



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD INLAND WETLANDS BOARD

UNAPPROVED/UNREVISED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not a verbatim transcription.

June 26, 2025

Members present: Susan Baker, Chair; Alan Pilch, Secretary; Tim Bishop, Vice Chair; Keith Carlson, Noah Berkowicz

Members Absent: Carson Fincham, David Smith

Also present, Caleb Johnson, Inland Wetlands Agent; Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary; Brian Truskowski, Antonio DiCamillo, Nicole Ramos.

I. Call to order:

Ms. Baker, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II: Public Hearing:

1. IW-25-21; 0 Fire Hill Road; Plenary Ruling application for construction of trails, board walks, and associated site work for the Norwalk River Valley Trail system within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses on Town of Ridgefield parcels (H11-0048, H12-0071, H12-0074, H12-0031, H12-0056) and State of Connecticut owned parcels (H13-0057, H13-0054, H13-0051, H12-0043). Owner: Town of Ridgefield, State of Connecticut. Applicant: Alexander Wojtkowiak.
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/100987>

Mr. Johnson read all the documents submitted with the plenary ruling application.

Mr. Truskowski gave a brief overview of the NRVV project. He said the entire trail is almost thirty miles long from Norwalk to Danbury. The section in Ridgefield (Ridgefield Ramble) is 1.7 miles in length. Information sessions were conducted with the community to hear suggestions and concerns while planning the routing and screening for the trail.

He stated that this multi-use trail will be a wonderful amenity for the community in Ridgefield.

Mr. DiCamillo from Stantec engineering presented the design construction of the trail. The proposed trail route starts at Simpaug Turnpike and meanders through woods, wetlands and watercourses. The ten-foot-wide trail shall be mostly covered in stone dust, with some short paved areas near road crossings. The trail runs through both State and Town properties and permitting is needed with the State as well as the Town Inland Wetlands Board and Planning and Zoning Commission. The trail includes boardwalks for wetlands and stream crossings and some culverts along the way. Steep slopes shall require walls, riprap, and plantings to stabilize the slopes. Robust erosion control measures shall be installed, particularly in areas closer to the wetlands. Anti-tracking pads shall be installed at the entrances. The only permanent impacts are the boardwalks and piles; there are temporary impacts from matting of either rubber or timber at the wetlands crossings. The contractor shall be monitored throughout the work with funding from the State to ensure work is completed as per plans. Permits from State, DEEP and Conn DOT are in process to be approved. The proposed project includes stormwater designs and bioretention areas, and swales to provide improved water quality along the trails. Along the roadways are low-point catch basins to address road drainage and sediments. One watercourse area will be reestablished by removing the boulders to daylight the stream.

The tentative timeframe of the project includes securing proper permits and approvals by August, completing final design in September, and submitting plans to DOT in December, with the goal of beginning construction in April 2026.

Mr. Pilch inquired why some parts of the trail are ten-inch stone dust and some are bituminous concrete. He asked how would the planting be established on steep slopes, specially watering them. He expressed concerns about the erosion on the down gradient side and if any drilling is proposed in wetlands for the piles.

Mr. Bishop inquired if all the plantings proposed are native. He inquired if any stream crossings will require footings or piles or if they can be clear spans. He inquired if the boardwalk shall be made of composite or treated wood and stated that treated wood should not be in direct contact with the wetlands.

Mr. Carlson commended the project and the improvements proposed.

Ms. Baker asked who will provide oversight of the project and what the timeline will be.

Mr. DiCamillo addressed the concerns raised by the Board stating that the bituminous concrete walks are only along the roadways. He said these were proposed due to the concerns of neighbors regarding drainage on their properties. He said erosion matting with conservation seed mixes shall be installed on steep slopes to address any erosion issues. Most of the plantings proposed are native trees and shade tolerant vegetation per the landscape architect. He confirmed there are no significant crossings that will require footings or spans. Most of the watercourses are intermittent, and the ones which are flowing are narrow. He added that the wood used for boardwalk is treated black locust just like they have used at other projects, however he doesn't have specifics. The treated wood shall not be in contact with the wetlands, it will be on helical piles. These helical piles are drilled directly down hence avoiding erosion from drilling.

The project shall be monitored using part of the trail funding, and they will hire an inspector approved by the Town to continuously monitor the project. Their team shall also come out weekly or twice a week where there shall be onsite meetings to discuss the workload, erosion measures issues, etc. The project is aimed to start in April 2026, once all the permits and approval are received.

Mr. Jones, resident of Fire Hill Rd, Redding, inquired about the asphalt paving in wetlands areas, construction entrance and the removals of stonewall on Fire Hill Rd.

Mr. DiCamillo said that there are no wetlands at Fire Hill Rd. The mitigation backfill to fill some existing holes shall be pervious and will have no negative impact on the wetlands. The bituminous asphalt is proposed due to the concerns raised by neighbors. The stonewall shall be removed during construction and will be replaced back. The construction entrance is temporary to address any sediments leaving the site.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 7:38 PM.

Board members acknowledged the work of the NRV and agreed that the project is good and would be handled well by the consultants team. The project will have only temporary impacts and nothing long-term. The board unanimously supported the project.

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the above Plenary Ruling application. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

III: Discussion:

- 1. IW-25-30; 3 Tackora Trail; Summary Ruling application for revision to prior Inland Wetlands Board approval IW-25-16. Owner/Applicant: Nicole Ramos. For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.**
<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101773>

Ms. Baker mentioned that for 3 Tackora Trail, the change requested is minor and could be reviewed by the Board at tonight's meeting. Since the previous application (IW-26-16) was approved very recently, there is no need for a site walk, and the homeowner is present at the meeting and can describe the change.

Ms. Ramos presented the revision where the fence around the pool will be moved from within 5 feet of the pool to the bottom of the slope where the erosion and control measures are installed. Erosion mat and seeding will stabilize the disturbance.

Mr. Pilch inquired if any new grading is involved.

Ms. Ramos confirmed no new grading, but just stabilization of the area due to disturbance caused by construction of pool.

Ms. Baker inquired if any vegetation or trees shall be removed.

Homeowner confirmed no vegetation would be removed.

Mr. Bishop had no concern moving the fence down slope since there is no new disturbance and no adverse impacts to wetlands.

Members modified the condition with the following language:

- The pool fence shall be located further down the existing slope at the current silt fence line location as shown on the previous plan. The applicant shall provide an updated map showing the new location for the fence.

Mr. Pilch motioned to approve the revision to the original plan, with the special condition as stated by the Board.

Mr. Bishop seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson shall notice the revised Adopted Resolution in the press.

IV: Applications for Receipt(s):

2. IW-25-31; 9 Maplewood Road; Summary Ruling application for installation of an above ground swimming pool, patio and stormwater management system within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Harris Kaplan. Applicant: Samantha Brant. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101807>

3. IW-25-32; 10 Shady Lane; Summary Ruling application for construction of a sauna and deck within the upland review area of wetlands and watercourses. Owner: Vincent Nagle. Applicant: Victoria Baird. *For receipt and scheduling a sitewalk and discussion.*

<https://ridgefieldct.portal.opengov.com/records/101844>

Mr. Bishop motioned to receive the above two applications and schedule discussions and sitewalks as stated below. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Sitewalk will be on July 20 and discussion on July 24, 2025.

V: List of Ongoing Enforcement by Agent:

None

VI: Other Business:

1. IW-22-11; 265 North Street – Planting bond release (\$5,670.00)

Mr. Johnson updated the Board that all the plants are thriving one hundred percent. He informed the homeowner not to mow around the plants.

Mr. Bishop motioned to release the bond in full. Mr. Pilch seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Biological Evaluation and Engineer Peer Review – 145 High Ridge Avenue

Ms. Baker said that Mr. Johnson has shared information on a few professionals for the peer reviews for engineering and biological evaluation for this application. The Board can review before confirming whose proposal to accept.

Ms. Baker also informed the Board that on the day that the Public Hearing begins she will officially recuse herself from hearing or voting on this application. She left the zoom meeting while peer reviewers were discussed.

Mr. Bishop suggested that Board members should review the credentials of the consultants and at the next meeting decide who should be contracted.

Mr. Pilch mentioned that he would like detailed resumes of the consultants.

Mr. Johnson said if members know of additional consultants to add to the pool, they can send their contact information to him so he can contact them for availability and quotes.

VII: Approval of Minutes:

- **Inland Wetlands Meeting: June 12, 2025**

Mr. Bishop motioned to approve the above minutes with the names of the property owners to be corrected. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried unanimously

VIII: Adjourn

Mr. Johnson informed the Board about the sitewalk scheduled for Sunday June 29, 2025 and specifically who will be at the South Street site from the applicant's team. Members discussed to meet at 59 South Street behind the Goodwill trailer.

Hearing no further business, Ms. Baker adjourned the meeting at 8:19 PM.

Submitted by

Aarti Paranjape, Recording Secretary