

**A REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD HELD IN THE SYDNEY V. STOLDT, JR. COURT ROOM OF THE RIDGEWOOD VILLAGE HALL, 131 NORTH MAPLE AVENUE, RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY, ON JANUARY 15, 2025 AT 7:30 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER – OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT – ROLL CALL – FLAG SALUTE**

Deputy Mayor Perron called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and read the Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. At roll call, the following were present: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz, and Winograd. Mayor Vagianos was absent from the meeting. Also present were Keith Kazmark, Village Manager; Heather Mailander, Village Clerk; and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney.

Deputy Mayor Perron led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Deputy Mayor Perron asked for a moment of silence to honor Paul Markosian and to recognize him as a “consummate volunteer” in Ridgewood. Mr. Markosian passed away this past weekend.

Deputy Mayor Perron then asked David Arabia, a new business owner in Ridgewood, to come to the podium to introduce himself. Mr. Arabia said that he is the owner of Corcoran Infinity Properties, which is part of the Corcoran Group in New York City. Corcoran Group is the largest real estate company in Manhattan, and Mr. Arabia owns the Bergen County rights. Corcoran Infinity Properties was opened for business approximately 1½ years ago, and they currently have four locations in “luxury” neighborhoods: Alpine, Edgewater, River Vale and Ridgewood. His business will operate at 195 South Maple Avenue. Many of his real estate agents live in this area.

Mr. Arabia stated that his company engages in charitable events in all municipalities in which they have offices. They support Bergen County Cares by sponsoring coat drives every year. Mr. Arabia said that they collected approximately 700 coats this past year, and these coats are given to families in need.

Deputy Mayor Perron welcomed Mr. Arabia to Ridgewood and said that his company will make a great contribution to the community. There was a round of applause.

**2. ACCEPTANCE OF FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Deputy Mayor Perron moved that the Bills, Claims, and Vouchers, and Statement of Funds on Hand as of December 31, 2024, be accepted as submitted. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None.

**4. PROCLAMATIONS**

**A. RECOGNIZE RIDGEWOOD LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**

Councilmember Winograd read the following proclamation:

Councilmember Weitz encouraged everyone to get their tickets for the Ridgewood Lunar New Year Festival soon, as this event quickly sells out. Ms. Mailander indicated that the typographical error in the Proclamation will be corrected and that Mayor Vagianos will sign the corrected copies. The date in the Proclamation will be changed from January 29, 2025 to January 26, 2025, which is the date of the Ridgewood Lunar New Year Festival. Pictures were then taken with some members of the Ridgewood Asian American Pacific Islander Alliance, Ridgewood Chinese American Association, Koren Community of Ridgewood, the Ridgewood Indian Community, and the Village Councilmembers. There was a resounding round of applause.

**B. JAMBOREE DAYS**

Deputy Mayor Perron read the following proclamation, and stated that she is a Jamboree Alumnus. She explained that anyone interested in purchasing tickets to the upcoming production of Jamboree entitled, “Viva Las Vegas”, can obtain them online at [www.rhsjamboree.org](http://www.rhsjamboree.org).

## **5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

HyunJu Kwak, a resident of Ridgewood, said that on behalf of the Ridgewood Asian American Pacific Islander Alliance, she wanted to thank the Village Council for recognizing the various groups mentioned in the Proclamation. She said that she is looking forward to celebrating the Lunar New Year Festival on January 26, 2025 at the Ridgewood High School Campus Center.

Cynthia O’Keefe, a resident of Ridgewood, congratulated the groups recognized in the Proclamation and said that she looks forward to attending the Lunar New Year Festival. She said that she was grateful to the Village Council for recognizing Paul Markosian, who was a friend of hers and a staunch supporter of the Schedler neighbors, regarding the overdevelopment of the Schedler property. She said that his passing is a tremendous loss to the Village.

Ms. O’Keefe stated that Councilmember Mortimer campaigned for election to the Village Council with a platform that advocated environmental leadership, striving to make Ridgewood a municipality that other towns looked up to for guidance in environmental matters. She asked Mr. Mortimer how he planned to do this, since four of the five Village Councilmembers are staunchly supporting the installation of an artificial turf field on the Schedler property, despite the dangers of artificial turf expressed by many experts in the medical and scientific fields. Ms. O’Keefe said that the Village Councilmembers are “greenwashing” the matter.

Ms. O’Keefe stated that getting a tenant for the Zabriskie-Schedler house and the overdevelopment plan for the Schedler property are mutually exclusive. Ms. O’Keefe said that the Bergen County Historical Society has expressed an interest in using the house for its events and museum artifacts. The Schedler neighbors are still opposed to the construction of a large athletic turf field and the removal of multiple trees. She said that she couldn’t understand how this could happen at the same time Ridgewood is known as “Tree City USA.” Ms. O’Keefe said that the goal for the Schedler property should be to develop the area that could be enjoyed by everyone, and not just a few.

Ms. O’Keefe stated that she recently attended a Fields Committee meeting. She said that Suburban Engineering, in the plans submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to install a turf field at Benjamin Franklin Middle School, said that the property could not be further developed. However, this turned out not to be the case. She asked for further information in this regard.

Anne Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, said that there was no shame in a person changing their mind. She said that infant botulism was first identified in the 1970s. Prior to that time, it was common practice to dip a baby’s pacifier into honey to quiet the baby. It was thereafter learned that honey could contain *Clostridium botulinum* spores, which will kill a baby. Therefore, many bottles of honey now contain a warning that honey should not be given to an infant under one year of age. She said that minds were changed because of new information. Similarly, car seats with safety features were first introduced in 1962; prior to that time, car seats did not exist.

Ms. Loving stated that astro turf was introduced in the 1950s and was considered an awesome new invention. However, it is known today that artificial turf is not safe. She reiterated that there is no shame if the Village Councilmembers want to change their minds regarding artificial turf, considering the plethora of information that has been learned over the past 70 years. She said that if the four Village Councilmembers in favor of artificial turf changed their minds, they would be applauded and remembered forever as the Village Councilmembers who took a stand against artificial turf.

Nancy Brennan-Hill, a resident of Ridgewood, thanked the Village Councilmembers for introducing Ordinance No. 4030, known as the Tree Protection, Removal, and Replacement Ordinance. She acknowledged the hard work done by the Shade Tree Commission and Councilmember Winograd in making changes to this ordinance. She has noticed a lot of effort in the Village to restore the tree canopy.

Amy McCambridge, a resident of Ridgewood, said that at last week's Village Council meeting, the Village Councilmembers repeatedly dismissed the environmental risks of artificial turf. She said that the Village Councilmembers have ignored their responsibility to be truthful and transparent with their constituents. Ms. McCambridge said that Councilmember Winograd claimed that the Village Council's efforts to reach out to Dr. Sarah Evans regarding the Mt. Sinai reports were unsuccessful. She said that this was not true, because she personally spoke to Dr. Evans, who said that no one has reached out to her from the Village Council. Ms. McCambridge is meeting with Dr. Evans next week and she will report back to the Village Councilmembers. Ms. McCambridge said that she will also be setting up a meeting between Dr. Evans and the public.

In addition, Ms. McCambridge said that Councilmember Winograd stated that the Village purchases its turf from Shaw Industries, implying that the turf purchased from this manufacturer is safer than that of other vendors. Ms. McCambridge reported that Shaw Industries is currently involved in multiple lawsuits due to PFAS contamination in their products. This makes the decision by a majority of the Village Councilmembers to continue using artificial turf totally irresponsible.

Addressing Councilmembers Mortimer and Weitz, Ms. McCambridge stated that they claim that artificial turf is safe, because the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) does not have any Federal regulations banning the use of artificial turf. She said that the USEPA allowed lead paint, asbestos, and tobacco to proliferate among millions of people before finally taking action to either ban or warn against the dangers of these products. Ms. McCambridge said that these Village Councilmembers failed to mention that in March of 2024, the USEPA officially classified two PFAS compounds – PFOA and PFOS – as hazardous substances under the Superfund law.

Ms. McCambridge mentioned the controversy surrounding the Love Canal contamination in the 1940s, when a chemical company dumped toxic waste near their manufacturing plant. The contamination was found after homes and schools were built on the site and toxic chemicals began

to leach into the basements of these buildings. The water surrounding the site became contaminated as well, and subsequent widespread illness, cancer and birth defects occurred as a result. This disaster prompted the formation of the Superfund program in 1980. Ms. McCambridge went on to cite other instances in which chemicals leached into the soil and water and made people very ill. She said that Ridgewood is heading in the same path. She said that the Village has never tested the three artificial turf fields that are close to the waterways, which traverse the Village to determine if PFAS has leached into the water.

Ms. McCambridge stated that Councilmembers Mortimer and Weitz have both declared that playing on artificial turf is safer than playing on grass. She said that she is a soccer trainer and three players whom she trains sustained torn anterior cruciate ligaments from playing on artificial turf, as well as experiencing burns from the turf. She quoted Travis Kelce who said, "I would rather practice in thunderstorms, with a chance of getting struck by lightning, than to run inside on the turf." Roger Goodall, the NFL Commissioner, has said that he wants to make a decision based on science. NFL players are now demanding grass fields because of the risks associated with artificial turf. She urged the Village Councilmembers to stop pretending that artificial turf does not pose a direct threat to the health and future of Ridgewood residents.

Rurik Halaby, a resident of Ridgewood, thanked the Village Council for initiating hybrid meetings, so that older residents like himself can participate in the governmental process. Regarding the quality of sound in the courtroom during Village Council meetings, Mr. Halaby agreed that the acoustics really need to be improved. This problem has been discussed before. He feels that the problem lies with the configuration of the courtroom and the speakers themselves, rather than the microphones. Mr. Halaby stated that he had a problem hearing what was said when he physically attended meetings, but he has no problems hearing what is being said when he watches the meetings via Zoom.

Mr. Halaby wrote to Dylan Hansen, I.T. Coordinator, in December. Mr. Hansen stated that the vendor will be addressing this issue in early 2025. Mr. Halaby also mentioned to Mr. Hansen how great it would be to have the meetings shown on Channel 34 (FIOS) broadcast in high definition (HD) and to cover more meetings, such as those of Green Ridgewood, as well as select cultural events held in the Village, such as Jamboree.

There were no further public comments.

Councilmember Winograd said that the Zabriskie-Schedler house and Schedler property are not separate issues. She said that the Schedler development needs to be looked at in its totality, and the entire development plan is being sent to SHPO. She said that she loved the proposal set forth by the Bergen County Historical Society (BCHS) to occupy the house. Another proposal from the Newcomers Club will be heard before the Village Council in the near future. She feels that having a future use for the house will make the plans more *bona fide*, since the Village has

already spent \$2.6 million to renovate the house. Councilmember Winograd said that neither the BCHS nor the Newcomers Club will be paying any rent to use the house. However, she would feel more comfortable knowing that the house will be used as a meeting and gathering place, rather than sit empty. Councilmember Winograd went on to say that ever since the Village purchased the Schedler property, the property was never intended to be used as a “preserve,” but rather was intended to be used for recreation.

Councilmember Winograd clarified that Suburban Engineering is a vendor used by the Village, and the Board of Education (BOE) has hired a supplemental architect to do a feasibility study at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. The study referenced at the Fields Committee was from a BOE update. She suggested that Ms. O’Keefe contact the BOE to find out the name of its engineering vendor for this project.

Councilmember Winograd said that the Village Council did indeed reach out to Dr. Sarah Evans, but have not heard back from her. At the Fields Committee meeting, there was a discussion about having a meeting at the Ridgewood Library in order to have a multifaceted discussion. Both Councilmember Winograd and Deputy Mayor Perron would attend the meeting, so that both sides of the issues, regarding artificial turf, can be discussed. She asked Ms. McCambridge to try to facilitate such a meeting with Dr. Evans.

Regarding Ms. McCambridge’s comment about Shaw Industries, Councilmember Winograd said that the Village does not use field turf on its fields. She stated that a turf vendor has not yet been chosen for the field at the Schedler property.

Councilmember Winograd agreed with Mr. Halaby that the audio is much better when listening at home, rather than in the courtroom. She encouraged anyone who has trouble hearing what was said at a Village Council meeting to go home and watch the video.

Councilmember Mortimer said that he was quoting studies regarding artificial turf. When he talks about his position, he said that he is not talking about his opinion, but rather information gleaned from peer-reviewed journals. An article from a North Carolina Cooperative Education publication stated that artificial turf maximizes the durability of athletic fields. The article stated that 1,000 hours of use per year on grass fields causes significant grass loss, damages the field surface, and increases the potential for athlete injury. Councilmember Mortimer said that he was merely quoting scientific studies and was not making anything up.

## **6. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Kazmark began his Village Manager’s Report by stating that there are 38 resolutions to be adopted by a Consent Agenda this evening for Ridgewood Water. Adoption of these resolutions will enable Ridgewood Water to continue their important projects in 2025. He feels that the most

important contracts are the ones for hydrogeologic services and replacement of water distribution service lines, as well as lead service line replacements. Some projects will help to increase water pressure in higher elevation areas in Midland Park. Mr. Kazmark thanked the Village Councilmembers for their patience while all of these projects/contracts were discussed at last week's Work Session.

Mr. Kazmark indicated that there are several ordinances which will be introduced this evening, including Ordinance No. 4030, entitled "Tree Protection, Removal, and Replacement." Resolutions to be adopted via Consent Agenda include the construction of a New Jersey Transit bus shelter at Ridgewood High School, with approval having been received from the Board of Education and Bergen County to construct same. Another resolution to be adopted via a Consent Agenda will authorize the execution of an agreement between the Village and Valley Hospital to establish a fourth paramedic unit at 33 Douglas Place (Emergency Management Services building). This will permit faster response times in emergencies, since the paramedics will only have to travel from Ridgewood, rather than from the new Valley Hospital location in Paramus. Another resolution to be adopted via a Consent Agenda will authorize the execution of a lease for the Social Services Association's use of the Ridgewood Train Station building for a food pantry. Mr. Kazmark thanked Ms. Mailander and Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer, for their efforts in this regard.

Mr. Kazmark indicated that he has a letter from four sports organizations in Ridgewood, regarding funding the field lighting project at Veterans Field. There was discussion last year to expand the lighting project to include the girls' varsity softball field. Mayor Vagianos has been engaged in discussions with the leaders of these various sports groups and representatives from the Board of Education to see if they can make financial contributions towards this project. The Maroons Soccer Club, Ridgewood Junior Football Association, and the Ridgewood Lacrosse Association have each pledged to contribute the sum of \$10,000.00. In addition, a \$17,000.00 commitment has been received from the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association. A Special Public Meeting will be held during the Village Council Work Session scheduled on January 29, 2025, to accept these donations. By that time, Mr. Kazmark said that a response should have been received from the Board of Education, since their next meeting is on January 27, 2025. Mr. Kazmark asked Ms. Mailander to compose a resolution, in time for the next meeting, to accept these monetary donations to Ridgewood from these sports associations. After all of these things have been accomplished, then the vendor performing the lighting improvements (Musco Sports Lighting) will be awarded a contract to add the lights to the girls' softball field.

Mr. Kazmark announced that the annual parking permits for Ridgewood are being sold daily in the Village Hall lobby. Individuals buying a permit should bring their driver's license and vehicle registration with them. If more than one vehicle is owned, a registration for each vehicle is required.



Christmas trees will be picked up on Tuesdays on the east side of the Village and Thursdays on the west side, through the end of January. Residents may also drop off their Christmas trees in the designated area of the Graydon Pool parking lot.

Week one of Restaurant Week, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, will take place until tomorrow night, and again from January 20<sup>th</sup> through January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Kazmark encouraged everyone to enjoy a delicious meal at a discount, while supporting local businesses at the same time.

All Village offices will be closed on January 20<sup>th</sup> in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The Recycling Center will also be closed on that date, and there will be no curbside bulk pickup that week. In addition, there will be no garbage or recycling pickups on that day.

Mr. Kazmark announced that the “Legal Documents Program” will be held in the Youth Lounge at Village Hall on January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30 a.m. Interested individuals should sign up through Community Pass. This program is sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department. The purpose of this program is to educate residents on the four legal documents which people should have prepared, including a Living Will and Power of Attorney.

Mr. Kazmark reminded everyone to place their garbage cans at the end of their driveways during inclement weather, to ensure the safety of the sanitation crew. All sidewalks in residential districts must be cleared of snow within 24 hours after the snow stops falling.

Upcoming Village Council meetings are as follows: Work Sessions on January 29, February 5, and February 26, 2025; and the Public Meeting on February 10, 2025. All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Kazmark indicated that the Budget Meeting schedule has been finalized. The Budget Meetings will be held on January 22, February 3, February 19, and February 27, 2025. If needed, an additional meeting will be held on March 3, 2025. All meetings will commence at 5:00 p.m. in the Village Hall courtroom. An ordinance to adopt the 2025 Municipal Budget will be introduced at the Village Council Public Meeting on March 12, 2025, with final adoption of the 2025 Municipal Budget on April 9, 2025.

## **7. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS**

Councilmember Mortimer stated that he attended his first Open Space Committee meeting as Village Council Liaison on January 9, 2025. They discussed the demolition of the Town Garage. A Village resident attended the meeting and suggested that a permanent skateboard park be constructed on the former Town Garage property on Franklin Avenue, and touted the benefits of

such a park. They also discussed the Park Walks scheduled for 2025, as well as their goals for 2025.

Last night, Councilmember Mortimer attended the Ridgewood Arts Council meeting with Councilmember Weitz. An event entitled “Children in the Arts” will be held on March 30, 2025 at the Lester Stable. This event is for children involved in dancing, singing, and acting. An event with John Luckinbill will be held at the Ridgewood Library, when he will discuss his passion for music. Councilmember Mortimer will be attending his first Citizens Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) meeting tomorrow. This past weekend, Councilmember Mortimer took his daughter to the Ridgewood Library to get her passport renewed. He said that it was a quality experience and encouraged all residents to avail themselves of this new service offered by the library, if they need their passports renewed.

Deputy Mayor Perron recalled that the passport service at the Ridgewood Library is for new passports only, and not for renewal passport applications, which can be done by mail. Councilmember Mortimer said that individuals may also have their passport pictures taken at the Ridgewood Library.

Councilmember Winograd thanked the members of the Fields Committee and Mr. Kazmark for facilitating the generous donations from four Ridgewood sports organizations, totaling \$47,000.00. She also thanked Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, for her efforts in this regard.

Last evening, Deputy Mayor Perron and Councilmember Winograd attended an ACCESS Committee event at the Ridgewood Library, during which the movie “Patrice” was shown. This movie highlights the problems faced by special needs couples who wish to marry. Councilmember Winograd indicated that, nationwide, there is a marriage penalty clause regarding state benefits when two members of the special needs community want to get married. A woman named Patrice is a local crossing guard in the State of New Jersey, and several individuals in Ridgewood were featured in the movie. “Patrice” is available on Hulu. Councilmember Winograd said that this is a wonderful movie with a powerful message. She thanked the Ridgewood Library and the ACCESS Committee for their efforts in this regard.

Councilmember Winograd also attended the Shade Tree Commission (STC) meeting last night. She thanked Nancy Brennan-Hill, George Wolfson, and other members of the STC for their efforts in developing the amendment to the tree protection ordinance. Several items were discussed regarding budget appropriations for various projects. Members of the STC are clamoring for the Village to hire a “tree sheriff” to enforce the provisions of the tree ordinance. For Arbor Day this year, the STC is planning to launch an email blast highlighting how residents may get a sapling or tree planted on their property.

On Monday evening, Councilmember Winograd attended a Project Pride meeting. They discussed the possibility of decorating (wrapping) the lampposts in the Central Business District (CBD) next winter with white lights. Councilmember Winograd said that they are planning to upgrade the kissing balls, in collaboration with students from Ridgewood High School. They also discussed upgrading the flower pots in the CBD, in collaboration with the Ridgewood Police Department.

Councilmember Weitz attended the Board of Education (BOE) meeting last week, with representatives from the BOE and the Village Council present. He indicated that there will be a vote at the BOE meeting on January 27, 2025, as to whether or not the BOE will make a monetary contribution to the Veterans Field lighting project.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) met this week. Councilmember Weitz said that there are two new businesses coming to Ridgewood. There were two residential applications that came before the HPC during the meeting. Councilmember Weitz said that he is always impressed by the quality of Village volunteers. He said that he has had the privilege of being Village Council Liaison to the Ridgewood Arts Council for the last two years, which Councilmember Mortimer has now assumed. Councilmember Weitz said that he will now act as Village Council Liaison to the Kasschau Shell Committee.

Councilmember Weitz said that he was very excited about the upcoming Budget Meetings, which he encouraged all residents to attend, so that they can learn about the budget process.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she also enjoys Budget Meetings, because she gets to meet all of the Department Directors in the Village. She stated that this week was her last meeting as Village Council Liaison to the Open Space Committee. Councilmember Mortimer will be the new Village Council Liaison to the Open Space Committee.

Green Ridgewood and the Green Team met this week, and they discussed various topics, including the Town Garage and what can be done with that property. Members of Green Ridgewood and the Green Team will be meeting with other Bergen County environmental commissions on January 28, 2025 (the “Hub”). She said that Richard Calbi, Director of Ridgewood Water, and Sean Hamlin, Supervisor of the Recycling Center, will be speaking at that meeting, as well as Lois Krause, who heads a group called the Advocates for Transitional Landscaping. During the Green Ridgewood meeting this week, Deputy Mayor Perron said they have asked the Rutgers Cooperative Extension program to help them figure out a way to measure what effect rain gardens have on flooding and the environment, as well as whether or not affordable housing takes priority over the environment. The next Green Ridgewood meeting will be held on February 6, 2025 in the Senior Lounge at Village Hall.

The Planning Board will be holding a Reorganization Meeting on January 21, 2025.

**8. ORDINANCES – RIDGEWOOD WATER**

Deputy Mayor Perron indicated that there were no introductions of or Public Hearings on ordinances for Ridgewood Water this evening.

**9. RESOLUTIONS – RIDGEWOOD WATER**

Ms. Mailander stated that the following resolutions, numbered 25-38 through 25-76, would be adopted by a Consent Agenda, with one vote by the Village Council, and would be read by title only:

## **10. ORDINANCES**

### **A. INTRODUCTION - #4028 – AMEND VARIOUS SALARY ORDINANCES**

Deputy Mayor Perron moved that the Village Clerk read Ordinance #4028 on first reading. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call Vote**

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

The Village Clerk read Ordinance #4028 by title only:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SALARY ORDINANCE 3908, AN ORDINANCE TO FIX SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER COMPENSATION OF AND FOR BLUE COLLAR EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY; SALARY ORDINANCE 4021, AN ORDINANCE TO FIX SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER COMPENSATION OF NON-UNION EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR 2025; AND SALARY ORDINANCE 4022, FIXING THE SALARIES AND WAGES AND OTHER COMPENSATION AND TO ESTABLISH THE “EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT” OF CERTAIN NON-UNION OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, COUNTY OF BERGEN, AND STATE OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE YEAR 2025

Councilmember Winograd moved that Ordinance #4028 be adopted on first reading and that February 10, 2025 be fixed as the date for the hearing thereon. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

#### **Roll Call Vote**

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

**B.     INTRODUCTION - #4029 – AMEND CHAPTER 265 – VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC – ESTABLISH STOP SIGN ON HEIGHTS ROAD AT AVONDALE ROAD**

Deputy Mayor Perron moved that the Village Clerk read Ordinance #4029 by title on first reading. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES:       Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS:       None

ABSENT:   Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

The Village Clerk read Ordinance #4029 by title only:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 265 OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, AT SECTION 265-59, SCHEDULE IX: “STOP INTERSECTIONS”

Councilmember Winograd moved that Ordinance #4029 be adopted on first reading and that February 10, 2025 be fixed as the date for the hearing thereon. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES:       Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS:       None

ABSENT:   Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

**C.     INTRODUCTION - #4030 – AMEND CHAPTER 260 – TREE PROTECTION, REMOVAL, AND REPLACEMENT**

Deputy Mayor Perron moved that the Village Clerk read Ordinance #4030 by title on first reading. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES:       Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS:       None

ABSENT:   Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

The Village Clerk read Ordinance #4030 by title only:

AN ORDINANCE TO RESCIND AND REPLACE IN ITS ENTIRETY, CHAPTER 260 OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, TREES AND SHRUBS, AND PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED ORDINANCE NO. 3682, WHICH AMENDED CHAPTER 260 AND TO ESTABLISH A NEW TITLE FOR CHAPTER 260, “TREE PROTECTION, REMOVAL, AND REPLACEMENT”

Councilmember Winograd moved that Ordinance #4030 be adopted on first reading and that February 10, 2025 be fixed as the date for the hearing thereon. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she proudly voted in favor of this ordinance, since it further protects trees and the environment.

**D. INTRODUCTION - #4031 – AMEND CHAPTER 3 – ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT – ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL POLICE SERGEANT POSITION AND ADD TO POLICE DEPARTMENT TABLE OF ORGANIZATION**

Deputy Mayor Perron moved that the Village Clerk read Ordinance #4031 by title on first reading. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

The Village Clerk read Ordinance #4031 by title only:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 3, OF THE CODE OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD, ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT, ARTICLE V, DEPARTMENTS, AT SECTION 3-43, POLICE DEPARTMENT

Councilmember Winograd moved that Ordinance #4031 be adopted on first reading and that February 10, 2025 be fixed as the date for the hearing thereon. Councilmember Mortimer seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

AYES: Councilmembers Mortimer, Perron, Weitz and Winograd

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Vagianos

ABSTAIN: None

Councilmember Mortimer said that he gladly voted yes on this ordinance, because it will make Ridgewood schools safer.

**11. RESOLUTIONS**

Ms. Mailander stated that the following resolutions, numbered 25-77 through 25-95, would be adopted by a Consent Agenda, with one vote by the Village Council, and would be read by title only:



## **12. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Boyd A. Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, began by thanking the Village Council, Mr. Kazmark, and Dylan Hansen, I.T. Director, for promptly addressing his comments regarding the acoustics/audio in the courtroom during Village Council meetings. Mr. Loving said that he did notice an improvement this evening, noting that he could hear Councilmember Weitz a lot better than he could previously. He also noted that he could hear Councilmember Winograd fine, even though she was standing up by her chair. Mr. Loving said that he disagreed with Mr. Halaby's comments that the problem with the acoustics had nothing to do with the microphones. Mr. Loving believes that the problem lies with the microphones, since the audio on the videos of the meetings is fine, when he replays them at home.

Regarding the bus shelter to be installed near Ridgewood High School, Mr. Loving stated that there are residents in three homes on East Ridgewood Avenue who will be able to view the bus shelter from their front doors. He suggested that notices be sent to these three homes to advise them of this fact, along with photos of what the bus shelter will look like.

Rurik Halaby, a resident of Ridgewood, commented on Ms. Loving's earlier comments, when she stated that there was no shame in changing one's mind. He said that he hopes the four Village Councilmembers do not change their minds about installing an artificial turf field on the Schedler property. Mr. Halaby said that he could not believe that the Village Councilmembers were accused by some residents of irresponsibly ignoring the safety and health of children. Two of the Village Councilmembers have young children who are very active in sports, one of which is a champion soccer player. He said that there are thousands of children in Ridgewood who play sports, and the leaders of the sports groups, whom he said were not irresponsible, are in favor of artificial turf fields. Mr. Halaby said that there is a lot of fear mongering, twisted facts and half-truths being bandied about, and he said that the Village Councilmembers should "stick to their guns."

Suzanne Ruane, a resident of Ridgewood, said that she was speaking this evening about the Residential Flood Advisory Committee. She said that she was excluded from being on the committee, even though she first advocated for the formation of the group. She noted that there is no information posted on the Village website regarding this committee, and no meeting dates are posted. She asked when this information will be posted.

There were no further public comments.

Mr. Kazmark stated that the first meeting date for the Residential Flood Advisory Committee will be at 4:00 p.m. on January 22, 2025. Councilmember Winograd is the Village Council Liaison for the committee. At the initial meeting, future meeting dates will be established. They will probably meet on a quarterly basis. An advocacy plan will be developed in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Congressional and State Legislative Offices. Mr. Kazmark said that he will

have Carol Bialkowski, Director of Communications and Special Events, post this meeting date on the Village website.

**13.     RESOLUTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Mailander read resolution #25-96 to go into Closed Session:

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Village Council, on a motion by Councilmember Weitz, seconded by Councilmember Mortimer, and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Village Council's Regular Public Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

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Pamela R. Perron  
Deputy Mayor

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Heather A. Mailander  
Village Clerk