

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2025**

Opening:

The public meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Village of Ridgewood was called to order at 7:50 p.m.

Present: Greg Brown, Matthew Bandelt, Jonathan Papietro, Jamie Fox, Jason Curreri (8:14), Yelena Raytser and Matthew Swan. Also present were Bruce Whitaker, Esq.; John Barree, Village Planner; Christopher Piersa, Village Engineer; August Matarazzo, Traffic Engineer, and Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary. Diana Ruhl and Khidir Abdalla were absent.

Minutes: The minutes from May 13, 2025, and May 27, 2025 were adopted.

Non-agenda items:

Board member comments – There were no comments at this time.

Members of the public comments – There were no comments at this time.

Resolution memorialization: The following resolutions were memorialized:

- Mathew, 314 South Van Dien Avenue, Block 4107, Lot 19
- Schmidt, 739 Parsons Road, Block 1304, Lot 19

Public hearings:

Old Business:

LES DANN, LLC – An application for use variance approval, preliminary and final site plan approval and bulk variances related to the consolidation of three existing lots into one property to be developed with a new autobody shop at 246 – 264 South Broad Avenue, Block 3905, Lots 12, 13, 14.

Mark Semeraro, Esq., entered his appearance on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Semeraro said they were ready to start the testimony of the Civil Engineer.

Calisto Bertin was sworn and his credentials as a licensed engineer accepted. Mr. Bertin testified regarding the plans he prepared, revised to May 29, 2025. Mr. Bertin described the existing conditions and the current setbacks of the buildings on the three lots. Mr. Bertin stated that the applicant proposes to demolish all the existing buildings and consolidate the lots, which would reduce the impervious coverage. Mr. Bertin discussed the proposed stormwater management and described the proposed setbacks and the footprint of the proposed building.

Mr. Bertin showed a drawing with the existing setbacks overlayed on the proposed building, which was marked as Exhibit A-90.

Mr. Bertin testified regarding the proposed site plan in detail, describing the location of the fence and the dumpsters, and the parking layout, including the tandem parking spots and the 3 EV spaces.

Mr. Bertin went over the revisions made, showing an existing rendering, dated June 9, 2025 and marked as Exhibit A-91, and a landscape plan rendering dated June 9, 2025 and marked as

Exhibit A-92.

Mr. Bertin testified regarding the stormwater management, the impervious coverage calculations, slope of the site, retaining walls and the landscape and lighting plan. Mr. Bertin identified the variances being requested.

Mr. Bertin testified regarding the circulation plan, marked as Exhibit A-93.

Mr. Whitaker asked about the location of the dumpsters and if they are enclosed. Mr. Bertin said three roll-off dumpsters are proposed and are not enclosed as the whole rear of the building is enclosed. Mr. Bertin said they could be fenced if required. Mr. Whitaker asked about the parking and the applicant stipulated that the parking in the front of the building would only be for customers picking up their cars and the general public. Mr. Whitaker asked for clarification on the painting booth, as it was stipulated that the sound would be measured as existing now and then would be measured after the new building was completed, if approved, and that it would have to be equal to or less than it is currently. Mr. Whitaker said that state standards in regards to safety would have to be met. Mr. Bertin agreed and said that they would have to comply.

Mr. Piersa asked about where the water from washing vehicles would to. Mr. Bertin explained that it goes through an oil/water separator and then into the sanitary system. Mr. Bertin said they would have a suggested maintenance system in place.

Mr. Barree asked about the setback of the transformer, which will be 15 feet from the property line, and if they are satisfied that the spacing of the trees will not cause any interference with the utility trenches. Mr. Bertin said that should not be an issue.

Board members asked if the width of the driveway entrance would be sufficient for larger trucks. Mr. Bertin said they may need to swing wide to enter the property. Board members asked if they could widen the drive in the interest of safety. Mr. Bertin said they could widen the driveway and make the circulation one-way.

Board members asked if the application was approved, could there be a review of the sound analysis, site lighting and of the gate to determine if it should be motorized.

Questions from the public:

David Christiansen, 79 Grove Street, Waldwick, present as a member of the Religious Society of Friends, 224 Highwood Avenue, asked why the berm shown in a previous plan was removed. Mr. Bertin said that with the proposed landscaping it did not seem necessary. Mr. Christiansen asked about the proposed 10 foot high sign, 5 feet from the property line, and if it was permitted and if it fit in with the neighborhood. Mr. Bertin said that the sign is not permitted in a residential zone.

Todd Allievi, corner of Boyce and Woodside Place, asked who enforces who parks in the spaces designated for customers. Mr. Whitaker said the Zoning Officer would enforce and summonses would be issued if they do not meet the stipulation.

Mr. Allievi asked about the size of the shrubs and trees to be planted and why they are so small. Mr. Bertin said the proposed size of the shrubs and trees is customary when planting new. Mr. Whitaker said that the applicant would have to plant as per the plans if approved.

Henry Thayer, 209 South Broad Street, asked what the 3 dumpsters were for. Mr. Bertin said that one is for steel, one for aluminum and one for other recycling. Mr. Thayer asked about other trash. Mr. Bertin is not the witness for that question.

Mr. Thayer asked Mr. Bertin what neighbors he spoke with. Mr. Bertin said he was given instruction; he did not speak directly with any neighbors.

Mr. Thayer asked about the parking and if the number of tandem spots was sufficient for the vehicles being worked on. Mr. Bertin said there were some spaces on the side if more were needed.

Mr. Thayer asked about the hearing procedure and Mr. Whitaker explained the process.

John Corak was sworn and his credentials as a licensed Traffic Engineer accepted. Mr. Corak described his process of preparing his report and doing a trip generation count during the two busiest periods. Mr. Corak testified that the sign was shifted back one foot due to the sight triangle and that going from three driveways to one driveway is a safety benefit. Mr. Corak stated he did a parking variance analysis and that the highest demand at any one time was 46 vehicles and the proposed parking supply is sufficient. Mr. Corak said the parking space size of 9 feet by 18 feet is the industry standard, if the required 9 feet by 20 feet were used, there would be more impervious coverage.

Mr. Corak stated that the proposed signage is beneficial as it makes the business identifiable to motorists. Mr. Corak stated that the proposed landscaping impacts the visibility of the structure and the sign makes up for that.

Mr. Corak addressed the issues in the Board's Traffic Engineer's report.

Mr. Whitaker asked about the one way circulation. Mr. Corak said it needs to be two-way at the entrance and then clockwise around the property.

Mr. Matarazzo asked what the anticipated level of service of the site driveway would be. Mr. Corak said that level of service at all times of day would be operating at A's and B's.

Mr. Matarazzo asked about the EV parking requirement and the EV credit. Mr. Corak stated that they would only get the credit up to eight or nine if eight or nine EV spaces were provided, which would be impractical for this use. Mr. Matarazzo said if they provided them as make-ready spaces, they could eliminate the parking variance. Mr. Corak said they could consider it.

Mr. Barree asked if Mr. Corak observed any of Mountain View Auto's other facilities. Mr. Corak said he observed the Wayne facility in regards to trip count two years ago and it was slightly lower than observed at this site.

Board members asked if the comparison between the Ridgewood site and the Route 23 site would align as one is on the highway. Mr. Corak explained that the access to the Wayne business is through a two-lane roadway, not Route 23. Board members asked for an explanation of the numbers and the time table.

Board members asked about the increase in traffic on South Broad. Mr. Corak stated that even with a higher trip generation there is no adverse impact.

Board members asked about the tandem parking in the west corner of the lot where the retaining wall is and if all the spaces are needed for the operations or just to meet the required number of spaces. Mr. Corak said that according to his review of the Institute of Transportation Engineers Parking Generation Manual, those nine spaces could be removed, but that would be more of an operator distinction than traffic engineering.

Public questions:

Todd Allievi, corner of Boyce and Woodside Place, asked if Mr. Corak observed any car carriers or trucks driving during peak hours. Mr. Corak said he saw one delivery truck during peak hours, and four larger vehicles during the whole day. Mr. Allievi submitted a photo of a car hauler that could carry 9 vehicles which he saw on May 27. The photo was marked as Exhibit O-1. Mr. Semeraro asked if Mr. Allievi saw where it came from. Mr. Allievi said he didn't see where it came from but inferred that it came from Mountain View Auto Body. Mr. Allievi asked if there would be an increase of the number of car haulers and flat beds coming and going from the site. Mr. Corak said there would be some increase, but the majority of vehicles would be driven by the customer. The increase would have a minimal negative impact.

Henry Thayer, 209 South Broad Street, asked about the pedestrian traffic. Mr. Corak said the pedestrian traffic would not change as a result of this application. Mr. Thayer asked what percentage increase in business would lead to more than a minimal increase in traffic. Mr. Corak explained how that would be determined, but that a trip increase of 50 or more vehicle trips would have the potential for a change in level of service for an adverse impact. Mr. Thayer asked if the proposed trip increase could negatively affect people in the neighborhood beyond the metric used by a traffic engineer. Mr. Corak said it could. Mr. Thayer asked about the comparison of Pompton Turnpike in Wayne to South Broad Street in Ridgewood. Mr. Corak said there are similar characteristics. Mr. Thayer asked about children walking to school and people in their front yards. Mr. Corak said that goes beyond his expertise as a traffic engineer. Mr. Thayer asked about busier times of the year. Mr. Corak said there are not busier months for this type of business.

David Christiansen, 79 Grove Street, Waldwick, present as a member of the Religious Society of Friends, 224 Highwood Avenue, asked what the relevance in looking at the data from Wayne from two years ago would be. Mr. Corak said that this operator has a modern facility in Wayne that is very similar to the proposed facility.

Mr. Semeraro said that Mr. Corak's testimony is concluded.

The hearing was carried to July 8, 2025 without further notice.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary

Date Approved: July 8, 2025