

# COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

## RIDGEFIELD PARK

April 22, 2025

7:30 PM

Mayor MacNeill announced that this meeting is being held in accordance with the “Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.” notice of which was sent to the Record, and the Star Ledger on December 31, 2024 and was posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and Village Website.

This agenda is listed as a courtesy and attempt to inform the public of actions being considered by the Village Board of Commissioners. There may be additions and deletions prior to the Board taking final action. Any action may be taken at any meeting, which includes all Caucus and Regular sessions. The Commissioners reserve the right to conduct and/or attend any meetings presently scheduled for the rest of 2025 by a combination of electronic and/or in-person means. Meetings are open to the public.

### **ROLL CALL**

Those present were Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor MacNeill in the chair.

Absent: Commissioner Mirza

Also, present: Phil Boggia & Chris Chapman, Village Attorney; Joe Rella, Chief of Police; Rich Flynn, DPW Asst. Superintendent and Tara O’Grady, Village Clerk.

### **FLAG SALUTE**

The flag salute was led by Mayor MacNeill.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Commissioner Gerken, seconded by Commissioner Portorreal to approve the minutes of the Commissioners Regular Meeting of April 8, 2025.

On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor MacNeill voted “YEA”.

Absent: Commissioner Mirza

### **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

**Commissioner Anlian** advised the Arbor Day ceremony will take place on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 10AM in Brewster Park. They will be dedicating some trees in honor of Ptl. Steven Fernandez. The DPW has replanted 77 flowering trees in Brewster Park.

**Commissioner Gerken** wished all a Happy Earth Day since today is actually Earth Day. The Main Street planters have been refreshed by the Village Gardeners, who could always use new help.

**Commissioner Portorreal** advised the children’s Easter Egg Hunt took place last Saturday. Sustainable RP had a recycling event at the DPW – next one is in October.

Pool Open Houses are May 3<sup>rd</sup> 10am-2pm and May 14<sup>th</sup> 6pm-8pm. First 50 members will receive a gift.

**Mayor MacNeill** advised the budget was introduced on April 17<sup>th</sup>. The municipal portion of taxes will increase \$155, Board of Education portion will increase \$360 and the County portion will increase \$20, for a total of approximately \$535 on the average assessed home of \$430,000.00. The Civic Rec program will launch May 5<sup>th</sup> – scheduling of fields and Municipal Building use.

**INTERN REPORT**

Liam McAveney – 15X Survey

Mr. McAveney, a student at Ramapo College, is currently an intern with the Village of Ridgefield Park. He has been assigned to conduct a Shuttle Interest Survey of the Ridgefield Park residents due to NJ Transit obtaining undeveloped land in the Village.

There were 127 responses to the survey. The results showed there is a need for enhanced public transit services. More than half of the responders who answered the question ‘if a shuttle existed where would you like to see it go?’, offered either 15X as their preferred location or variants of ‘train station.’ 70% of the survey respondents would prefer to use the shuttle for work purposes. The survey is still open for residents to participate.

Frank Donaruma, resident, stated he had recommended to the Board of Commissioners to ask the US Senators for an Environmental Impact Study from the EPA pertaining to a NJ Transit bus depot.

Commissioner Gerken advised a NJ Transit plan has yet to be designed.

**HEARING OF CITIZENS**

Karen Purpura, resident, is co-chair of the RP Arts Association. She voiced her concern that there is not much art in Ridgefield Park anymore – Public Arts Committee, Creative Placemaking, the Grove Street piano and concerned that the arts budget was cut.

Mr. Purpura is very concerned that the arts are diminishing in the Village.

Mayor MacNeill advised Commissioner Mirza is the Commissioner in charge of the arts and he is not here tonight.

Commissioner Anlian advised the Village will continue conducting Summer Concerts - there is a concert tomorrow at the Knights of Columbus.

Frank Donaruma, resident, stated he was advised that the Civic Center is no longer usable for musicians – must pay a fee. Arts are essential for our quality of life. There have been economic studies done on the benefit of the arts.

Mr. Donaruma brought up that there is no bank in town.

Commissioner Anlian advised that he has met with a few banks and they feel they won’t make any money, they don’t want the public’s money.

Commissioner Gerken added the whole environment has changed.

Mr. Donaruma asked why one of the community gardens was closed. Commissioner Anlian stated both gardens are open – a fence was put up around McGowan Park’s garden since people were helping themselves.

Mr. Donaruma stated with the Arts Champions not having meetings is a direct conflict to the Master Plan.

Mayor MacNeill advised Mr. Donaruma and Ms. Purpura to voice their concerns to Commissioner Mirza, since the Arts is his department.

Mr. Donaruma asked if the new laundromat is putting in a dry well. There is a 12- inch pipe and the water has to be going somewhere.

Daniel Terranova, resident, requested an update on the Veterans Park renovations.

Mayor MacNeill advised the project is still in the environmental stages – the DEP is involved and the land is undergoing studies, test pits for the water table level. Once the wetlands are delineated, the design phase can begin. The Village has 2 engineering firms involved and a landscape architect. The Village cannot do anything without the DEP’s approval.

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Eliana Sevilla, resident, asked for a time line on the Veterans Park development. Mayor MacNeill advised there is no time line; hopefully close to the design stage. Unfortunately, this is out of our hands.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor MacNeill announces that the following business is considered to be routine in nature and will be enacted in one motion. Any item may be removed for separate consideration.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

2025-46	Authorization to Dispose of Two DPW Vehicles
2025-47	Appoint Board of Recreation Members
2025-48	Award Contract to Bilow Garrett Group, Architects and Planners, P.C. for the Preparation of Design Specifications and Plans for the Proposed Renovations to the Police Department
2025-49	Authorize Shared Services Agreement with the County of Bergen to Provide 911 Emergency Communication and Fire Dispatch Services

Motion by Commissioner Portorreal, seconded by Commissioner Anlian, that the consent agenda be approved.

On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor MacNeill voted “YEA”.  
Absent: Commissioner Mirza

**ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION**

2025-09	ORDINANCE TO EXCEED THE MUNICIPAL BUDGET APPROPRIATION LIMITS AND TO ESTABLISH A CAP BANK (N.J.S.A. 40A: 4-45.14) CALENDAR YEAR 2025
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Mayor MacNeill moved the ordinance be given its first reading. So ordered.

Mayor MacNeill read the said ordinance by title.

Mayor MacNeill moved the ordinance be adopted on first reading, published in the Record Newspaper and posted on the Village Bulletin Board by the Village Clerk. The public hearing will be held on May 13, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gerken.

On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor Anlian voted “YEA”.  
Absent: Commissioner Mirza

**ORDINANCE PUBLIC HEARING & ADOPTION**

2025-08	AN ORDINANCE BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AMENDING THE VILLAGE CODE OF RIDGEFIELD PARK TO REPEAL CHAPTER 193; TO ADOPT A NEW CHAPTER 193; TO ADOPT FLOOD HAZARD MAPS; TO DESIGNATE A FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE
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The clerk presented affidavit of publication, showing that advertisement had been made according to law, which was ordered filed. Commissioner Gerken moved a public hearing be held on the ordinance and was seconded by Commissioner Portorreal. So ordered. Commissioner Gerken read the ordinance by title on second reading. Commissioner Gerken then announced that all interested parties would now be given opportunity to be heard for or against the adoption of the ordinance.

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Natalie Franco, resident, asked how this pertains to the general public.

Commissioner Gerken advised the DEP has come out with new requirements for floodplains. The Village re-wrote the ordinance to be in compliance. The Village needs to follow the DEP's state mandates or start receiving fines.

Commissioner Gerken moved the ordinance be adopted on second reading and final passage, which motion was seconded by Commissioner Portorreal and adopted upon a call of the roll.

On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor MacNeill voted "YEA".  
Absent: Commissioner Mirza

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Commissioner Anlian, seconded by Commissioner Gerken to adjourn.

On roll call, Commissioners Anlian, Gerken, Portorreal and Mayor MacNeill voted "YEA".  
Absent: Commissioner Mirza

Mayor MacNeill adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

/s/ John H. Anlian  
Commissioner

/s/ William G. Gerken  
Commissioner

Abstain  
Commissioner Mirza

/s/ Wanda C. Portorreal  
Commissioner

/s/ Adam MacNeill  
Mayor

/s/ Tara O'Grady  
Village Clerk  
Approved on May 13, 2025