



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD

131 N. MAPLE AVENUE, RIDGEWOOD, NJ 07450

Ridgewood's Stigma-Free Committee Meeting Minutes 1.21.25

The Zoom meeting opened at 3:02 pm.

Present: Danielle Caputo, Surbhi Kapadia, Dawn Cetrulo, Angela Musella, Siobhan Winograd, Rev. Sarah Lenzi, Dan Kilday, Sheila Brogan, Emily Cathcart, Corinne Scarpa, Beth Abbott, Karen Acker, and Jan Bottcher

Item 1: Welcome and Item 2: Introduction of Village Council Liaison Siobhan Winograd & partnership with Access

- Danielle announced and welcomed Siobhan Winograd as the new counsel liaison for Stigma-Free. Previously Mayor Paul Vagianos had been the Stigma-Free liaison. The committee is excited to have Siobhan join. Siobhan introduced herself. She noted she is a new politician. She was raised in Ridgewood and raised her own family in Ridgewood. She has two adult children. She shared some life experiences and personal reasons that have motivated her commitment to Stigma-Free. She is also the council liaison on the Ridgewood Access Committee.
- As this was Siobhan's first meeting, all members went around and introduced themselves. This was also the first meeting for Rev. Sarah Lenzi, of the Unitarian Society, and Emily Cartcart, who applied to be a member of Stigma-Free and was auditing the meeting.
- Danielle and Siobhan spoke about a meeting that took place earlier in January between a few members of Access Ridgewood and Stigma-Free. During the meeting they discussed areas of overlap and ways the two committees could partner to amplify each other's work. Siobhan reviewed some of the Access Ridgewood initiatives that have helped integrate disabled individuals into the community. Some of the recent initiatives Access took on was the rebranding of the Access logo which incorporated more disability icons, programs at the library with support dogs, inclusionary dinner once a month particularly for the neurodiverse, and an independent Christmas tree lighting, and expanding Access Ridgewood weekend to a full week of events. Danielle asked the group to think about initiatives. She shared one thing that came to mind, which was the streaming of the two movies in the Creative Coping Toolkit that were not shown last year.

Item 3: Bergen County Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services Initiative

- Danielle announced that Bergen County Stigma-Free is launching a lawn sign campaign for mental health in May. This campaign is similar to the Opioid Overdose Awareness campaign that was held by the county last August. Dawn shared that the overdose awareness signs and flags were set up near the train station at the corner. Some other locations discussed as a potential location for the signs included in front of the library,

Village Hall, the schools and the churches. Sheila shared she would speak to the superintendent about displaying signs at the schools. Danielle and Surbhi commented that putting the signs up in a mulched location would be better, as landscapers remove the signs while mowing and they do not put the signs back up. Siobhan noted that along with the lawn sign campaign, the campaign can be expanded digitally by putting photos up on social media or adding it to the E-News, and sending out a press release when the signs go in the ground. Regarding the lawn signs, Lynn suggested, is it possible to have QR code on the signs? QR code to lead you to a one-pager or resources. Agrees we should take the lawn sign initiative to next level, and how do we integrate other partners. Surbhi shared that when the county printed the overdose awareness signs, a QR code was included. Siobhan asked for tactile details about the signs like size.

Item 4: Stigma-Free Logo and billboard in town

- Discussion of the Stigma-Free logo took place, because the general public that sees the sign at the train station or elsewhere do not know exactly what Stigma-Free means. Ideas of how to improve the logo were discussed. One idea is to include a tag line such as “Striving to be” or “in pursuit of” along with the logo. Siobhan has several interns working with her. The young students are very savvy with enhancing and manipulating the digital images. In the Access Committee, an intern MJ Aguilar, was able to rebrand the Access logo. She has 6 interns working with her currently and can have one of them work on rebranding Ridgewood’s Stigma-Free.
- Lynn brought up tweaking the terminology and language used with Stigma-Free. She would like the language to promote mental wellness rather than focus on mental illness and disease, as the language that focuses on illness and disease can cause people to turn away or shut down. Lynn also asked if there were any students on the Stigma-Free. Dawn shared that there had been students on the committee in years past, usually a junior or a senior, but they age out and they are not always replaced. Siobhan to ask if a new student would be interested in Stigma-Free and can be a liaison to the schools and share what is being done at the school.
- In discussion about the schools, Danielle was reminded of the annual Bergen County Mental Health Symposium held every May. A portion of the program always revolves around presenting awards to students who won the sticker contest. The announcement for the contest should be coming out soon and that could potentially be another way to look for Stigma-Free artwork.

Item: 5 Increase Stigma-Free messaging on social media

- Overall, everyone agreed that amping up the message of Stigma-Free with both print and digital media would be beneficial to the community.

Upcoming Events

- Danielle opened up floor to all to discuss any upcoming events.
 - She noted that Deanna of Parks & Rec, who could not attend today, had several coming up. They included: Tax Year 2024- What’s New?, Motown Records and Berry Gordy, Nut Butter Tasting, The Magic of China: Beijing and Beyond, Empower Yourself: Senior Self Defense Workshop,
 - Rev. Sarah is working with West Bergen Mental Healthcare to provide a well-being

speaker series, Living Your Best Life: A series on living well in our time. There will be 3 sessions and the topics are: Navigating Relationships with Our Adult Children, Caring Well for Aging Parents, and The Value of Friendship. The Unitarian Society will be providing the space for the series.

Meeting ended at 4:03 pm.

The next meeting will be held via Zoom on February 18 at 3:00 pm.