

GREEN RIDGEWOOD MINUTES

May 2, 2024

Attendees: David Refkin, Jill Fasano, Joan Hubertus, Alina Mordkovich, Pam Perron, Frank Mortimer, Luly Melarti, Adam Peterseil, Nurhan Ezik, Justin Manger, Justin Jonsson, Guests: George Wolfson, Carolyn Jacoby, Bill Armbruster, Rurik Hallaby, Ava Delmonico (RHS student), Aniela Spina (RHS student), Lindsey Zaddow (RHS student)

April 4 meeting addendum: Miles Luo was present.

April 4 meeting minutes approved

Chair intro notes:

1. Village Council meeting - Columbia students' report was presented.
2. Joan, David, and Pam have been meeting with the Village Engineer and others on stormwater ordinances providing input.
3. The Daffodil Festival /Earth Day Fair was successful. No official count.
4. Climate Fresk on May 15, 6:30-9:30. Invited 68 people.
 - a. Adam asked who the target audience was.
 - b. David: Village Council, Planning Board, Keith and his staff, Chairperson of each Advisory Committee, Board of Ed, NJ Transit, Valley Hospital, and more!

Village Council Liaison Report notes:

1. Village Council appreciated Columbia's presentation.
2. Applying for a grant for lighting at Vets field. Currently using diesel. Grant is for permanent LED lights. \$700k. Grant would be for \$245k
3. Storms are affecting sewer systems. Emergency actions required means that federal dollars can't be spent on it. Of the three pump stations, one is costing us a lot of money.
4. Ford F-150 Lightning was authorized. It will come with a charger, to be installed in the municipal garage at Chestnut St.
5. Schedler: Grub Associates did a Phase 1b archaeological study, looking for historical artifacts, and found none.
6. Contract awarded to Suburban to delineate how much of Schedler is wetlands, and where.
7. We have one opening in Green Ridgewood and Green Team.
8. Project Pride are planting in CBD on May 19 at 8am. Come plant!
9. Frank Mortimer and Pam Perron and Paul Vagianos are running for the Village Council.
10. Open Space Committee having park walks. Saturdays was on Dunham Trail. Next one is May 11, 10am, at Pleasant Park (Hawes School).

Comments on the above:

1. Carolyn Jacoby: Can we quantify the energy savings (LED electric vs old-school & diesel costs).

2. David Refkin: in addition to gallons of diesel, what is the social cost of Carbon? Consider using the Federal measurements to quantify the benefits of reducing fossil fuel use.
3. Carolyn Jacoby: Master Plan & Columbia's presentation need to be used to drive change.
4. Frank Mortimer: Ridgewood-branded rain barrels

Alina's report on the Columbia students' report:

1. The report was well received.
2. Joan, Alina and David to present those slides to the Village Manager and his staff on May 6, to see how to action it.
3. Major flood mitigation recommendations include:
 - a. Short-term, rain barrels
 - b. Medium-term, underground detention basins
 - c. Long-term, Brook redirection
4. Decarbonization was the next big topic. See report for details.
 - a. The social price of carbon is a great metric to use here, and something we can help educate on.
5. The students were pleased with the process and happy with the outcome.

Comments on the above:

1. Adam Peterseil - I'd like to be at that May 6 meeting to make sure we gather data. For example, the Village does not know if solar panels are operational and how much energy they may produce.
2. Joan Hubertus - putting things on paper is what gives them power. We need to articulate how we will gather data, measure it, report it, articulate it, and make compelling proposals. Each subcommittee should be able to describe their data needs.
3. David Refkin - Army Corps of Engineers here in June to discuss long-term solutions.
4. Carolyn Jacoby - are rain barrels really the most effective solution?
 - a. Joan - no, but we can probably recast this as "managing rain where it falls" and use rain barrels as a very visible method to help manage water. Rain barrels are not typically a flood mitigation solution, but they help start the conversation. Let's just be careful to set clear expectations in our messaging.
 - b. George - agreed, this is to start a conversation and begin a process in which residents participate in mitigation.
 - c. Frank - Slow Mow May is similar. People could do more, but it's a start.
5. David Refkin - Resilience, Flooding & Stormwater committee will front a person to help Shade Tree implement rain barrels.
6. Rurik - Residents don't understand the direct impact of things like solar panel installation. If someone knew that in four months they'd save 3 tons of coal, that would feel good.
 - a. David - that is one of the benefits of Climate Fresk
7. David Refkin - one recommendation is to create a long-term sustainability program, and that's something we could more formally take on. The Sustainability Roadmap from Columbia is a valuable starting point.

Climate Fresk May 15 (David Refkin)

1. Attend if you wanted to but didn't come to the last one.

Bergen Hub (David Refkin)

1. We have a committee for towns to help each other.

Comments on the above:

1. Justin Manger - should we withdraw? Is this working?
 - a. David Refkin - they are putting together a steering committee. Based on its membership, we can decide how to proceed.

Student report on Sustainability Day (student reps listed above)

1. Lots of interest both at Sustainability Day and Daffodil Festival/Earth Day Fair
2. Lots of education opportunities
 - a. Recycling details
 - b. Hydroponics water savings
3. People had fun!

Comments on the above:

1. David Refkin - Ridgewood HS achieved silver certification from Sustainable NJ

Daffodil Festival report

1. Frank Mortimer & George Wolfson - no data, but one of the biggest turnouts it's had.
2. George Wolfson - let's be sure there are events scheduled throughout, including toward the end, and that that schedule is well advertised.
3. Carolyn Jacoby - booth variety was excellent.
4. George Wolfson - its success is in large part due to Parks & Rec putting extra effort in and we need to help more next year; we can't rely on them.
 - a. Frank Mortimer - tell cool vendors at farmers' markets you see!
5. Going the extra half hour is probably the way to go. Let's try it again next year and see.
6. Might we attend in shifts?
7. Next one is April 27, 2025. Arbor Day is April 25!
8. We asked this year of all vendors: what are you doing about Sustainability? Perhaps next year we ask businesses "are you a member of the NJ Sustainable Business Register?"
9. People asked, "Can I buy your shirts?"
 - a. Pam asked the village lawyer if we can sell them. Yes, we can. Possible question on how we can do that on a Sunday.
10. 140 households have signed up for Slow Mow May.
11. Revenue after expenses and split is approximately \$3000 for Green Ridgewood.
12. Attendees voted on Ridgewood's biggest climate issue. 229 total votes. 102 voted for flooding.

Subcommittee Report

1. We need to re-evaluate subcommittees, their membership, their roles, our expectations of them, etc.
2. Stormwater Ordinance - Joan Hubertus - DEP has mandated a minimum ordinance. Ridgewood adopted that and the local practices on minor development. The committee has looked at other model ordinances to assess how we might amend ours to improve the quantity & quality of water without being an unnecessary burden to homeowners. Next meeting will focus on rain gardens being included in the ordinance for minor development.
3. Finances -
 - a. Let's set our fiscal year, let's be able to budget ourselves. Justin Jonsson to try and get regular accurate info about our accounts.
 - b. Justin Jonsson to set up guidance for parties requesting money.
4. Communications ideas for newsletter: Climate Fresk, Columbia Students' Report. Ridgewood Living, water conservation for the summer
5. Green Building & Sustainability - Beth's group to put together a plan to action those.

Potential Field Trips:

1. Frank's Bee Joint
2. Sewage Treatment

Future meetings:

June 6, July 11, August ??, September 12, October 10, October 22 with Parks & Rec, November 7, December 5