



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD

Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED/REVISED MINUTES PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION Zoom Webinar Meeting

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

May 25, 2021 Present: Susan Consentino
Joseph Dowdell
George Hanlon
Robert Hendrick (Joined at: 7:01 p.m.)
John Katz
Rebecca Mucchetti, Chair
Ben Nneji (Joined at: 7:06 p.m.)
Charles Robbins, Vice Chair

Absent: Joseph Fossi

Also Present: Richard Baldelli, Director, Planning and Zoning, ZEO
Karen Martin, Town Planner
Eileen White, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

Chair Mucchetti called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Webinar. She gave an overview of the Agenda and the aspects of Zoom Webinar procedures.

The Chair apologized that after the Site Walk notice for **41 Governor Street** was published, the starting point for the Site Walk had been relocated. After conferring with Commission Counsel and notifying the Applicant, the Commission scheduled another Site Walk on June 6, 2021.

II: Discussions:

1. **SP-21-8:** Revision to Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations for additions and alterations to the existing building at a property located at **41 Governor Street** (Boys & Girls Club).
Statutorily received May 11, 2021. Owner: Boys & Girls Club of Ridgefield Inc.
Applicant: Robert R. Jewell, Esq.



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Attorney Robert Jewell, for the Applicant, gave an overview of the Application. This included the fact that the Inland Wetlands Board had approved the Application. He also said that the Boys and Girls Club of Ridgefield (the "Club") has seen steady growth in its membership, except for the year 2020, by 20-25% since 2005.

Mr. Jewell furthered that 8 out of 10 children in Ridgefield use the Club. He also stated that the property can never be sold without the Town being given the first option to buy it.

Mr. Jeff Mose, Architect, presented an overview of the proposed changes to the Club that included creating a central entrance and a link with the new building addition being connected to the existing building.

Mr. Mose added that the Architectural Advisory Commission had favorable comments and that to be in compliance with the ADA requirements, new bathrooms would be created. Mr. Mose shared a video that showed what the proposed changes would look like.

Commissioner Katz asked about preserving the trees with the proposed parking lot expansion. Mr. Jewell answered that the proposed parking lot expansion would be pulled from the project to preserve the streetscape.

Mr. Baldelli requested that the Applicant submit a one-sheet revised parking plan prior to the June 8, 2021 Meeting. Mr. Mose asked if it was appropriate to modify the existing retaining wall. Mr. Baldelli answered that both revisions could be submitted on the same one-sheet plan.

Commissioner Consentino asked how wide the proposed stairs would be. Mr. Craig Studer, Landscape Architect and Designer, answered that the new steps would be twice as wide (12 feet) as the existing stairs.

Mr. Studer continued that the proposed plan includes a more serpentine wall and that the accessibility for emergency vehicles had been factored into the new plan.

Commissioner Hendrick asked how long the temporary access road would be in place. Mr. Studer answered that the access road would be in place during the length of construction.

Mr. Jewell interjected that the timing of the construction would start after Summer Camp had finished and would be done before the 2022 Summer Camp season.

Mr. Steve Sullivan, Project Engineer, gave an overview of the design which included a Stormwater Management System, erosion controls and water and sewer connections. Mr. Sullivan said that, since the proposed parking expansion was not taking place, that some of the



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stormwater galleries would be eliminated and that he was submitting a revised Stormwater Management Plan and revised Parking Plan to Mr. Baldelli.

Ms. Kate Throckmorton, Landscape Architect, presented the proposed design for refined plantings around the Wetlands area. Ms. Throckmorton said that Porcelain Berry, an invasive species, has done a lot of damage. Many of the plantings around the Club were not well managed. Thus, a three-year protocol has been established to offset the mismanagement.

Ms. Throckmorton also said that since the Box Turtles have a good home range, the Box Turtle population is being protected with a management plan being put in place.

Commissioner Hendrick asked what the Applicant would do to maintain the wetlands going forward. Ms. Throckmorton stated that a three-year program with the Inland Wetlands Board's approval is being put into place that would also enhance the Club's Education Program.

Commissioner Hendrick also asked about a replanting program. Mr. Studer stated that the Spruce Trees would be part of the proposed plan. Chair Mucchetti stated that there was a Plant List – LA 103 – the packet for Commissioners to review.

Commissioner Consentino asked about the Town's maintenance of the grounds. Mr. Jewell said that the Town does not maintain the site. The Club has a private contractor do the mowing.

Commissioner Consentino asked about the plantings being put into place at the Upper Area for sound reduction. Mr. Studer replied that there was no detailed plan yet for sound reduction, but one was being developed.

Mr. Cipolla of Fredrick P. Clarke gave the traffic summation which calculated that there would be 280 members at the Club per day during the school year and 500 members at the Club per day during the Summer Camp. Mr. Cipolla stated that there would be no real increase in traffic because the estimate for operation would be at 70% capacity versus now during the Covid-19 Pandemic, which is at 30% capacity.

Commissioner Hendrick asked if there was an estimation of the number of trucks on the access road during construction. Mr. Jewell said that that estimation had not been asked of the Traffic Consultant.

Mr. Baldelli stated that a Revision to a Special Permit Application does not require a traffic calculation of construction activity.



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Mr. Jewell gave his closing by citing the specific criteria in the Regulations that pertain to the Revision to a Special Permit Application.

Discussion of this matter has been continued to June 8, 2021.

2. FOIA webinar update. % Chair

Chair Mucchetti gave an overview of the May 13, 2021, Webinar on the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") that had been organized by the Town Clerk.

Ms. Mucchetti stated that Mr. Thomas Hennick, Public Education Officer of Connecticut's Freedom of Information Commission, who gave the Webinar, stressed a number of key points to the 45 attendees from various Boards, Commissions and departments of Ridgefield.

The Town of Ridgefield's business must be done in public. Mr. Hennick emphasized access to meetings and records. For example, responses to requests for records have to be sent within 4 days. A response means acknowledgement of the request, not the request itself, which may take many months to complete, depending on the size of the request.

There are three types of Meetings: regular, special and emergency. Regular meetings are on the calendar a year ahead of time. Special meetings are added to the Calendar by the Commission. Emergency Meetings should be avoided as they always create problems, but if they are necessary, they must have an Agenda and have explicit minutes.

Mr. Hennick stressed that the FOIA law requires people to be able to observe, not participate in public meetings. Boards and commissions can limit time for public comments. E-mails and texts can become a public record and are subject to FOI. Mr. Hennick stated that Commission business should not be conducted via text or e-mail, a fact Ms. Mucchetti said the Commission has noted in prior meetings.

Minutes are not a transcript, and must be available within 7 days.

The Chair stated that the FOI Commission has a website with basic materials.

Ms. Martin said that there is a highlights page on this website and that the recording of the Webinar is available through the Town Clerk.



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III: New Submissions:

1. **SP-21-9:** Revision to Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations to construct a pagoda structure for smoker and refrigerator at a property located at **545 Ridgebury Road** (Ridgefield Golf Course). *Statutorily received May 11, 2021. Owner: Town of Ridgefield. Applicant: Ralph Langham. To schedule a site walk and discussion.*

Mr. Katz recused himself. The reason he gave was that he owns property rights that abuts **545 Ridgebury Road**.

Mr. Hanlon motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to Receive, Schedule a Site Walk for June 6, 2021 and a discussion for June 8, 2021. Motion carried 7-1-0. Mr. Katz was recused,

2. **SP-21-10:** Special Permit Application per Section 9.2 of the Town of Ridgefield Zoning Regulations per section 5.3.D.27 for used car dealership and auto repair shop at a property located at **626 Danbury Road**. *Owner: Mulvaney Properties LLC. Applicant: Franklin Montesdeoca. To receive, schedule a site walk and Public Hearing.*

Mr. Robbins recused himself. The reason he gave was that he is a member of the Trinity CrossFit Club and a friend to the owners.

Mr. Hanlon motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to Receive, Schedule a Site Walk for June 6, 2021 and a Public Hearing for June 22, 2021. Motion carried 7-1-0. Mr. Robbins was recused

There were no requests for Bond Releases.

IV: Correspondence:
None.

V: Approval of Minutes:

- **PZC Meeting-** May 11, 2021

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hendrick seconded, to approve as amended. Motion carried 8-0.



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Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hanlon seconded, to Raise to the Agenda the Site Walk Minutes of May 23, 2021. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Site Walk - May 23, 2021**

Mr. Katz motioned, Mr. Hanlon seconded to approve as amended. Motion carried 8-0.

VI: Adjourn

Hearing no further discussion, the Chair adjourned the meeting at: 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eileen White