



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD



Ridgewood Community ACCESS Committee Meeting Minutes 6/20/25

The ZOOM meeting began at 2:02pm.

Present: Jaimie Davis, Jesse Schwartzman, Deanna Schablik, Siobhan Winograd, Sheila Brogan, Robin Ritter, Greg Alter, Jan Phillips, Danielle Caputo, Joanne Stolfo, Ashley Loria, Laura McKenna, Cara Lynn Robinson-Deutsch, Emily Cathcart, Meghann Bierly, Erica Duncckley

Item 1: Welcome/Approval of Minutes

Jaimie welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked Erica for her efforts in being the Recording Secretary for the committee. Emily Cathcart will be taking over in that position. Regarding the minutes from the May meeting which Ashley recorded, Erica motioned approval with Sheila seconding. Motion passed.

Item 2: President's Report

Recording Secretary: Jaimie suggested Erica and Emily to coordinate to ensure a smooth transition. Siobhan emphasized sending the minutes to Carol as soon as they are approved so she can post them on the website. Some committees have not been updating. Also the website needs updates when we have voted on the chair and co-chair.

Sensory-Friendly Touch-a-Truck and Barbecue was last weekend. Carol posted it in the eNews but she didn't mention that it was also an ACCESS-sponsored event. We had over 100 people there and even though it was crowded it was very chill. Jaimie suggested writing a letter to the firefighters who were so involved with the children from the ACCESS Committee. Also at the next Council meeting, perhaps a short note could be entered into the record to publicly thank them. Siobhan asked Jaimie to write the copy and send it to her and Carol and they'll send it on our letterhead in a PDF. Paul V can read it. Jaimie will share the final letter to the committee.

Sensory-Friendly Dinner in May was a big success. That will be the last one until the fall.

Item 3: Executive Board Reports

Jesse: He attended the Touch-a-Truck event and was impressed with the number and variety of fire trucks. He said that Stop 'n Shop had provided the hamburgers, and they kept bringing them out every 15 minutes.

Erica thanked Emily for taking on the secretary position and Jaimie for asking her. Robin thanked Erica for her time as secretary.

Item 4: Village Council Report

Siobhan: There was a hearing grant available to Bergen County. A woman emailed Siobhan through our website suggesting we apply for the grant. Although Ridgewood is the applicant, the County had to apply for us. We were at the nth hour. She called Tracey Zur at the County. She helped us in acting very quickly. We applied for this \$70,000 grant on a Thursday and we were



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD



awarded it on Tuesday! It will service the main floor of Village Hall where the Senior Lounge is located, and where the acoustics are poor. She is very appreciative of Tracey's help and receiving the grant. It's a great thing for ACCESS and the seniors who will greatly benefit. Also last week we had an intern proclamation. We've never really had an internship program. At the Village Council meeting there were several STEPPS students in attendance who are interning in WATER, a division of Ridgewood Water.

Sheila mentioned the STEPPS graduation which took place this past Tuesday. Five students graduated from the program. They are all either moving on to college courses or they have a job. It was a wonderful event. Families were joyous and the staff was very proud. She thanked Siobhan and the Village.

Item 5: SEPAG Report:

Jaimie mentioned that each STEPSS graduate will receive a free year's membership to the Ridgewood YMCA. David Rosen gave them each their YMCA certificate at the ceremony. SEPAG has posted the video with Dr. Schwarz giving a state of the special ed program.

Item 6: Village Dept. Reports

Health Dept./Stigma-Free:

Danielle has replaced Surbhi on the committee, whose grant wasn't renewed unfortunately. But she has gone on to another municipality. Regarding the two grants that we had, one was reinstated. So Danielle should be there through June of 2026. Blood pressure clinic is today 1-3. The child health clinic is on the last Tues. of June. She met with Deanna about the fall calendar and they have come up with a date for their Senior Resource Fair. Wed. 11/19 9:30-11:30.

Other programs are in the works and she will share those in Aug. when they are confirmed. The Mayor's Wellness Challenge is coming up in the fall, including mental health and NARCAN classes. We should try to attend these programs. Teen mental health training will be in Nov. Laura: She would like it if the CPR could be connected to DDD. Caregivers need to have it and it can be a hassle finding a place to do it. If she could publicize it to the COPE center, that would be so much easier. Siobhan asked her to assemble a list of Ridgewood residents. She will ask the Fire Dept. Laura will check with the State.

Danielle mentioned that they have NARCAN kits if anyone would like to have one. Siobhan mentioned that college-age kids are interested in learning about this as well.

HILT: Deanna:

HILT picnic was held this past week and 82 seniors attended - a record number! They've been very engaged recently. They've been coming out for the Lunch and Learn programs. Liz Kloak works very hard to find the sponsors for the lunches.

ROID grant of \$20,000 came in. So they'll be hiring someone part-time to oversee the grant. She'll get back to us on the age groups. And she's very happy about the hearing grant. It will really help our older population.



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD



Summer classes will continue throughout the summer for the seniors. In July we will hold registration for the fall programs.

Item 7: New Business

ACCESS Week: Jaimie met with Siobhan, Robin, Paul Aronsohn and Roberta Panjwani regarding thoughts on the Interfaith event which happens on Sunday at 2pm. They had a good discussion and then Paul met with Rev. Mack Brandon to go over some ideas with him. Robin said that they discussed holding the event in the library auditorium. One idea they discussed was a round table discussion with faith leaders, other community leaders and families engaging in decisions about the role of faith in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. A variety of topics were discussed and then outreach to houses of worship. We would provide a brief summary of incorporating access in your faith community. And hopefully they could incorporate these ideas into their service. Also if we do that in early Oct. before ACCESS Week, it's another way of advertising the program. She thinks the next step is, if everyone is in agreement with this model, Jaimie could write a letter to Mack and formalize it to the interfaith community and we could then move forward.

Jaimie thinks it would be so valuable to discover what the different faiths say about disability in their texts, in their culture; what types of steps their congregation has taken to make their services and facilities more accessible and maybe each congregation can learn from each other. So rather than it be a religious discussion, it could be about what disability means to their faith. Meghan also suggested including Joanne Van Sant in the conversation. Siobhan suggested having the "Save the Date" flyer go out starting on Wed. of the week. Jaimie said that the formal invitation would have both Mack and Joanne's names as co-chairs on it. Siobhan said the idea of holding it in the library auditorium would have to be put before the library board as well. We have to ensure there isn't any religion being promoted. Robin emphasized that this event idea is very preliminary.

Playground: Cara -at one of the accessible playgrounds in Clifton the parents in the town started a non-profit booster and collected many grants so no taxpayer money was spent at all. She wondered what the rules are in Ridgewood for something like that. Siobhan said the Village does not have a dedicated 501C3 that supports a supplemental charity. She explained about the diversion of parkland that we have. Once that diversion is cleared we will be eligible for Jake's Law.

Our parks will be getting swings. A discussion of accessible and ADA-approved playgrounds ensued. One feature of the former that Cara especially likes is a message board for vision-impaired youths.

July 7/21 is Disability Pride Day. She has a link for the flag. Siobhan suggested a proclamation at the Village Council meeting on 7/9.

Ashley spoke about the ASL conference that she attended recently. Siobhan suggested to Sheila that during ACCESS Week, perhaps we could invite the middle school students to attend



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD



an event at the library, maybe on Friday. However, logistics are complicated during school hours. Maybe offering extra credit for attending? Probably an event at 3:30 would work best.

The meeting ended at 3:16pm.

The next meeting will be via ZOOM on Friday, August 15 at 2:00pm.