

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 JULY 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 7:30 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; and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney.

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

2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Cynthia O’Keefe, a resident of Ridgewood, said that at last week’s Village Council meeting, Councilmember Mortimer mentioned 13 websites containing different studies, upon which he based his opinion that artificial turf is safe. Ms. O’Keefe said that she reviewed the various resources mentioned by Councilmember Mortimer. She said that three of the resources had nothing to do with artificial turf, but rather set forth benchmarking in parks and recreation matters. The report on artificial turf conducted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) did not study PFAS or the heat islands created on artificial turf. The USEPA admitted that limited tests were conducted on their subjects and stated that their report was in no way a risk assessment concerning artificial turf. The USEPA report contained many disclaimers. Based upon these facts, Ms. O’Keefe said that one cannot conclude from this USEPA report that artificial turf is safe. The material of focus in this study was crumb rubber infill. The USEPA concluded that there were low levels of chemical exposure to athletes who played on turf with crumb rubber infill only.

Ms. O’Keefe said that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), another resource cited by Councilmember Mortimer, has identified artificial turf as a potential source of lead. Ms. O’Keefe said that while the risk may be considered low from new artificial turf fields, both aging and weathered turf can release lead dust, which can be ingested and inhaled by players. The CDC suggests that testing be performed of older, worn and weathered fields to determine lead levels. If lead levels are high, children should be restricted from playing on them.

Ms. O’Keefe said that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) reported on the manufacturing process of artificial turf. Their report stated that all artificial turf contained PFAS and created heat islands, and recognized the importance of investigating both items in greater detail. Ms. O’Keefe stated that a 2023 NJDEP study found fluorine in artificial turf. The NJDEP

recommended that a full assessment of optional alternatives be performed, and endpoints such as toxic releases and carbon footprints should be appropriately compared to evaluate the full impact to environmental and human health.

Ms. O’Keefe also discussed her findings after reading articles in the *Journal of Environmental Pollution* and *National Geographic*. She said that the latter publication reported on microplastics and honeybees. She felt that Councilmember Mortimer was “cherry picking” whatever reports were favorable to artificial turf. Ms. O’Keefe said that bees are collecting microplastics on their wings and legs, most likely from turf and other materials.

Eric Santoli, a resident of Ridgewood, said that he was invited to the meeting this evening by Jeanne Johnson to show some support and solidarity for the Outside Art in Ridgewood (AiR) Initiative. Mr. Santoli said that he has been a teacher for over ten years. He is also an artist and is “in touch” with the Ridgewood art community. The Outside AiR Initiative is a mural program/public arts program. He spoke about this initiative today on the Ridgewood Talks podcast. He feels that this program will benefit the entire community and school system, and not just artists.

Jackie Carter, a resident of Ridgewood, said that she was also speaking this evening to show support for the Outside AiR Initiative. She feels that this program will bring more visitors to the Central Business District (CBD) and will increase profitability for retail and service businesses.

Jennie Coates, a resident of Ridgewood, said that she is the Treasurer of the Newcomers Club. She also serves on the Library Foundation Board and the Kasschau Bandshell Committee. She said that she is also speaking this evening to show her support for the Outside AiR Initiative.

Amy McCambridge, a resident of Ridgewood, stated that at last week’s Village Council meeting, Councilmember Mortimer cited a lot of sources upon which he based his opinion that artificial turf is safe. She said that the USEPA and CDC made no safety declarations, and both are actively conducting investigations on the health impact of artificial turf and crumb rubber. Both organizations have stated that more research is needed regarding artificial turf. Ms. McCambridge said that if Councilmember Mortimer is stating that he has done his research and looked at the science, he is either uninformed or is misleading the community. She said that even though the NJDEP has approved grants for artificial turf projects, they have never stated that crumb rubber is safe for children to play on. Ms. McCambridge said that the NJDEP has stayed silent regarding the safety of artificial turf and accused them of institutional negligence.

Ms. McCambridge stated that Councilmember Mortimer cited a five-year-old study performed by the Netherlands National Institute for Health and Environment. However, she stated that Councilmember Mortimer failed to mention that this study contributed to a full European ban on crumb rubber turf, which will be effective in 2028, due to serious health and environmental concerns. Ms. McCambridge stated that the European Chemicals Agency and Norwegian

Institute of Public Health raised “major flags” regarding cancer-causing chemicals in artificial turf. She said that the publications cited by Councilmember Mortimer (*International Journal of Risk Analysis*, *Journal of Environmental Pollution*, and *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology Letters*) made no safety endorsements regarding artificial turf. Ms. McCambridge said that Councilmember Mortimer is ignoring the growing body of research on cancer risks, PFAS leaching, and microplastic pollution related to artificial turf.

Ms. McCambridge said that Mr. Kazmark seemed “deeply disturbed” by the misinformation being spread in the community. However, she stated that a lot of misinformation is originating from Mr. Kazmark himself. Mr. Kazmark claimed that the Village and sports officials are following heat guidelines set forth by the National Athletic Trainers Association. She said that Mr. Kazmark spoke about the WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) being used. Ms. McCambridge stated that the WBGT does not measure surface heat on artificial turf. She said that surface temperatures on artificial turf can reach between 140 and 170 degrees, even when air temperatures are below the safety threshold. She asked where warning signs have been posted on artificial turf fields, which turf fields were closed during the recent heatwave, and where the shaded cooldown zones were located. She also asked who is enforcing the protocols cited by Mr. Kazmark. Ms. McCambridge stated that children were actually playing on Maple Field, on the day that Mr. Kazmark said the field was closed due to the extreme temperatures. She said that she has a video proving that children were playing on Maple Field.

Ms. McCambridge stated that Councilmember Winograd was correct in stating, at last week’s Village Council meeting, that it would be irresponsible for anyone to stand in the center of an artificial turf field during a heatwave. She said that if the children can play on Maple Field during a heatwave, then her challenge remains for the Village Councilmembers to stand in the middle of that field during extreme temperatures so that they can understand heat islands.

Anna Grossman, a resident of Montclair, New Jersey, said that she was speaking this evening about the artificial turf field that is being proposed for the Schedler property. During one day last week when the temperature reached 97 degrees, Ms. Grossman said that she cracked an egg on some artificial turf and the yolk fully cooked after a while. She said that the egg didn’t even stick to the turf because it contained PFAS. She asked the Village Councilmembers why they would expose young children to the heat islands created by artificial turf, surfaces so hot that an egg can be baked on it.

Ms. Grossman said that she lives next door to an artificial turf field. When it is hot and it rains, she smells a stench emanating from the field. She said that she reported this to the Essex County Health Department, and an inspector came today to investigate where the stench was coming from. She described the smell as “infill soup,” hot, steamy crumb rubber soup, full of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). Despite the grants issued by the NJDEP for artificial turf projects, Ms. Grossman feels that people should heed the words of

Commissioner Shawn LaTourette regarding the landmark PFAS settlement recently reached in New Jersey (\$450 million against 3M). She spoke about the constant use of artificial turf in the State of New Jersey. She said that just because Green Acres funds such projects does not mean that the Research and Science Division of the NJDEP has investigated the safety of artificial turf.

Ms. Grossman said that politicians and governmental agencies, as well as the Village Councilmembers, are pressured by sports lobbyists and sports groups to vote for, or act in favor of, artificial turf, despite the fact that such turf pollutes the environment. Ms. Grossman said that the Village Councilmembers cannot seem to figure out how to maintain grass fields, despite the fact that students from Rutgers University have offered their assistance. She said that the Village Councilmembers only abide by science when it is convenient for them.

Anne Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, said that Mayor Vagianos has chastised her and others for laughing, smirking or smiling while comments are being made during Village Council meetings. Earlier this evening, although Ms. O'Keefe was speaking directly to Councilmember Mortimer, only Councilmember Weitz and Deputy Mayor Perron were looking directly at Ms. O'Keefe when she spoke. Ms. Loving said that Councilmember Mortimer never looked at Ms. O'Keefe as she addressed him specifically. Instead, Councilmember Mortimer was sipping water, adjusting his neck, and looking around. Ms. Loving said that these actions were very disrespectful, and she said that she wished Mayor Vagianos could have witnessed these actions. Similarly, Ms. Loving stated that Councilmember Winograd never looked directly at Ms. O'Keefe when she spoke during public comments.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mayor Vagianos apologized for his brief absence during the meeting, as he had gotten something in his eye while driving to the meeting this evening and tried to wash his eyes out in the restroom.

Councilmember Winograd apologized to Ms. Loving if it seemed as though she were not paying attention to the comments being made by Ms. O'Keefe. She was taking notes so that she could give Ms. O'Keefe a proper response. Councilmember Winograd emphasized that the Village is not considering the use of crumb rubber for its athletic fields, and crumb rubber infill was not used when Maple Field was installed. The Village Council has only considered eco-friendly turf in its decision-making process. Councilmember Winograd said that the Village Councilmembers are aware that artificial turf gets hotter than grass during extreme temperatures, and Maple Field is closed during those times. She stated that the heat guidelines by which the Village abides have been communicated to those persons who have rightful access to the fields, such as properly registered and insured trainers and sports organizations. She said that the Village cannot control random individuals who happen to use the field during extreme temperatures.

Regarding Ms. O’Keefe’s comments regarding Councilmember Mortimer’s reliance upon the USEPA’s reports concerning the safety of artificial turf, Councilmember Winograd stated that the USEPA is a Federal agency. The Federal government has approved turf in several key places, including a dedicated turf field at The Presidio (a national park) and the Congressional cemetery, which is federally regulated.

Councilmember Mortimer apologized if it appeared as though he was not listening while Ms. O’Keefe was speaking earlier, but he said that he was listening to everything she said.

3. VILLAGE MANAGER’S REPORT

Mr. Kazmark began his Village Manager’s report by congratulating the staff of Ridgewood Water. The State Budget, which was signed earlier this week by Governor Murphy, allocates \$1 million in funding to Ridgewood Water for PFAS mitigation, specifically for the Main PFAS Treatment Facility which will be built in Glen Rock. He thanked Governor Murphy and the legislative teams who represent the municipalities serviced by Ridgewood Water for including this allocation in the State Budget (Fiscal Year 2026), and for lessening the tax burden to residents. Mr. Kazmark said that the Village has now received both Federal and State funding to be used towards PFAS mitigation. The Village continues to pursue its legal avenues against the manufacturers of these forever chemicals, as well as any possible claims that can be made through old insurance policies.

Mr. Kazmark said that through the efforts of Ms. Mailander, the leadership of the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association (PBA) and Superior Officers Association (SOA), the current PBA contract has been successfully negotiated and signed, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been in place for a number of years. Mr. Kazmark expressed confidence that the Blue Collar Workers contract will be signed by next week, making the Village current with all of its labor contracts.

The Fourth of July parade will be held on July 4, 2025, and the fourth floor of the Hudson Street Parking Garage will be closed to vehicles and the public during the entire day. According to the Signal Department and Robert Rooney, Chief Financial Officer and Director of the Parking Utility, the fourth floor cannot accommodate the weight of so many people congregating to watch the Fourth of July fireworks. The architectural firm advised, when the garage was built, that human weight is very different from vehicular weight, and having too many people on the fourth floor could be problematic. The closure of the fourth floor of the parking garage will be enforced.

Mr. Kazmark reiterated from last week’s Village Council meeting that the Village follows the heat guidelines and protocols set forth by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), regarding the use of Maple Field during extreme temperatures. This

policy was again distributed to all sports organizations in Ridgewood after last week's meeting. He thanked Nancy Bigos, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, and Katie Frey, Supervisor of the Recreation Department, for their assistance in this regard. Mr. Kazmark said that the Village continues to monitor the use of Maple Field, particularly during the summer camp program. During the height of the recent heatwave, the Ridgewood Baseball and Softball Association (RBSA) cancelled some of their practices and games at Maple Field.

The Fourth of July parade begins at 10:00 a.m. on July 4, 2025, and the evening celebratory events will begin at 6:30 p.m. The fireworks will commence at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Village offices and operations will be closed on Friday in observance of the Fourth of July holiday. The Recycling Center will also be closed on that date.

The Ridgewood Guild will be sponsoring "Music in the Night" at various locations throughout the Central Business District (CBD) on Friday nights during the summer, and continuing through Labor Day. "Music in the Park" will also take place on Saturday evenings from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. The Ridgewood Guild is sponsoring free "Movies in the Park" on Wednesday nights at 9:00 p.m. in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. Summer concert entertainment will take place at the Kasschau Bandshell every Tuesday and Thursday evening, beginning at 8:00 p.m. unless otherwise announced, and will end at approximately 10:00 p.m., during the months of June, July and August.

The Chamber of Commerce is hosting their annual Farmers Market on Sundays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., at the Train Station on the west side.

Upcoming Village Council meetings are as follows: Work Session on August 6, 2025 and Public Meetings on July 9 and August 13, 2025. All meetings commence at 7:30 p.m.

4. VILLAGE COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Mortimer stated that he had nothing new to report.

Councilmember Weitz stated that he is the Village Council liaison to the Fourth of July Committee, and the final volunteer meeting was held this past Monday. He said that he wished the residents of Ridgewood could see how much work is done "behind the scenes" by Village staff and committee volunteers, to ensure that everything runs smoothly on the Fourth of July. Councilmember Weitz stated that all of the funding for the Fourth of July events is raised through private donations and ticket/raffle sales, and he praised Tara Masterson and Leigh Gilsenan for their hard work every year. He encouraged everyone to purchase their tickets for the Fourth of July fireworks as soon as possible. Councilmember Weitz said that 50/50 tickets are also available for purchase. The flag raising will take place on July 4th at 9:00 a.m. at the Train

Station, and the parade will begin at 10:00 a.m. near George Washington Middle School. The parade should end around 12:00 p.m., and the gates to Veterans Field will open at 6:15 p.m. for the evening festivities.

Mr. Kazmark said that there was a comprehensive meeting held today about safety improvements at the intersection of Oak Street and West Glen Avenue, with the staff of the Engineering Department and Police Department. A meeting is scheduled for tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. with Bergen County staff to discuss a “laundry list” of questions, in order to ascertain what Bergen County will allow the Village to do to improve safety at that intersection, since West Glen Avenue is a County road. Further details will follow.

Councilmember Winograd said that she has nothing new to report, but wished everyone a happy and healthy Fourth of July. She reminded all dog owners to make sure that their pets are properly registered and tagged, just in case their pets should wander off because they are frightened by the fireworks.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that she has nothing new to report.

5. PRESENTATION

A. OUTSIDE AiR INITIATIVE – CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT MURALS

Deputy Mayor Perron said that Jeanne Johnson and Kathy Wu Brady would give a presentation on Outside Art in Ridgewood (AiR). Ms. Johnson said that she has appeared before the Village Council several times in the past 18 months to speak about public art installations in Ridgewood. She said that her larger proposals are stuck in “bureaucratic jail.” Ms. Johnson said that the historic architectural firm is still reviewing the pedestrian tunnel project, and New Jersey Transit is reviewing the trestle mural proposal.

Ms. Johnson said that she is appearing this evening with Kathy Wu Brady, her Co-Chair on the Outside Air in Ridgewood Committee. They would like to install several miniature interactive murals throughout the Central Business District (CBD). These murals would complement the existing installations by Ridgewood Cycle, Rossi Paint Store, and the Playhouse.

Ms. Johnson said that the mission of Outside AiR is to create a more vibrant and connected community, where the streets are alive with art, culture, and community spirit. There would be social media interaction and strong support for local businesses, which will create a more robust CBD. The small interactive art installations would consist of murals and 3-D art that capture the imagination and delight the viewer in a small footprint. She said that passersby will be inspired to shop, admire, take photos, and share their experience with others, bringing more attention to

the downtown area. QR codes will be placed at each installation, which will bring the user to the Outside AiR landing page, where they can find out the locations of other art installations in the CBD. Featured artists include Jackie Carter, Elsa Carbone, Bob Leibow, Athena Maxwell, and Kathy Wu Brady. Ms. Carter owns a business called “Artisan Crafts.” Ms. Carbone is a former art teacher in Midland Park and a former Ridgewood resident. Mr. Leibow is a Ridgewood resident and retired art teacher in New York City. Ms. Maxwell is the AP art instructor at Ridgewood High School, and Ms. Brady is an artist working with the Ridgewood Art Institute.

Ms. Johnson then reviewed potential art ideas and locations in the CBD where the art installations can be placed. The locations include the Wine Seller on West Ridgewood Avenue, Stella on South Broad Street, Sweet Kitchen and Brooklyn Pizza on Oak Street, the Post Office, as well as Color Me Mine and worldFLATS on East Ridgewood Avenue. Ms. Johnson stated that they have not yet received any endorsements, but representatives from the Ridgewood High School Art Department, the National Art Honor Society, the Ridgewood Art Institute, the Ridgewood Arts Foundation, and the Ridgewood Arts Council are serving on the Outside AiR Committee. Ms. Johnson then showed some slides on the screen depicting some of the proposed art installations around the CBD, including a depiction of grapes near the Wine Seller, a whimsical clock near Stella, and a picture of a chef throwing a pizza out a window at Brooklyn Pizza.

Ms. Johnson described some interactive art murals consisting of butterflies, a bouquet of balloons, and bubbles. She explained that the wings of the butterfly, for example, would tell a story about a famous artist such as Georgia O’Keefe, Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, and Jackson Pollack, and would show an image of that artist’s artwork. Ms. Johnson stated that the bouquet of balloons could be illustrated on the wall of Color Me Mine, and the butterfly could be portrayed at 11 Oak Street. The art installations would be made out of Hardie Board, which would allow for the art installations to be changed at any time by painting over the existing image on the Hardie Board. Ms. Johnson stated that the art installations would be interesting and inspiring, would attract visitors to the CBD, and would be educational as well.

Ms. Johnson then described some proposed seasonal art installations, including a “Paint Tube” in the summer, “Googly Eyes” set in a tree in the fall, “Yarn Bombs” wrapped around trees in the winter, and umbrellas or kites in the spring. She said that the sophisticated, whimsical installations were inspired by other locations across the globe. The “Paint Tube” is found in Bologna, France; the “Googly Eyes” are found at the Arboretum in Washington, D.C.; and the “Yarn Bombs” are seen in many communities around New Jersey, including Fair Lawn. The idea of the hanging umbrellas and kites started in Quebec City, Canada, and has spread to Flushing, New York; Bangor, Maine; and Newport, Rhode Island. The proposal of the paint tube has been discussed with Ms. Bigos, and she was thrilled with the idea.

Ms. Johnson said that the “Googly Eyes” could be rotated in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square. The “Granny Squares” comprising the Yarn Bombs are made by volunteers. Ms. Johnson is proposing, to keep things uniform, to use the Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) light poles in the CBD to hang the umbrellas and kites, similar to how the Kissing Balls were hung around the holidays. She needs to get permission for this from PSE&G. She said that the umbrellas are made from kits, composed of aluminum and polyester. The top of the umbrella has a hole in it to allow for easy hanging with wire. Ms. Johnson said that the committee members would like to complete this project in time for Downtown for the Holidays on December 5, 2025.

Mr. Kazmark stated that he has already spoken to the Outside AiR Committee members, the Ridgewood Guild, and the Parks and Recreation Department, and it has been agreed that any art installations in Memorial Park at Van Neste Square will be kept a respectful distance away from the War Memorial and Gold Star Families Memorial.

Ms. Johnson agreed with Mr. Kazmark, and said that the committee is seeking approval from the Village Council to move forward with the project. Approval is also needed from the landlords who own the buildings on which the proposed art installations will be placed, as well as PSE&G and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

Mayor Vagianos thanked Ms. Johnson for her presentation. Councilmember Mortimer stated that in his wife’s hometown in Sweden, there are open art installations. Every year, they invite different artists to create art in the downtown area. The seasonal art installations proposed by Ms. Johnson also reminded Councilmember Mortimer of the outside art in his wife’s hometown. He said that installations of art in communities drives visitors into the area. Councilmember Mortimer said that he fully supports the Outside AiR initiative.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she would like Ms. Johnson to make her presentation at a meeting of the Central Business District Advisory Committee (CBDAC). She called the project “charming” and said that she fully supports the initiative.

Councilmember Weitz agreed with Deputy Mayor Perron and asked to see any final plans before the art is installed, just to ensure that there are no sight line obstructions or anything that would cause accidents. Councilmember Weitz said that he would be happy to work with the Outside AiR Committee regarding the review by the HPC, since he serves as the Village Council liaison to that committee. He does not think there will be a problem, since none of the art installations are permanent. Councilmember Weitz asked Ms. Johnson when the art installations could be done. He said that the HPC meets once a month.

Ms. Johnson replied that as soon as approvals are obtained from the landlords, then she can present her proposal to the HPC. Once all approvals have been obtained, then the art installations

will be staggered. She would love to see all of the murals installed by October 1, 2025, since that is when a lot of events take place in the CBD, such as the Fall Festival and Oktoberfest.

Councilmember Winograd said that she loved the idea of the art installations. She asked if the PowerPoint presentation created by Ms. Johnson could be sent to all of the Village Councilmembers, so that it can be shared with their respective committees, and Ms. Johnson agreed to do so. Councilmember Winograd suggested that perhaps some of the interns in the Village's intern program could assist the Outside AiR Committee with their social media campaign. Councilmember Winograd said that she would love to see a "Welcome to Ridgewood" sign near the new Bus Station, something that is historical and whimsical at the same time. She also stated that there are a lot of special needs children who are very artistic and expressive, and she would love to see them included in this project.

Ms. Johnson said that the budget slide was missing from her PowerPoint presentation. She stated that she is requesting the amount of \$1,350.00 for this project. The paint supplies needed for the interactive murals will be donated by Rossi Paint Store. The "Paint Tube" will be donated by Larisa Shlahet, a member of the Ridgewood Arts Foundation. The umbrellas (kits of 10) will cost approximately \$1,000.00, assembly of the donated granny squares will cost \$150.00, and the "Googly Eyes" will cost \$200.00, for a total of \$1,350.00.

Mayor Vagianos again thanked Ms. Johnson and her fellow committee members for all of the work they have done to beautify the CBD, particularly during the Covid pandemic. He asked how the maintenance and/or replacement of the art installations would be managed. Ms. Johnson said that Mayor Vagianos's question has been the topic of discussion for almost two years with the Outside AiR Committee, which currently has 30 members. She said that all of the members are willing to do whatever is necessary to create, maintain or replace the art installations in Ridgewood. Ms. Johnson said that the committee is "not at a loss" of volunteers to help out in this endeavor.

Mayor Vagianos asked how the art replacements would be handled, and Ms. Johnson replied that she has not thought that far ahead, past the initial seasonal installations, but she is confident that committee members will come up with some really great ideas in the future. Regarding the Hardie Board, Ms. Johnson said that she loves the suggestions presented to her by Jackie Carter for changing the artistic themes of the butterflies, balloons and bubbles seasonally, which themes will be both educational and inspiring. Ms. Johnson said that art is something that everyone can appreciate.

Mayor Vagianos said that he believes the Outside AiR project as proposed has the full support of the Village Council. He suggested that Ms. Johnson move forward with presenting this proposal before the necessary committees and obtain the necessary approvals, and the Village Council will "figure out the money."

6. **DISCUSSION**

A. **BUDGET**

1. **RESCIND AND REPLACE RESOLUTION NO. 25-158 – AWARD CONTRACT – RENOVATION OF GLEN PICKLEBALL COURTS**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to an updated proposal for the renovation of the pickleball courts at the Glen School. On March 10, 2025, Resolution #25-158 was approved for the repair and resurfacing of the existing Glen pickleball courts. Since that time, several residents have requested that two additional courts be installed during the renovation of the existing courts. The vendor, Sport Tech Acrylics of Brewster, New York, has prepared an estimate in the amount of \$67,000.00 (which is an additional \$28,000.00 over the original quote), and this work will include redesigning of the courts, removal of the old poles and installation of new poles and nets, repairing cracks, resurfacing the entire six-court facility, and relining all courts. It is recommended that Resolution #25-158 be rescinded and replaced with a new resolution, with the contract being approved through the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program. Ms. Bigos has successfully found funding for this revised project through old capital accounts.

Councilmember Mortimer, who has been working closely with the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board on this project, said that the installation of the two additional pickleball courts comes at a convenient time, while the existing pickleball courts are being renovated. He said that the popularity of pickleball continues to steadily increase. Mayor Vagianos clarified for the public that the two additional pickleball courts will cost \$28,000.00, and the balance of \$39,000.00 is for the renovation and resurfacing of the existing pickleball courts.

2. **CHAPTER 159 – 2025 BUDGET AMENDMENT – GRANT FROM STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, STRENGTHENING LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH CAPACITY PROGRAM – FUNDING FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EXPENSES AND PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Mr. Kazmark stated that this item deals with a 2025 Budget Amendment Resolution for a State grant awarded to the Village but not appropriated. This resolution permits the Village to add grant revenue and appropriation to the 2025 budget. The grant was received by the Health Department from the State of New Jersey Department of Health, Strengthening Local Public Health Capacity Program, to provide funding for communicable disease expenses and protection of public health and safety, in the amount of \$24,951.00, for the period of July 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.

**3. AWARD CONTRACT UNDER THE COUNTY OF BERGEN
COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM – VILLAGE HALL
ROOF REPLACEMENT**

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter pertains to the awarding of a contract, under the Bergen County Cooperative Purchasing Program, for removal of the solar panels, cables and conduits from the roof at Village Hall and replacement of the roof. The current roof is approximately 25 years old and has numerous leaks that are damaging equipment in various offices after heavy rainstorms. Many of the leaks are from the initial installation of the solar panels. The solar panels, which are approximately 15 years old, have not provided electricity to Village Hall for a number of years due to cable and conduit failures. Once removed, the cabling will be recycled; the plastic conduits will be disposed of; the solar panels may possibly be sold on govdeals.com; and the steel and aluminum supporting structure for the panels will be recycled with the Village's scrap metals. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to VMG Group of Roselle, New Jersey, in an amount not to exceed \$39,600.00.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she asked about the leaks caused by the solar panels and discovered that there are leaks in the Village Clerk's Office, Engineering Office, and Village Manager's Office.

**4. AWARD CONTRACT – REPAIR TO PEDESTRIAN STAIRWELL
AT THE TRAIN STATION**

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter deals with the awarding of a contract to perform repairs to the pedestrian stairwell at the Train Station (eastbound kiosk #1). This project was sent out for bid since it is a project regulated by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). There were seven registered plan holders eligible to bid, and six bids were received on June 18, 2025, ranging from a low of \$98,000.00 to a high of \$227,000.00. This damage was caused when an automobile ran into the pedestrian stairwell. The cost of these repairs is to be funded from the Village's insurance trust account, as well as with reimbursement monies from the responsible party's motor vehicle insurance. It is recommended that this contract be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Hear Construction, Inc., of South Ozone Park, New York, in an amount not to exceed \$98,000.00. Mr. Kazmark added that Hear Construction, Inc., is an historic contracting firm.

Councilmember Winograd said that this unsightly damage to the Train Station has been present for quite a while, and she thanked everyone for their patience. She asked when the actual repairs would be performed and said that it would be ideal if the repairs could be completed before the start of school in September. Mr. Kazmark said that he was not sure when the work would be completed and it would really depend upon the contractor's schedule. A pre-construction meeting is not usually held until the contract is actually awarded by the Village Council. As soon

as that meeting is held, Mr. Kazmark said that he would let Councilmember Winograd know the actual timetable for the work to be completed.

For the public's edification, Deputy Mayor Perron said that the cost for this work will be partially paid for through insurance proceeds recovered from the auto insurance company of the driver who caused the damage in the first place. Deputy Mayor Perron said that there is also damage to one of the kiosks (structure that houses the stairwell and ramps) on the west side of the Train Station that needs to be repaired. These repairs will be performed when the pedestrian tunnel repairs are performed.

B. POLICY

1. NOMINATE ISABELLA ALTANO FOR NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION AWARD OF RECOGNITION

Mr. Kazmark stated that this matter pertains to the posthumous nomination of Isabella Altano for the New Jersey Historical Commission Award of Recognition. Ms. Mailander stated that this award is to honor Ms. Altano for spearheading the drive to preserve the Zabriskie-Schedler House in Ridgewood.

Councilmember Winograd said that she and Deputy Mayor Perron both worked alongside Ms. Altano, when Ms. Altano served on the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters. Ms. Altano's family was contacted when Councilmember Winograd and others became aware of this award. Councilmember Winograd thanked everyone who assisted in honoring Ms. Altano with this award.

Deputy Mayor Perron agreed with Councilmember Winograd, stating that Ms. Altano was diligent, knowledgeable and persuasive when it came to the work she did to preserve the Zabriskie-Schedler house.

2. AMEND CHAPTER 190 – LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT – ESTABLISH S-1 SENIOR OVERLAY ZONE DISTRICT

Mr. Kazmark explained that this matter deals with an amendment to Chapter 190, Land Use and Development, to establish an S-1 Senior Overlay Zone District (approximately 1-1/4 acres). Beth McManus, the Village's Affordable Housing Planner, stated that this newly established zone consists of three lots located along North Maple Avenue, between Franklin Avenue and Marshall Street, which will permit development of an assisted living building. Ms. McManus said that there are currently a few office buildings on this site which would be redeveloped into an assisted living building. She explained that an overlay zone creates an additional layer of zoning for a property, resulting in a choice of usage for the property owner (underlying zoning or extra

layer of zoning, with adherence to the specific requirements for each particular zone, rather than a mixture of both zones). Ms. McManus stated that the new building will be more aesthetically pleasing than what currently exists on the property.

Ms. McManus stated that several months ago, during preparation of the Fourth Round Housing Plan, Kensington Senior Development, LLC, approached the Village to request inclusion in the housing plan for development of an assisted living building at the site. This site was included in the Fourth Round Housing Plan. The S-1 Senior Overlay Zone District (Block 3611, Lots 1, 19, and 22) permits an assisted living building of approximately 120 beds. Parking will be located behind the building (not along North Maple Avenue). The maximum building height would be 56 feet, and the maximum building height permitted in the B-3-R, B-1 and B-2 districts is 50 feet. The apartment building across the street, at the corner of North Maple Avenue and Franklin Avenue, is five stories tall.

Ms. McManus stated that the Planning Board adopted the Fourth Round Housing Plan on June 23, 2025. The S-1 Senior Overlay District was included and will generate approximately 12 affordable housing credits. New Jersey assisted living facilities are required to reserve 10% of the beds for Medicaid recipients, and those beds qualify for affordable housing credits.

Mr. Rogers explained the legal process which led to the discussions by the Village with Kensington Senior Development, LLC. Deputy Mayor Perron indicated that Kensington Senior Development, LLC, was very cooperative during the discussions. Mayor Vagianos stated that an assisted living facility in Ridgewood is a use that is absolutely beneficial to the Ridgewood community. Mr. Kazmark described the procedural process by which the proposed ordinance, once approved by the Village Council, would be referred back to the Planning Board on July 15, 2025, for review and recommendations before final adoption by the Village Council on August 13, 2025.

3. RENEW SITE ACCESS AGREEMENT – NORTH WALNUT STREET PARKING LOT – SAMPLING OF MONITORING WELLS

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this item pertains to renewal of the access agreement to The ELM Group, Inc., a division of Haley and Aldrich, Inc., the firm working on property located at 120 Franklin Avenue in Ridgewood (the former Town Garage). The North Walnut Street parking lot (Lots 3 and 4, Block 3806) has been included in the investigation area for subsurface contamination affecting 120 Franklin Avenue. The consultant is investigating contaminants, including volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds and metals. Renewal of the access agreement would enable the consultant for 120 Franklin Avenue to continue to sample the groundwater monitoring wells surrounding the North Walnut Street parking lot. It is recommended by Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer, that the access agreement be

renewed to permit The ELM Group, Inc., access to the parking lot's monitoring wells for an additional two years. The ELM Group has offered to share with the Village any data generated by the investigation.

4. PLACE LOCAL REFERENDUM QUESTION ON GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT – INCREASE RIDGEWOOD'S OPEN SPACE TAX LEVY

Mr. Kazmark explained that that this item pertains to the referendum question to be placed on the General Election ballot in November 2025, to ask voters if they approve increasing the Municipal Open Space tax levy from one-half cent to one penny per \$100.00 of assessed valuation. The proposed wording has been provided by Councilmember Mortimer, as the Village Council liaison to the Open Space Committee. The proposed wording is based upon the wording used in Middletown, New Jersey, where voters have approved three increases to their Open Space tax levy.

Councilmember Mortimer stated that Middletown's Open Space tax levy is currently four cents per \$100.00 of equalized valuation. He thinks that the current wording for the referendum question to be considered in November is much clearer than originally proposed, and he thanked Deputy Mayor Perron and Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney, for their assistance in this regard. An explanatory statement will also be included on the November ballot, which was missing from ballots in previous years. Also, in previous years, the Open Space tax was described as a new tax, instead of an increase to an existing tax.

Deputy Mayor Perron stated that some residents contacted her and asked if the referendum question could assure voters that the increased Open Space tax levy would not be used for artificial turf. Deputy Mayor Perron said that she checked with Mr. Rogers and this cannot be done. She said that the referendum question needs to be presented in the most neutral way as possible, without swaying anyone's vote. In any event, Deputy Mayor Perron said that if the wording is changed, she advised against using the term "equalized value," used by Middletown in their referendum question, because that term is too variable. She agrees with the term "assessed value" as used in both the proposed ballot question and explanatory statement.

Mr. Rogers explained that there are seven purposes or uses set forth by State statute regarding how funds in the Open Space Trust Fund can be used. The statute allows the Village to specify which of those usages are being sought when attempting to spend Open Space funds. Whenever the Village proposes to use such Open Space funds for purposes of installing artificial turf, or for any purpose, there has to be a Public Hearing, during which time members of the public may voice their opinions. Mr. Rogers said that the referendum question cannot supplant any decision by the Village Council, at a later date, as to how it decides to utilize Open Space funds.

Mayor Vagianos said that he was trying to explain the referendum question to someone in clear terms. It was that person's understanding that the Village wanted to increase the Open Space tax levy to 1%, and he asked how much his taxes would increase if the increase was approved. Mayor Vagianos said that he "did the math" and the increase turned out to be a nominal amount. He asked if an example could be included in the explanatory statement of how the increase in the Municipal Open Space tax levy would affect an average home in Ridgewood, in a dollar amount.

Councilmember Mortimer stated that he had sent some wording to include such an example in the explanatory statement for Mr. Rogers' approval, but Mr. Rogers explained that the explanatory statement had to be as neutral as possible and not be persuasive one way or the other. Mr. Rogers said that he would review the example wording again, over the next few days.

Mr. Kazmark said that the proposed ballot question and explanatory statement must be submitted by Ms. Mailander to John Hogan (Bergen County Clerk) shortly. He asked if there was a consensus among the Village Councilmembers that the example should be placed into the explanatory statement. Councilmember Mortimer said that he would feel more comfortable using the wording that is similar to the wording used by Middletown when this question was placed on the ballot, since voters in Middletown have approved three increases over the past 25 years. Mr. Rogers said that he would review same to determine if it is permitted or not. Mayor Vagianos clarified that Mr. Kazmark wanted to know if there was a consensus of a majority of the Village Councilmembers to include the example into the explanatory statement, so that the submission to the Bergen County Clerk can be expedited once Mr. Rogers determines whether or not such an example can be included in the explanatory statement.

Mr. Kazmark confirmed that the Village Councilmembers must adopt the resolution for the referendum at the July 9, 2025 Public Meeting, since the "Vote by Mail" ballots are sent out during the third week in September. The ballot questions are due in mid-August, but the first Village Council Public Meeting in August will be held on August 13th.

Councilmember Winograd stated that she likes the suggestion made by Mayor Vagianos, but the explanatory statement cannot sway the way a member of the public votes. She said that she was not in favor of adding the example to the explanatory statement, unless there has been a precedent set previously by another New Jersey municipality. She said that she does not want to be the first to put "a dollar amount" on the ballot question. That being said, Councilmember Winograd said that there will be an effort to inform the voter what an Open Space tax levy is and how the funds are used.

Mr. Kazmark said that he has never seen such an example in a ballot question or an explanatory statement printed on the ballot. The only place he has seen such an example is in Q&A material that has been developed to educate people about the ballot question.

Councilmember Weitz said that he is in favor of the wording as presented this evening for both the ballot question and the explanatory statement. He said that there may be some confusion about what the Open Space tax increase is, that it is not 1% but rather one-tenth of 1%. In any event, he does not feel that this should hold up the vote on July 9, 2025 at the Public Meeting. Councilmember Mortimer said that that is why he used the word “penny” rather than any percentage terminology.

Mayor Vagianos said that he oftentimes walks into a voting machine and still does not understand what a referendum question or explanatory statement means. He said that he does not feel that an illustrative example would persuade a voter to vote one way or another. Mayor Vagianos said that many residents do not even know what an Open Space Trust Fund is, or what the term “assessed value” means. He said that voters just want to know how the proposed increase is going to financially affect them. Mayor Vagianos said that just because someone hasn’t put numerical examples in an explanatory statement before, doesn’t make it a bad thing. Councilmember Mortimer said that he would collaborate with Mr. Rogers to work on the proposed language in the explanatory statement, and all of the Village Councilmembers were in agreement.

5. SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT ORDINANCE

Mr. Kazmark said that the next item for consideration is the proposed Special Improvement District Ordinance. Deputy Mayor Perron explained that the basis of the Special Improvement District (SID) is that the commercial property owners in Ridgewood would pay a special assessment that would be used by a nonprofit District Management Corporation (DMC) to promote economic development and growth, foster and encourage business vitality, and improve the business climate overall. There would be no financial contribution by residential taxpayers. SIDs were sanctioned by the New Jersey Legislature in the 1980s, and many New Jersey municipalities have formed SIDs. Members of the Steering Committee, which was formed to develop a feasibility study, have been researching SIDs for months and months, and the feasibility study report was accepted and adopted at the Village Council meeting held on June 25, 2025. The ordinance under consideration by the Village Council this evening would authorize creation of the Special Improvement District.

Deputy Mayor Perron said that she would like to make two changes in the ordinance. The first change would be to revise the name of the DMC from the Ridgewood Village Alliance, Inc., to the Ridgewood Business Alliance, Inc. She polled all members of the Steering Committee regarding this change and they were all in favor of this change. Deputy Mayor Perron said that this would avoid confusion with the Ridgewood Municipal Alliance, which is the Village’s program for drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

The second change would be in Section 5, The Designated District Management Corporation, which sets forth some of the statutory powers afforded to the DMC, which is not an inclusive list. Deputy Mayor Perron said that the 18th power indicated in Section 5 is similar to the regulations of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), dealing with the review of all applications, plans, and specifications for the proposed construction or alteration of any and all exterior improvements to buildings and facades. Deputy Mayor Perron said that she sees no reason to duplicate the regulations of the HPC by including this 18th power, since this might lead to undue delay if applications have to be reviewed by two entities. Mr. Rogers, Councilmember Weitz, and Councilmember Winograd both agreed that paragraph number (18) should be deleted from the ordinance.

Councilmember Weitz asked if the list of commercial properties listed in Schedule A would be binding or if it would be subject to change. Deputy Mayor Perron said that the list has to be fluid, because properties get sold. Councilmember Mortimer said that he was very much in favor of forming a SID in the Village. He explained to Councilmember Weitz, who was absent last week when the SID presentation was given before the Village Council, that when the DMC is formed, the Board of Directors will include representatives from each zone (4A, 4C and 15F), not just businesses located in the CBD.

Mayor Vagianos clarified that the property owners will be responsible for paying the special SID assessment, but he assumed that the property owners/landlords will pass along this responsibility to the business owners renting their property. He thanked Deputy Mayor Perron for all of the hours she has spent spearheading the formation of a SID in Ridgewood. Councilmember Winograd also thanked Deputy Mayor Perron for her work on the SID proposal, and Ms. Mailander for the time she spent in developing the proposed ordinance.

E. OPERATIONS

1. ENDORSE FOURTH ROUND HOUSING ELEMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLAN ADOPTED BY RIDGEWOOD PLANNING BOARD

Mr. Kazmark indicated that this matter pertains to the endorsement of the Fourth Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan adopted by the Ridgewood Planning Board. Ms. McManus explained that the Planning Board has done a lot of the “hard work” in adopting the Housing Element on June 12, 2025, and everything has been submitted for review to the Affordable Housing Dispute Resolution Program (“Program”). This proposed resolution does not formally adopt the Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan, but merely endorses what the Planning Board has done and authorizes submission to the Program for issuance (hopefully) of a Compliance Certification or stamp of approval of the submitted affordable housing plan. Ms. McManus said that this is one of the final formal actions that need to be taken this summer by the Village Council, for the housing plan submission to be complete.

Mr. Kazmark asked Ms. McManus to explain how the Realistic Development Potential (RDP) of 427 units, calculated by the Department of Community Affairs, was reduced to a fourth round obligation of only 4 units. Ms. McManus stated that Ridgewood has historically been the recipient of a vacant land adjustment, since there is a lack of vacant and/or developable land in the Village. She explained that the Village's affordable housing obligation from 1987 to 1999 (First and Second Rounds) was 229 units; the Third Round obligation was 664 units; and the Fourth Round obligation is 427 affordable housing units. By using the vacant land adjustment, this Fourth Round obligation has been reduced to 4 units. The obligations for the First, Second, and Third Rounds were adjusted downward to just 55 units.

Ms. McManus said that the "Unmet Need," referred to in the Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan, is equal to the 423-unit reduction in the fourth round obligation, which does not need to be met by the Village. However, the Village must create some mechanisms that contribute towards that obligation, such as the previously discussed creation of the S-1 Senior Overlay Zone.

Councilmember Weitz was very satisfied with the Fourth Round Affordable Housing Plan and stated that the development of the assisted living building in Ridgewood will help senior Village residents to "age in place" and will also result in more business for business owners in the CBD. He said that most of the residents in the assisted living facility will not have minor children and will most likely not drive, so the schools and roadways will not be adversely affected. He thanked Ms. McManus for all of her hard work and comprehensive report. Councilmember Mortimer echoed Councilmember Weitz's comments. Mayor Vagianos also thanked Ms. McManus.

7. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Boyd A. Loving, a resident of Ridgewood, said that when solar panels were installed on the roof of Village Hall in 2018, it was described as "the greatest thing since sliced bread." However, due to a collapsed conduit and other failures, the Village has decided to remove the solar panels on the roof altogether. Mr. Loving said that he does not understand why the mechanical issues with the existing solar panels cannot be repaired, so that they are once again functional. Mr. Loving believed that there are solar panels at the main fire headquarters, at the Water Pollution Control Facility, and in other locations. He asked for an explanation as to why the solar panels on the roof of Village Hall cannot be repaired.

Regarding the proposed increase in the Open Space tax levy which the public will vote upon in November 2025, Mr. Loving cautioned the public that the funds in the Open Space Trust Fund are not just used for athletic fields. There are other things which the Open Space funds are used for, such as acquiring land for historic preservation purposes, flood relief purposes, and buffer zones.

Mr. Loving stated that during the Village Council meeting on June 25, 2025, Stuart Koperweis, of Economic Strategists, LLC, gave an oral presentation and written report concerning the formation of a Special Improvement District (SID) in Ridgewood. However, Mr. Loving said that there was no PowerPoint/slideshow presentation offered to the public, and the public was not able to view anything on the screen in the courtroom during Mr. Koperweis's oral presentation. Mr. Loving encouraged the Village Councilmembers to develop such a PowerPoint presentation for the public's perusal, since it is a very confusing and complex topic. Mr. Loving said that it was his understanding that the SID would include the entire Village. In that event, he asked what services Wilkes Deli on East Glen Avenue would receive as being part of the SID, as compared to the services that a business located in the Central Business District would receive as being part of the SID. Although residential taxpayers will not be funding any part of the SID, Mr. Loving said that the public has a right to know and to understand what the SID is all about.

Cynthia O'Keefe, a resident of Ridgewood, said that it does not bother her if anyone on the dais is not looking at her while she is speaking. She said that it does bother her when those sitting on the dais do not actually listen to what she is saying. Ms. O'Keefe said that she also does not like when the Village Councilmembers try to "spin" her words into meaning something different than what she intended, such as Councilmember Winograd's comment about eco-turf. Ms. O'Keefe said that eco-turf, similar to other forms of artificial turf, has not been studied to determine its safety. Deputy Mayor Perron has previously indicated that when she and Councilmember Winograd met with the turf manufacturers, none of them would contractually guarantee the absence of PFAS or other toxic compounds in the artificial turf. Ms. O'Keefe said that any artificial turf vendor who states that their turf is PFAS-free is "full of baloney." She went on to describe the various testing methods and protocols used by artificial turf manufacturers, and stated that such testing is substandard when performed by an in-house company.

Ms. O'Keefe then spoke about Green Acres funding and how grant monies awarded to municipalities are not used strictly for artificial turf projects, but rather are used to construct walking paths and other park amenities. She questioned how many of these artificial turf fields have been constructed next to private wells. Ms. O'Keefe wondered whether any of the Village Councilmembers had any data regarding same, or whether she would have to call Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette herself to find out. She called the decisions of the Village Councilmembers to cut down hundreds of trees and install an artificial turf field on the Schedler property as irresponsible and grossly negligent.

Amy McCambridge, a resident of Ridgewood, said that Councilmember Winograd tried to reassure the public by stating that Ridgewood has no intentions of using crumb rubber artificial turf, but will instead be using eco-friendly turf. Ms. McCambridge called this statement a "smoke screen" and stated that there is no such thing as eco-friendly synthetic turf. She said that manufacturers use this term as a marketing scam to make people feel good while, in reality, they are poisoning the environment. Ms. McCambridge said that artificial turf is composed of PFAS-

laden components and chemicals linked to cancer, hormone disruption and immune system dysfunction. She accused the Village Councilmembers of actively erasing a living environment while trying to distract the public by using the term “eco-friendly.”

Ms. McCambridge stated that not all of the sports organizations and certified trainers in the Village abide by the heat guidelines established by the NJSIAA. She said that there is no signage to that effect. She said that she was a soccer trainer in Ridgewood for 18 years and was never advised of those guidelines by Village officials. Ms. McCambridge warned Ridgewood parents that they are being lied to and gaslighted by the Village Councilmembers.

There were no further comments from the public.

Mr. Kazmark asked to be excused from the meeting at this point, since he had a childcare issue this evening.

Councilmember Weitz said that Ms. McCambridge stated that the Village Councilmembers were irresponsible and grossly negligent, and that they lie to the public. He said that the same argument arises time and time again, and the Village Councilmembers are repeatedly accused of not listening to the public. Councilmember Weitz said that when these inflammatory statements are said in a vindictive way, it does not invite meaningful conversation. However, he said that he is always willing to engage in an intellectual discussion regarding artificial turf, but he will not engage when accusations are “thrown” at the Village Councilmembers. Councilmember Weitz said that even though he disagrees with Deputy Mayor Perron’s opinions, he still respects her opinions, and having different viewpoints does not make him grossly negligent or irresponsible.

Mayor Vagianos said that he echoed Councilmember Weitz’s comments. He said that characterizations about other people’s opinions are unnecessary. He said that none of the Village Councilmembers would ever say that members of the public are gaslighting anyone, or are grossly negligent or irresponsible. Mayor Vagianos cautioned members of the public from making such accusations against the Village Councilmembers.

Councilmember Winograd stated that it was a shame that the last public commenter took aim at people who volunteer and donate their time for the good of the community. She said that despite everything else that the Village Councilmembers do for the Village, the subject always revolves back to the Schedler property. Councilmember Winograd said that sometimes the Village Councilmembers struggle as to whether or not they should respond to comments from the public or provide certain information.

Councilmember Winograd said that two people this evening spoke about the dangers of a crumb rubber turf field, yet the Village has never even considered the use of a crumb rubber turf field. Councilmember Winograd said that neither she nor Deputy Mayor Perron have ever stated that

they found a vendor who claimed that their artificial turf is PFAS-free. They met with multiple artificial turf vendors at the request of the community. She said that most of the trees that will be cut down on the Schedler property are invasive species. Councilmember Winograd stated that most of the actions being taken by the Village Councilmembers are being taken at the request of the Schedler neighbors.

Councilmember Winograd said that the Village Councilmembers would never place child athletes at risk by allowing them to play on hot turf. If the sports organizations in Ridgewood do not inform their trainers about the NJSIAA heat guidelines, the Village Councilmembers would like to be informed of same.

8. RESOLUTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Mailander read Resolution #25-296 to go into Closed Session:

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Village Council, on a motion by Councilmember Winograd, seconded by Councilmember Mortimer, and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Village Council's Regular Public Work Session was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Paul Vagianos
Mayor

Heather A. Mailander
Village Clerk