- Letter from Christopher and Beth Ingram re: Bennett's Meadow Subdivision.
- The kennel application has been removed from the agenda but should be revisited for discussion by the PZC for possible regulation amendments.

1.3. Approval of agenda.

2. ENFORCEMENT (COMPLAINTS/VIOLATIONS)

- **225 Bennetts Farm Road:** Discussion ensued on this ongoing violation. A neighbor has complained about a potential violation. The ZEO has gotten involved. There is discussion about bringing an engineer in to understand more. Mr. Hendrick suggests putting a pause on this discussion for the evening until the PZC can hear more from both parties. Mr. Hendrick discusses Intervener status and how this relates to the legal question. Since there is a zoning permit in question and the PZC is not the reviewing authority, Mr. Hendrick is not clear on whether a decision is made by the PZC or ZEO. Mr. Hendrick would like to consult Attorney Beecher for further clarification. Ms. Okrongly asked if the original development was a PZC issued permit. Ms. Paranjape clarified that it was a subdivision application, Summary Ruling and Special permit for accessway. She asked if there was a petition, but she would like to clarify what level permit would allow a petition would make the PZC qualified to make a determination. Ms. Paranjape asked Mr. Beecher if the application should be brought in front of the PZC. The applicant is in front of the IWB right now. Mr. Beecher thinks the PZC can review for the

Intervener status. The detention basin was originally part of the Summary Ruling. Ms. Paranjape stated that she has sent a memo to Engineer (Mr. Mazzucco) to give in writing the issues raised. She added that town's consulting engineer will be independently review property in violation for the concerns. Mr. Hendrick asked if Ms. Paranjape would like the PZC to be part of the process. Ms. Paranjape believes this should be in a public setting and not resolved in the office. At this time, no vote is necessary. Ms. Paranjape can refer the issue to the PZC. She plans to do so by the next meeting and for the neighbors to claim Intervener status. The issue includes a pool, cabana, and detention basin. No cease and desist order has been issued. Mr. Hendrick asked if there was any objection by the PZC to review this. It would be referred to the PZC by Ms. Paranjape with no public hearing, but both parties could present their side of the story to the PZC. Ms. Okrongly if anyone else in the subdivision could comment on the application. Ms. Paranjape stated no because it is not a public hearing. If Ms. Paranjape had to issue a violation for the drainage basin, she would have to issue to all six lots as the drainage agreement is recorded under the Bennetts Farm LLC., which includes all six lots. Mr. Hendrick wants to be clear on whether or not there should be a public hearing. Ms. Paranjape will clarify this with Mr. Beecher. Mr. Hendrick asks Ms. Paranjape if there is a timeline for the zoning permit. Ms. Paranjape stated no because it is after the fact and she has been given an As-Built survey. Ms. Paranjape stated there is no timeline. Mr. Sorena asked when the original subdivision permit was issued. Ms. Parnajape stated 2013 and clarified language from the stormwater maintenance plan. Mr. Sorena is asking about code and what regulations the property owner must meet. Mr. Hendrick stated that the PZC stormwater plans have not changed since 2020. Ms. Paranjape clarified that this permit was issued prior to the town adopting stormwater regulations. This will be tabled for further consideration at the next meeting on October 13. At that time Ms. Paranjape believes there will be two engineer reports available for the PZC to review.

3. PUBLIC HEARING

- 3.1. **(Contd.) 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 explained what has happened to this point. Ms. Okrongly recused herself from this application and left the room at 7:18PM. Mr. Jewell was present on behalf of the applicant and Mr. Trinkaus was present on Zoom. Mr. Jewell stated he was caught off guard with the level of opposition at the last meeting and would like to go back and give additional information to clarify a few topics from the last meeting. Mr. Knick, the applicant, is also present via Zoom. Mr. Hendrick went through the application and how the Special Permit criteria applies.

Mr. Hendrick states that there could be more intensive development but the offsetting point to that is that even with all the Special Permit uses, the PZC would have the ability to review whether or not the specific application would be the right use on that particular site. Mr. Jewell conceded that the construction of buildings would need a permit but the uses he went through were as of right.

Mr. Jewell discusses the activity and states it is concentrated in the southeast corner of the property. He also states the driveway is located on Haviland for safety because it is less traveled than Route 7. Ms. Paranjape shared images uploaded to the application by Mr. Jewell. Photographs included a Google view of the site, the trees across the street from the proposed driveway, site lines from the proposed driveway to Route 7, site lines looking up Haviland away from Route 7 from the proposed driveway. Mr. Jewell states there are no safety issues with site lines from the proposed driveway. Mr. Jewell discusses the dimensions of the parking area and the built-in turnaround space. Ms. Paranjape revisited the images uploaded to the application. Mr. Jewell supplied the Institute of Transportation Engineers trip generation manual. A number of other uses have not worked on this property for reasons including no water and no sewer. Mr. Jewell stated that this is a low impact use compared to other uses on this property. Mr. Dowdell asked about the actual distances for site lines. Mr. Jewell stated he was rounding. Mr. Jewell stated the rendering is not accurate.

Mr. Jewell did not have additional information on the crosswalk or the noise issue that came up at the last meeting.

Mr. Trinkaus is present to discuss the impervious surfaces and other engineering issues. Mr. Jewell asked Mr. Trinkaus about the site line distances. Mr. Trinkaus stated the site lines were measured in the field to the nearest foot. Ms. Paranjape shared the site plan for discussion. He goes over the permeable driveway materials and clearing. Mr. Trinkaus isn't involved with the noise or crosswalk information. Mr. Sorena asked about a structural base to prevent running into the roadway. Mr. Hendrick mentioned the language on parking spaces and access drives in the regulations. He stated that what is being proposed would specifically be approved by the PZC. Mr. Jewell would suggest approving this. Mr. Hendrick states that what is proposed is less intense than what is typically required. He also asked Ms. Paranjape if this was actually considered impervious. She stated that an engineer would have to give certification that it is impervious. Ms. Paranjape stated that the PZC will require a maintenance plan. Tree survey, remediation, noise survey, and path to the crosswalk, fencing, netting, and material structural elements will be available at the next meeting, the netting details will be available at the next meeting on October 13. Ms. Paranjape stated if it extends beyond the October 13 meeting, an extension will be required.

Mr. Jewell stated that a pathway will be provided to the crosswalk. Ms. Paranjape stated an ADA compliant crosswalk would be required if a crosswalk was present. He said he doesn't want to do anything permanent, so if ADA compliance is required, they will not be providing a crosswalk. Mr. Jewell states that the use is intended to be easily removed.

Ms. Paranjape stated traffic and noise will be discussed at the next meeting. She said the Police Commission meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum, when applicant was planning to attend. Mr. Hendrick opened the floor to public comment.

Mr. Egan at 197 Haviland Road. He and his wife own a home on the accessway. He wants to discuss the safety issue due to vehicle traffic and possible injury. He has three children and next year they will be in three different schools with three different pickup times. He believes there is a line of site issue and a lot of traffic due to delivery drivers, guests, neighbors, and children. Mr. Hendrick asks about the bus stop location and where it is. Mr. Egan clarified it is on Haviland. Mr. Hendrick asks about earliest and latest bus. He estimates between 7:00 and 9:30AM or pickup in the morning and dropoff begins around 2:00PM in the evening. Mr. Sorena suggests the majority of the driving range traffic would be during the summer when school is not in session. Mr. Sorena asks about limiting hours and what would work. Mr. Egan would still have concerns with limiting hours. Mr. Egan also wants to talk about safety and noise. The neighborhood children walk between properties, and traffic will prevent this quality of life. Mr. Egan is also concerned about the high decibel sound of the golf ball impacting his children's ears. Mr. Hendrick reminds the room that he is listening to all sides and what the PZC is looking at is credibility and expertise. Mr. Hendrick states that Mr. Egan needs to either submit the studies or bring an expert to make the claims credible about studies. Mr. Egan summarizes that the negative impacts of the proposed use for this property would give him a lower quality of life than what exists right now.

Mr. Arbucci at 220 Haviland Road. He lives directly across the road from the proposed golf center. He wants to state that within a 90-degree angle from the driveway, his house is present although it was not shown by Mr. Jewell in his photos. Mr. Hendrick asks Mr. Arbucci to submit for the record the photo he is showing on his phone. He states traffic volume and safety of the proposed driveway on Haviland versus Route 7. He said you cannot back out of his driveway. He does not believe it is a safe road because it is windy, blind corners, and traveled. He wants to address the acoustic study that was not presented this evening. He brings up the pickleball court. He also referenced a study discussing the noise impacts of golf balls as an impact noise. He is requesting the PZC denies the application. Mr. Hendrick reminds Mr. Arbucci to submit any scientific studies and photos shown to be part of the application. The information should be emailed to Ms. Paranjape. Mr. Nneji asked if Mr. Arbucci's house is the closest. Mr. Nneji asked the distance from his house to the proposed

driveway. Mr. Arbucci stated that his property is 3.5 acres that extends from Route 7 to near the proposed driveway. Mr. Arbucci couldn't answer that question but will look and share with the PZC.

Mr. Fields at 128 Haviland Road. He has a concern about the large expanse of artificial turf and the concern of the leeching of microplastics into the groundwater from this surface. The more permeable it is, the more likely it is and easier it becomes for the microplastics to go into the groundwater. The neighbors are all on well and septic. Mr. Sorena is familiar with this because of football turf, but he feels golf turf should have the information provided in specs by the turf manufacture. Mr. Hendrick states that it is within the per view of the PZC to discuss the materials being used are not going to damage the natural environment. The PZC just raised the question at the last meeting relative to surface. Mr. Hendrick suggests continuing to submit information for the PZC to consider. Mr. Sorena said if the public asks for something to be looked at, the PZC can ask the applicant to answer the questions. Mr. Nneji suggests that the applicant should submit anything relevant to this that he has. Mr. Sorena states that it is a slippery slope because the synthetic area of this turf is very smooth.

Mr. Robbin at 121 Haviland Road. He lives approximately 20 feet from the proposed application. He asks if the public will have access to acoustic studies. The PZC states that the public has the same information the PZC has. Mr. Hendrick states that traditionally the first thing an expert does is establish their credentials.

Mr. Jewell gave final comment. He has a few things to submit at the next meeting and clarify. He suggests that he will have more information on the turf for the next meeting. Mr. Jewell stated that they will pull together acoustic information but did not clarify if they will hire an expert for studies.

Main topics that the applicant has outstanding for the next meeting include:

- Tree information
- Noise
- Rendering
- Fence structure and height
- Crossing

This will be continued at the meeting on October 13. Ms. Okrongly returned at 8:32PM

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. **FP-26-2: 0 West Branchville Rd: Flood Plain Application** (per RZR 6.1 and RZR 11) for safety improvements at Portland venue and Depot Road railroad crossing; under the State project No 117-0114), Town of Ridgefield. *Owner: State of Connecticut and Town of Ridgefield. Appl: Jeffrey Fontaine.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/107276>

Mr. Hendrick gave an introduction and turned the table over to Mr. Fontaine. The application is in response to safety improvements at the Ridgefield Metro North Train station. Mr. Fontaine shared a presentation. The proposed project is located within a FEMA Flood zone and FEMA flood plain.

Ms. Okrongly asked if there would be signage during construction to notify the public that the road is closed. Mr. Fontaine said that there would be signage and detour signs. A better idea on what the signage and detour will consist of he will have more information. The engineer is projecting a start date of October. Mr. Sorena asks what will happen if they reach the bollard and need to turn around. Mr. Hendrick asks exactly where the

bollards will be located. The PZC shares their screen to look at GIS to understand exactly where the bollards will be.

Mr. Fontaine continued with his presentation. Ms. Paranjape had distributed her staff report. To clarify she had asked the length of project. Mr. Fontaine suggested 147 contractor days. The contractor has not been chosen yet. Ms. Paranjape suggested all comments are in her staff report. She did not upload but distributed to the PZC.

Motion made by Mr. Sorena to approve the application as presented with conditions as stated in the staff report. Seconded by Mr. Molyneaux. Motion carries unanimously.

- 4.3. **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.*
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/108397>

Mr. Hendrick introduced the application. Mr. Snell was not present. Mr. Pettinelli was present to represent the application on behalf of WSP. Mr. Pettinelli asked Ms. Paranjape to share the screen.

The applicant would like to add a 30 x 50 salt structure adjacent to the current maintenance facilities. Currently they do not have the capacity to store the salt and sand to maintain throughout the winter season. Once they run out, they run into difficulty obtaining additional sand and salt.

Ms. Okrongly asked if trees were being removed. Mr. Pettinelli stated there were no specimen trees, but 23 trees will be removed. Mr. Bruzzi stated that the trees are covered in invasives and are predominantly apple trees that are in decline. Mr. Sorena is asking about the location of the clearing. Mr. Bruzzi states it is the extent of grading shown on the plan. Mr. Sorena asked how much disturbed area overall. Mr. Bruzzi stated 4.8 acres will be disturbed.

Mr. Hendrick clarifies for the record. Mr. Pettinelli is the engineer presenting the design plans. Mr. Sullivan is the manager of real estate and facility management for Boehringer Ingelheim. Mr. Bruzzi is the rep for Boehringer and works under Mr. Sullivan in a contractor capacity.

Ms. Okrongly notes that due to the discussion of invasives, she would like to add the removal of invasives to the greatest extent possible and planting of native species. Ms. Paranjape suggested that this was discussed in her staff report and shared on the screen. Mr. Bruzzi stated that he will remove the invasives and replant native. Ms. Paranjape would like to add a condition that the planting plan should be submitted to the office for approval. Ms. Okrongly would like the condition to say native to Connecticut.

Mr. Sorena made a motion to approve the application as presented with conditions, as discussed, that the native plantings be native to Connecticut and conditions in the staff report. Seconded by Mr. Nneji. Motion carries unanimously.

4.4. Zoning Regulations Update

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

4.4.1.1. Native Plant Discussion

Discussion postponed to October 13.

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

No discussion at this meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- 5.1. **MISC-26-8:** 92 Danbury Rd: Pre-submission concept (for the property located at 92 Danbury Road for Mavis Tire (currently Marty Motors) in B-3 Zone.

Discussion was held on the proposed change on the site to a proposed retail/auto service. Ms. Paranjape said that the use will remain the same because it is auto use. The Special Permit is for the construction of a new building associated with the change in ownership.

Mr. Hendrick suggested preserving and enhancing the sidewalk along Danbury Road. The applicant suggested moving the sidewalk slightly to add a grassy strip to match the adjacent properties within the corridor. Ms. Okrongly suggests that this road is insane with traffic and she has concerns about putting in something that could potentially add traffic to this section of roadway. She also suggests familiarizing himself with the POCD and whether it is necessary to have this much traffic and parking. Mr. Sorena is supportive of the application but is supportive of a traffic study. Mr. Sorena asks if the plan can be adjusted to enter from somewhere other than Danbury Road.

Ms. Okrongly suggests talking to the police, fire, and state DOT about whether this is an opportunity to make the roadway better. Mr. Sorena suggests an opportunity for a crosswalk.

Ms. Okrongly suggests presenting the application with different options and how they thought through this and making that this is the best way to present this application. She suggests beautification and pollinator pathways, if there are bollards make them pretty, if there are dumpster, block them from view. Mr. Sorena doesn't believe the bright green façade will go well with the proposed use.

The applicant had no additional comments or questions. Ms. Okrongly suggested trying to stay within the current buffer. He also made note of some sort of encroach into the buffer of the neighboring property. He will try to clean that up. Mr. Hendrick asked from a business model standpoint if the bays could go in different locations.

Hearing no additional conversation, the applicant stated he expects to be back in front of the PZC toward the end of the year or early next.

- 5.2. **REF-26-3: 221 Danbury Road:** 8-24 Referral application for purchase of property located at 221 Danbury Road for a new Public Safety Building accommodating the Ridgefield Police, Fire EMS, Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department and communication center. *(For receipt and possible discussion.)*

Mr. Hendrick suggested he could present or wait until Mr. Marconi can be present. He could not be present this evening. Mr. Hendrick wanted to clarify that it is currently a home the town is thinking about purchasing in order to accommodate a potential public safety building on the site. It is very early in the conversations and wanted to put it on the radar.

Mr. Hendrick would like the PZC to consider whether it would be offensive for the Town to own the property for this use adjacent to the rec center. Ms. Okrongly clarifies that this is for a positive referral. Mr. Hendrick confirms that if the PZC gives a positive referral, the Town can proceed with the purchase. If the PZC gives a negative referral, the Town would have to call a Special Meeting to overturn the decision.

- 5.3. **REF-26-4: 84 Mamasasco Road:** 8-24 Referral for donation of land located at 84 Mamasasco Road; (C10-0180 and C10-0182). Parcels will be deed restricted open space in perpetuity and used as a small park as requested by owner. *(For receipt and possible discussion.)*

Mr. Hendrick suggests this is a similar thing but would be a donation. This is a blighted property with a tree on a roof that has been that way for a long time. The resolution to solve the blight is for the owner to donate it to the Town. The Town intent with this property would be to be kept as open space in perpetuity. There is talk

among the Mamasasco residents that they would like to see a public trail there. But Mamasasco conversation is not part of this discussion.

Ms. Oksongly made a motion for a positive referral to support the donation of 29 Lakeview Drive. Seconded by Mr. Nneji. Motion passes unanimously.

- 5.4. **REF-26-5: 29 Lakeview Drive:** 8-24 Referral for sale of land located at 29 Lakeview Drive (F08-0160). *(For receipt and possible discussion.)*

This is similar to the above referral because this will also not be deemed Open Space. This is asking the PZC if they are okay with the Town owning the property. There is concern that the language says for sale instead of for purchase of. There is neighbor concern about what could happen here. Ms Oksongly requested some clarification about the sale of the property for the PZC before making a referral. Ms. Oksongly asks Ms. Paranjape if she can add the letter from the neighbors to the file. The letter is addressed to the Board of Select people and the Citizens of Ridgefield.

This will be carried to the next meeting.

- 5.5. **Meeting Minutes -** Regular Meeting, July 28, 2026
Regular Meeting, September 8, 2026

Motion made by Mr. Dowdell to approve the minutes with suggested edits by Mr. Dowdell, as suggested, for both July 28 and September 8 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Sorena. Motion carries unanimously.

6. ADJOURN

Hearing no further business or public discussion, meeting adjourned at 9:42 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