



## APPROVED MINUTES

### MINUTES

Ridgefield Conservation Commission

Town Hall Annex, 66 Prospect Street

Ridgefield, CT 06877

(203) 431-2713 • [conservation@ridgefieldct.gov](mailto:conservation@ridgefieldct.gov)

### Meeting November 17, 2025 at 7PM

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

Absent: Jana Hogan, Jim Liptack

**Upon** motion duly made (Nichols), seconded (Sharp) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to add the item Old Sib Trees to the agenda under item 3.

#### 1. Approval of Minutes

UPON motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Nichols) and carried it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of November 3, 2025 be approved and filed in Town Hall.

#### 2. McKeon Follow up

Mr. Coyle reviewed the draft maintenance document for McKeon Farm. The items labeled in Section 1.0 labeled necessary will be executed as written. For discretionary activities in Section 2.0, Sections 2.2 (purple martin birdhouses) and 2.3 (pollinator garden) will be managed as written. For Section 2.1 (chestnut tree garden), Mr. Nichols will explore the possibility of moving it to a different location at McKeon Farm as its current placement is not optimal for the survival of the trees.

There was much discussion around Section 2.4 (pollinator/wildflower meadow). Mr. Welby handed out extensively researched documents on the successful use of the herbicide glyphosate for the creation of native grasslands/meadows. His view and documentation discuss the science behind the use of this herbicide and believes that the Commission should take a leadership view in the creation of such a space. Dr. Markert strongly supported Mr. Welby and stated that he would work on the project to make it a success.

Most other commissioners supported the concept of a pollinator/wildflower meadow but not the use of glyphosate for its creation. Mr. Keller and Mr. Coyle were doubtful of the successful completion of the project because of the failure of past efforts and the scale of the project. It was suggested that the project be significantly scaled down in size using either the area formally used by Cornerstone Gardens or 1 acre of Stagecoach Pasture 1. Other concerns included the overall cost of the project, number of volunteers needed, and the potential Town backlash over the broadcasting of herbicides at McKeon.

The Commission agreed to review the documents submitted by Mr. Welby over the next month and will revisit the potential for this project in 2026.

No Commissioner volunteered to lead Sections 2.5 (farm animals) and 2.6 (friends of McKeon). They will not be pursued at this point in time.

Mr. Keller proposed the spending of \$10,400 to weed and remove invasive plants from over 550 feet of stone walls at McKeon Farm. This proposal was seconded by Mr. Sharp and was approved unanimously.

### **3. Annual Appeal and Meeting**

Letters for the annual appeal have been sent out and Ms. Hogan will be sending out an email for the appeal to the RCC mailing list in the next few days. Ms. Hogan continues to search for an appropriate venue for the annual meeting. The Nod Hill Brewery was considered too expensive; she will be contacting the Ridgefield Playhouse next. The Town library will be considered if no other venue can be found.

### **4. Old Sib Trees**

Mr. Welby sent pictures to the Commission showing the extensive cutting of trees on/and or near the Old Sib Open Space. Mr. Keller and Mr. Johnson will investigate the site and report back to the Commission.

### **5. Grant Sources**

Mr. Welby shared an extensive list of organizations that give grants to organizations such as the Commission. It was suggested that when potential projects arise, that this list be considered for funding.

### **6. Expense and Capital Budget**

Mr. Coyle stated that the expense and capital budget for FY 26-27 are due soon. It was suggested that given the yearly deficits experienced by Commission due to the addition of new open spaces (e.g., Wittman Preserve) and increased maintenance required at McKeon Farm that an increase of 10% be requested. The Commission will also make a capital request of approximately \$7,000 for a new ride-on mower with roll-over protection.

### **7. 2026 Meeting Calendar**

A new 2026 Meeting Calendar was unanimously approved by the Commission.

### **8. New Business**

Mr. Keller told commissioners that the deadline for topic inclusions in the quarterly newsletter is November 24. He also made a proposal for the spending of \$620 for new signs for Pine Mountain and McKeon Farm. It was seconded by Nichols and approved unanimously.

Mr. Nichols was approached by a neighbor about the unsightliness of the RCC pickup truck and water-collection system at McKeon. The neighbor will be allowed to build a screen around the water-collection system; the Commission will explore other Town properties to park the pickup truck during the winter.

As Ms. Linville is leaving the Commission, she is looking for another commissioner to take over her position as liaison to Woodcock Nature Preserve. Mr. Nichols volunteered.

## 9. Meetings for Attendance

### **P&Z**

November 18 – Sharp

### **IWB**

December 11 – Kace

## 10. Chairman's Remarks

Mr. Coyle announced that he will not seek re-election as Chairman for 2026. Mr. Keller indicated that he would assume the position of Chairman, which will be voted upon at the next meeting of the RCC. Mr. Coyle indicated that he would remain on the Commission as Vice-Chairman, if so, voted in.

The next commission meeting will occur on December 15.

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**ADJOURNMENT UPON** motion duly made, and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 8:32.