

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting Minutes
JANUARY 13, 2026**

Opening:

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

REORGANIZATION:

Greg Brown took the Oath of Office.

Present: Greg Brown, Matthew Bandelt, Diana Ruhl, Jonathan Papietro, Jason Curreri, Yelena Raytser and Matthew Swan were present.

The following people were elected to the following offices:

Chairman:	Greg Brown
Vice Chairman:	Matthew Bandelt
Chairman Pro Tem:	Jonathan Papietro
Board Secretary:	Jane Wondergem

The following persons were appointed:

Board Attorney:	Bruce Whitaker/McDonnell & Whitaker LLC
Board Professionals:	John Barree, MJ Planning LLP, Village Planner Neglia Engineering Associates, Traffic Engineering Services
Site Plan Committee:	Jamie Fox, Jonathan Papietro, Diana Ruhl

The By-Laws of the Zoning Board were adopted.

The Resolution of Adoption in the Matter of Compliance with the Requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act was approved. The schedule of meetings for the year January 13, 2026 through December 31, 2026 were approved.

The Reorganization meeting was closed.

Present: Greg Brown, Matthew Bandelt, Diana Ruhl, Jonathan Papietro, Jason Curreri, Yelena Raytser and Matthew Swan were present. Also present were Bruce Whitaker, Esq., Board Attorney; John Barree, Village Planner; Christopher Rutishauser, Village Engineer; Brian Intindola, Traffic Consultant; and Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary. Jamie Fox was absent.

Minutes: The minutes from November 25, 2025 and December 9, 2025 were adopted.

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

Old Business:

LES DANN, LLC – An application for use variance approval, preliminary and final site plan approval and bulk variances related to the consolidation of three existing lots into one property to be developed with a new autobody shop at 246 – 264 South Broad Street, Block 3905, Lots 12, 13, 14, in an R-3 Zone. (Continued from July 8, 2025, Carried from October 14, 2025 without further notice)

Mark Semeraro, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Whitaker stated that public comment had previously been closed.

John Barree, Village Planner, was sworn and testified. Mr. Barree stated that he reviewed the application, plans, prior testimony, transcripts, and exhibits. Mr. Barree testified that the proposal would replace six existing buildings with one modern structure, increase setbacks, reduce impervious coverage, improve stormwater management, consolidate three driveways into one, and eliminate garage doors facing South Broad Street. Mr. Barree testified that the site was particularly suited for the proposed use and that the application satisfied the positive and negative criteria for the requested variances, citing applicable case law.

Mr. Whitaker clarified that Lots 12 and 14 have been certified non-conforming and that Mr. Barree testified that

the expansion is appropriate for the site. Mr. Whitaker stated that if the Board approves the application, they have the right to impose conditions.

Board members asked questions regarding pedestrian safety, traffic, and operations and how this could be considered for the public good. Mr. Barree responded that by consolidating the driveways they are increasing pedestrian safety and that what is proposed improves the existing non-conforming use by having all services under one roof and servicing the vehicles inside the building.

There were no questions from the public.

Mr. Semeraro provided a summation and reviewed the history of the site and outlined the improvements proposed. Mr. Semeraro showed an aerial view of what exists on the property today, stating that the applicant would be permitted to continue the operation as is. Mr. Semeraro showed a table of existing conditions and proposed conditions and a setback exhibit showing existing conditions with an overlay of what is proposed. Mr. Semeraro showed the exhibit of a landscape rendering showing the extensive buffering

proposed. Mr. Semeraro agreed to operational conditions including indoor storage, limits on deliveries and vehicle size, prohibition of tractor-trailers, and limitations on hours of operation.

Mr. Whitaker confirmed that all Board members present were eligible.

The Board deliberated. Board members brought up the issue of what trucks would be permitted on the site. Following discussion, Mr. Semeraro agreed that the longest vehicle permitted on the site would be a three-car carrier at 34.5 feet from front to back. Board members discussed the signs and asked that only the freestanding sign be permitted. Mr. Semeraro stated that the applicant agreed to eliminate the sign on the building. Board members discussed the landscape plan and if approved, the applicant will submit a landscape plan to be reviewed by the site plan committee. The Board discussed hours of operation and limits on hours of parts and vehicle deliveries.

Following Board deliberation Mr. Papietro made motion to deny the application and Ms. Raytser seconded. The motion did not pass.

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the application with all the conditions discussed, Mr. Bandelt seconded, and the application was approved with 5 yes votes to 2 no votes.

Resolution memorialization: The memorialization of the Seiter, 179 Lincoln Avenue, was carried to the following meeting to review for errors.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:
Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary

Date Approved: February 10, 2026