

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE Meeting Notes

September 11th, 2025 – The Stable 7:00PM

PRESENT: Jim Bostler, Matt Lindenberg, Frank Mortimer, Jessica Van Aken (New Intern), Alex Pastore, Dave Sayles, Dave Refkin – Chairman Green Ridgewood

Absent: Jim Van Goor, Ralph Currey, Nancy Bigos

Summary

Overall, there was a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm going forward as events have broken in favor of the Open Space Committee (OSC). Significant progress was made for the diversion issue, Schedler properties and progress in the plan for the Tax Referendum issue on the November ballot. There will also be a lot of activities in September for these issues and Park Walks, etc.

The meeting notes will remain topical only and will not go into great details about conversations, etc. Also, the notes will stress follow-ups and the appropriate person who is responsible.

Topics and Follow-ups

I. Public Comment

There was no public comment..

II. Approval of May Meeting Notes

The July Meeting Notes were approved with corrections for mis-spelled names.

III. Dave Refkin – Green Committee

In keeping with the OSC strategic plans to increase awareness of the OSC and increase cooperation across committees the Green Ridgewood Committee was asked to share special projects and efforts. Dave Refkin is the chairman of the Green Ridgewood team and detailed a plan for flood mitigation in Bergen County. While not directly tied to Ridgewood, it did spark ideas for future directions for the OSC as it pertains to Ridgewood. Dave also shared some ideas on possible cooperation and property acquisitions with neighboring towns.

IV. Liaison Reports

- Village Council
 - Frank Mortimer shared the approved press release for the Tax Referendum, Open Space Tax rates for other towns and upcoming events. All will be discussed in the agenda items.
- Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board {PRC}
 - Big news here was the progress on the NY/NJ Trail Center proposal. More about this in the agenda items.
- Fields Committee
 - There is still not a replacement for Bob Lasky although there have been interviews.
- Planning Board
 - Jim Van Goor was not present at this meeting. Challenges facing the Planning Board will of course be affordable housing and housing development.

V. Open Space Tax Referendum

Continued discussions on this topic centered on responsibilities and deadlines as it pertains to the OSC.

- Matt and Jessica have finalized the Tax Referendum brochure with Frank. Frank has received the approval from legal. While much of the detail was toned down by legal, the final document did show the nuts and bolts of the Referendum and the benefits to Ridgewood. Arrangements have been made with the printing and mailing of the brochure.
- Jessica will work with Matt in the development of our social media program. The plan calls for future meetings within the Ridgewood High School community.
- Communications with the various Ridgewood Committees will be critical to the passing of the referendum. In September and October Jim has scheduled meetings with 10 different committees and will try to communicate with others.
- The OSC will have a booth at the Street Fair on September 14th and at the Westside Oktoberfest in October.
- Frank will develop a press release for Carol at Ridgewood e-communications.
- Jim will work on a letter to the editor, gather edits and input and publish under his and the committee's name.
- There is a podcast by Jeanne Johnson that we need to schedule as well as tapping into Beth Ann communications. Siobhan is working on the set-up for these venues.

VI. Green Acres Diversion/2024 Progress/2025 Plan/Frank Mortimer

Ridgewood has accepted the diversion settlement and is finalizing the details. Timing is still being worked on but it should free up the OSC in receiving future aid from Green Acres and give the OSC flexibility in its action steps.

VI. Schedler Park Property/Update

SHPO has approved conditionally the plan submitted by Ridgewood. Ridgewood must respond to the conditions put forth in the appropriate time frame.

VIII. Events

2025 Park Walks/Updates –

The final two Park Walks of the year will be Van Neste conducted on the 13th by Matt and Twinney Park which will be conducted on the 27th by Jim Morgan from the Parks, Recreation and Conservation Committee.

Park Stewardships –

- Rain gardens – OSC will continue to investigate the potential of this process as it pertains to Open Space.
- NY/NJ Trail Conference/Parks Assessment Workshop Schedule
Sunday, Sept 28th, 10:00am to 2:00pm – Habernickel Park “Intro to Trail Maintenance”
Sunday October 12th, 10:00am to 2:00 pm – Grove Park – “Eyes of a Trail Builder”
Sunday, October 26th, 10:00am to 2:00pm – Kings Pond/Gypsy Pond Park- “Intro to Trail Maintenance”

Sunday, November 2nd, 10:00am – to 2:00pm (Rain date)

- Pavilion Dedicaton, Habernickel Park, Saturday, Sept 13th, 9:00am
- Street Fair, Sunday Sept 14, 11:00am to 5:00pm
- Westside Oktoberfest – October 12th

IX. New Business

Alex and Jim took a tour of potential acquisition sites. The information is being evaluated for the current value of the properties. No action steps are necessary currently.

X. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Open Space Thursday, October 9th, 2025 – Time 7:00 PM – at The Stable

Submitted By: James Bostler – OSC Committee Secretary/Chairman