



APPROVED MINUTES

MINUTES

Ridgefield Conservation Commission  
Town Hall Annex, First Floor Conference Room  
66 Prospect Street Ridgefield, CT 06877  
(203) 431-2713 • [conservation@ridgefieldct.gov](mailto: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. The Commission denied the request for land use.

## 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

Mr. Sharp **MOVED** and Mr. Nichols **SECONDED** the motion to enter into executive session, with all commissioners **IN FAVOR**, at 8:20 PM, in order to discuss potential litigation.

## 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 Zoning Board of Appeals.

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

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



## Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877

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March 24, 2026

Robin Price Jr., Chair  
Lewisboro Zoning Board of Appeals  
79 Bouton Rd.  
South Salem, NY 10590

To the Lewisboro ZBA:

The Ridgefield Conservation Commission (RCC) requests that the current application for a Special Permit Application for a helipad at 21 Woodway, South Salem, NY, be denied. As has been mentioned in a letter from attorney Michael Fuller Sirignano, who represents Martha & Richard Handler, “. . .The flight path was carefully chosen so that the helicopter’s final descent to and departure from the landing area will be over a large wooded parcel owned by the Town of Ridgefield.”

What the letter does not mention is that the vast majority of this wooded parcel is the Colonial Heights Refuge consisting of a protected wetlands of nearly 19 acres (see pages 1-6,7, Ridgefield Walk Book). Such wetlands host a wide variety of birds, animals, and amphibians that are sensitive to loud noises.

Helicopter noise has significant detrimental impacts on wetland ecosystems, primarily by disrupting wildlife behavior, reducing reproductive success, and causing habitat abandonment. The intense, low-frequency sound of rotor noise, often combined with visual disturbance, triggers stress responses and panic in animals, particularly impacting birds, amphibians, and mammals in these sensitive habitats. Even moderate noise levels (40-50 dBA) can have detrimental effects.

A variety of studies show that there are negative impacts of noise to the local ecosystems when helicopters fly below 300 meters. In fact, best practices in noise abatement have helicopters fly above 500 meters to minimize impact.

As no such protective measures have been suggested, the RCC believes that to grant this Special Permit would manifest irreparable harm to the Town’s Open Space and all the creatures that inhabit it.

Finally, the analysis of aircraft-related noise levels is a complex process and the time allotted (on the order of one week from Mr. Sirignano's letter to the Lewisboro meeting) for review of the potential impacts of this project is insufficient.

It is with this in mind that the RCC requests that this Special Permit be denied.

Sincerely yours,



Erik Keller  
Chairman  
Ridgefield Conservation Commission  
[torccchair@ridgefieldct.gov](mailto:torccchair@ridgefieldct.gov)

cc: Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson, Ridgefield  
Susan Baker, Chair, Inland Wetlands Board, Ridgefield

*The RCC was established in 1962 by the Town Ordinance after enabling legislation was adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1961. Currently the RCC manages over 2,800 acres of open space in Ridgefield and 60 miles of trails. The duties of the Commission include the following:*

- *Looking after the Town's open space including trail maintenance, posting, and protection.*
- *Acting in an advisory capacity to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands Board on the impact of development on the environment.*
- *Adding lands to the Town's inventory of open space by acquisition and by encouraging donations.*
- *Enforcing the Town's Open Space Use Ordinance.*

#### **Sources:**

[Effects of Military Noise on Wildlife : A Literature Review, Ronald Larken, USACERL Technical Report 96/21, January 1996](#)

[\*\*The Effects of Noise on Animals, Springer, October 2022\*\*](#)

[Clearing the Air: Helicopter Express](#) “Helicopters can limit noise and visual disturbance to wildlife by flying at higher altitudes, using sound-dampening technologies, and optimizing flight paths. These techniques minimize wildlife stress and mitigate the resulting behavioral changes.”

[Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance](#)

[\*\*Impacts of environmental noise on biodiversity \(Signal\), European Environment Agency, March 2025\*\*](#)