



**TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
UNAPPROVED/UNREVISED MEETING MINUTES**

These minutes and motions (votes) are a general summary of the meeting. This is not a verbatim transcription.

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Members present: Robert Hendrick, Mariah Okrongly, Joseph Dowdell, Elizabeth DiSalvo, Ben Nneji, Chris Molyneaux (7:09), Sebastiano D'Acunto

Absent: Joseph Sorena, Susan Consentino

Also Present: Alice Dew, Director of Planning and Zoning

Meeting link:- [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_9ZvL462GTf-HaqTl1OVZQA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9ZvL462GTf-HaqTl1OVZQA) Anyone requiring special accommodations due to disability should contact the Planning & Zoning Office at (203) 431-2766.

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1. Distribution of agenda & previous minutes. (Published on Commission's webpage prior to meeting)

Chair Hendrick called meeting to order at 7:00 PM

- 1.2. Administrative Announcements & Correspondence

(Note: Correspondence *related to an application* will be uploaded to the relevant application file (see links on agenda items) and reviewed/acknowledged during the relevant public hearing. Correspondence unrelated to an application will be acknowledged as this point in the meeting, and uploaded to the Commission's webpage at <https://www.ridgefieldct.gov/planning-and-zoning-commission/pages/correspondence>).

By March 1<sup>st</sup> letter needs to be submitted to Board of Selectman regarding training hours for Commissioners.

- 1.3. Approval of agenda.

## **2. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 2.1. **(Contd.) A-23-6:** Regulation Text Amendment (per PZR 9.2.B.) to amend child care services in PZR Sections 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3 as per CGS Section 19a-77 and PA 23-142. Commission initiated (as a result of PA 23-142). <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/94399>

There have been several meetings and discussions previously on this topic. There are only 2 towns in the Fairfield area that are currently compliant per OPM (Office Policy Management) list. Questions from public were addressed.

*Motion to close Public Hearing (Maker: C. Molyneaux, second by B. Nneji) Unanimous Approval*

- 2.2. **SP-24-2: 3 Big Shop Lane;** Revision to Special permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A; 5.1.D.1 and 7.2.E) for existing pergola, vestibule and sign. Owner: 1-7 Big Shop Group LLC Applicant: Pietro Polini. <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95161>

Pietro Polini, applicant, and Scott Yandrasevich presented. Pietro Polini spoke on seating capacity, water problems, tent that was put up during Covid and a pergola that was under 200 square feet that was built.

Applicant added cosmetic improvements to outside of tent without permit to make outside of tent look more like the building. Building Official told applicant to stop the job. The applicant had ordered plexiglass and added to the structure on outside of tent to prevent damage. The idea was to have a roof like structure and get rid of tent because tents deteriorate over time. Applicant discussed conversations with the building inspector.

Chair Hendrick recapped Covid executive orders and protocols which allowed temporary tents, expansions, etc. which were allowed through May of 2023. Late 2022-May 2023 all restaurants were to take away the temporary structures.

Chair Hendrick explained what is needed in order to review an application. A complete plan, number of parking spaces, traffic, and specific details are needed in order to review application.

Per applicant, abutters were not noticed, therefore this public hearing cannot proceed. Survey was submitted today.

It was suggested that applicant have a lawyer, architect, or engineer to assist.

Marcus Recck, Parking Authority, submitted a map around Big Shop Lane. According to Mr. Recck, 4 spaces are blocked off in front of restaurant and 2 near Luc's that are typically used for outdoor dining, which leaves 17 spaces for Big Shop that are useable. There are shared spaces available if in agreement with Town of Ridgefield. Full map available on Town of Ridgefield website. Compliance of parking spaces in regards to expansion was discussed.

Public comments/questions included: giving applicant the opportunity to fix/bring up to codes, public notices, applicant's fine, if VDC does not recommend can the Commission still approve, importance of meeting zoning laws, discussion of a favorable response to the Commission for denying without prejudice on prior application. Commissioners gave feedback on what is seen esthetically.

Public Hearing continued to March 19<sup>th</sup>.

### 3. OLD/CONTINUED BUSINESS

- 3.1. **SUB-23-2; 54 Ketcham Rd.:** 4 lot subdivision of land under Section 7.5 of Subdivision Regulations for a parcel containing ± 12.96 acres in R-AA zone. Owner: Diane and Joe Fossi. Applicant: Steven Trinkaus. *For Commission discussion and possible action/vote.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/94293>

Commission discussed the special conditions that were drafted last meeting. These conditions included the open space being marked in accordance with the guidelines under sub division applications, 2-man boulder be placed at the limit of lawn, 10,000-gallon tank for fire suppression, abandonment of Calgary Court easement, garage and ADU as an accessory use is negated when subdivision map is filed.

*Motion to approve with special conditions. (Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by S. D'Acunto) Unanimous Approval*

- 3.2. **SP-23-28; 54 Ketcham;** Special permit Application (Per RZR 9.2.A and 3.2.C.5) for accessway for 4 new lots. Owner: Diane and Joe Fossi. Applicant: Steven Trinkaus. *For Commission discussion and possible action/vote.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/94401>

*Motion to approve. (Maker: E. DiSalvo, second by B. Nneji) Unanimous Approval*

- 3.3. **VDC-24-3; 381 Main Street:** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3 and 7.2.H.2) for installation of sign "Rodier Flowers" in CBD district. Owner: 381-383 Main Street. Applicant: Adrian Jones. *For Commission discussion and possible action/vote.* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95181>

Adrian Jones, owner of Rodier Flowers, presented. Rodier Flowers moved across the street due to outgrowing previous spot. VDC recommended design approval.

*Motion to approve. (Maker: M. Okrongly, second by C. Molyneaux) Unanimous Approval*

- 3.4. **VDC-24-4; 2 Prospect Street:** Village District Application (per RZR 8.3 and 7.2.H.2) for installation of an illuminated sign “M&T Bank” in CBD district. Owner: Charles A Knoche, Trustee of the Charles A Knoche Revocable Trust. Applicant: Lydia Jimenez. *For Commission discussion and possible action/vote.*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95279>

Mike Hyman, Senior construction manager for M&T Bank, Sydney Orcee, Branch Manager, and Lydia Jimenez presented. VDC approved plans. Currently there is a sign on opposite side which will be removed. Drive-up sign will stay. Sign being added on Prospect St will be illuminated and green. There was discussion regarding brightness of sign. LED is 65,000 K and will match existing sign that is up now. Size of letters was discussed. Letters will be lit all the time although it is not as noticeable during daylight hours. This proposal is with green LED lights. The other lights that have been up for years has the same lights as what will be added.

*Motion to approve as presented (with notation Commission is providing approval with exception to the norm in new regulation.) (Maker: J. Dowdell, second by C. Molyneaux) Unanimous Approval*

- 3.5. **Branchville Strategic Review.** In the fall of 2023, the Commission indicated an interest in reviewing and re-visiting the 2017 Branchville “TOD” study and recommendations, given recent progress on infrastructure improvements. After hearing from three experts over three previous meetings (from December through early February), *tonight we will set aside time for the Commission members to debrief and have informal discussion (e.g., questions and views on the optimal process to move forward, including timeframes, public engagement, etc.)* [Note: Commissioner DiSalvo is recused on this matter.]

Tabled and moved to next regular meeting.

#### 4. NEW BUSINESS

- 4.1. **SP-24-5; 746 Danbury Road:** Revision to Special permit (Per RZR 9.2.A and 7.2.E) to install additional building and freestanding signs at BMW of Ridgefield. *Owner: Keeler Property Holdings, LLC, Applicant: Kassie Boehn For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion. (Staff suggests sitewalk on March 10 and discussion March 19<sup>th</sup>.)* <https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95433>

*Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on March 10 and discussion on March 19. (Maker: B. Nneji, second by M. Okrongly) Unanimous Approval*

- 4.2. **SUB-24-1; 0 Ives Court:** Subdivision of land under Section 7.5 of Subdivision Regulations for creating a lot B of ±6.458 acres from Lot A (creating one new lot with 2 existing lots). *Owner: Wolf Pond Run One A, LLC, Appl: Michelle Morris-Micoli. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion/public hearing. (Staff suggests sitewalk on March 24 and public hearing/discussion on April 2.)*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/95498>

*Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on March 24 and public hearing on April 2. (Maker: B. Nneji, second by M. Okrongly) Unanimous Approval*

- 4.3. **FP-24-1; 0 West Branchville Road:** Flood Plain Application (per RZR 6.1) for construction of a bridge #07031 over Norwalk River at Depot Road intersection with Route 7. *Owner: Town of Ridgefield and State of Connecticut, Appl: Greg Gerrish. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion/public hearing. (Staff*

*suggests sitewalk on March 24 and public hearing/discussion on April 2.)*  
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/91884>

*Motion to receive, schedule sitewalk on March 24 and public hearing on April 16. (Maker: J. Dowdell, second by M. Okrongly) Unanimous Approval*

- 4.4. **Commission discussion re: possible regulation amendment to encourage affordable housing deed restrictions in perpetuity (i.e., instead of typical 40-year terms).** Section 9.3.2. of Ridgefield's 8-30j Affordable Housing Plan (adopted in 2022) encouraged the PZC to investigate this topic. Some Commissioners and Applicants have also recently indicated an interest in the topic. *Tonight we will set aside time for informal discussion.*

Discussion to possibly amend the regulations to allow applicant under 8-30g approval to exchange deed restriction to Area Median Income in perpetuity versus State Median Income for 40 years. Steve Zemo spoke regarding family units and variable of calculations for rent determined by state versus area. Discussion of having an update on Affordable Housing Plan by the Affordable Housing Committee. Will get input from Tom Beecher regarding potential regulation amendment.

- 4.5. **2024 State Legislative Update (c/o Chair).** As the 2024 legislative session is now underway in Hartford, the Chair will provide a brief overview of proposed legislation which may impact local planning, zoning, and housing matters.

Chair Hendrick gave update and presented some examples of the legislation being proposed. This session seems to be light on zoning and housing proposals. Inviting legislators to a meeting, writing letters and stating opinion was discussed.

4.6. **Approval of Minutes**

4.6.1. Meeting Minutes – February 6, 2024

*Motion to approve (Maker: C. Molyneaux, second by E. DiSalvo) Motion carries 5-0-1 with J. Dowdell abstaining.*

**5. ADJOURN**