



MINUTES

Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877

(203) 431-2713 • conservation@ridgefieldct.gov

Meeting August 18, 2025 at 7PM

Present: Roberta Barbieri James Coyle Jana Hogan Erik Keller
 Jean Linville Jim Liptack Anthony Markert Pete Nichols
 Allan Welby

Absent: Jack Kace, Matt Sharp

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Nichols) and carried, it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of July 21, 2025 be approved and filed in Town Hall.

2. STATUS of NRVT (Brian Truskowski)

Mr. Truskowski provided an update on the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT), including a summary of progress to date and a focus on the Ridgefield segment, known as the Ridgefield Ramble. He noted that the overall project is approximately 50% complete, with much of the trail utilizing state-owned land. The Ridgefield Ramble section is scheduled for a public hearing on September 2 at the Planning and Zoning Commission. He also highlighted that only native plantings are being used in areas requiring reconstruction. The RCC expressed full support for the project and offered to assist with efforts related to space planning and ongoing maintenance.

3. HEMLOCK HILLS CAMP SITE (Scout Asher Pereya)

Mr. Pereya presented his proposed project to rebuild the Hemlock Hills Campsite, to include one fire pit and three tent sites. The RCC suggested several modifications to the project; work with the fire chief, add the emergency QR code signage, only one trail entrance, and obtain Parks and Rec reservation criteria and process. **UPON** motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Barbieri) and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve the project with the requested modifications and budget of up to \$1,300.

4. HEMLOCK HILLS TRAIL BRIDGES (Scout Eli Scheer)

Mr. Scheer presented his proposed project to add trail bridges to the existing trails in Hemlock Hills where the trails can flood and cause more erosion with bikers avoiding those areas and moving off the trail.

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Markert) and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve the project with no cost to the RCC.

5. MCKEON FARM MEADOW and GARDENS

Cornerstone Gardens is no longer operating at the McKeon Farm site. Ms. Snow, who has contributed significant work to the pollinator gardens, will require additional volunteers and support if the area is to be maintained moving forward. The RCC agreed it would be best to take time and invite additional experts to assess the garden area in order to determine the most appropriate path ahead. A portion of the garden was identified as needing immediate mowing. Mr. Keller will arrange for the summer workers to address this. Ms. Hogan will send out an email to initiate a discussion at the RCC's October 20th meeting, with the goal of determining next steps based on both public and expert input.

A larger issue is the maintenance and management plan of McKeon moving forward.

6. MCKEON FARM SIGNAGE

Ms. Linville brought up that the McKeon signs on the property are also out of date and will need to be updated following coordination with the overall management plan.

7. DEEP Fields Report for McKeon Farm

The RCC recently held a site walk at McKeon Farm with a representative from DEEP to better understand the process and financial requirements involved in converting a section of the property into grasslands. Mr. Welby was able to obtain seed and maintenance estimates, which totaled around \$10,000 for 4 acres for the initial application of seed and site preparation. This will also be brought into the overall management plan discussion of McKeon Farm.

8. FOREST MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Dr. Markert is working with the forestry management consultant to obtain final estimates to begin the work.

9. GOODWILL PUMPING STATION

The WPCA is relocating the Quail Ridge Pump Station and extending a new sewer line across multiple properties. While the RCC believes there are no conservation or historic easements in the area, existing RCC trails are present and further analysis is needed to assess potential impacts from the sewer alignment. The RCC expressed interest in using the opportunity to connect existing trail segments, particularly between Ligi’s Way and the Rail Trail. The WPCA may install a gravel path along portions of the sewer route, which may support future trail connectivity. Mr. Keller will be reaching out directly as there has been no response to emails.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Keller is preparing for the Fall Newsletter and requests anything that is to be included is emailed to him by next week.
Mr. Nichols reported that he and Mr. Sharp removed dead trees at Prospect Ridge and that Mr. Nichols will update the signs for that area.
Mr. Coyle did address the public that was in attendance regarding possible herbicide use at Whitman Preserve; the RCC has not had time to review best practices as of yet and will respond once determined.

8. MEETINGS FOR ATTENDANCE

P&Z	IWB
September 2 – Welby	August 28 – Nichols
September 16 – Barbieri	September 11 – Hogan

Mr. Keller will cover Ms. Hogan’s September 11th meeting.

9. CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS

Mr. Coyle had a couple of remarks; he and Mr. Keller are meeting with the First Selectman tomorrow on several conservation issues; mentioned that there was a \$2,000 budget overage for the 2025 FY; and that there was an Architectural Advisory Commission proposal re open space requirements for multifamily developments that was discussed at a recent BOS meeting (the RCC will obtain more information).

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made, and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 9:12 PM.