

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting Minutes
June 24, 2025**

Opening:

The public meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Village of Ridgewood was called to order at 7:37 p.m.

Present: Matthew Bandelt, Diana Ruhl, Jonathan Papietro, Jamie Fox, Jason Curreri, Khidir Abdalla and Matthew Swan. Also present were Bruce Whitaker, Esq., Board Attorney; John Barree, Village Planner, and Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary. Greg Brown and Yelena Raytser were absent.

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.

Public hearings:

Mr. Brown announced that the Fox, 325 Crest Road, application was carried to August 12, 2025, without further notice.

New Business:

CHRISTOPHER & SARA WILSON – An application to permit the construction of a rear addition to the first floor and attic addition which would result in a building height of 33 feet, where 30 feet is permitted; a side yard setbacks of 14.1 feet to the attic addition, and 12.52 feet to the rear addition, where 22 feet is the minimum required; and a combined side yard setback of 26.62 feet, where 27.3 feet is required at 718 Hillcrest Road, Block 1403, Lot 7, in an R-1 Zone.

Mr. Swan recused himself from this hearing.

Roger Schlicht was sworn and his credentials as a licensed architect accepted. Mr. Schlicht described the existing conditions on the property and described the lot as undersized and irregularly shaped.

Mr. Schlicht distributed photos showing the existing conditions and stated that the house will have the same footprint except for two sets of stairs. Mr. Schlicht testified that the application complies with all coverage requirements and identified the variances being requested. Mr. Schlicht explained that although they are requesting a 'd' variance for the height, the proposed height of the dormer is lower than the main roof.

There were no questions from the Board members.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Following Board deliberation, Ms. Ruhl made a motion to approve, Mr. Fox seconded, and the application was approved.

Old Business:

Mr. Swan returned to the meeting.

NICHOLAS & BRITTANY LOUROS – An application to permit the construction of a new single-family dwelling with attached garage, pool and patio which would result in a front yard setback on Briarcliff Road of 25.29 feet, where 40 feet is required; gross building area within 140 feet of the front lot line of Orchard Place of 38.5%, where 32% is permitted; coverage by above grade structures within 140 feet of the front lot line of Orchard Place of 23.35%, where 20% is permitted; and a fence height of 6 feet where 4 feet is permitted at 220 Orchard Place, Block 2311, Lot 5.01, in an R-2 Zone. (Continued from May 27, 2025 without further notice)

Matthew Capizzi, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant, and made comments in regards to the revisions made since the previous meeting. Mr. Capizzi identified the variances being requested, noting that the setbacks of the patio and pool are now conforming.

Stephen Koestner, Engineer, was previously sworn. Mr. Koestner testified regarding the site plan revised to 6/10/25. Mr. Koestner went over the revisions and the calculations.

Board members asked about the steps and the retaining wall height and if it is within the 10 foot setback. Mr. Barree explained that the wall needs to be setback from the property line equal to its height. Mr. Koestner explained that the wall is a retaining wall for the stairs.

Questions from the public:

Michael Francesco, 256 Briarcliff Road, asked if the Maple tree can be saved. Mr. Koestner said it can be. Mr. Francesco asked if the total impervious coverage is remaining the same. Mr. Koestner said it is shifted, but the calculations remained the same.

Mr. Whitaker asked for clarification on if the tree could be saved and where the underground drainage facility could be moved. There was discussion regarding the plan to save the tree.

Board members asked about the volume of the house and if any changes had been made. Mr. Capizzi said there was discussion at the last meeting about the house but nothing specific and no changes were made to the house.

Spach Trahan was sworn and her credentials as a licensed Planner accepted. Ms. Trahan commented on her preparation regarding her testimony. Ms. Trahan described the property, explained the subdivision application that created this lot and described the neighborhood. Ms. Trahan testified regarding the revisions made prior to tonight's testimony.

Ms. Trahan identified the variances being proposed and distributed photos showing the site and the area.

Ms. Trahan stated that they are seeking a c(2) variance and explained how what is proposed is compatible in the neighborhood and there would be no substantial detriment.

Board members asked about starting with a 'blank slate' and the lot being oversized. Ms. Trahan explained that there is less area when measuring the area within 140 feet on Orchard Place.

Mr. Barree asked if Ms. Trahan analyzed the coverage if the house was pushed back from Orchard and out of the first 140 feet. Ms. Trahan said that would not be a better planning alternative as it would not be in character with the neighborhood to have such a large front yard.

There were no questions from the public.

Public comment:

Norma Francesco, 256 Briarcliff Road, was sworn and stated her concerns about the amount of pavement and the relocation of the driveway. Ms. Francesco said that the Maple tree is one of the last on the street and they would like to see it saved to maintain the canopy.

Michael Francesco, 256 Briarcliff Road, was sworn and commented regarding his concerns regarding drainage issues and the hardship on the neighborhood to have so much impervious coverage.

Mr. Capizzi said they are 6% below the permitted impervious coverage sitewide and they will allow most trees to remain.

The Board began deliberation. Mr. Capizzi asked if the hearing could be carried to allow them to discuss alternatives.

The hearing was carried to August 12, 2025, without further notice.

KATHLEEN CARTER – An application to permit the construction of a patio, hot tub and outdoor kitchen which would result in a rear yard setback of 4.9 feet and a side yard setback of 7.1 feet to the patio, a rear yard setback of 9 feet to the hot tub, and a rear yard setback of 6.4 feet to the outdoor kitchen, where 10 feet is the minimum required at 535 North Monroe Street, Block 1603, Lot 21, in an R-2 Zone.

Priscilla Triolo, Esq., entered her appearance and explained that the applicant was not able to attend. Ms. Triolo made opening remarks.

Kiersten Osterkorn was sworn and her credentials as a licensed Engineer and Planner accepted. Ms. Osterkorn testified regarding the site plan and described the existing conditions. Ms. Osterkorn stated that the property drains on the north side of the lot between lots 1 and 2 and there is currently no drainage system on the property. Ms. Osterkorn stated that they are compliant on coverages and are seeking variances for side and rear yard setbacks for the patio and hot tub. There will be compliant fencing around the property.

Ms. Osterkorn submitted the specification of the proposed fence, which will be 6 feet along the rear. This was marked as Exhibit A-1. Ms. Osterkorn submitted photos of the existing conditions on the property which were marked as Exhibit A-2.

Mr. Whitaker asked if the hot tub was in the ground. Ms. Osterkorn stated the hot tub would be out of the ground 18 inches. Mr. Whitaker said that it would be considered a pool.

Ms. Osterkorn referred to the landscape plan, which was marked as Exhibit A-3, and said the property would be irrigated and explained the drainage system and the pea gravel.

Mr. Barree said they should add everything that is 12 inches above grade to the calculations. Mr. Barree asked if the hot tub and outdoor kitchen could be moved closer to the house.

Board members asked about the trees at the rear of the property. Ms. Osterkorn said they belong to the neighbor. Board members asked about the existing play structure. Ms. Osterkorn said it was being removed.

Public questions:

Paul Samuel, 350 Fairmount Road, asked if the coverage by above grade structures would go over 20%. Ms. Osterkorn stated that the above grade structures calculation would be 16.79%. Mr. Samuel asked if the hot tub could be moved one more foot from the property line and if any trees would be removed. Ms. Osterkorn said no trees would be removed.

Belma Dogdas, 531 North Monroe Street, asked if the proposed trees would be deer resistant. Ms. Osterkorn said they could not guarantee that, but they are also providing a privacy fence. Ms. Dogdas asked about the drainage as they are at a lower elevation. Ms. Osterkorn explained that they will not exacerbate what is going on the property and that whatever is being proposed will be collected.

Drew Shepherd was sworn and his credentials as a landscape architect accepted. Mr. Shepherd prepared the landscape plan marked as Exhibit A-3 and testified that there will be a vast network of root system and mulch and that the pea gravel will also add to the stormwater drainage management. Mr. Shepherd explained that the steps are proposed to be at that width because that is how wide the door is, but that they could move hot tub further from the property line.

Board members asked about the plants being deer resistant. Mr. Shepherd explained that the 6 foot privacy fence would help with the deer situation. Board members asked what would happen with the plants in the winter. Mr. Shepherd stated that some of the plants would be good year round and that everything was selected for its hardiness.

There were no questions from the public for Mr. Shepherd.

Public comment:

Belma Dogdas, 531 North Monroe Street, was sworn and submitted photos, which were marked as Exhibit O-1. Ms. Dogdas took the photos from several different vantage points from her house to show the current view from her property which is at a lower elevation than the subject property.

Board members asked Mr. Shepherd how tall the proposed arborvitaes should grow, Mr. Shepherd stated that they should grow to be 20 feet tall. Ms. Dogdas asked how quickly they grow and what the planting height would be. Mr. Shepherd said the trees should grow 12-16 inches per year and they would have a planting height of 6 feet.

Victor Carlson, 356 Fairmount Road, was sworn and stated that he has no objections but wanted to underscore that the existing drainage issues are real. Mr. Carlson said he is optimistic about the landscape plan.

Mr. Whitaker suggested that the Village Engineer should review the plan and submit a report that would be available to the public.

There was Board discussion and it was agreed that the Village Engineer should review the plans. Board members discussed what issues they would like to see addressed.

Paul Samuel, 350 Fairmount Road, was sworn and commented that his concerns had been addressed but that he would want to see the updated calculations after the revisions are made.

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

Discussion: Leung, 256 Ivy Place – resolution compliance. Mr. Barree said he discussed the revised plans with Mr. Capizzi and the outstanding issues will be addressed.

Resolution memorialization: The following resolution was memorialized:

- St. John, 199 Spencer Place, Block 2301, Lot 4

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary

Date Approved: July 22, 2025