



UNAPPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES

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

Meeting July 20, 2026 at 7PM

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

Absent: Tommy McCarthy

The meeting was convened at 7 PM by Chairman Keller.

1. Approval of Minutes

UPON motion duly made (Barbieri), seconded (Nichols) and carried it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of July 6, 2026 be approved and filed in Town Hall. Ms. Hogan, Mr. Sharp, and Mr. Liptack abstained.

2. Rodenticide ban update

The RCC recently sent out a survey on rodenticide usage to various Town departments. The Ridgefield Police Department responded and acknowledged the use of a small number of bait boxes. Commissioner Nichols spoke with Parks and Recreation, which was unable to provide specific details on what pest control is in use at the Recreation Center currently. Commissioner Markert walked around the Town-owned Schlumberger property, and saw no bait boxes outside.

Commissioner Kace discussed the examples set by several other CT towns and recommended talking with the Conservation Commission in Fairfield regarding its recent study on the effectiveness of rodent birth control. Dr. Kace emphasized that more information is needed before the RCC can consider pursuing the creation of a Town policy. Chairman Keller suggested that perhaps the emphasis for the moment should be on public education. Mr. Keller and Dr. Kace will meet with the First Selectperson soon.

3. Pine Mountain trail blazes

A resident informed the RCC of confusing, and incomplete, trail blazes at Pine Mountain. Commissioner Liptack has refreshed the blazes, resolving the issue.

4. Forestry management grant update

The forestry grant being considered for Florida Refuge has a submission deadline of August 31st. The 4-acre section being targeted is heavily covered with invasive privet and Japanese barberry. The aim of the project would be to restore this 4-acre plot by mechanically removing them initially and installing a 10-foot-high deer fence around it, which should allow for native vegetation to regrow. Ms. Barbieri will be sending out a request for proposals to various contractors, which she has already drafted. Chairman Keller noted that the Town now has a Volunteer Grants Administrator; Ms. Barbieri will reach out to him.

Commissioners debated about potential courses of management. Dr. Markert will continue to look into the current scientific data about best regenerative practices.

5. McKeon update and long-term equipment maintenance

Chairman Keller gave a short presentation on the current state of the wildflower plots. Some of the plots are thriving, but there is mugwort growing in some perimeter areas. He observed some damage to a sign, but commissioners did not feel it was substantial enough to merit replacement. He also noted that the shed is leaning badly. A contractor can fix it, which will cost between \$500 and \$750. Mr. Coyle **MOVED** to spend up to \$750 to support the shed structurally. Mr. Sharp **SECONDED** the motion, and all commissioners were **IN FAVOR**.

Chairman Keller and Commissioner Sharp have discussed hiring Scott Morosky on retainer to maintain all the RCC's equipment. Mr. Morosky lives next door to McKeon Farm, and operates a small engine repair business. He has already done repairs and maintenance work for the RCC. Chairman Keller proposed hiring Scott on a \$6,000 per year retainer; this would be \$1,000 per month for 6 months of the year, from Spring through Fall. He would come to McKeon Farm a few times each week, check the equipment, do routine maintenance (oil, grease, etc.), perform repairs as needed, and then winterize everything later in the Fall.

UPON motion duly made (Kace), seconded (Barbieri) and carried it was **RESOLVED** to allocate \$1,000 per month for 6 months every year to have Scott Morosky's services on retainer. For the remainder of 2026, this contract will be pro-rated.

Mr. Sharp reminded commissioners that a contractor is on hold waiting to hay various fields at McKeon. Mr. Welby said that there is low risk of causing damage to bird habitat at this time, and that the fields can be cut now.

6. Ranger responsibilities

Mr. Sharp suggested that the Rangers could take on the responsibility of maintaining individual sections of trail blazes. Commissioner Nichols remarked that he believes there is only a small handful of active Rangers at this time, and that he has been finding it difficult to get a response from the majority. Commissioners acknowledged that the RCC should be doing more to manage these volunteers. They considered the possibility of doing a kick-off meeting in April next year, as well as a wrap-up at the end of the season.

7. Website update

The Chair requested that all commissioners review the website and provide comments and rewrites as appropriate. Mr. Sharp and Mr. Welby will look over the bird list. Chairman Keller suggested that a list of reptiles should be added.

8. Volunteer/donor gifts

Commissioners liked the idea of printing stickers as a small gift. They discussed their preferences for shirt designs and agreed that the best option would be a simple emblem on the chest. The administrator will create a design before the Commission's next meeting.

9. New business

Dr. Markert will be doing a forestry walk with Dave Beers on August 25th at 10 AM, at a location to be determined.

Mr. Sharp and Ms. Barbieri will arrange a time with the summer workers for a demonstration of electric-powered landscaping equipment.

Mr. Coyle has heard a rumor that the Ridgefield Land Conservancy had sold a property; Mr. Nichols asserted that this is not true.

Mr. Nichols and Ms. Barbieri participated in a work day at Aldrich Park, removing invasive burning bush. There were a few other volunteers helping, including some new attendees, who were impressed at how much the group was able to clear in 2 hours.

Mr. Sharp met with a stonemason and showed him the concrete-capped wall at Wittman Preserve. The mason will provide feedback and an estimate to restore the wall.

10. Meetings for Attendance

P&Z

July 28 – Liptack
September 8– Welby

IWB

July 23 – Nichols
August 27 – Sharp

11. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Keller is considering ways to increase local awareness of the Walk Book. The administrator will reach out to Parks and Recreation to see if the books can be sold at the Recreation Center.

In looking through an old edition of the Walk Book, Chairman Keller noticed that there used to be a campsite at Levy Park. He asked commissioners if they would be interested in reopening it. Mr. Sharp agreed that he would like to do it as a Scout project, as they did with the Hemlock Hills campsite. Ms. Hogan noted that her 20-year-old daughter wanted to camp at Hemlock Hills, but could not because the rules currently stipulate that there must be a Ridgefield resident over 21 on site at all times. Commissioners were open to changing this rule, but will discuss first with the insurer.

Chairman Keller gave an update on Mopus Brook flooding and erosion at 7 Chipmunk Lane. The lawn planted by the resident appears to encroach on Town open space; the Inland Wetlands Board will be discussing the situation at its July 23rd meeting.

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made (Sharp), and seconded (Barbieri), it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting adjourn at 8:47 PM.