

**A REGULAR PUBLIC WORK SESSION 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 APRIL 2, 2025 AT 7:30 P.M.**

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

Mayor Vagianos 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, Winograd, and Mayor Vagianos. Also present were Keith Kazmark, Village Manager; Heather Mailander, Village Clerk; Jennifer Natoli, Deputy Village Clerk; and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney.

Mayor Vagianos led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

**2. PROCLAMATION**

**A. HONOR FRANCESCA GUSFA, 2025 STATE CHAMPION NJSIAA 100-POUND INDIVIDUAL GIRLS WRESTLING**

Mayor Vagianos asked the Village Councilmembers, as well as Francesca Gusfa and her family, to join him on the floor of the courtroom. Mayor Vagianos announced that Ms. Gusfa is the 2025 Girls Wrestling State Champion in the 100-pound class. She is the second-ever State wrestling champion from Ridgewood High School (RHS) and the first State wrestling champion at RHS in over 60 years. Mayor Vagianos read the following Proclamation:

Mayor Vagianos congratulated Ms. Gusfa on her exceptional accomplishments. There was a resounding round of applause.

Torre Watson, wrestling coach at Ridgewood High School, asked members of the wrestling team in the audience to stand up to be recognized. Mr. Watson thanked the members of the RHS girls wrestling team for supporting Ms. Gusfa. He stated how proud he was of Ms. Gusfa's accomplishments.

Ms. Gusfa thanked everyone for their support during her journey to become State wrestling champion, especially her teammates and family. There was a resounding round of applause.

### **3. PRESENTATION**

#### **A. RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS – PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT AT VETERANS FIELD – NEW RECYCLING/TRASH BINS**

Danielle Haas and Esmé Hendrikse, students at Ridgewood High School (RHS), introduced themselves and stated that they are taking an AP Environmental Science class at RHS. They are working, along with Zoe Fritz and Matilda Gondris, on a sustainability project for Veterans Field. They propose that new trash and recycling bins be purchased for Veterans Field. Ms. Haas stated that Ms. Fritz is also a senior at RHS and will be attending Ramapo College after graduation from high school, majoring in Environmental Science and Journalism. She is involved in dance and the Color Guard at school, and is a Youth Ministry volunteer.

Ms. Hendrikse stated that she is a senior at RHS and is not sure which college she will be attending in the fall, but she will be majoring in either Biology or Architecture, with a minor in Environmental Science. She is involved in swimming at the YMCA and in high school, and she volunteers at Valley Hospital.

Ms. Haas stated that she is also a senior at RHS and will be attending the University of Delaware after graduation from high school, majoring in Global Studies, with a concentration in the environment, and minoring in Music. Ms. Haas said that she is involved in almost every single band activity there is at RHS and is a pitcher for the varsity softball team. She has noticed the need for more trash bins and recycling containers at Veterans Field.

Ms. Haas stated that the goal of this project is to replace the trash bins at Veterans Field with better quality ones and to pair them with recycling bins. Their intention is that people will actually throw out their trash and recycle more, since the bins will be more accessible. Veterans Field has very few trash cans when compared to the size of the field. The trash bins are misplaced, found in areas where they are not needed, and not found in areas where they are

needed. Many trash cans are either condensed into one area or are far apart from each other. Some of the trash cans are poorly made, and there may be only one recycling bin, if any.

Ms. Haas stated that the bins are not as accessible as they should be. She showed an aerial view on the screen of the locations of the trash bins on Veterans Field. Most of the trash cans are located on the Village Hall/Kasschau Bandshell side of the field, and there are none on the opposite side. Ms. Haas said that they would like to add pairs of trash/recycling bins near the entrance to the field, by the bridge over the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, by the girls' softball field, and by the parking lot near Northern Parkway. Ms. Haas said that many high school students park in this lot and parents park in the lot when their children are playing sports on Veterans Field.

Ms. Haas said that the current trash bins at Veterans Field are made of wire mesh holes, and trash can come out of these holes or be blown out of the cans on a windy day. There are no garbage bags in the trash bins and they do not have tops on them. Preliminary research included a survey of Veterans Field to see where the trash bins were located, and talking with some varsity, junior varsity and freshman athletes (baseball and softball players), as well as other people who utilize the field. The four students also conferred with Margie Downs, Alternate Deputy Registrar in the Health Department, and Councilmember Winograd to seek advice from them in implementing this project. Ms. Haas stated that they have also conferred with Damian Smith, who oversees the trash collection at RHS. They have done research on which types of garbage bins/recycling bins would be more effective to use at Veterans Field and would be the most cost efficient.

Ms. Haas stated that the physical setup of the trash/recycling bins could be done by all four students, and the required upkeep of the bins would be the same as what is currently needed. She stated that they have received grant monies which will be used for another phase of this project, but those funds can only be used on property owned by the Board of Education. Jeffrey Nyhuis, Principal of Ridgewood High School, directed the students to the Village Council, since Veterans Field is owned by the Village. These students are asking the Village Council for financial assistance for this project. Ms. Haas showed some examples of trash/recycling bins on the screen, which have lids and are much sturdier than the current ones at Veterans Field.

Ms. Haas stated that these trash/recycling bins will be good for the environment by minimizing the amount of litter that flies out of the existing bins on windy days, and they reduce the chance that people will put trash in recycling bins, and vice versa. Regarding accessibility, having more cans of this type makes it easier for people who are utilizing Veterans Field to place litter and recyclables in the proper containers, since the bins will be clearly marked and placed more strategically around the field. She stated that these new bins would be aesthetically pleasing, since Veterans Field is used a lot by residents for sports and the field is near Village Hall.

Ms. Haas said that she and the three other students are requesting funding from the Village Council, since Veterans Field is Village property. The Village can also assist in this project by

providing permission and materials to apply for grants that can be used to offset the costs of this project.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she is very impressed with Ms. Haas's presentation. She would like for this project to be an educational experience for all four students. Deputy Mayor Perron said that she would like to set up a meeting between the students and Matthew Andreula, Parks Supervisor, since the personnel in the Parks Department are the ones who take care of trash pickup at Veterans Field. She said that Mr. Andreula could explain to the students why the cans at Veterans Field are placed where they are, and the students could explain to him why they think more cans are needed. Deputy Mayor Perron also said that there may be a weight limit for trash cans, pursuant to occupational safety and health requirements, so that personnel collecting the trash do not get injured by lifting heavy loads. Mr. Andreula could also explain to the students how often trash is picked up at Veterans Field.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she would also like to introduce the students to Seam Hamlin, Recycling Coordinator. She said that recycling bins in the Central Business District (CBD) are often mixed with garbage and recyclables. She feels that labeling the receptacles would be helpful, as well as educating the public on the proper use of trash/recycling bins. When regular trash is mixed with recyclables, the recyclable materials become contaminated and cannot be recycled.

Ms. Haas said that the students have already reached out to Mr. Hamlin, but they would be interested in Mr. Andreula's contact information.

Councilmember Winograd stated that the students have met with Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. She explained that Damian Smith is the Facilities Director for the Board of Education, and he also expressed concern about his staff picking up excessively heavy loads of trash. The presentation given this evening has been forwarded to the Police Department for their review and feedback. After the bombing which occurred at the Boston Marathon in 2013, police became concerned that bombs could be hidden in trash receptacles, so certain types of receptacles were thereafter used. Councilmember Winograd added that the students gave their presentation at the Fields Committee meeting yesterday, which was well received. There was general agreement that more trash/recycling bins were needed at the Village's schools. Councilmember Winograd stated that all of the sports organizations seem amenable to contributing financially towards this project.

Ms. Haas stated that when the presentation was given at the Fields Committee meeting, the students expected there to be a lot more questions from the members and requests to change a lot of their strategy. However, the members were very supportive and agreed that more trash/recycling bins were needed at Veterans Field.

Councilmember Mortimer said that he was very impressed how the students identified a specific problem and came up with ways to address it. He congratulated the students on “stepping up” to solve an important problem.

Mayor Vagianos said that he has spent a lot of time on Veterans Field and often observed overflowing garbage cans, yet nothing to date had been done about it until the students came up with implementable solutions to the problem. Mayor Vagianos congratulated the students on their presentation and for offering viable solutions. There was a resounding round of applause.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments from the public.

#### **5. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Kazmark began his Village Manager’s report by announcing that the Village was notified on Friday, March 28, 2025, at 5:30 p.m., by the New Jersey State Department of Health that two of the three public health grants received by the Village Health Department in past years were frozen by the Federal government. These are Federal grants and the current administration in Washington, D.C. is cutting back on government spending. On Monday, March 31, 2025, the State of New Jersey announced that they would be suing the Federal government for suspending nearly \$11 billion in public health grants nationwide (\$350 million earmarked for New Jersey). This suspension affects municipalities and counties throughout the United States. Twenty-two other states have also filed similar lawsuits, in an effort to reverse the decision of the Federal government. The funding that is no longer available to the Village amounts to a little less than \$170,000.00.

Mr. Kazmark stated that the loss of grant monies will affect the Village’s ability to pay two full-time employees in the Health Department, as well as the ability to fund 34 programs administered by the Village’s Health Department. Mr. Kazmark said that he is working closely with Dawn Cetrulo, Director of the Health Department, to get conclusive answers from both the State and Federal governments. However, he stated that such answers will probably not be received until the lawsuits are heard in court. He added that one grant expires in June 2025 and the other grant expires in March 2026. This abrupt spending freeze will create a hardship for the Village.

Mr. Kazmark said that a house fire occurred on Norgate Drive in Ridgewood yesterday. Personnel from the Ridgewood Police Department, Fire Department, and Office of Emergency Management responded to the emergency shortly after 3:30 p.m. Mutual aid was rendered by first responders from Ho-Ho-Kus, Glen Rock, Wyckoff, and Paramus, as well as Valley Hospital Emergency Services, Bergen County Mutual Aid Coordinators, and the Northwest Bergen

Incident Safety Officer. Mr. Kazmark thanked first responders from Fair Lawn and Midland Park, who manned Ridgewood Fire Headquarters during the emergency. The fire is still under investigation. There was one resident who was transported to Valley Hospital. The emergency was cleared by 6:00 p.m. yesterday. Mr. Kazmark publicly thanked Fire Chief John Judge and all members of the Fire Department for their prompt response to this emergency; the 911 dispatcher at Northwest Bergen Central Dispatch, who advised the resident to evacuate their home; and everyone else who responded to this emergency.

Mr. Kazmark said that he has received the monthly report from Millennium Strategies, the grant writing firm hired by the Village. The Village currently has pending grant applications in the amount of \$4.6 million. Since the beginning of 2025, the Village has applied for additional grants in the amount of \$823,000.00. Mr. Kazmark thanked all Department Directors and their staff for aggressively pursuing available grants, so that the burden on taxpayers can be alleviated. He expressed the hope that the Federal government will not freeze any additional grant monies.

Mr. Kazmark pointed out that the Village Councilmembers will consider authorizing an application for a grant from the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund, to be utilized for field improvements at Citizens Park in 2026. The improvements include replacement of the original fencing at the park, which was erected in the 1960s; renovations to the baseball field, including sun shelters by the player benches; drainage improvements; and possibly some bump-in parking on North Monroe Avenue.

Mr. Kazmark stated that he, Mayor Vagianos, and Deputy Mayor Perron met today with four representatives from New Jersey Transit, to discuss the improvements which are needed at the Train Station, particularly underneath the trestle which spans Franklin Avenue. The New Jersey Transit representatives asked the Village Engineering Department to develop a scope of work proposal, which would include the Village's concerns about drainage issues and rust. This proposal will be submitted to New Jersey Transit for consideration.

The Village's Shred Day event will take place on Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., or until the trucks are full, at the Graydon Pool parking lot. Residents are limited to five boxes or paper bags per vehicle. This is for confidential documents only. Residents should remain in their vehicles (no walk-ups are allowed) and place all items for shredding in the trunks of their vehicles. None of the items for shredding should be placed in plastic bags.

Online registration for Graydon Pool and tennis/pickleball badges began on April 1, 2025, through Community Pass. Badges may also be obtained in person at the Lester Stable, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The badge office at Graydon Pool will be open on May 10 and May 17, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., where pool badges will also be sold.

Mr. Kazmark reminded Village residents that rules allowing irrigation only twice per week are now in effect. Odd-numbered addresses may irrigate on Tuesday and Saturday, and even-numbered addresses may irrigate on Wednesday and Sunday. No irrigation is allowed on Monday, Thursday or Friday.

Yard waste collection begins on Monday, April 7, 2025. Residents should check their Village calendar for pickup days in their specific area.

Village Hall will be closed on Friday, April 18, 2025 in observance of Good Friday, and there will be no garbage or recycling pickups on that day. The Recycling Center will also be closed on that day.

The Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce will host “Easter in the Park,” in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square, on April 19, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There will be an Easter egg hunt, picture opportunities with the Easter bunny, musical entertainment, games and activities. More information can be obtained from the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce.

The Opening Day Parade for the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association will take place on Saturday, April 26, 2025. The parade will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the Ridgewood Train Station, will continue down Ridgewood Avenue to Maple Avenue, and will end at Veterans Field.

The 2025 Daffodil Festival and Earth Day Fair will take place on Sunday, April 27, 2025 in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Upcoming Village Council meetings are as follows: Work Session on April 23, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.; and Public Meeting on April 9, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Kazmark stated that he anticipates that the 2025 Municipal Budget will be introduced at the Public Meeting on April 9, 2025.

## **6. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS**

Mayor Vagianos thanked Councilmember Winograd for assisting the four Ridgewood High School students with their environmental project presentation this evening. Councilmember Winograd stated that she enjoyed working with the students and thanked the staff in the I.T. Department for their support.

Councilmember Winograd said that there was a Fields Committee meeting held on April 1, 2025. The Opening Day Parade for the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association will be held on April 26, 2025. The Ridgewood Lacrosse Association will hold its 19th Annual LAX Day on Sunday, April 27, 2025. The Maroons Soccer Club will hold its Annual Father’s Day Tournament on June 13-15, 2025. A discussion was held during the meeting about enhancing some of the lightning detection systems in the Village, as well as removal and recycling of waste.



Next month, the Fields Committee will have an in-person meeting at the Zabriskie-Schedler house. This is a public meeting, and she advised anyone who plans to attend the meeting that they need to wear appropriate shoes, since there is no hardscaping, and that they cannot park on the Schedler property. Councilmember Winograd said that she would like to get some ideas from representatives of the sports organizations in Ridgewood about a possible future tenant for the house.

Councilmember Winograd thanked Councilmember Mortimer for participating in Council Chat. Members of Highlights in Leisure Time (HILT) attended the last Council Chat. They felt that better signage was needed in Village Hall to direct visitors. Additional signage was recently placed in Village Hall, particularly in the elevators, by Village staff. Councilmember Winograd encouraged Village residents to attend Council Chat to express their concerns.

Councilmember Mortimer said that he had nothing new to report. Councilmember Weitz also said that he had nothing new to report, since his committees have not met since last week.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that Sustainability Day will be hosted by students at Ridgewood High School on April 25, 2025. Richard Calbi, Director of Ridgewood Water, and Deputy Mayor Perron will speak to the students on that day.

Regarding “Slow Mow May,” Deputy Mayor Perron said that no registration or signage will be available this year. However, she encouraged Ridgewood residents to participate in this initiative, since it benefits the environment. However, she said that enforcement of the Village ordinance prohibiting homeowners from letting their grass grow higher than 10 inches will not be suspended.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that the Planning Board met on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 to consider a minor site plan application by the new owner of 245 East Ridgewood Avenue (building across the street from Fox’s clothing store). The new owner would like to extend the back of the building, but will not be altering the charming façade. The application was approved by the Planning Board.

Mayor Vagianos said that he was at the Planning Board Meeting yesterday, and he swore in one of their newest members. He said that members of the Planning Board devote a lot of their personal time to serve on the board, and he described them as exceptional individuals who possess high intelligence and empathy. Mayor Vagianos said that the residents of Ridgewood are fortunate to have people of this caliber serving on the Planning Board.

Mayor Vagianos said that he wanted to celebrate the end of Ramadan, a holy time in the Muslim community where they fast (both water and food) during daylight hours. Ramadan is celebrated on different days each year, and Mayor Vagianos said that it is hard to fast in the summer



months. This celebration is to remind all Muslims how fortunate they are and to recognize those who are less fortunate. Eid al-Fitr, meaning "festival of the breaking of the fast," marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, and is a major Islamic holiday celebrated with community prayers, feasting, and visiting with family and friends. Mayor Vagianos wished the Ridgewood Muslim community well and said that he admired their strength, fortitude, and dedication to their faith.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

### **A. BUDGET**

#### **1. AWARD CONTRACT – TREE IRRIGATION**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the award of a contract for tree irrigation services throughout the Village of Ridgewood. There were five registered plan holders eligible to bid, and three bids were received on March 26, 2025. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Bill's Landscaping Service and Design, Inc., of Ridgefield, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$79,295.00. These services will cover tree irrigation one time per week, by filling Gator Bags with approximately 15 gallons of water each, from May 1, 2025 to November 1, 2025. For residential areas, this will include 26 watering sessions for 400 trees; for the CBD, 53 watering sessions for 45 trees; and for Crest Road by The View, 53 watering sessions for 30 trees.

#### **2. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER STATE CONTRACT – SPATIAL DATA LOGIC SOFTWARE**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter deals with the award of a contract, under State contract, for the renewal of the license for use of the Spatial Data Logic (SDL) software by the Building Department, Health Department, and the Village Clerk's Office. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to SHI of Somerset, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$58,500.00. Councilmember Winograd said that this technology will help to streamline transactions, especially in the Building Department.

#### **3. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM THROUGH PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION CONTRACT – 4-INCH SUBMERSIBLE TRASH PUMP – WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the award of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System, through the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission

Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of a four-inch diameter submersible trash pump for use at the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF). The current pump, used as part of the wastewater treatment process, is old and worn out. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Rapid Pump and Meter Service Company, Inc., of Paterson, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$63,125.00. Funding is available in prior Capital Accounts.

**4. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM THROUGH PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION CONTRACT – PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF DIGESTER GAS SAFETY EQUIPMENT – WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the award of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System, through the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of digester gas safety equipment for the anaerobic digesters at the WPCF. There are a number of safety features at the WPCF to deal with the methane gas produced by the wastewater treatment process. The current safety valves are not functioning properly, and they were last installed in 2005, during the last plant upgrade. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Rapid Pump and Meter Service Company, Inc., of Paterson, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$109,635.00. Funding is available in prior Capital Accounts.

Councilmember Mortimer asked how the new safety equipment, once installed, will impact the environment (odor), since the current safety valves are not functioning properly. Mr. Kazmark said that it is critical that this equipment be ordered and installed as quickly as possible, and he surmised that the quality of the smell in the air surrounding the WPCF would be improved, once the new equipment is installed.

**5. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM THROUGH PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION CONTRACT – PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF TWO DIGESTER ROOF GAS SWIVEL CONNECTIONS – WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the award of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System, through the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of digester roof gas swivel connections for the anaerobic digesters at the WPCF. The current gas swivel connections were installed during the last plant upgrade in 2005 and do not meet the electrical code for safety. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Rapid Pump and Meter Service Company, Inc., of Paterson, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$45,530.00. Funding is available in prior Capital Accounts.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that the WPCF, which is located in Glen Rock, is not often thought of by Village residents, but a lot of important work goes on at this facility which is vital to everyone's health. Mr. Kazmark added that the equipment at the WPCF is operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. He said that it is important that the Village Council support these significant investments in the WPCF infrastructure.

**6. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER NORTH JERSEY WASTEWATER COOPERATIVE PRICING SYSTEM THROUGH PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSION CONTRACT – 3 PENN VALLEY SLUDGE PUMPS – WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITY**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item pertains to the award of a contract, under the North Jersey Wastewater Cooperative Pricing System, through the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission Cooperative Purchasing Program, for the purchase of three new Penn Valley Sludge Pumps for the WPCF. This equipment is used as part of the wastewater treatment process, and several of the existing pumps are wearing out and need frequent repairs. The Village has previously purchased replacement Penn Valley Sludge Pumps as a sole source item, to minimize the amount of piping that would need to be rerouted if a different pump were used. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to Rapid Pump and Meter Service Company, Inc., of Paterson, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$224,442.00. Funding is available in prior Capital Accounts.

**B. OPERATIONS**

**1. AUTHORIZE APPLICATION FOR BERGEN COUNTY OPEN SPACE GRANT – FIELD IMPROVEMENTS AT CITIZENS PARK**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this item pertains to authorization by the Village Council of the submission of an application to the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund for a matching grant to be used for field improvements at Citizens Park. The matching grant is in the amount of \$99,352.24. A Public Hearing on this matter is required. Councilmember Winograd anecdotally remarked how hard it is to hang graduation posters on the current uneven fence at Citizens Park. Mr. Kazmark noted that once this matter is finalized, Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, will give a presentation before the Village Council regarding the proposed improvements to Citizens Park.

Ms. Mailander mentioned that the Public Hearing will be held, and the corresponding resolutions will be considered, at a Special Public Meeting on April 23, 2025. The Public Hearing will be held before voting is held on the resolutions. Mayor Vagianos thanked Ms. Mailander for always making sure that required paperwork is filed and submitted in a timely manner.

**2. AUTHORIZE APPLICATION FOR BERGEN COUNTY  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST FUND GRANT –  
RESTORATION OF PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL AT THE TRAIN  
STATION**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item pertains to the authorization of an application to the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund for a matching grant to be used for the historic restoration of the pedestrian tunnel at the Ridgewood Train Station. The matching grant is in the amount of \$599,335.00. Deputy Mayor Perron asked if 6 Garber Square is the correct address to be used for the property encompassing the Train Station. Mr. Kazmark said that he would review the address with Ms. Mailander tomorrow.

**8. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were some technical difficulties with the hybrid access system, so Mayor Vagianos contacted Denise Lima, who appeared to be waiting to speak, on his cell phone and held the phone up to the microphone.

Denise Lima, a resident of Ridgewood, stated that Memorial Park at Van Neste Square looks fabulous, with all the new tree and flower plantings. She stated that Twinney Pond needs more cleanup, including removal of invasive tree species. The water appears stagnant as well. Ms. Lima said that she would be happy to volunteer on any Village committee formed to deal with the cleanup of Twinney Pond.

Ms. Lima said that with regard to the future development of the former Town Garage property on Franklin Avenue, she thought that the Village Council ought to consider modeling the development of the property similar to Bryant Park in New York City. The use of Bryant Park changes every season, with winter pop-ups and shops, as well as ice skating, and they just planted grass for the upcoming warmer weather.

Regarding the electronic billboard proposed to be erected along Route 17, Ms. Lima said that the same company appealing the Ridgewood Zoning Board of Adjustment's denial of their application has a similar electronic billboard along Route 22 in Union, New Jersey, that emits bird sounds to prevent flying birds from hitting and damaging the screen. Ms. Lima stated that the residents of Ridgewood, if the company's litigation against the Village is successful, will have both a light pollution issue and a sound pollution issue.

Ms. Lima recalled a remark by Mr. Kazmark during the last meeting, wherein he stated that the Village owns 121 vehicles which are monitored through Verizon Connect GPS. She believes that

the ratio of employees to vehicles is quite large (40%). She asked for a breakdown of which Village departments use these vehicles.

There were no further comments from the public.

Deputy Mayor Perron thanked Ms. Lima for bringing up the topic about the electronic billboard. Deputy Mayor Perron stated that the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) issued its Annual Report to the Village Council and to the Planning Board. One of the requests in the report for next year is for the establishment of standards regarding the placement of billboards in the Village. The ZBA report also requested that fencing be addressed (narrowing some types of fencing and augmenting other types of fencing). These topics will be discussed during the next Planning Board meeting.

Regarding Twinney Pond, Deputy Mayor Perron said that she went to that site today with Carol Bialkowski, Director of Communications and Special Projects. She said that the recent storm helped to fill up this “kettle pond.” Mr. Kazmark added that Ridgewood Water recently activated the well at that location, and they utilized some groundwater to replenish the pond. Deputy Mayor Perron said that Twinney Pond needs some “loving care.” She and Ms. Bialkowski noted some garbage in the area. She stated that the invasive tree species are threatening the ecology of Twinney Pond. Deputy Mayor Perron said that she would be interested in gleaning some ideas for the future development of the former Town Garage property by reviewing how Bryant Park is operated.

Regarding Ms. Lima’s question about the number of vehicles used by each Village department, Mr. Kazmark stated that he agreed with her statement about the ratio of vehicles to Village employees is quite high. He stated that Ridgewood is unique in that the Village provides its own trash and recycling pickups, as opposed to employing private companies to perform these services. He said that there is an entire fleet of vehicles for the Sanitation/Recycling Department, Parks Department, Ridgewood Water (which services four municipalities), Police Department (recently onboarded three additional vehicles for the Special Law Enforcement Officer Class IIIs), and Fire Department. Mr. Kazmark said that the vehicles owned by the Village are managed quite well. Some budget requests for new vehicles were not approved in the 2025 budget, and some departmental fleets have been reduced since he became Village Manager. He stated that Ridgewood performs a lot of its services in-house. Mr. Kazmark agreed with Ms. Lima’s request to conduct an inventory of each department’s vehicles, and he indicated that he would discuss this with Michael Junta, Supervisor of the Fleet Services Division.

## **9. RESOLUTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Ms. Natoli read Resolution #25-184 to go into Closed Session:

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Paul Vagianos  
Mayor

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Heather A. Mailander  
Village Clerk