



# Ridge Civic



*Caring Citizens in a Quiet Country Community*

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**Cynthia Eaton Tvelia**  
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Ninette Kayton  
Chris Sosik  
Cynthia Eaton Tvelia

## **General Membership Meeting**

**April 19, 2023, 7:30 pm**

**Ridge Fire House**

### Call to Order and Pledge

- Meeting called to order at 7:33 pm.

### Reading of the Minutes

- Minutes are accessible online so please access those on our website: [ridgescivic.org](http://ridgescivic.org).

### Financial Report

- President Scott Wood reports on behalf of Treasurer Ken Casanova the following current balances. About \$5,000 has been paid out for our summer concert but will be reimbursed through Legislator Sarah Anker's office.
  - **\$11,360.35** — Total in all accounts
  - \$784.57 — General checking
  - \$2,893.78 — Community park fund
  - \$854.89 — Schoolhouse fund
  - \$2,620.42 — Scholarship fund
  - \$533.75 — Beautification fund
  - \$3,672.94 — Savings

### Correspondence

- None at this time.

### Unfinished Business

- The five military plaques have been installed at the Veterans Memorial, and the flag pole has been reinstalled. They are waiting on planters to be installed, and the Ridge sign will be replaced.
- Next major event is Earth Day, Saturday, April 22. This is our first annual Earth Day. Ridge residents can participate in a neighborhood cleanup crew challenge and win

prizes. These are gift certificates to Ridge restaurants: grand prize is \$150 to Drifter's and five runners up will get one of the following: \$50 to Go Burger, Dunkin Donuts, Alfredo's, Joy Luck Club, Hollywood Sweets. Participants have to register and show before-and-after photos to document cleanup.

The event is at the park at 12 noon on April 22. Charlie Bevington of Cornell Cooperative Extension will be there to teach about pollinator pathways. Ridge Civic will give out free Earth Day seeds. Also we will give out free flowers for kids from Bill Erdmann of Hidden Ridge Plants, blue recycling bins from Town of Brookhaven, and cinnamon squares courtesy of Alfredo's.

- Blessings in a Backpack Longwood Chapter Coordinator Trisha Ewald
  - Ridge Civic Association presents a donation to Blessings in a Backpack for \$500.
  - Trish: Thank you to Ridge Civic for keeping us in your heart. Blessings chapter started nine years ago and network is extensive between school and community partnerships. We fundraise, shop, run food drives, pack and distribute food to ensure kids are able to have food over the weekends.

Kids are identified by school staff. Each Friday, approximately 500 children each get a bag of food directly, and there's always a waitlist; school estimates another 400 students in district would benefit. Goal is to reach kids who truly need it so don't fall through cracks. Longwood does great job of letting families know about resources available when they are in crisis, choosing to pay bills or buy food.

Kids who are hungry do not do as well academically or socially due to distraction, behavioral issues, etc. Food insecurity is also a safety issue. At Ridge Elementary alone we are feeding 80 kids and plan to expand to 125. We are hosting a major fundraiser on May 19, which is a casino night.

Is it just elementary or others? Trish: It's designed for elementary through grade 6, but it's harder to hand a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grader (or older) a backpack because they feel shame. We'd like to reach older students, but the school established a food pantry instead at high school.

What percent of total number of Longwood students in those grades are you helping? 468 kids are currently being helped with this program, and the district has about 9,200 students K-12.

#### New Business

- None at this time

#### Guest Speakers:

- Suffolk County COPE officer updates for Ridge community:
  - Recent shooting not in Ridge but in Calverton Hills; sharing because a 15-year-old died and we need to be aware of gun violence and be alert in our community

- Another firearms incident happened on April 4 which is being investigated by the 7<sup>th</sup> precinct
- The Yaphank Wal Mart has seen uptick in larcenies; it's a larger store so increasing patrols there
- In month of April, 80 arrests on 96 charges; 7<sup>th</sup> precinct working hard
- A Longwood School District robocall went out about a bomb threat called in. School district notified us, and we responded immediately by searching buildings. Great collaborative effort, and determined that school safe to open on that date
- County-wide safety meeting held last night at LHS for Narcan training. Attendees received a free Narcan kit after being trained
- Upcoming events:
  - April 26 5:30 pm: Skating with a Cop (GR8 Skates in Shirley), with 50 students from Longwood and William Floyd and officers on skates
  - May 5: LI Game Farm grand opening
  - May 9: Rocky Point Moe's special day where cops make your food
- Longwood Central School District Superintendent Dr. Lohman
  - Budget vote is May 16, and full presentation on district website where residents can go see detailed budget
  - Still trying to address pandemic fallout, recover and reaffirm who we are as a district and a community
  - Longwood used to be a group of smaller districts, then together to become Middle Island School District, then eventually became Longwood. That process forced us to learn to talk with and listen to one another. Committed to sharing as much positive news as possible; too much news about Longwood is negative
  - 75% of districts in NY have fewer than 5,000 but we have over 9,000 students, and our economically disadvantaged population is twice as large as most districts in NY. Our special education population is just under 2,000 students and we have about 1,000 English language learners. Our Hispanic population is now around 35%, and white population is 43%. Regarding economically disadvantaged students: 1,200 are white, 1,100 Black, and 2,000 Hispanic. We've continued to provide free lunch to our students in need; kids can't pay attention when hungry; it's a basic need
  - Need to ensure we have resources needed to address changing demographics. Big hurdle is that many students do not go to preschool, so now have preschool intervention program so they know how to sit, focus, hold a pencil, know their colors
  - Board of Ed developing long-term goals that don't change every year. Our biggest focus is just being human and showing how much we care. When someone needs something, this community rallies together to help.
  - We are focused on providing opportunities for kids to be college ready or workplace ready. A big push is dual enrollment so kids can take college credits while still in high school. The first student in SUNY history who is graduating both high school and Suffolk County Community College at the same time is at Longwood. Dual-enrollment program, Beacon, allows students to save money and time. We also focus on career development for those not college focused; need to make sure they know what opportunities are by way of careers.

- Working on branding and cybersecurity, and we're proud of our double-digit credit rating. Over past ten years, state aid has been short every year by \$2 million to \$10 million. When state doesn't have money, they tend to cut school districts. A lawsuit resulted in NYS having to pay back money, which for Longwood amounts to about \$15 million.
- More information is on LCSD website if you click budget presentation. You'll see that the budget increased this year, but impact on average taxpayer is less than 1%.
- Bill Erdmann Hidden Ridge Plants
  - Hidden Ridge on Randall Road is very popular in spring. Bought house in the woods there in 1979 and have been there ever since, gave up working to focus on nursery full time. Hidden Ridge is open 7 days a week and has 7 greenhouses.
  - Two biggest challenges for growing plants are the cold and the deer.
  - Bill shares advice for both, plus a variety of plants that are more deer resistant. Encourages people to plant salvia because deer will not touch them and they come in wide range of colors. Ostrich fern, Angelonia, European ginger, Allum Millennium (blooms in July), and others are considered deer proof. Bill always happy to help; just come by and ask.
- Peter Ganley, Director of Operations for Congressman Nick LaLota
  - New district office in Huntington but moving to Hauppauge. New York's 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District encompasses Brookhaven, so want to introduce selves. Office hours Thursdays 1-5 pm in Rocky Point VFW; a staff member always will be there. Come to express a concern or ask a question, e.g., if you have an issue with a federal agency, a problem with the IRS, a passport issue, etc.
  - Congressman LaLota sits on homeland security and small business concerns committees.
- Victoria Molloy, Legislative Aide to Town Councilman Mike Loguercio
  - We are donating blue recycle bins for Ridge Civic's Earth Day celebration; those bins will also include lids so please use those to help keep your paper and cardboard dry. We'll also have recycling stickers you could put on any regular can under 30 gallons, plus other free info as well.

### Member Concerns

- None at this time.

### Committees

- A. Community Park (Chris Sosik/John Gulino): Scott notes that John and Chris are not here this evening; a lot of people are using the playground in the nicer weather.
- B. Membership (Holly Wood) — Holly reports that we continue to welcome people into the Ridge Civic Association.

- C. Downtown Beautification (Debbie Bedell) — Debbie reports that we're waiting to get old planters removed and new white ones installed.
- D. School House (Chris Sosik) — No report at this time. \$854.89 fund has been there for a while. Speaking with Diane Schwindt from Longwood Estate to see if we can help with renovation. We'd like to use this funding to put a plaque on the school house to provide a bit of history; plus it needs some painting and repairs to the front door.

**Motion to use these funds up to the available amount of \$854.89 to purchase plaque and make needed repairs made by Holly Wood, seconded. Motion passes unanimously.**

- E. Clean Up (Rich Paduspska) — No report at this time.
- F. Scholarship Committee (Cynthia Eaton) — We have two \$500 scholarships, and applications are on the website. Deadline is May 15. Forms are revised so students can now complete and email their applications rather than mail in via post office.
- G. Events (Ninette Kayton) — Ninette indicates that upcoming events have been reported on already. Easter Egg hunt was rainy, but a lot of people showed up and it was really fun despite the rain. The children and families asked us to hide the eggs in the rain anyway, and they had a blast with the Easter bunny.
- H. Brookhaven National Lab (Ken Casanova) — Scott notes that Ken is not here this evening due to a medical issue but wants to note that BNL has a new director, Joanne Hewitt. Ken has stepped down as treasurer. If you'd like to run and will be a member in good standing for three months prior to our June meeting, the position is open this year.

#### Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.