



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

Special Meeting January 12, 2026 at 7PM

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

Absent: Jim Liptack

1. Approval of Minutes

UPON motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Nichols) and carried it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of December 15, 2025 be approved and filed in Town Hall.

2. Eagle Scout Project Hemlock Hills_(Benjamin Pearl)

The presentation will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

3. Election of New Commissioner

The Commission considered the appointment of a new alternate member to the RCC Board. Two candidates, Tommy McCarthy and Ian Dow, submitted resumes and attended the meeting for consideration. Each candidate provided an overview of their professional background, relevant experience, and the skills and perspective they would bring to the RCC Board if selected.

Following discussion, the RCC conducted a vote. By unanimous decision, Tommy McCarthy was elected as the new alternate member of the RCC Board. His name has been forwarded to the Board of Selectpersons for formal approval.

4. Pound Street Property Name/Potential Trails

The RCC discussed potential name options for the newly acquired open space located on Pound Street. Suggested names included Pound Street Preserve and New Pond Preserve. RCC commissioners were encouraged to walk the site to evaluate the feasibility of adding walking trails. A final decision regarding the name of the open space will be revisited at a future meeting.

5. Pond Lake Connection

The Pond and Lake Connection conducted an assessment of the areas along Old Trolley Road and Fisher Road as a follow-up to their previous bamboo treatment application. Based on their findings, they proposed an additional treatment application, with an estimated cost of \$691.28.

Upon motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Kace) and carried, it was RESOLVED to approve the estimate for \$691.28.

6. 2026 Focus/Projects

Mr. Keller requested input from RCC members on focus areas and projects for 2026. The following ideas were discussed:

- Making border markers more prominent on open spaces that do not have established trails.
- Trail blazing and installation of trail signs.
- Increasing emphasis on habitat restoration, including grassland management, invasive species removal, and possibly deer management initiatives to protect flora and habitat.
- Enhancing kiosk content for public education.
- Tracking and reporting volunteer hours to demonstrate RCC and community contributions beyond the Town budget.
- Budget transparency, showing the Town the costs being spent outside the official budget to maintain open spaces.
- Fixing the PayPal link on the newsletter and website for donations.

Members agreed that while trail maintenance remains important, habitat restoration and related conservation efforts should be given equal priority in the upcoming year.

7. Annual Meeting and Edith Meffley

Mr. Keller and Ms. Hogan are working to secure a venue for the annual meeting. Once the RCC has a venue, it will decide upon the need for a keynote speaker and Meffley award recipient. If an appropriate venue is not found, the meeting may be cancelled this year.

8. Annual Appeal Status

The current status of the annual appeal is about \$6,000 behind where it was at this time last year. To date, approximately \$14,000 has been received. There will be another mailing going out over the next two weeks as well.

9. Thrift Shop Grant Proposals

Mr. Coyle reminded members of the upcoming deadline for the grant application process. To date, five suggested projects have been submitted, totaling about \$50,000. As such, the Commission will probably need to narrow down the projects for submission.

10. McKeon Wall Clearing

Mr. Sharp received an additional estimate to remove invasive plants along the stone walls at McKeon. The proposed cost for this work is \$3,900.

Upon motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Nichols) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the estimate for \$3,900 to remove the invasive plants along the stone walls at McKeon.

New Business

Mr. Welby informed everyone of a coyote in town that may have bitten a child.

Mr. Nichols is working with the neighbor about the visibility of the RCC pickup truck and water-collection system at McKeon. The pickup has been moved and the water system has been shielded from view with a lattice structure with reimbursement made from the neighbor to Mr. Nichols.

11. Meetings for Attendance

P&Z
January 13 – Barbieri
January 27 - Coyle

IWB
January 22 - Kace
February 12 - Markert

12. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Keller thanked the RCC members for their support during his transition into the role of Chair.

He noted that two members of the public have expressed interest in volunteering and stated that he will follow up with them.

Mr. Keller also referenced the Town's standards of conduct and encouraged members to review the document, with particular attention to Sections 11-9 and 11-10 concerning conflicts of interest. Members were advised to reach out with any questions or concerns. He further noted that, as the RCC conducts business with other boards, any member serving on such a board may be required to recuse themselves from related matters.

Chairman Keller also announced that the current RCC administrative assistant is stepping down (exit schedule to be determined). Human Resources has posted the position, and the vacancy will also be shared on social media and other platforms.

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made, and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 8:31 pm.