



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

Meeting February 9, 2026 at 7PM

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

Absent: Roberta Barbieri

1. Approval of Minutes

UPON motion duly made (Nichols), seconded (Coyle) and carried it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of January 12, 2025 be approved and filed in Town Hall. Mr. Liptack abstained.

2. Old Sib Violation Interview via Phone

CEO Caleb Johnson phoned the homeowner during the meeting to review the NOV. During the call, the homeowner stated they would like to work toward a resolution and expressed no objection to the NOV, acknowledging that a mistake had been made. The homeowner proposed a reduced fine of €20,000 and indicated they would also contact the landscaping company to determine whether they could contribute, as they did not follow the homeowner's instructions. The homeowner will formally submit a written counterproposal to CEO Caleb Johnson. Mr. Keller and Mr. Coyle will review the counterproposal and discuss it during Executive Session at the next meeting. If the RCC agrees, the matter will move forward, with a lump-sum payment typically presented.

3. Eagle Scout Project Hemlock Hills_(Benjamin Pearl)

Mr. Pearl of Troop 76 presented his proposed Eagle Scout project at Hemlock Hills. The project consists of trail improvements, including reconstruction of a bridge and existing rock walls within approximately one quarter mile of the entrance. The work will take place in two areas, and the existing bridges will be removed as part of the project.

Upon motion duly made (Sharp), seconded (Coyle) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposal with a budget of up to \$250. The project is expected to take place in April.

4. Tree Committee Interviews

Kitsey Snow and Paul Shotton appeared for renewal of their positions on the Tree Committee. The RCC appoints four members to the Tree Committee. Both candidates presented an update on committee activities and discussed ways the RCC and Tree Committee can work more closely together. The Tree Committee is highly involved and oversees all municipal plantings not located on Open Space. The committee currently has seven members and has divided responsibilities into seven monitoring sectors to address issues as they arise. They plan to plant 39 trees along Main Street leading to Danbury Road and noted that they continuously monitor tree health and conditions. Ms. Hogan asked whether native plantings could be used instead of mulch around the 39 trees, which the committee will look into.

The committee expressed interest in assistance with public education regarding environmental changes affecting trees, including the impacts of road salt, pathogens, and other stressors. They also emphasized education on invasive species and indicated interest in working more closely with the RCC, including contributing content to the quarterly newsletter and social media.

Upon motion duly made (Keller), seconded (Coyle) and carried, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the nomination to reappointment Kitsey Snow and Paul Shotton to the Tree Committee.

5. DEEP Forest Walks

Dr. Markert presented the latest images from his forestry walks conducted with Dave Beers. He provided a summary of site visits at Keeler Court, Ridgebury Road, Old Trolley, and Scodon. Dr. Markert noted there may be potential NOV's, which he will revisit in the spring, including instances of cutting and items located on Open Space. He also identified several deer stands that need to be removed for liability reasons and stated he will compile a list to send to the Deer Committee.

6. Pound Street Trails

Mr. Sharp, Mr. Coyle and Mr. Keller walked the property and noted it is an interesting site with the potential for trails in town. Parking will need to be addressed, particularly near the end of Pound Street. Mr. Keller will reach out to the BOS to determine next steps, as a survey may be required to carve out two to three parking spaces. The RCC will also need to notify neighbors and install signage around the open space and designated parking areas.

7. Steep Slopes

Mr. Coyle reported that he was contacted by the P&Z and has also involved the IWB regarding proposed steep slope regulations. The proposal would allow development on slopes under 15 degrees, while restricting or prohibiting development on slopes exceeding 25 degrees. The proposal is currently under review, if approved, would be incorporated into the zoning regulations.

8. Social Media

Ms. Hogan and Mr. Keller proposed creating a social media calendar. The intent is for members who have a library talk scheduled during a given month to post related content on social media. Mr. McCarthy offered to create a template to share with members for sign-ups and coordination.

9. New Homeowner Letters

The RCC typically mails informational letters to new homeowners. The RCC discussed modifying this practice to instead send letters only to new homeowners whose properties border Open Space, and potentially wetlands, and to include more detailed information relevant to those areas.

10. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting will be postponed until next year and in the meantime RCC will look for a more permanent home.

11. 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. One mailing has been sent and a second will be mailed out Thursday.

12. New Business

Mr. Nichols mentioned the parking areas that do need to be cleared of snow (Wittman, Shadow Lake, Pine Mountain and McKeon's). RCC will reach out to the Highway department for plowing/clearing. Also mentioned that the giant pumpkin grower needs some space to grow pumpkins this season and was thinking about McKeon's. Mr. Nichols will inform him of the insurance requirement and find out if still interested.

Mr. McCarthy works with a Frog hatch chapter and they are presenting at the library, which RCC will be happy to partner with.

13. Meetings for Attendance

P&Z

February 10 - McCarthy
February 24 - Liptack

IWB

February 12 - Markert
February 26 - Nichols

14. Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Keller wanted to congratulate and welcome the newest member Mr. McCarthy and Ms. Hogan as a member.

RCC was alerted that a stream on Chipmunk Lane has a lot of erosion on the banks, Mr. Keller and the CEO will take a site visit once the snow has melted.

RACE would like to get more involved with the RCC, Mr. Oko and Mr. Keller will discuss and share ideas with the RCC.

The last library talk had very little attendance, however it may have been due to the weather. The RCC may consider zoom talks in January and February and stay in person for the remainder of the year.

RCC has some left over capital expense budget funds to install fencing, something to think about how and where this needs to be used.

Chairman Keller also announced that they had one interview last week and two tomorrow for the RCC administrative assistant open position, a new candidate for replacement will transition over the next few weeks.

ADJOURNMENT UPON motion duly made, and carried, it was RESOLVED that the meeting adjourn at 9:00 pm.