



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

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

December 14, 2021 Present: Susan Consentino (arrived 7:05 p.m.)
Elizabeth DiSalvo
Joseph Dowdell (Vice Chair)
Robert Hendrick (Chair)
John Katz
Christopher Molyneaux
Ben Nneji
Maria Hutchings Okrongly
Joseph Sorena

Also Present: Eileen White, Recording Secretary

I. Call to order:

The Chair called the hybrid Meeting to Order and gave an overview of the Zoom Webinar feature and the in-person Meeting at 66 Prospect Street. This was the first time that the Town of Ridgefield Planning and Zoning Commission had had a hybrid meeting.

Chair Hendrick asked that any Commissioners who were not going to be in attendance in-person, send both he and Office Administrator Paranjape a quick e-mail.

The Chair stated that the new policy line on the Meeting Agenda was written at the request of the Board of Selectman and is now on every official Town meeting agenda.

II: Discussions:

- 1) Affordable Housing. For discussion and possible action*. Debrief from Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) public meeting on December 1st; overview of process to develop 8-30j plan by July 2022, as required by state statute; *appoint AHC Liaison. % Chair.



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Mr. Dave Goldenberg, Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee, gave an overview of the December 1, 2021 Meeting that included five of the Planning and Zoning Commissioners (“the Commission”) and the State-required Affordable Housing Plan.

Chair Goldenberg stated that the Affordable Housing Committee (“the Committee”) was given a grant of \$11,000. The Committee hired Mr. Glenn Chalder of Planimetrics to:

- Identify the affordable housing need in Town;
- Review the assets that are available and see the gaps; and
- Develop strategies to produce an Affordable Housing Plan by July of 2022 that is required by State Statute.

Mr. Goldenberg’s presentation included the fact that the proposed Prospect Ridge project has 5 acres that could be developed for 70+ affordable housing units and that a feasibility study, environmental impact study and traffic impact study would be conducted to calculate that possibility.

Mr. Goldenberg and the Commission discussion included whether the Prospect Ridge project would get enough cooperation from current property owners, how many Ridgefielders have limited assets, although employed and how the point system for Accessory Dwelling Units (“ADU’s”) is determined.

The Commission also discussed the Branchville area in terms of affordable housing and the lack of extension of the sewer system.

Mr. Goldenberg stated that since 2008, 140 permits have been issued State-wide for ADU’s, and a survey will be conducted to determine where they are, what is being done with them and how they will be counted.

Mr. Goldenberg went on to say that the next meeting of the Committee will be January 5, 2022 and several more meetings will be scheduled for January.

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Molyneaux seconded, to appoint Commissioner DiSalvo as Liaison to the Affordable Housing Committee. Motion carried 9-0.

- 2) P&Z considerations re: federal infrastructure funding. For discussion. % Commissioner Okrongly.

Commissioner Okrongly presented an overview of the information she had conveyed to the Commission about how the federal funds being allocated to Connecticut could impact Ridgefield in terms of roads, bridges, and other areas of infrastructure.



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The Chair stated that WestCog has a planning staff that is already monitoring the federal funds that are being allocated for Connecticut's infrastructure.

Mr. Katz said that the Commission should be careful about its purview.

- 3) 2021 P&Z Department Activity. For information and discussion. Snapshot of 2021 YTD department activity (# of applications, etc.) to be distributed for Commission awareness. Members are invited to discuss what data/information would be helpful for them, going forward. c/o Chair.

The Chair gave a brief overview of the snapshot of the Department's volume of activity, the numbers which Mr. Baldelli ensured were gathered, before his departure. The numbers reflected about one application per day in 2021.

- 4) 2022 P&Z Department Budget. For discussion and possible action*. Proposed budget to be distributed. Review, discussion, and possible action* to approve. % Chair.

The Chair gave an overview of the budget he plans to present to the Board of Selectman for the Department, which he had sent to the Commission for their perusal.

The proposed budget includes adding planning consultants, should they be needed in the absence of a Zoning Enforcement Officer at \$150/hour, which is the going rate.

Mr. Hendrick conveyed that the Zoning Enforcement Officer Certificate will be required by January of 2023 for all Zoning Enforcement Officers.

Mr. Nneji asked if the continuing education for the Commissioners was included in the budget and Mr. Hendrick stated that APA membership will provide some educational content for 2022, but the 2023 state requirement for commissioner education [per PA-21-29] may require additional funding.

Commissioner Dowdell asked what kind of line item the hardware is and Mr. Hendrick replied that it is under capital.

Chair Hendrick said that he would the legwork for e-mail addresses for the Commissioners. Mr. Dowdell said that he thought that the Commission had gotten some sort of guidance from Attorney Beecher on the use of personal devices.

The Chair stated that he will talk to the Board of Selectmen about putting the budget through.

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

- 5) 2022 PZC Strategy & Priorities Discussion. For discussion. All members are invited to offer their thoughts on topics or initiatives where they would like to see the Commission focus in 2022. Commissioners are welcome to bring their own list



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or other materials to share with colleagues, to facilitate this discussion. To maintain meeting efficiency, the Chair may limit the time and postpone further discussion to the next Regular Meeting in January. % Chair.

The Chair polled each of the Commissioners and asked them to name their priorities.

Priority items included:

- More interactions between departments to discourage future demolitions;
- A fund for sidewalks;
- More regulations for renewable energy;
- Tightening up signage rules;
- The Coastal Water Rules;
- Assisting the Inland Wetlands Board;
- Impacting how Real Estate agents are selling with promises for variances;
- Re-looking at the moratorium on recreational marijuana;
- The Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD”) in view of the Pandemic; and
- Reviewing the Special Permit Criteria.

The Chair will circulate the list to the Commission and allocate time in January of 2022 for further discussion.

Mr. Katz motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, to move into Executive Session (8:25 p.m.). Motion carried 9-0.

- 6) Executive Session. Re: personnel search for P&Z Director / ZEO and transitional staffing plans. For interview(s) if appropriate, and discussion on candidates.

Executive Session ended at: 8:44 p.m.

- 7) P&Z Director / ZEO. (In public meeting / after Exec Session). For discussion and possible vote to extend an offer to a candidate, and/or to engage an interim contractor/consultant.

The Chair called for continuation of discussion on the motion made and seconded during the Special Meeting held November 30th, to extend an offer to the candidate interviewed on that evening. Hearing no further discussion or amendment, the Chair called for a vote on the motion. The motion was carried 9-0.



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Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Sorena seconded, to authorize the Chair to work with Personnel to engage an interim, part-time, contracted ZEO, with cost limited to no more than \$5,000 per month. Motion carried 9-0.

II: New Submissions:

- 1. SP-21-22:** Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per Section 3.4.C.2 for construction of a 3 car garage in the front yard for a property located at **209 Old Stagecoach Road**. Owner/Applicant: Erin Caviola. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and public hearing.*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Nneji seconded, to acknowledge receipt of the application, schedule a site walk for January 9, 2022 and schedule a Public Hearing for January 11, 2022. Motion carried 9-0.

- 2. SP-21-23:** Revision to Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations to construct ground mount solar panels at a property located at **60 South Street (recycling center)**. Owner: Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Dwayne Escola. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk.*

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Nneji seconded, to acknowledge receipt of the application and schedule a site walk for January 9, 2022. Motion carried 9-0.

III: Release of Bond

- 1.439 Silver Spring Road, #2019-045-REV(SP).** Request for release of bond for \$32,000.00 posted for Erosion and sediment control.

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



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IV: Approval of Minutes:

- **PZC Meeting - Regular Meeting-November 23, 2021**

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

- Special Executive Meeting: November 30, 2021

Ms. DiSalvo motioned, Mr. Molyneaux seconded, to approve as amended. Motion carried 9-0.

- Special Meeting: December 01, 2021

Mr. Sorena motioned, Ms. Consentino seconded, there were four abstentions. Motion carried 5-0.

V: Adjourn

Mr. Katz motioned, Ms. Okrongly seconded, to adjourn the Meeting.

The Meeting adjourned at: 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen White