



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION Zoom Webinar

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

March 22, 2022

Present:

Susan Consentino
Elizabeth DiSalvo
Joseph Dowdell (Vice Chair)
Robert Hendrick (Chair)
John Katz
Christopher Molyneaux
Ben Nneji
Mariah Okrongly
Joseph Sorena

Also Present: Alice Dew, Director of Planning & Zoning and ZEO
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

I. Call to order

Vice Chair Dowdell called the Meeting to Order at 7:02 p.m. via the Hybrid Model, with the following Commissioners attending via Zoom: Mr. Hendrick, Mr. Molyneaux and Mr. Sorena. A quorum was established.

II: Discussions:

1. **VDC-22-1:** Village District Application per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for wall sign Botanika café located at **424 Main Street**. *Owner: Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc. Applicant: Kristina Arias.*

This matter was incorrectly listed on the Agenda.

Ms. DiSalvo motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, to raise to the Agenda VDC-22-2. Motion carried 9-0.

Mr. Hendrick motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, to raise to the Agenda under New Business a State Legislative Update. Motion carried 9-0.



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1. **VDC-22-2: Village District Application** per Section 8.3 and Sec.5.1.B. of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for wall sign “Compass” located at **470 Main Street**. *Owner: Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc. Applicant: Ivo Granata.*

Mr. Granata presented the Application, which included fulfilling the Planning and Zoning Commission’s request to clarify the size of the signage. Mr. Granata stated that there is 1.33 square feet of sign and the door is 16 square feet.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Nneji seconded, to approve as presented. Motion carried 9-0.

Old Business was considered before New Business.

III: New Business:

- **Discussion on State Legislative Update/Chair.**

The Chair conveyed that he had sent a Word document to the Commissioners outlining the seven bills in the State Legislature which are the most impactful. The Bills were presented to the Commission in the order of their importance.

Chair Hendrick’s report included that HB 5271 would extend all Covid-related provisions through April 30, 2023 whereupon it was expected that Towns would have regulations in place regarding outdoor dining.

The Chair went on to say that HB 5429 was about allowing, as of right, the development of 15 housing units per acre within a half mile radius of transit stations. The Bill contains some restrictions with respect to wetlands and high slopes.

The Commissioners discussed the possible consequences of HB 5429, including whether rapid transit includes the Trailways station in front of Squash’s and the impact of the technology on sewage treatment.

Commissioner Katz stressed caution when proceeding with any legislation saying “as of right.”

Commissioner Oksongly asked if the Commission could write a letter expressing their concerns.

Chair Hendrick stated that there was a consensus amongst the Commissioners that a letter be written expressing their concerns with HB 5429 with the proviso that the letter also be sent to State Representative Berger-Girvalo.

Mr. Kirk Carr, a member of the public, who was on-line, commented on the Public Hearing that took place for HB 5429, which included 11 hours of testimony.



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The Chair stated that WESTCOG has looked at this legislation on behalf of Fairfield County.

The Chair listed the other Bills that were up for action in the State Legislature, including HB 204 which has to do with needs assessment. Chair Hendrick also conveyed that the State Legislature is in Short Session this go-around.

Mr. Katz motioned, Ms. DiSalvo seconded, to have Chair draft a letter this week expressing the Commission's views on impending State Legislation that will allow, as of right, the development of 15 units per acre within a half mile radius of transit stations. Motion carried 9-0.

IV: Old Business:

- Affordable Housing Plan

Ms. DiSalvo stated that Mr. Dave Goldenberg would be at the next Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting on April 5, 2022 where he will present the Affordable Housing Plan that will be e-mailed to the Commissioners

The suggestion is for the Commissioners to read WESTCOG's report on Affordable Housing, as well.

Mr. Katz motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, to Raise to the Agenda Discussion regarding Correspondence from the Casagmo Board and Discussion with Casagmo Board members who were present. Motion carried 9-0.

- Casagmo Board Correspondence and Update from Casagmo Board Members

Commissioner Consentino read into the Record the letter the Commissioners received from Property Manager, Jeanne Eberhardt, that was also received by the Inland Wetlands Board, outlining the \$200,000 worth of water damage from the September 1, 2021 Storm.

The Letter included concerns about being ignored by the Planning and Zoning Department and the failure of drainage maintenance.

A Notice of Drainage Maintenance Plan was attached to the Letter.

Ms. Dew stated that a Storm Management Plan may only have been in place since 2019.

Commissioner Katz stressed that the Commission must only look at what it can do statutorily and that the Town does have the ability to control damage. Mr. Katz furthered that the Town no longer has a full-time engineer, although Jake Miller does his best.



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Commissioner Nneji stated that the water damage was an accumulative effect and asked if the area could be widened.

The Commissioners went on to discuss the various aspects of water management that are in place and decided that the Storm Water Management Agreement needed to be pursued.

Mr. Katz asked, through the Chair, if those from Casagmo who were at the Meeting could speak. The Chair agreed.

The Commission heard from:

Mr. Jim Finger, Casagmo's Treasurer;
Ms. Lori Egan, Casagmo Board; and
Mr. Mathew Sokal, Casagmo Board

Their concerns mainly focused on needing an updated engineer report that was promised by First Selectman Marconi after the September 1, 2021 Storm and what the Storm had exposed with respect to the sewage line. There is also silt in the pond and significant erosion problems.

Ms. Dew said that she would track the study that was taking place at Casagmo since the September Storm.

V: Approval of Minutes:

- **Regular Meeting-** March 08, 2022

Mr. Katz motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, Ms. Consentino abstained, to approve as amended. Motion carried 8-0-1.

- **Site walk Meeting-** March 06, 2022

Ms. Dew stated that the Site walk Minutes have not yet been distributed.

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting at: 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen White