

**A REGULAR WORK SESSION OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD HELD IN THE SYDNEY V. STOLDT, JR. COURT ROOM OF THE RIDGEWOOD VILLAGE HALL, 131 NORTH MAPLE AVENUE, RIDGEWOOD, NEW JERSEY ON DECEMBER 6, 2017 AT 7:30 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER – OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT – ROLL CALL – FLAG SALUTE**

Mayor Knudsen called the meeting to order at 7:32 P.M. and read the Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. At roll call, the following were present: Councilmembers Hache, Sedon, Voigt, Walsh, and Mayor Knudsen. Also present were Heather Mailander, Village Manager/Village Clerk; Matthew Rogers, Village Attorney; and Donna M. Jackson, Deputy Village Clerk.

Mayor Knudsen led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and held a Moment of Silence for all the men and women serving our nation, and all first responders.

Mayor Knudsen and the Village Council wished Village Attorney Matthew Rogers and Village Manager/Village Clerk Heather Mailander a happy birthday. There was a round of applause from everyone present.

**2. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mayor Knudsen opened the public comment portion of the meeting.

Dr. Sal Infantino, 6 Betty Court, objected to putting a playing field on the Schedler Property. Dr. Infantino said that it is medically wrong to have children exercise in an area that is in close proximity to a well-traveled highway. He explained that the pollution in this area includes carbon dioxide particles and other pollutants from the moving parts of vehicles traveling on the highway, including pieces of asphalt from the road and rubber from the tires. All of these substances are highly carcinogenic. When people exercise, their risks from exposure to these pollutants rises experientially, because the increased metabolism and respiratory rate of the body allows more of these pollutants to be absorbed. Children are particularly in danger. Dr. Infantino urged the Village Council not to approve a playing field on the Schedler Property.

Patricia Infantino, 6 Betty Court, objected to putting a playing field on the Schedler Property, because of the health risks associated with the pollutants described by Dr. Infantino. Ms. Infantino asked for the trees on the Schedler Property remain; for the house on the property be made a community center; and for the construction of a passive playground. Ms. Infantino also spoke of the importance of planting trees on the existing berm to create a separation between the property and the highway.

Paul Vagianos, 280 Rivara Court, questioned if a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the parking garage had been issued yesterday. Mayor Knudsen confirmed that the RFP had been issued. Mr. Vagianos applauded the Village Council for approving this action and

Under questioning by Councilman Hache, Mr. Roche stated that businesses can also promote particular discounts or promotions.

Under questioning by Mayor Knudsen, Mr. Roche stated that Chamber of Commerce events are promoted for free.

Under questioning by Mayor Knudsen, Mr. Roche explained that the tiles are weighted by popularity. Schools tend to go to the top tile. Tiles could be weighted so they can move farther up. Mayor Knudsen felt it was important for information such as leaf pickup or garbage pickup to be prominently displayed. Mr. Roche explained that this information could appear in the third or fourth set of tiles. He noted that users can choose to “follow” certain events, such as leaf pickup, and choose to be e-mailed when new information is available. Also, the tiles could be customized so that the user sees the information that pertains to them, such as leaf pickup separated by neighborhood.

Under questioning by Councilman Sedon, Mr. Roche explained that Burbio’s events pull links, so if a link to the information is put into the event itself, users can click on it to find out more information, such as recycling regulations.

Mr. Roche explained the way Burbio is launched in a community. The calendar starts with school, library, and government events, and is announced in the local press. Residents and nonprofit groups would be sent an e-mail announcing the existence of Burbio and inviting them to sign-up for free. An icon link to Burbio would also be placed on the Village website.

Under questioning by Ms. Mailander, Mr. Roche stated that Ramsey, New Jersey uses an embedded Burbio for their Recreation Program; however, Ramsey has not developed the platform. There are libraries in New Jersey that have adopted Burbio. Ridgewood would be the first municipality in New Jersey to adopt Burbio. There are municipalities in Westchester County, New York, and Connecticut that use Burbio.

Mayor Knudsen felt it would be to the residents’ advantage to have all calendars in one location at no cost to the Village.

Under questioning by Ms. Mailander, Mr. Roche stated that there is no contract involved.

Mr. Roche noted that Burbio has a very good privacy policy. E-Mails are not sold, and anyone can unsubscribe at any time.

The Village Councilmembers will review the information provided by Mr. Roche and contact him if they decide to move forward with this digital calendar platform.

## **2. Presentation by Schedler Ad Hoc Committee**

Councilman Hache stated that he was very pleased with the hard work and the open, transparent, and fair approach taken by the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee in terms of

gathering input from the different stakeholders in the community, and transforming this information into a recommendation to the Village Council in terms of the best use for the Schedler Property.

Councilman Sedon recalled that at the first meeting, he recommended beginning the process of considering the best use of the Schedler Property by considering a name for the park. This became a community-building exercise. Councilman Sedon suggested calling it Revolutionary Park, or something similar, based on the history of the area. Old Paramus Church owned the parcel during the Revolutionary War, and General George Washington, with his army, stayed there on two separate occasions. A skirmish was also fought near the church on March 23, 1780. No other formal suggestions were made.

Michael Winograd and Manish Shrimali appeared on behalf of the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Village Council to develop a proposal for the development of the Schedler Property.

Using a Power Point Presentation, Mr. Winograd discussed the following five areas: the background of the property; the committee itself; the process involved; the details of how the process played out; and a recommendation.

Mr. Winograd explained that the house that sits on the Schedler Property is one of the last remaining 1820's Dutch wood frame houses in Bergen County. A historic battle took place at the Old Paramus Church, located about 200 yards away from the property. In 2008, the Open Space Committee urged the Village Council to purchase the Schedler property before a private developer purchased it for high density housing or commercial development. At that time, the Open Space Committee suggested that a baseball diamond and a field be developed on the property. The Village purchased the Schedler property in 2009 for approximately \$2.7 million, including grants from the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund. In 2013, the Village purchased the Shotmeyer property, a .358 acre of land that was surrounded by the Schedler property, for approximately \$90,000, creating a contiguous, full property. In 2015, the Village Council passed a resolution to build a 90-foot baseball diamond, and a 120-yard x 70-yard multi-purpose field, with some other features. In 2017, the Village Council rescinded the 2015 resolution, and appointed the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee to propose a development plan.

Mr. Winograd noted that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee used a very inclusive, collaborative and transparent review process that was aimed at reevaluating and formulating a proposal for the development of the Schedler property. The members of the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee included Councilman Hache, Councilman Sedon, Michael Winograd, Nancy Bigos, Matthew Cunnigham, Dan Cramblitt, Tim Cronin, Manish Shrimali, Nick Whitney, Phil Dolce, Paul D'Arpa, and Ellie Gruber. Isabella Altano, who recently passed away, was also a member. Mr. Winograd recalled that Ms. Altano was a pleasure to work with, and her contributions to the committee were significant and very much appreciated.

Mr. Winograd recalled that at the first meeting, the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee discussed goals, viewpoints, and concerns. The group is very diverse, so there were many perspectives expressed. The group then began to gather data and facts. Reports and surveys were reviewed and background research began. The group walked the property with a development expert, and met with many Village organizations, including sport and neighborhood groups; the Parks and Recreation Committee; the House Restoration Project Committee; and other groups. Using sports groups as an example of how these meetings were set-up, Mr. Winograd explained that an e-mail was sent out on July 26, 2017 to all the presidents of the sports groups and fields committees setting up a general meeting with the Schedler Ad Hoc Sub-Committee, consisting of Mr. Winograd, Mr. Shrimali, and Mr. Cunningham, on September 6, 2017. This e-mail asked the recipients to forward it to all boards, and offered to meet with them as a group or individually, and asked them to provide enrollment numbers and various facts about their needs, proposals, and ideas. In August, 2017, the Schedler Ad Hoc Sub-Committee walked the site with representatives of the sports groups. Follow-up e-mails were sent identifying key agenda items for the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, and noted that attendance was voluntary, but that their input was important. Subsequent meetings were also held, including a meeting after the proposal was completed.

After the meetings with all the interested parties, the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee developed a proposal that balanced the needs that had been established based on facts, with the interests of the residents in mind. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee then met with the Village's Engineering Department to get input from a logistical and developmental standpoint, and requested that the Engineering Department develop the plans. By October, 2017, four plans were drafted, each of which had three different field sizes, and multiple features in various locations. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee then met again with the groups and also offered to speak individually to people who could not attend the meeting. After this meeting the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee met again to discuss the feedback from the various groups and created the presentation to the Village Council. The presentation was previewed openly.

Mr. Winograd explain that during the process, an agreement was reached on the scope of the Phase I clean-up of the property, which included the marking of trees and a period of time for people to inspect the decisions of the independent arborist and to offer input and ask questions. The Phase I clean-up will include the removal of the garage and the shed; a capping of the well; and the removal of dead and diseased trees and unwanted shrubs. A fixed price contract coming out of grant money was executed in October, 2017. The work will be monitored by Village Staff.

As a result of the meetings held with the Schedler Ad Hoc Sub-Committee and the sports groups, it was determined that there was a significant need for additional multi-purpose field space across all sports. There was no single sport that was found to be in danger of collapsing without additional space, but it was clear that each sport was limited and operating under sub-optimal conditions due to the field limits and the field quality. There is no one need that arose any greater than any other sports needs, as all the groups were in need of more space. This was evident as baseball, soccer, and lacrosse groups had to give

up home games because there wasn't enough space to play; soccer and lacrosse had many teams on one field during practices, and would need to practice until 9:00 p.m. because fields were not available earlier in the day; baseball had to cut down on the number of high school teams, and increased their rosters to 18 players because of the lack of fields; baseball's kickball program for preschoolers had to turn away participants because of the lack of field space; lacrosse experienced scheduling issues because the grass fields were typically closed early on in the spring season; grass fields were dusty and hazardous due to overuse; and certain fields would flood considerably after a rainstorm. It was noted that the overwhelming participation in Ridgewood sports was in pre-high school.

Mr. Shrimali continued with the presentation. He explained that the park development options considered four different field sizes to accommodate all sports. The options also included other features such as a children's playground; a bathroom with an overhang shelter; a parking lot; walking trails; a berm with a tree line across the top; fencing; the planting of trees along the street; and a pickleball court. All these options were considered in relationship with the location of the house.

Mr. Shrimali explained that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is making the following recommendations:

- Building a 75-yard by 50-yard field because it will benefit the maximum number of students, while maintaining a good balance between active and passive activities. Approximately 1,000 children will use this field.
- Building a children's playground
- Installing two ADA compliant bathrooms with an overhang shelter
- Constructing a 44-space parking lot between the house and Route 17
- Constructing walking trails
- Constructing a berm with a tree line across the top to address noise concerns
- Installing fencing at least on the Saddle River Road side of the site
- Planting more trees along Saddle River Road
- The use of "FieldTurf Cool Play", an artificial grass surface that allows for significantly more use and is one of the safest field turfs on the market

Using two displayed drawings, Mr. Shrimali described two recommended layouts, labeled Recommended Option A and Recommended Option B. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is recommending Option A.

Mr. Shrimali addressed the concerns of neighbors of the Schedler Property. He stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee met with neighbors many times, and informed them of the steps taken to address their concerns. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee explained the needs of the different sports teams and the benefits that each option offered. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee clarified neighbors doubts and questions regarding the Phase I Clean-up; gave neighbors the opportunity to review the property marked by the arborist and to submit feedback; and communicated with the neighbors, regarding both the clean-up and the recommended options, via e-mail and by going door-to-door.

Mr. Shrimali stated that the majority of the comments from the neighbors were positive regarding the 75-yard by 50-yard multi-purpose field.

In reference to concerns expressed by neighbors regarding sound, the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee recommended a 6-foot, tree lined berm along Route 17, and a tree line proposed along West Saddle River Road. A sound study was conducted and concluded that these measures will actually reduce the present noise level.

Mr. Shrimali stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee felt that the main goal of the Schedler property is to preserve the historic house and to try to restore it to its original glory.

Mr. Shrimali stated that the renaming of the park has not been finalized, and the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is not proposing any suggestions; however, they are open to suggestions on how to name the park appropriately.

In reference to concerns regarding safety, Mr. Shrimali stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee felt it was important to locate the entrance to the park away from the West Saddle River Road exit off of Route 17. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee would like to collaborate with the Ridgewood Police Department to monitor the park and the neighborhood to prevent vandalism and criminal activity. The Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is also recommending the installation of a designated crosswalk for neighborhood children; the placement of a fence along West Saddle River Road; and the installation of low level parking safety lights.

Mr. Shrimali explained that in addressing quality of life concerns, the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is recommending a prohibition on non-safety lights, both permanent and portable; a prohibition on public address announcement systems; a prohibition on a permanent concession stand; and park hours from dawn to dusk.

Mr. Shrimali stated that traffic, safety, noise, and environmental studies have been or are to be performed by professionals contracted by the Village. To the extent possible, the results of these studies will be shared and made available for review.

Mr. Shrimali thanked the Village Council for giving everyone an opportunity to participate in this process. He also thanked Councilman Hache and Councilman Sedon for their input.

Councilman Voigt complimented Mr. Winograd and Mr. Shrimali, and the entire Schedler Ad Hoc Committee, for their hard work. Under his questioning, Mr. Winograd explained that a full size field is 120 yards by 75 yards and is used primarily by high school students. The next size down is 75 yards by 50 yards, which meets the needs of the sports played by middle schoolers, and can also be used as a practice field for all ages.

Under questioning by Councilman Voigt, Mr. Shrimali stated that he is working on cost figures. Mr. Winograd understood that the Village professionals are presently working on these figures.

Under questioning by Councilman Voigt, Mr. Shrimali stated that the 44-parking space figure took into consideration having a large enough parking lot for parents, so as to avoid the need to park on the street, but not too large as to create a need to remove more trees. Mr. Shrimali stated that the possibility that street parking may be needed during special events was discussed with the neighbors. At present, parking is allowed on these streets.

Under questioning by Councilman Voigt, Mr. Shrimali stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee suggested installing a crosswalk, and would like to work with the Ridgewood Police Department and the Village Engineering Department on other signage, such as a stop sign and a crosswalk warning sign.

Councilman Sedon thanked Mr. Shrimali and Mr. Winograd for tonight's presentation, as well as everyone on the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee for their hard work. Councilman Sedon pointed out that once the Village Council comes to an agreement, and estimated costs are determined by the Village Engineering Department, the project would be phased in over a series of years so the Capital Budget is not heavily impacted.

Councilwoman Walsh thanked the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee for their great proposal, and complimented the members on all the input they obtained.

Under questioning by Councilwoman Walsh, Mr. Winograd stated that a few representatives from each of the sports groups attended the walk through of the property, as well as the initial meeting, either in person or by phone. The Fields Committee was notified of these meetings, as well. The schools were not included because there are no middle school sports teams, and the proposed field is not suited for high school sports. The property will be designed to achieve the maximum benefit to all sports goods, balanced with the needs and the interests of the community.

Under questioning by Councilwoman Walsh, Mr. Winograd confirmed that he is not anticipating any bussing coming in and parking along the western roadway.

Councilwoman Walsh referred to the testimony that indicated that 1,000 children would benefit from the use of this field, and pointed out the importance of proper scheduling to balance the different uses proposed for the site, including the historical house.

Under questioning by Councilwoman Walsh regarding the notification process, Mr. Shrimali explained that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee maintained approximately 220-240 e-mail addresses for the neighbors and other interested residents. Also, e-mails were sent to The Schedler Core Group, which contained approximately 50 e-mail addresses. Paper documents containing information on the clean-up and the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee's process and progress were delivered door-to-door.

Under questioning by Councilwoman Walsh, Mr. Shrimali confirmed that the field proposed is not large enough to be used for a real baseball game, eliminating the possibility of balls going onto Route 17.

Councilman Hache thanked Mr. Shrimali and Mr. Winograd for the tremendous amount of work they did on putting this presentation together and for reaching out into the community. Councilman Hache felt that a great deal of thought went into the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation, which balanced active and passive recreation, quality of life issues, and a safe environment; a goal that is never easy to achieve. He pointed out that the field and its required boundary and fencing, will only encompass approximately 1 acre of a 7.1 acre site. The field proposed under the resolution approved in 2015, would have encompassed approximately 4 acres of the site.

Mayor Knudsen described tonight's presentation as a great culmination of a collaborative effort, and she thanked the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee for all their hard work.

Under questioning by Mayor Knudsen, Mr. Shrimali stated that Village Council members were not copied on the e-mail communications to the neighbors.

Mayor Knudsen felt that knowing the enrollment numbers for each particular sport was key in determining the needs, both in the present and in the future, for each sport.

Under questioning by Mayor Knudsen, Mr. Winograd stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee kept Ridgewood Parks and Rec apprised of the plans for the playground and the nature trails. He understood that members of this committee kept other committees they were affiliated with informed, as well. Mr. Winograd noted that an environmental impact study, performed by the Village when the property was purchased, and was reviewed by the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee.

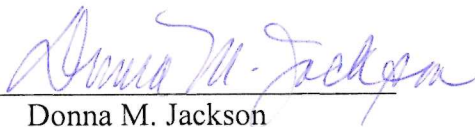
Mayor Knudsen expressed a concern with the cost of artificial turf. Mr. Winograd explained that turf is actually less expensive than grass when the cost of maintenance, watering, and longevity is considered. He pointed out that this was confirmed in a recent study conducted by the Ho-Ho-Kus Board of Education.

Mayor Knudsen expressed a concern with the pollutants associated with the highway, as previously expressed by Dr. Infantino during the public comment portion of this evening, and the effect on the lungs of children. She questioned if the environmental study addressed this issue. Village Attorney, Matthew Rogers explained that there has never been a particle study done on the site. Mr. Shrimali stated that the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee is recommending that an air quality study be conducted by a professional. Mr. Winograd added that members of the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee were planning to review a study conducted many years ago, as part of the construction of a ball field in close proximity to Route 17 in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. Mr. Shrimali added that looking at comparable studies was good; however, the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee still strongly recommends a new air quality study. Mayor Knudsen agreed.

Mayor Knudsen thanked the Schedler Ad Hoc Committee for all the time, effort and energy that went into this fabulous study, and the members' commitment to work on behalf of the community.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Village Council, on a motion by Councilman Hache, seconded by Councilman Sedon, and carried unanimously by voice vote, the Village Council's Work Session was adjourned at 10:57 p.m.



Donna M. Jackson  
Deputy Village Clerk



Susan Knudsen  
Mayor