

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Meeting Notes

February 13th, 2025 – The Stable 7:00PM

PRESENT: Jim Bostler, Nancy Bigos, Matt Lindenberg, Dave Sayles, Frank Mortimer, Alex Pastore, Ralph Currey

Summary

A rather lengthy meeting served to update everyone on the goals and strategic direction of the Open Space Committee (OSC) in 2025. Alex Pastore was introduced as the newest member of the committee. Following the introductions, in-depth discussions took place on the issues to bring everyone up to date on what we expect to accomplish this year. Chief focus was placed on Park Walks, Earth Day, the referendum, member terms and the Town Garage.

The meeting notes will remain topical only and will not go into great details about conversations, etc. Also, the notes will stress follow-ups and the appropriate person who is responsible.

Topics and Follow-ups

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

II. Approval of October Meeting Notes

The January meeting notes were approved with one typo. The typo will be fixed in the website copy.

III. Member Terms

We welcome Alex Pastore to the Open Space Committee. He will fill the vacancy void at the beginning of the year and after the approval of the Village Council, which should be a formality.

We still have one vacancy which is currently being filled by our Vice Chairman Emeritus Ralph Currey. Past committee member Oleg Rivkin resigned from the committee in January due to scheduling conflicts.

IV. Liaison Reports

- Village Council
 - Frank Mortimer summarized the Village Council issues as they pertain to the OSC. They will be addressed in the succeeding issues.
- Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board
 - Jim attended the PRC meeting with Dave. Basically, they focused on the Reorganization of the committee and new responsibilities.
- Fields Committee
 - Nancy briefed us on the Fields Committee accomplishments. The new lights at Vets are a success with only a few minor complaints which should be alleviated in the Spring. The sodding and rework of the baseball diamond for the field at lower Hawes was completed and should be ready for use at the end of March.

- Planning Board
 - The new liaison assigned to the OSC is Jim Van Goor former Fire Chief of Ridgewood. Jim VG did not attend this meeting due to a conflict, but we look forward to his insights in the future.

V. Green Acres Diversion/2024 Progress/2025 Plan/Frank Mortimer

Frank updated the committee on the progress on this issue. March 22nd is a key date when Frank is scheduled to receive an update on the progress with the appraisals from Heather. The committee is still hoping for a September completion date.

VI. Schedler Park Property/Update

The archeological digs conducted at the park found nothing of significance. Soil studies are almost done, enabling plans for park development to move forward.

VII. Town Garage/Discussion/ Update

The cleanup of this property will take approximately two years as currently planned. The committee members agreed that OSC should sponsor a community event to discuss what should be done with the property after the cleanup. We also agreed that our Daffodil/Earth Day booth should have some type of suggestion box to get an idea of what the community wants done with the property. Frank will communicate with the Village Council on our wishes.

VIII. Potential Event Suggestions

We will be involved with the Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair Event on April 27th. Jim will manage the booth with volunteers to be decided.

Also, we will rerun last year's Park Walks. We were very successful in the publicity we obtained and want to build on that success. Jim will forward new dates to Frank. Frank will check with proper authorities to reserve the dates against any conflicts with other events as Pam did last year. I will present the final schedule at next month's meeting, and we will also include it in Ridgewood's Weekly E-News communications.

IX. New Business

The two issues discussed were the Open Space Assessment and Referendum and the NY/NJ Trail Center proposal.

The Open Space Assessment currently is at 0.5 cents per \$100 evaluation. This has not changed in 20 years. The committee discussed the possibility of raising the assessment to one cent per \$100 evaluation. In order to raise the assessment, the Village must vote and pass a referendum. Also, the Village Council must approve placing it on the November ballot. The importance and the reasons for the request can be communicated by the OSC but we must be careful not to show our support either positively or in a negative fashion. Frank will work with the Village Council in adding it to the ballot.

Nancy shared a proposal from the NY/NJ Trail Conference for a Trail Plan and Workshops for 4 parks. The trail plan would be for a walk through the parks and a document featuring comments on each trail, emphasizing

deficiencies and recommended improvements. A Volunteer Training Workshops would also be developed to train volunteers in helping to implement the improvements.

The 4 parks are Habernickel, Grove Park, Kings Pond/Gypsy Pond and Twinney Pond Park. The next steps will be getting approval to cover the cost of the program and that the OSC Village Ordinance allows us to cover the cost in our budget.

Jim will be updating the Property Acquisitions list. This will include updating the value, criteria and any new properties that may be added. We agreed this will require a separate meeting.

XII. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Open Space Thursday, March 13th, 2025 – Time 7:00 PM – at The Stable

Submitted By: James Bostler – OSC Committee Secretary/Chairman