



Access Ridgewood Meeting Minutes February 20 , 2026

Present: Jaimie Davis; Emily Cathcart; Jesse Schwartzman; Siobhan Winograd; Robin Ritter; Deanna Schablik; Joanne Stolfo; Jeff Hofmann; Cara Lynn Robinson-Deutsch; Jan Philips; Danielle Caputo; Rurik Halaby; Ashley Loria

1. **Welcome/Approval of Minutes** (Jaimie Davis)

Jaimie welcomed everyone to the meeting. Siobhan moved to approve the minutes from the January 23, 2026 meeting, Deanna seconded. The minutes were approved.

2. **President's Report** (Jaimie Davis)

a. 4th of July

Jaimie recounted discussions to make the July 4th festivities more accessible to people with disabilities, who have varied needs. Paul Vaggiano has suggested to Jaimie that perhaps the Village could use the vacant commercial space that Parisa East used to occupy at the corner of Broad and East Ridgewood Avenue. People with sensory issues or who are sensitive to heat or noise could be inside and enjoy the parade from the large windows, whereas those who would like to be outside can stay in a sectioned off area outside the space. We could consider blocking off the area in front of the restaurant so that the view is not blocked; sectioning off some parking spaces in the adjacent garage; and limiting access so it does not get too congested. Jaimie noted that in organizing this event, the Committee should be sensitive to consider the needs of all disabled people not just those with, e.g., neurodivergent issues or accessibility issues.

Siobhan supports this idea and believes the Council would easily support setting aside parking in the garage. Siobhan noted that after the 2025 July 4th festivity, the Village received complaints about lack of handicap parking, though a subsequent investigation suggested additional parking had been made available. She wants to ensure that the event is promoted as increasing accessibility generally, not just for the neurodivergent population.

At Jaimie's request, Cara agreed to be the point person for this project, though she noted that her schedule will have to be flexible. Cara recommended surveying several communities, e.g., hearing impaired, visually impaired, neurodivergent, physical disabilities, etc., to determine what accommodations would be helpful. The Committee could consider soliciting the community's input via Village eNews. The Committee can



frame this as a “pilot program” in order to encourage community input and emphasize that it could take a few years to work out the kinks.

Another idea is including disability month as part of the 4th of July parade and/or inviting the special Olympics or one of the sensory-dinner attendees to carry the parade banner.

Jaimie will connect Paul and Cara to begin working on this initiative.

3. **Executive Board Reports** (Jesse Schwartzman, Emily Cathcart)

a. Sensory-Friendly Dinners

Jesse and Emily discussed upcoming sensory-friendly dinners. The next dinner is Monday, February 23, 2026 at Puzo’s. The March dinner will be on March 23 at MacMurphy’s.

4. **Village Council Report** (Liaison Siobhan Winograd)

Siobhan recounted a recent field visit with remediation site planning for Schedler. The park development is looking at Jake’s Law and an inclusionary playground. After remediation, the playground developer may attend an Access meeting.

Siobhan noted that Megan Murphy attended a recent Stigma-Free meeting and is very impressive and well-received in the caregiver space.

5. **SEPAG Report** (Meghann Bierly)

Emily noted that SEPAG had an information meeting this morning during which time the District presented Part II of its Structured Literacy presentation. The meeting materials and a recording of the presentation are available on SEPAG’s website. The SEPAG has an in-person coffee chat on Monday, April 16 and a virtual coffee chat on Tuesday, April 7. The next information meeting will be on Friday, April 10.



6. Village Department Reports

a. Health Department/Stigma Free (Danielle Caputo)

Danielle recounted that during her appearance at the Stigma-Free Committee meeting, Megan Murphy was a wealth of knowledge on caregiver issues and the sandwich generation. She also works on decluttering resources and information, which could be relevant to hoarding issues in the community. Danielle hopes that when she returns from medical leave, the department can collaborate with Megan either on the caregiver issues or decluttering. The Committees would have to be mindful regarding what to call a “hoarding” workshop because of the stigma associated with hoarding.

On Tuesday, the Health and Parks & Rec Departments held a fascinating “In Your Medicine Cabinet” workshop. Next Friday, the Health Department will be presenting a “Sleep Rescue: Secrets to Restorative Sleep” workshop. There will be a blood drive on March 26.

May is mental health awareness month and older Americans month. Valley Hospital may host an event on May 19 at 10AM on caregiving. Danielle anticipates that the two caregiving programs being planned (e.g., the Valley program and Megan Murphy’s program) will target different audiences.

Danielle will confirm who will attend Access meetings in her absence, perhaps Dawn.

b. HILT (Deanna Schablik)

HILT is hosting a Lunch and Learn on March 24, which is during National Nutrition Month. The event will be sponsored by HealthBarn.

The next Lunch and Learn is scheduled for May 12. During this event, Sheila Brogan will present on protecting your personal information. Jaimie suggested the Committee consider an internet safety program during 2026 Access Week.

Two professionals were hired to work under the Roid grant. They are starting this afternoon.

7. Old Business

None discussed.



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8. **New Business**

a. June meeting date

The June 19 Access meeting will be rescheduled to June 12 in light of the holiday.

The Committee's next meeting is on Friday, March 20, 2026 at 2:00pm via Zoom.