



UNAPPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES

Ridgefield Conservation Commission
Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room
66 Prospect Street Ridgefield, CT 06877
(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.gov

Meeting March 23, 2026 at 7PM

Present:	Jim Coyle	Jana Hogan	Jack Kace	Erik Keller
	Jim Liptack	Anthony Markert	Tommy McCarthy	Pete Nichols
	Matt Sharp	Allan Welby	Roberta Barbieri	

In attendance: Joseph Humphrey, Steve Maydan, residents of Pound and New Streets

The meeting was convened at 7 PM by Chairman Keller.

1. Approval of Minutes

UPON motion duly made (Coyle), seconded (Sharp) and carried it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of March 9, 2026 be approved and filed in Town Hall.

2. Scout Presentation—Joseph Humphrey

Mr. Humphrey gave a final presentation on his project for the Scouts: the installation of informational signs at Shadow Lake.

3. Pound Street parking and trails

Chairman Keller discussed the plans for a small parking lot in order to facilitate trail access at Pound Street. The Highway Department would lay down gravel, designed to accommodate three to five cars. The plans also include low fencing, and a crosswalk on New Street. Mr. Liptack discussed the planned locations of the trails.

The discussion was opened for questions and comments from residents. Several expressed gratitude and excitement that the Town has acquired the land. Many residents shared concerns about access, citing the narrowness of the road at the end of Pound Street, poor paving conditions, and frequently-observed dangerous driving at the intersection of Pound and New Streets. There was also concern that adding parking spots would increase the amount of dangerous traffic at that intersection. Residents noted that parking spots there might be used inappropriately by people attending events in Town. They would prefer the number of parking spaces be minimized, as the area is not large and they do not wish to see the ecology disturbed. Several residents questioned the proposed order of operations by the Commission, and recommended developing the trails fully prior to installing parking.

4. McKeon pumpkin patch—Steve Maydan

Mr. Maydan has been growing giant pumpkins in his backyard, where he has limited space and too much shade. He is looking for a more optimal growing space, and expressed interest in growing a pumpkin plant by the well at McKeon farm, in a fenced-in area. Mr. Coyle noted that the area is fenced because the well water is potable, so he is concerned about the usage of pesticides and herbicides. Mr. Maydan stated that he would need to use chemical controls in order to successfully produce a giant pumpkin, so this restriction disqualifies McKeon Farm as a potential growing site.

5. Summer Trekking

Mr. Nichols will be facilitating a Summer Trekking hike, as well as one for CT Trails Day. He plans to do Pine Mountain. Ms. Hogan has requested that funds be allocated in order to match the funds raised by Parks and Rec.

UPON motion duly made (Markert), and seconded (Nichols), commissioners unanimously **RESOLVED** to allocate \$500 towards Summer Trekking.

6. Social media update

Discussion was postponed.

7. Deer hunt/blind removal

Dr. Markert believes that the Town hunters will be adequate to cull the deer population. He suggests that the Commission make more properties available to the hunters next year. He recommended considering areas that have deer browse problems. Ms. Barbieri is strongly in favor of opening more areas to mitigate deer browse damage. She would like to hear from the hunters themselves which spots they think would be best. Dr. Markert will create a sign to post on unlicensed deer stands, to give notice of removal.

8. GIS/GPS device purchase

Chairman Keller is considering whether the Commission would benefit from a GIS/GPS device more powerful than a personal cell phone. Mr. Liptack noted that though a military standard of GPS would be more accurate, it would cost a great deal more money on an ongoing basis. Dr. Markert suggested looking into an advanced Garmin model. Planning & Zoning is also looking into more advanced GPS models.

9. McKeon maintenance

Mr. Sharp will be meeting with a contractor in the coming days to get an estimate. He will mow the field at Old Stagecoach himself.

10. Executive session—Taylors Pond

11. New Business

Mr. Nichols has replaced 9 fence rails on the Ridgebury side of McKeon Farm. He noted that more rails will be needed soon. He has also been in conversation with the Ridgefield Historical Society about the possibility of saving the Ridgebury Schoolhouse. He recently attended the Land Conservancy Conference, and hopes that other Commissioners will join him in attending next year.

Mr. Coyle received an email from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop acknowledging that the RCC has been given an award. He also noted that on the Town's GIS, the Pound Street parcel has a line drawn incorrectly. This will need to be rectified.

Ms. Barbieri offered her congratulations to Mr. McCarthy, who has been recognized by the Wilton Youth Council for his work.

Dr. Markert has filed a survey with DEEP, which is a preliminary for a grant application for a forestry study at Florida Refuge. Several Commissioners have arranged to walk the property.

Mr. Welby will be leading two Woodcock Walks at McKeon Farm this week.

12. Meetings for Attendance

P&Z
March 24 - Hogan
April 14 - Welby

IWB
March 26 - Coyle
April 9 - McCarthy

13. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Keller asked Commissioners for their responses to the public's comments regarding the parking spots at Pound Street. Mr. Liptack felt that there was little to discuss until the Highway Department makes its own assessment. Commissioners were in favor of reducing the number of spots to a maximum of two or three. Dr. Markert noted that parking is necessary even for the Commission itself to be able to work at the site.

Chairman Keller congratulated Ms. Barbieri, who has been given the 2026 Audubon Environmental Leader Award. She will be honored at a fundraiser in Greenwich.

First Selectperson Marconi has asked that the Chair write a letter to the town of Lewisboro, stating that they should not move forward with potential plans to install a helipad. The proposed plan has a flight path over Town of Ridgefield open space. Chairman Keller read the Commission a draft of his letter to the Lewisboro Planning & Zoning Committee.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), and seconded (Barbieri), commissioners unanimously **APPROVED** the sending of the letter to Lewisboro P&Z.

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made (Nichols), and carried (Coyle), it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 9:00 pm.