

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2025**

Opening:

The public meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Village of Ridgewood was called to order at 7:45 p.m.

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

Minutes: The minutes from July 8, 2025 and July 22, 2025 were adopted.

Resolution memorialization - The following resolutions were memorialized:

- Hlavachek – 316 South Irving Street, Block 4105, Lot 9
- Leff – 562 Lotus Road, Block 4306, Lot 11

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 October 14, 2025 with notice, and the Mahmoud, 230 Fairfield Avenue, application was carried to October 28, 2025 without further notice.

New Business:

MICHAEL & KRISTIN O'DONOGHUE – An application to permit the construction of a pergola above a deck which would result in a rear yard setback of 26.5 feet, where 40 feet is required, and coverage by above-grade structures of 24.5%, where 20% is the maximum permitted at 584 Highland Avenue, Block 2809, Lot 6, in an R-110 Zone.

Kristin O'Donoghue, homeowner, was sworn and made opening remarks explaining the reasons for the request.

Elena Gnatyuk, Design Professional from Deck Remodelers, was sworn. Ms. Gnatyuk submitted photos which showed the existing conditions on the property which showed the odd shape of the lot. Ms. Gnatyuk testified that the lot is undersized. Ms. Gnatyuk explained that the location of the existing home is non-conforming in regards to the rear yard setback.

Ms. Gnatyuk testified regarding the renderings submitted to show the proposed pergola, which will have a motorized roof. Ms. Gnatyuk testified regarding the photos showing the view of the area in question from the neighbors' yards.

Board members clarified that the existing deck would be removed and rebuilt slightly larger. Board members asked about the footing for the fireplace.

There were no questions from the public.

Public comment:

Nisarg Vaidya, 566 Highland Avenue, was sworn and spoke in support of the application.

Dennis Tarzian, 576 Highland Avenue, was sworn and spoke in support of the application.

Ms. O'Donoghue made closing comments and the hearing was closed.

Following Board deliberation, Mr. Bandelt made a motion to approve the application with the condition that the deck would remain open and no screens or other coverings would be installed. Mr. Papietro seconded and the application was approved.

MATTHEW & KATHERINE MEYERS – An application to permit the construction of a new single-family dwelling, driveway and other improvements, including converting the existing detached garage into a field house which would result in maximum gross building area within 140' of the front lot line of 31%, where 29% is the maximum permitted at 155 Phelps Road, Block 1605, Lot 12, in an R-1 Zone.

Matthew Capizzi, Esq., entered his appearance and made opening remarks. Mr. Capizzi stated although the landscape architect was not available to testify, the landscape plan had been submitted with the application materials.

Robert Weismann was sworn and his credentials as a licensed engineer and land surveyor accepted. Mr. Weismann testified regarding the site plan he prepared which was revised to 7/28/25. Mr. Weismann described the proposed new dwelling which is similar to what was approved previously. Mr. Weismann stated that the existing garage is proposed to be converted to a field house. Mr. Weismann testified regarding the proposed setbacks and the variance being requested. Mr. Weismann testified regarding the stormwater management.

Board members asked about the large tree in the corner of the property with a wood deck built around it. Mr. Weismann stated that the tree and the deck are to be removed.

There were no questions from the public.

Roger Schlicht was sworn and his credentials as a licensed architect accepted. Mr. Schlicht testified regarding the plans he prepared. Mr. Schlicht described the proposed two story house with attached garage. Mr. Schlicht stated the existing garage would be converted to a field house. Mr. Schlicht went over the floor plans of the house and said there are no setback variances being requested and no variance for gross building area over the whole lot.

Mr. Schlicht showed the photo of the proposed materials for the house and stated that the plans were reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Schlicht went over the elevations and the materials. Mr. Schlicht testified that the height of the house is 34.88 feet, but the dimension from the first floor to the highest peak is 30.5 feet. The 34.88 feet is due to the grades at the garage going into the basement. No variance is being requested for the height.

Mr. Schlicht testified that the existing garage would be converted to a field house. The footprint would remain the same, the walls and main roof structure will remain, a false gable return and low roof. Mr. Schlicht said the inside would be repurposed for play room, office and storage.

Mr. Schlicht identified the variance being requested as the gross building area within 140 feet of the front lot line.

Mr. Schlicht went over the landscape plan testifying that there will be buffering along the back and west edge of the property.

Mr. Whitaker asked what would be in the field house. Mr. Schlicht said it would have a cathedral ceiling and there would be storage, an office, a play area, kitchenette and bathroom. There would be no stove.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Mr. Capizzi made closing remarks and the hearing was closed.

Following Board deliberation Mr. Papietro made a motion to approve. Mr. Bandelt seconded. The application was approved with the conditions that the attic would not be habitable and the field house would not be a second residence.

JOHN COMATAS – An application to permit the construction of a one story addition which would result in a rear yard setback of 26 feet, where 30 feet is the minimum required at 310 Abbey Court, Block 2908, Lot 22, in an R-2 Zone.

Stephen Hembrecht was sworn and his credentials as a licensed architect accepted. Mr. Hembrecht was appearing on behalf of Mr. Comatas.

Mr. Hembrecht testified regarding the plans he prepared. Mr. Hembrecht stated that the property is undersized and the property is skewed. The requested variance for the rear yard setback is due to the addition being at the closest point of the rear yard lot line.

Mr. Whitaker clarified the variance being requested and the property hardships.

Board members asked for clarification of the zoning table.

There were no questions or comments from the public.

Following Board deliberation Mr. Bandelt made a motion to approve, Mr. Curreri seconded and the application was approved.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary

Date Approved: September 23, 2025