

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
Meeting Minutes
JANUARY 27, 2026**

Opening:

The public meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the Village of Ridgewood was called to order at 7:48 p.m.

Jamie Fox took the Oath of Office.

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

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:

Mr. Brown announced that the **Jisoo Suzy Yoon**, 257 Greenway Road, application was carried to March 10, 2026 without further notice.

Old Business:

MICHAEL & CAITLIN LICARE – An application to install a swimming pool and related amenities, demolish existing detached garage and construct a new one-car detached garage which would result in a side yard setback to the pool of 8 feet, and rear yard setback to the pool of 7 feet, where 10 feet is required, and location of patio/BBQ within the front yard setback on Fairway Road at 153 John Street, Block 3407, Lot 1, in an R-2 Zone. (Continued from November 25, 2025 without further notice)

James Delia, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant and recapped the prior hearing, stating that revisions were made in response to concerns raised by the Board.

Peter Cooper, architect, was previously sworn. Mr. Cooper testified regarding the revisions made as shown on the drawings he prepared, revised to December 18, 2025. Mr. Cooper stated that the detached garage was relocated further from the street and provided an analysis of comparable corner lot garages in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Cooper went over the zoning table and addressed setbacks.

Board members asked about the prior approval and if it included the BBQ. Mr. Cooper explained that the BBQ was not planned to be permanent but was added by the contractor. Board members noted that the front yard setback should be identified as 16.5 feet to the BBQ

structure, not 20.2 feet to the house. Board members questioned Mr. Cooper about the massing of the garage and the visual impact from Fairway Road and if the patio encroachment could be further reduced.

There were no questions from the public.

The hearing was carried to February 24 without further notice.

MUHAMMAD MAHMOUD – An application to permit the construction of an addition to the attic which would result in a front yard setback to the second floor of 31.4 feet, and to the attic addition of 33.8 feet, where 40 feet is required; gross building area of 38%, where 32% is the maximum permitted; gross building area within 140 feet of the front lot line on Fairfield Avenue of 38%, where 32% is the maximum permitted; and gross building area within 140 feet of the front lot line on Graydon Terrace of 44%, where 34% is permitted at 230 Fairfield Avenue, Block 3212, Lot 7, in an R-2 Zone. (Continued from October 28, 2025, Carried from December 9, 2025 without further notice)

Matthew Weiss, Esq., was present on behalf of the applicant and recapped the prior meeting.

Ibrahim Issa, architect, was previously sworn and went over the revisions and zoning table, explaining that the attic addition was more centered and alterations were made to the second floor. Mr. Issa testified that they listened to the Board comments and concerns and looked at the aesthetics of the neighborhood. Mr. Issa compared the revised rendering to the previously proposed rendering.

Board members asked about the materials and the changes on the second floor.

There were no questions from the public.

George Williams was sworn and his credentials as a Professional Planner accepted. Mr. Williams testified that he reviewed the application and provided a planning overview. Mr. Williams went through the various criteria for hardship to be considered, including the c(1)a due to the undersize lot, c(1)c in regards to the location of the existing house, and c(2), stating that the benefits outweigh the detriment. Mr. Williams stated that the proposed improvements allow for aging in place and multi-generational living while not increasing the footprint of the existing house. Mr. Williams testified that the proposed changes align with the Master Plan.

Mr. Barree asked if the proposed gross building area would be conforming if the lot were conforming with the minimum required lot area. Mr. William said it would exactly comply. Mr. Barree said it would not quite be conforming. Mr. Barree commented that creating additional living space in the attic would not be conducive to multi-generational living.

Board members questioned aging in place as criteria for c(2) as it is a personal hardship. Mr. Williams the benefits for aging in place go with the house, not just the applicant.

Board members commented that the house is already oversized and it is difficult to justify an already oversized structure to more oversized. Board members referred to the 2008 approval which discussed the mass of the structure. Board members commented that every lot in the neighborhood is undersized and the applicant would have been aware of that when purchasing the property.

Mr. Whitaker stated that the Board is looking at the 2008 approval and how the massing of the structure was mitigated by the bump out of the structure. Mr. Whitaker mentioned case law in regards that the Master Plan can make proposals and suggestions, but it is the governing body

that would need to create the ordinances to address the proposals if they agree, and another case would be looking at a zone change rather than variances.

Mr. Weiss said they proposed to push out the front to make the addition look more incorporated with the house and to have the least amount of effect.

Mr. Williams addressed the interpretation of the 2008 resolution and spoke of the massing of the structure.

Board members asked about finishing the basement and creating living space there. Mr. Issa said that converting a crawl space to living space would be costly. Board members commented regarding the aging in place being impractical in the attic. Mr. Weiss said the intention was to shift the younger family members up.

There were no questions from the public.

Public comment:

Christine Policano, 237 Fairfield Avenue, was sworn and spoke in support of the application.

David Chow, 380 Graydon Terrace, was sworn and spoke in support of the application.

Mr. Weiss made closing remarks.

Following Board deliberation, Mr. Brown made motion to deny the application, Mr. Bandelt seconded and the application was denied.

New Business:

Mr. Brown announced that the **Mark Donoghue**, 151 N. Walnut Street, application was carried to February 10, 2026 without further notice.

ELLEN STORMS – An application to permit the construction of a one story addition which would result in a side yard setback of 9.5 feet where 18.67 feet is the minimum required and for the construction of a second story addition which would maintain a front yard setback on North Van Dien Avenue of 35.5 feet where 45 feet is the minimum required, and would maintain a rear yard setback of 27.16 feet where 30 feet is the minimum required, total coverage by above grade structures within 140 feet of the front lot line of 22.4% where 20% is the maximum permitted, total gross building area of 32.9% where 29% is the maximum permitted, gross building area within 140 feet of the front lot line of 38.4% where 32% is the maximum permitted, and a side yard setback to the patio of 3 feet where 10 feet is required at 68 North Van Dien Avenue, Block 3612, Lot 16, in an R-1 Zone. (Carried from December 9, 2026 without further notice)

Paul Giblin, Esq., entered his appearance on behalf of the applicant and made opening remarks.

Jordan Rosenberg was sworn and his credentials as a licensed architect were accepted. Mr. Rosenberg testified regarding the existing conditions of the corner lot and the proposed addition off of the first floor and the second story addition. Mr. Rosenberg identified the variances being requested and stated that the justification for the variances falls under the c(1)(a) criteria as it is

an undersized corner lot. Mr. Rosenberg went over the gross building area calculations. Mr. Rosenberg identified the variance being requested for the patio setback.

Mr. Rosenberg testified that the massing of the addition is not out of character for the neighborhood.

Board members asked when the third bay of the garage was added to the house. Mr. Rosenberg did not know. Board members asked if the setbacks exacerbated the existing setbacks. Mr. Rosenberg said they did not. Board members asked if the gba would be conforming if the lot was conforming. Mr. Rosenberg said it would, but Mr. Barree said they would still be over by 68 square feet.

Board members asked if the second story could be pushed back in the front. Mr. Rosenberg said they could do that.

There were no questions from the public.

Public comment:

Edward Collins, 75 North Van Dien Avenue, was sworn and spoke in support of the application.

Following Board deliberation Mr. Bandelt made a motion to approve with the condition that the second floor is pushed back and the revised plans are reviewed by the Board. Mr. Curreri seconded and the application was approved.

Discussion: Basov & Kalinina, 3 Paul Ct, Block 2505, Lot 2.04 – Request for a 6 month extension to comply with the conditions of the resolution. The Board granted a six month extension and a resolution was adopted.

Resolution memorialization: The following resolution was memorialized:

- Seiter, 179 Lincoln Avenue, Block 2301, Lot 13

The Board went into closed session for the purpose of discussing ongoing litigation matters.

The Board reconvened and the meeting was adjourned at 10:32 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Jane Wondergem, Board Secretary

Date Approved: February 10, 2026