

## **GREEN RIDGEWOOD MEETING**

**JUNE 4, 2026, 7:30-9:30 PM**

### **RIDGEWOOD VILLAGE HALL, SENIOR LOUNGE**

**Attendees:** Green Ridgewood: David Refkin – Chair; Justin Manger – Vice Chair; Jane Rouse, Peter Jerdee, Beth Creller, Bill Armbruster, Manpreet Tyagi. Pam Perron – Village Council liaison; Mary Lou Handy – Board of Education liaison; Jill Fasano – Village/Ridgewood Water-liaison; Anika Mukkatira - Student liaison; Green Team: Geri Atwood - Chair; Joe Ferrante; Guests: Carolyn Jacoby, Robert Zeller, Clarissa Gubb, Jamie Lee.

1. Welcome and Attendee Introductions
2. We approved May 7<sup>h</sup> meeting minutes unanimously.

#### **Updates/Discussion/Strategy**

3. Chair Report, Green Ridgewood highlights (David)

We've had 3 openings and have filled all of them. The three nominees will be approved at the next Council meeting in mid-June.

4. Village Council Liaison Report (Pam).

The Council had a presentation from Suburban Engineers regarding remediation at the Schedler property. That phase is almost done. They're looking now at development.

The Council received the Northwest Bergen County deer mapping survey. The survey is done at night. The report doesn't say how we should control the deer, but it indicates how bad the problem is. The sustainable level is 10 deer per sq mile. We've had 50 deer per sq mile.

The Parks Dept. is doing trail work. Participants will be blazing the trails (putting markers on trees to guide hikers.) The next one is July 12 at Grove Park. People have to register in advance. A representative from the Trail Conference will be leading it.

If you're going to register for a conference, call the Finance office in advance to ask for a voucher. Give it along with the original receipt to Keith Kazmark, the village manager.

5. Resource Management & Conservation Subcommittee (Peter, Pam)
  - a. Leaf Blower Strategy

The meeting with DPW officials in Maplewood, which had been twice postponed, finally happened. Pam and members of Ridgewood staff went. They saw several types of Stihl

electric leaf blowers that Maplewood uses. Staff were not enthusiastic about them. Smaller battery-powered blowers run out in 30 to 45 minutes. The alternative is to go with a larger suitcase model. There were no data on cost savings.

We agreed to recommend a trial of Kress leaf blowers. Greenworks is another manufacturer.

Maplewood and Montclair are still in litigation with local landscapers about the leaf-blowing ordinances in those two towns. The county uses electric-powered leaf blowers. Joe Ferrante pointed out the health issues from gas-powered leaf blowers, specifically, hydrocarbons, particulates and noise.

b. Food Scraps Expansion

The two new containers were delivered in May. They haven't been wrapped yet with signage. They will be deployed at Habernickel Park and the Stable

c. Skip the Stuff – Public Outreach

Pam said she asked the DEP if they had literature. It's not out yet. The law takes effect Aug 1. It doesn't cover plastic food containers. Only one town in NJ bans plastic food containers.

d. Project 1,000 acres – Mike Faherty has handed this initiative over to Peter. We are trying to get property owners to commit to sustainable landscaping practices. If they meet 5 criteria, they will get a certificate.

6. Resilience, Flooding, Stormwater Subcommittee: Saddle River Watershed Alliance/NJ Climate Resiliency Planning Grant (David)

a. Bergen County Meeting June 2: We had a very good meeting at the County office. Mayor Vagianos, Pam, Keith and David represented Ridgewood. Tom Duch, the county counsel, ran the meeting. Lucille Balerian (**SP?**), who handled the application last year for the county, also participated. The deadline for submitting to DEP is July 7. The county asked the participating towns to submit their part of the application by June 18. The questions are a little different from last time. Paramus and South Hackensack both participated in the meeting. Tom Duch said this will only succeed if we all work together. David responded by noting that the Saddle River Watershed Alliance, an ad hoc group consisting of representatives from Ridgewood, Paramus, Glen Rock, Rochelle Park, Fair Lawn,

and Lodi (**ANY OTHER TOWNS THAT I'M MISSING**) has already met four times. David mentioned the Columbia University report from last year. Tom Duch will be the responsible person from the county. David thinks South Hackensack will participate but is not sure. He's not sure about Wallington and Garfield either.

If we get the \$1.8 million grant, most of the money would go to consultants. Some would also go to the two CBOs (community-based organizations) participating in the application: Hackensack Riverkeeper and Passaic River Coalition.

Pam recommended a boat trip with the Hackensack Riverkeeper.

David will be working on our portion of the application and will get it to Pam next week.

#### 7. Potential New Columbia University Study Re: Climate Preparedness.

Geri and David recently met with GR member Alina Mordkovich, a Columbia alumna who coordinated our projects with Columbia the past two years. We are talking with John Barry, the village planner, about what we would the students to cover.

#### 8. Sustainable NJ Conference Report (Geri, David) –

The summit was held May 8 at the Bell Works Conference Center in Holmdel.

Geri learned that three towns that got substantial grants for treating bamboo, an invasive species, and putting in EV charging stations.

Staples will accept dry erasers for recycling.

Seven towns have gold certificates from Sustainable Jersey, while 63 have silver and 117 have bronze. We could get 20 points from Sustainable Jersey for promoting a sustainable business registry.

David said there was very little discussion of policy at the summit and that he had not yet received a request for feedback.

There will be a symposium next week at Rutgers on climate change.

#### 9. Green Team Report (Geri) –

We will have a full team soon. Geri wants to get commitments from members on specific areas for which they will take responsibility.

#### 10. Students Update: Current & Future Initiatives (Anika)

We are finishing the garden project and also working on wildflower meadows. Eight long-term sustainability projects will soon be coming to an end.

#### 11. RHS Student report on Turf/Grass Fields comparison (David) –

David and Miles had a discussion with an RHS senior named Bruno regarding his

research on turf fields. The student did a very good report.

#### 12. NJDEP webinar (Joe, David) –

There was not much substance to it. Blue Acres program buys out flood-prone properties for market value.

#### 13. Green Building/Sustainability Subcommittee. (Justin, David)

Justin and David met with Carol Bialkowski regarding the possibility of applying to Sustainable New Jersey for a \$10,000 planning grant. If successful, we may get a \$100,000 grant for implementation.

- a. Direct Install Program – PSE&G has loan programs (Jill thinks PSE&G will pay.)

#### 14. Finance – 2026 Revenue/Expenses (Jane, David)

We started the year with \$19,000. Our net proceeds from Earth Day were \$3,990.42, down from about \$5,000 last year. The big difference was that we didn't get a \$1,000 donation this year from Volvo. So far this year we've spent \$8,441. (That includes some future expenses for which we've already allocated funds.) Our current balance is \$14,827.42.

#### 15. Bergen Hub Meeting

It will be Monday October 26, at 7 pm in Ridgewood. The host town sets the agenda. We hosted it about two years ago and had a good discussion then, with about 70 people in attendance, including representatives from five counties.

#### 16. New Business/Other Announcements

Carolyn Jacoby mentioned that trees are dying, including three trees in the central business district, because of the lack of rainfall.

The Village hasn't hired a tree-service company because the bids came in too high. Carolyn said the Village should make this a priority, especially considering the money it has invested in new tree planting.

Future Meeting Dates: July 9. September 3, October 1

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Armbruster