

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE CASE YOU ARE FILING WITH THE **APPELLATE DIVISION**.  
REVIEW ALL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS FOR ACCURACY PRIOR TO HITTING THE **SUBMIT** BUTTON  
ON THE NEXT PAGE.

**FILING ID #**  
**APPELLATE #**  
**CASE TITLE**  
  
**CASE TYPE**  
**CATEGORY**  
**TRIAL COURT JUDGE**

1725046  
  
IN THE MATTER OF VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT AT THE ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY, APPLICATION FOR PROJECT AUTHORIZATION, NEW JERSEY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ACT REVIEW  
STATE AGENCY

**TRIAL COURT DOCKET #**  
**TRIAL COURT COUNTY**  
  
**DISPOSITION DATE**

HPO PROJECT #20-0608-35  
  
  
08/27/2025

PARTY/ATTORNEY

PARTY NAME	PARTY ROLE	PARTY DESIGNATION	FIRM NAME - ATTORNEY NAME / ATTORNEY ROLE	ADDRESS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	OTHER	RESPONDENT	ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW - SOOKIE BAE-PARK (ATTORNEY OF RECORD)	25 MARKET ST, PO BOX 112 TRENTON, NJ 08625-0112 609-984-3900 dol.appeals@law.njoag.gov (DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US; DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US)
FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	OTHER	APPELLANT	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN (ATTORNEY OF RECORD)	10 BRAEBURN DRIVE PRINCETON, NJ 08540 609-454-7435 bruceafran@aol.com; princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com
VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD	OTHER	RESPONDENT	MATTHEW S. ROGERS - MATTHEW S ROGERS (ATTORNEY OF RECORD)	123 PROSPECT ST RIDGEWOOD, NJ 07450 201-857-3700 msr@mrogerslaw.com; lpr@mrogerslaw.com

DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT / FILE NAME	FILING PARTY	FIRM NAME / ATTORNEY ATTENTION	CATEGORY / DOCUMENT TYPE	SOURCE	DATE DOCUMENT CREATED	STATUS
NOTICE OF APPEAL	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - NOTICE OF APPEAL	SYSTEM GENERATED	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT
CASE INFORMATION STATEMENT	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - CASE INFO STATEMENT	SYSTEM GENERATED	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT
TRIAL COURT ORDER/JUDGMENT/DECISION (08/27/2025)	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - TRIAL COURT ORDER/JUDGMENT/DECISION	UPLOAD	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT
TRANSCRIPTS REQUEST FORM	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM (TO	SYSTEM GENERATED	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT

	ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.		ORDER OR AMEND PRIOR REQUEST)			
CERTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL IDENTIFIERS	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - CERTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIAL IDENTIFIERS	SYSTEM GENERATED	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT
PROOF OF SERVICE	FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.	BRUCE I. AFRAN - BRUCE IRA AFRAN	APPELLATE DOCUMENTS - PROOF OF SERVICE	SYSTEM GENERATED	10/03/2025	READY TO SUBMIT

## FEES AND PAYMENTS

Fee Type	Fee Amount	Fee Status	Fee Paid	Payment Date	Payment Type	Amount Due
FILING FEE	\$250.00	FEE PENDING	\$0.00		JACS	\$250.00
	\$250.00		\$0.00			\$250.00

**RELATED APPEALS**

CASE TYPE	APPELLATE #	TRIAL COURT/ AGENCY DOCKET #	CASE TITLE	DISPOSITION DATE	STATUS
No record found.					

## Certification that Submission Contains No Confidential Information or Confidential Personal Identifiers

This form shall be completed by any party who files a document in a public court matter in the Supreme Court or in the Appellate Division of the Superior Court.

**1. Confidential information / confidential personal identifiers (must select one):**

I certify that I have reviewed Rules 1:38-3, 1:38-5, and 1:38-7 and:

- ☒ This document does not contain any confidential information or any confidential personal identifiers; **OR**
- ☐ This document; previously contained confidential information or confidential personal identifiers, which have been redacted (meaning removed or made anonymous by using fictitious first names or initials, where applicable). The cover of the redacted version of the document contains the word "REDACTED." I acknowledge that a non-redacted version must be filed simultaneously with the redacted version in matters where the confidential information is necessary to the disposition of the matter: **OR**
- ☐ This document contains confidential information, but redaction is not required because the document is excluded from public access pursuant to court order, Rule, statute, or other authority. If applicable, skip paragraphs 2 and 3.

**2. Return and resubmission:**

I certify that if any confidential information is discovered in this submission and brought to the court's attention, the court will return the document to me, and I will be responsible to redact or remove the confidential information before resubmission. I understand the court could impose sanctions, including suppression of the brief, dismissal in extraordinary cases, and other measures for a failure to accurately make this certification or for the discovery of confidential information in a document that has been filed.

**3. Briefs posted online:**

I understand that the presence of confidential information or confidential personal identifiers in a document that has been posted on the Judiciary's public website will be grounds for the removal of such online posting, pending correction by the filing party, on an expedited timeline. The court in its discretion could postpone further proceedings pending the resubmission of the document.

**This certification pertains to the following documents included in this filing:**

**NOTICE OF APPEAL, CASE INFORMATION STATEMENT, TRIAL COURT  
ORDER/JUDGMENT/DECISION (08/27/2025), TRANSCRIPTS REQUEST FORM**

I certify that the forgoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

**10/03/2025**

Date

**S/ BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**

Signature of Attorney or Pro Se Litigant



New Jersey Judiciary  
Superior Court - Appellate Division  
**Notice of Appeal**

TITLE IN FULL (AS CAPTIONED BELOW)

**IN THE MATTER OF VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD  
PARK DEVELOPMENT AT THE ZABRISKIE-  
SCHEDLER PROPERTY, APPLICATION FOR  
PROJECT AUTHORIZATION, NEW JERSEY  
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ACT REVIEW**

ATTORNEY / LAW FIRM / PRO SE LITIGANT

NAME

**BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**

STREET ADDRESS

**10 BRAEBURN DRIVE**

CITY

**PRINCETON**

STATE

**NJ**

ZIP

**08540**

PHONE NUMBER

**609-454-7435**

EMAIL ADDRESS

**bruceafran@aol.com**

**princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com**

ON APPEAL FROM

TRIAL COURT JUDGE

TRIAL COURT OR STATE AGENCY

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

TRIAL COURT OR AGENCY NUMBER

**HPO PROJECT #20-0608-35**

**FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER**

Notice is hereby given that **HOUSE, INC.** appeals to the Appellate  
Division from a ☐ Judgment or ☐ Order entered on \_\_\_\_\_ in the ☐ Civil  
☐ Criminal or ☐ Family Part of the Superior Court ☐ Tax Court or from a  
☒ State Agency decision entered on **08/27/2025**

If not appealing the entire judgment, order or agency decision, specify what parts or paragraphs are being  
appealed.

For criminal, quasi-criminal and juvenile actions only:

Give a concise statement of the offense and the judgment including date entered and any sentence or  
disposition imposed:

This appeal is from a ☐ conviction ☐ post judgment motion ☐ post-conviction relief ☐ pre-trial detention  
If post-conviction relief, is it the ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_  
specify

Is defendant incarcerated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Was bail granted or the sentence or disposition stayed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If in custody, name the place of confinement:

Defendant was represented below by:

☐ Public Defender ☐ self ☐ private counsel \_\_\_\_\_

specify

Notice of appeal and attached case information statement have been served where applicable on the following:

	Name	Date of Service
Trial Court Judge		
Trial Court Division Manager		
Tax Court Administrator		
State Agency	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	<b>10/03/2025</b>
Attorney General or Attorney for other Governmental body pursuant to R. 2:5-1(b)(4)		<b>10/03/2025</b>

Other parties in this action:

Name and Designation	Attorney Name, Address and Telephone No.	Date of Service
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	<b>SOOKIE BAE-PARK, Esq. ATTORNEY GENERAL LAW 25 MARKET ST PO BOX 112 TRENTON NJ 08625-0112 609-984-3900 dol.appeals@law.njoag.gov (DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US; DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US)</b>	<b>10/03/2025</b>
<b>VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD</b>	<b>MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq. MATTHEW S. ROGERS 123 PROSPECT ST RIDGEWOOD NJ 07450 201-857-3700 msr@mrogerslaw.com; lpr@mrogerslaw.com</b>	<b>10/03/2025</b>

Attached transcript request form has been served where applicable on the following:

	Name	Date of Service
Transcript Office		
Clerk of the Tax Court		
State Agency	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>	<b>10/03/2025</b>

Exempt from submitting the transcript request form due to the following:

☐

☐ Transcript in possession of attorney or pro se litigant (four copies of the transcript must be submitted along with an electronic copy).

List the date(s) of the trial or hearing:

☐ Motion for abbreviation of transcript filed with the court or agency below. Attach copy.

☐ Motion for transcripts at public expense filed with the court below. Attach copy.

I certify that the foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I also certify that, unless exempt, the filing fee required by *N.J.S.A. 22A:2* has been paid.

**10/03/2025**

Date

**s/ BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**

Signature of Attorney or Pro Se Litigant

**bruceafran@aol.com;**

BAR ID #

**010751986**

EMAIL ADDRESS **princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com**



New Jersey Judiciary  
Superior Court - Appellate Division  
Notice of Appeal

Additional appellants continued below

Additional respondents continued below

**Respondent's Attorney** Email Address: **msr@mrogerslaw.com; lpr@mrogerslaw.com**

☐ Plaintiff ☐ Defendant ☒ Other (Specify) **PETITIONER**

Name

**MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq.**

Client

**VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD**

Street Address

**123 PROSPECT ST**

City

**RIDGEWOOD**

State

**NJ**

Zip

**07450**

Telephone Number

**201-857-3700**

Additional parties continued below

Appellant's attorney email address continued below

Respondent's attorney email address continued below

**PARTY NAME: VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD ATTORNEY NAME: MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq.**

**msr@mrogerslaw.com**

**lpr@mrogerslaw.com**

Additional Party's attorney email address continued below





New Jersey Judiciary  
Superior Court - Appellate Division  
**Civil Case Information Statement**

Please type or clearly print all information.

Title in Full <b>IN THE MATTER OF VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT AT THE ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY, APPLICATION FOR PROJECT AUTHORIZATION, NEW JERSEY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ACT REVIEW</b>	Trial Court or Agency Docket Number <b>HPO PROJECT #20-0608-35</b>
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<b>Appellant's Attorney</b>	Email Address: <b>bruceafran@aol.com</b> <b>princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com</b>
-----------------------------	---

<input type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>PETITIONER</b>				
Name <b>BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.</b>		Client <b>FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.</b>		
Street Address <b>10 BRAEBURN DRIVE</b>	City <b>PRINCETON</b>	State <b>NJ</b>	Zip <b>08540</b>	Telephone Number <b>609-454-7435</b>

<b>Respondent's Attorney *</b>	Email Address: <b>dol.appeals@law.njoag.gov</b> <b>DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US</b>
--------------------------------	--

<input type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>STATE AGENCY</b>				
Name <b>SOOKIE BAE-PARK, Esq.</b>		Client <b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</b>		
Street Address <b>25 MARKET ST PO BOX 112</b>	City <b>TRENTON</b>	State <b>NJ</b>	Zip <b>08625-0112</b>	Telephone Number <b>609-984-3900</b>

Give Date and Summary of Judgment, Order, or Decision Being Appealed and Attach a Copy:  
**On August 27, 2025, Elizabeth Dragon, the Assistant Commissioner for Community Investment and Economic Revitalization, issued a decision approving of a plan by the Village of Ridgewood to build an engineered athletic field and roads, parking, restrooms and other facilities that would encroach upon approximately 90 per cent of the property associated with the Zabriskie-Schedler House, a historic farm property that is listed on the National and the New Jersey Registers of Historic Places; the decision was conditioned upon the Village of Ridgewood agreeing to certain conditions within a 60-day period but required no further decisional action by the Department of Environmental Protection. The appellant, Friends of Historic Zabriskie-Schedler House, Inc., was an Objector to the plan and submitted a report by Clifford Zink, a historic preservation expert, opposing the project and offered testimony through its expert and members at the hearings at the Historic Sites Council on July 21, 2025 and August 21, 2025 opposing the project.**

Have all the issues as to all the parties in this action, before the trial court or agency, been disposed? (These claims may include counterclaims, cross-claims, third-party claims, and applications for counsel fees.) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If outstanding claims remain open, has the order been properly certified as final pursuant to R. 4:42-2? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

A) If the order has been properly certified, attach copies of the order and the complaint and any other relevant pleadings to the order being appealed. Attach a brief explanation as to why the order qualified for certification pursuant to R. 4:42-2.

B) If the order has not been certified or has been improperly certified, leave to appeal must be sought. (See R. 2:2-4; 2:5-6.) Please note that an improperly certified order is not binding on the

Appellate Division.

If claims remain open and/or the order has not been properly certified, you may want to consider filing a motion for leave to appeal or submitting an explanation as to why you believe the matter is final and appealable as of right.

Were any claims dismissed without prejudice?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, explain and indicate any agreement between the parties concerning future disposition of those claims.

Is the validity of a statute, regulation, executive order, franchise or constitutional provision of this State being questioned? (R. 2:5-1(b)(4)) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Give a Brief Statement of the Facts and Procedural History:

**The Zabriskie-Schedler House is a historic farm house and associated land that is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places in the Village of Ridgewood. It is emblematic of an early 19th-Century farm property and is described on the National Register Nomination as one of the few properties in the region that is both intact structurally and with its supporting acreage.**

**Nomination of the Zabriskie-Schedler House for listing on the National and State Historic Registers is expressly based on the fact that it has its acreage intact and undeveloped and is a rare surviving example of an early-19th Century Farm property. It is also down the street and communicates directly with the Reformed Church, another historic property that was developed in tandem with the Zabriskie-Schedler property and reflects a unified architectural and cultural relationship between the two sites. In the community of Ridgewood and in the County of Bergen, there are virtually no other similar surviving properties.**

**A critical element of the National Register Nomination was the relationship of the land with the building, in other words that the entire homestead was deemed historically significant, not just the structure.**

**Despite the importance of the overall property to the listing, the Village of Ridgewood has applied for, and received, permission from the Department of Environmental Protection, following two hearings before the Historic Sites Council, to destroy virtually all of the intact land. This will be accomplished through clear-cutting nearly all of the seven-plus acre property, including hundreds of trees and shrubs, plowing over the natural grade of the site, constructing an engineered platform to house a soccer/athletic field (with artificial turf), along with fencing around the property, construction of a roadway that will partly encircle the house and most of the property, parking facilities, restroom and other structural elements. This industrial intrusion will consume approximately 90 per cent of the property leaving over only the house and a small piece of land next to the house, removing the historical homestead that was the subject of the National and State Register listings.**

**At first, the Historic Sites Council, after reviewing the plan and the expert report of Clifford Zink, a well-known historic preservationist, was prepared to adopt a resolution denying permission to construct this intrusion. Faced with this expected rejection, the Village of Ridgewood proposed on short notice a "Cultural Center (the 'Center') in the Zabriskie-Schedler House as means of "mitigating" the vast loss that the project will cause to the property. No factual information was provided as to the "Center", no description of any anticipated activity for the "Center", no budget allocated, no grant applications have been made for the "Center", no source of funds has been identified, no content for the "Center" has been disclosed, no staff have been assigned to the "Center".**

**In short, no actual proposal exists to explain in any manner the nature of the "Cultural Center" or the Village's ability to develop and operate such a "Center". Nor has any information been provided as to how a "Cultural Center" will mitigate the loss of the entirety of the early 19th Century farmstead/homestead.**

**The Village of Ridgewood contended, without any factual evidence, that it has a compelling need for this**

(\*) truncated due to space limit. Please find full information in the additional pages of the form.

Revised: 04/02/2016, CN 10501 (Appellate Civil CIS)

page 2 of 5

project due to the scarcity of athletic fields and that existing public and private school athletic fields are not sufficient. This evidence was entirely hearsay and conclusory with no factual evidence offered to support such claims. DEP failed to make any inquiry to determine their validity.

Even if such claims were documented, the destruction and loss of virtually all of the nominated historic site cannot be justified under the Historic Places Act, both state and federal, in view of the almost complete evisceration of the historic homestead that will follow construction.

No evidence was offered before DEP and the HSC that any similar historic properties have been so completely destroyed by an "encroachment".

After completion of hearings on July 21, 2025 and August 21, 2025, the Village offered a modified proposal on August 25, 2025 that was not made the subject of any public hearing. Neither the Objector nor any other member of the public was given an opportunity to testify to or otherwise speak to this new proposal. Remarkably, just two days later, without any hearing at all, on August 27, 2025, the Assistant Commissioner approved the new proposal that required the Village to accept certain conditions, such as historical signage, an archaeological plan, and related matters, none of which actually mitigate or eliminate the near-total loss to the historic site that will ensue from this development.

**This appeal followed.**

To the extent possible, list the proposed issues to be raised on the appeal as they will be described in appropriate point headings pursuant to *R. 2:6-2(a)(6)*. (Appellant or cross-appellant only.):

1. Due process was violated by DEP's failure to allow the public to comment on or object to the Village's modified proposal.
2. Due process was violated by the HSC's failure to allow the Appellant's expert, Clifford Zink, who had provided a detailed expert report, to testify outside of a three-minute period that was patently insufficient for expert testimony.
3. No factual basis exists to support the claim that the "Cultural Center" will mitigate the encroachment that will destroy virtually the entire site.
4. No "mitigation" is possible because the proposed project encroaches on the entirety of the historic site.
5. No "mitigation" is possible from the limited measures provided including, inter alia, signage, the archaeological survey and the "Cultural Center", none of which will restore the lost homestead that forms a fundamental part of the historic property as it was nominated for the State and Federal Registers.
6. No evidence was introduced to support the Village's claim that it had a compelling need to destroy the site to provide for a soccer/athletic field.
7. No evidence was offered to support any inference that these proposed modern intrusions are consonant with or compatible with the historic homestead and its cultural functions and significance.
8. Other issues are reserved for further analysis upon preparation of the Appellant's Merits Brief.

If you are appealing from a judgment entered by a trial judge sitting without a jury or from an order of the trial court, complete the following:

1. Did the trial judge issue oral findings or an opinion? If so, on what date? \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. Did the trial judge issue written findings or an opinion? If so, on what date? 08/27/2025 ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Will the trial judge be filing a statement or an opinion pursuant to *R. 2:5-1(d)*? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Unknown

**Caution:** Before you indicate that there was neither findings nor an opinion, you should inquire of the trial judge to determine whether findings or an opinion was placed on the record out of counsel's presence or whether the judge will be filing a statement or opinion pursuant to *R. 2:5-1(d)*.

Date of Your Inquiry:

1. Is there any appeal now pending or about to be brought before this court which:

- (A) Arises from substantially the same case or controversy as this appeal? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- (B) Involves an issue that is substantially the same, similar or related to an issue in this appeal? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If the answer to the question above is Yes, state:

(\*) truncated due to space limit. Please find full information in the additional pages of the form.

Case Title	Trial Court Docket#	Party Name
2. Was there any prior appeal involving this case or controversy?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If the answer to question above is Yes, state:		
Case Name and Type (direct, 1st PCR, other, etc.)	Appellate Division Docket Number	
<p>Civil appeals are screened for submission to the Civil Appeals Settlement Program (CASP) to determine their potential for settlement or, in the alternative, a simplification of the issues and any other matters that may aid in the disposition or handling of the appeal. Please consider these when responding to the following question. A negative response will not necessarily rule out the scheduling of a preargument conference.</p> <p>State whether you think this case may benefit from a CASP conference. <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</span></p> <p>Explain your answer:</p> <p><b>The Appellant and the Village have been in discussions for many years without success. The parties know each other well and there appears no basis on which to compromise or settle this matter. A CASP meeting will consume needless resources and cause delay.</b></p>		
Whether or not an opinion is approved for publication in the official court report books, the Judiciary posts all Appellate Division opinions on the Internet.		
I certify that confidential personal identifiers have been redacted from documents now submitted to the court, and will be redacted from all documents submitted in the future in accordance with Rule 1:38-7(b).		
<b>FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.</b> <hr/> <small>Name of Appellant or Respondent</small>  <hr/> <b>10/03/2025</b> <small>Date</small>  <hr/> <b>010751986</b> <small>Bar #</small>	<b>BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.</b> <hr/> <small>Name of Counsel of Record (or your name if not represented by counsel)</small>  <hr/> <b>s/ BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.</b> <small>Signature of Counsel of Record (or your signature if not represented by counsel)</small>  <hr/> <b>bruceafran@aol.com; princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com</b> <small>Email Address</small>	



New Jersey Judiciary  
Superior Court - Appellate Division  
CIVIL Case Information Statement

Additional appellants continued below

Additional respondents continued below

**Respondent's Attorney** Email Address: **msr@mrogerslaw.com; lpr@mrogerslaw.com**

☐ Plaintiff ☐ Defendant ☒ Other (Specify) **PETITIONER**

Name	Client			
<b>MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq.</b>	<b>VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD</b>			
Street Address	City	State	Zip	Telephone Number
<b>123 PROSPECT ST</b>	<b>RIDGEWOOD</b>	<b>NJ</b>	<b>07450</b>	<b>201-857-3700</b>

Additional parties continued below

Appellant's attorney email address continued below

Respondent's attorney email address continued below

**PARTY NAME: VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD ATTORNEY NAME: MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq.**  
**msr@mrogerslaw.com**  
**lpr@mrogerslaw.com**

Additional Party's attorney email address continued below



# State of New Jersey

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMUNITY INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

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**PHILIP D. MURPHY**

*Governor*

**SHAWN M. LATOURETTE**

*Commissioner*

**TAHESHA L. WAY**

*Lt. Governor*

August 27, 2025

Mr. Keith Kazmark, Village Manager  
Village of Ridgewood  
131 North Maple Avenue  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

VIA EMAIL, [kkazmark@ridgewoodnj.net](mailto:kkazmark@ridgewoodnj.net)

**RE: Bergen County, Village of Ridgewood  
Park Development at the Zabriskie-Schedler Property  
Application for Project Authorization  
New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act Review  
John A.L. Zabriskie House (SR 8/14/2019)**

Dear Mr. Kazmark,

I am writing concerning the Village of Ridgewood's ("Village") application for project authorization for the proposed development of a multi-functional public park ("Project") at the site of the John A.L. Zabriskie House ("Zabriskie House"), which is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. As proposed, the park development plan includes construction of a multi-sport artificial turf athletic field, a walking and hiking trail, inclusive playground for children of all abilities, landscaped areas for passive recreation, historic interpretive elements to promote the Zabriskie House, and supportive green infrastructure, parking, and restroom amenities.

In accordance with the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act, the Village appeared before the New Jersey Historic Sites Council ("Council") at public meetings on July 21 and August 21, 2025, and made a presentation in support of the application. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)(7), the Council passed Resolution 2025-449 (enclosed), recommending that the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection ("Department") temporarily deny the application for project authorization based on the Council's findings that insufficient measures were proposed to avoid, reduce or mitigate a potential encroachment upon the historic resource; an alternative to the Project exists that meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*; and the Project introduces visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that are out of character with the Zabriskie House.

In the course of its review and making its recommendation to the Commissioner, the Council questioned the potential incompatibility of the proposed multi-sport athletic field in size, scale and materials with the historic property; whether improvements to other existing fields in the municipality could satisfy the project need; the sufficiency of information regarding the potential presence of and impacts to archaeological resources; the completeness of the Village's

plans for the interpretation and use of the Zabriskie House and its relationship to the overall park development Project; and the potential environmental impacts of the Project.<sup>1</sup>

On August 25, 2025, the Village submitted supplemental documentation to the Department to address the issues raised by the Council in its recommended temporary denial and to clarify information that was already provided to the Council in the reviewed application. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.131 and N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(b), the Council's recommendation was provided to the Commissioner of the Department, who may authorize, conditionally authorize, deny, or temporarily deny the application. The Commissioner has delegated his authority to me as Assistant Commissioner.

I have carefully reviewed the entire record, including the application for project authorization, the Village's presentation to the Council, testimony from those in attendance at the July 21 and August 21, 2025, meetings, the Council's Resolution, the supplemental documentation submitted by the Village, and correspondence from members of the public, in light of my obligation to consider: (1) the public benefit of the proposed project; (2) whether there are feasible and prudent alternatives to the preferred alternative; and (3) whether sufficient measures could be taken to avoid, reduce, or mitigate impacts of the proposed encroachment, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)(6).

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.4, the Historic Preservation Office (HPO) determined that the proposed undertaking, the construction of the Project at the Zabriskie House site, constitutes an encroachment because the proposed development is located within the boundaries of the listed resource, on the open space that was historically associated with the agrarian use of the property, and introduces visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that are out of character with the registered property and will irreversibly alter its setting. The proposed development is incompatible with the size, scale, and materials of the historic property and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

In order for me to authorize this application, I must be satisfied that the criteria in N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)(6) have been fully considered and warrant authorization. Based on my review of the entire record, and for the reasons set forth below, I find that conditional authorization of the project is warranted.

### **Consideration 1: Public Benefit**

The Village has demonstrated the clear public benefit of this undertaking. The primary purpose of this undertaking is to create a multi-use public space that meets the growing recreational and environmental needs of the community. The Village's athletic fields support a wide range of youth and adult sports programs, school activities, and community events, and the demand for field space consistently exceeds availability. Several of the existing fields are subject to flooding during storm events, placing further stress on the Village's limited resources.

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<sup>1</sup> The Council is authorized to make advisory recommendations to the Commissioner concerning the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation of encroachments upon certain historic resources that may diminish the historic integrity of the resource as prescribed by governing law. N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.131; N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(c)(6); N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.4(a). The consideration of potential environmental impacts, however, is not the province of the Council, is beyond the scope of the Council's review, and may not be considered by the Council or serve as the basis of its recommendations to the Commissioner. To the extent that adverse impacts to public health or the environment from regulated activities are identified in the course of a potential encroachment application, it is appropriate for Historic Preservation Office staff to refer the matter to the relevant auspices of the Department for further review.



## **Consideration 2: Feasible and Prudent Alternatives**

The Village has adequately outlined multiple alternatives to the encroachment that were considered. Four categories of alternatives were considered by the Village, including: 1) a no build alternative; 2) alternative design; 3) another build location; and 4) construction of a multi-sport athletic field and park amenities separated from the Zabriskie House by a vegetative border.

First, although the no build alternative would retain the current appearance of the site and would not encroach upon the Zabriskie House, this alternative was dismissed by the Village, as it does not meet the project of providing recreational amenities, including a multi-sport athletic field, for the community.

The second alternative involved the consideration of alternate designs, including the demolition of the house and construction of a baseball diamond and soccer field and construction of a 225-foot by 15-foot artificial turf field with amenities. The first option, which was considered prior to the listing of the Zabriskie House on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, was rejected in part due to the loss of the historic house; the second was deemed too small to alleviate the need for additional full-size athletic fields in the community. This alternative also included consideration of both natural grass and artificial turf for the athletic playing field surface. The Village concluded that artificial turf is a more durable, low-maintenance solution than grass, which can better withstand the high volume of activity anticipated at the park.

The third alternative, another build location, was determined to be infeasible due to a lack of available property for acquisition in the Village. The analysis also included an assessment of whether the proposed project could be accommodated within existing parks that have athletic fields. The Village determined that this option was also infeasible due to a lack of space in existing parks; the need to remove or reconfigure existing recreational fields to utilize available space, where extant; and the location of multiple parks within the floodway of the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, making them vulnerable to flooding.

The fourth alternative, the development of a multi-functional public park on the Zabriskie House property that would segregate recreational improvements and supporting amenities from the immediate setting of the historic house, is the Village's preferred alternative. In this alternative, the Village proposes to construct a multi-sport, artificial turf athletic field and associated parking lot, paths, and lighting, bleachers, dug outs, fencing and safety netting, playground, and restrooms on the site, separated from the Zabriskie House by a vegetative buffer. No deficiencies in this plan were presented by the Village.

At the Council meeting on August 21, 2025, the Village presented a modified version of the fourth alternative in response to Council comments at the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. This alternative includes a multi-sport, artificial turf athletic field and similar amenities; however, the field is relocated 171 feet away from the house, as opposed to 63 feet from the house in the original alternative included in the application. The revised plan also removes the portable bleachers, moves the playground, relocates the restrooms away from the neighboring residences, enhances the vegetative buffer between the athletic field and both the Zabriskie House and the residences, and slightly enlarges the parking lot. This plan was also provided to the Department in the supplemental materials received on August 25, 2025.

## **Consideration 3: Measures to Avoid, Minimize, and/or Mitigate Impacts**

Although the proposed undertaking constitutes an encroachment on the Zabriskie House, through consultation with the Department, the Village has agreed to undertake mitigation





measures which are commensurate with the impact of the proposed undertaking on the Zabriskie House.

### **Authorization**

Therefore, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.131 and its implementing regulations, specifically N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)9.iii, I hereby authorize the proposed development of a multi-functional public park at the Zabriskie House, in accordance with the revised plan provided to the Department on August 25, 2025, with the following mitigating conditions:

1. Prior to the removal, demolition, or alteration of any components of the Zabriskie House property, the Village, using the services of an Architectural Historian who meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* [48 FR 44738-9] in Architectural History, shall document the existing conditions of the house and its setting to Level III equivalent standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). In lieu of large format photography, the permittee shall include high-resolution digital photos that meet the National Park Service National Register Digital Photo Submission Standards. The standards can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NR-NHL-photo-policy-2024-01-02.pdf>

The recordation shall include both archivally stable, 4-inch by 6-inch black and white prints and high-resolution digital RAW and/or TIFF files. A minimum of twenty (20) views of the property shall be produced as part of the recordation. Photography shall include, but not be limited to, documentation of the exterior of the building and the building's setting. The recordation shall also include high resolution digital copies of photos of the site prior to the construction of the berm in 2021, including historic aerials. The Village shall ensure that all documentation is completed and accepted by the Historic Preservation Office prior to any further construction activities, including site remediation. The Village shall provide one original archival copy of the recordation to the HPO and duplicate copies, with original photographs, shall be provided to the appropriate repositories as identified in consultation with the Historic Preservation Office.

The HABS documentation shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office within 6 months of project authorization.

2. The Village, using the services of a person meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards [48 FR 44738-9] in Archaeology, shall ensure a plan documenting and preserving in place to the greatest extent possible the John A.L. Zabriskie House Archaeological Site (28-Be-232) (Site Core 1) is developed as follows:
  - a. The Village shall ensure that the Phase II archaeological survey report by Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., is submitted to the Historic Preservation Office within two months of authorization signature approval by the Village. The Village shall ensure any report deficiencies identified by the Historic Preservation Office are rectified.
  - b. The Village shall develop an archaeological avoidance and protection plan (Plan) avoiding impacts to and protecting Site Core 1. The Plan shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office for approval prior to park construction. The Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:



- i. Revised project plans demonstrating Site Core 1 is avoided by the proposed development.
  - ii. Pre-construction, during park construction, and post-construction photographs shall be taken of Site Core 1. Adequate photo documentation of all areas of the site must be conducted.
  - iii. Protective fencing shall be installed within the entire limits of Site Core 1. To facilitate fencing placement; the site limits will be marked prior to construction. The layout of the fencing at Site Core 1 shall be illustrated on construction plans and need for protective fencing noted. The fencing may not be moved or removed during construction activities without prior approval from the Historic Preservation Office.
  - iv. Photographs shall be keyed to construction plans and submitted to the Historic Preservation Office along with a brief letter report documenting the successful implementation of the Plan. Photographic documentation and a letter report shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office within two months of the end of park construction activities.
- c. Prior to construction, the Village shall develop an archaeological monitoring plan covering Site Core 1 in the event any unanticipated encroachment into the site limit and/or unanticipated utility work is necessary within the protection area. The monitoring plan shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office for approval prior to park construction. The monitoring plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - i. The monitoring program shall be referenced in all project plans, documents, and specifications.
  - ii. The monitoring program shall define and describe the location(s) requiring archaeological monitoring, the archaeological methods and techniques to be employed, and project conditions requiring the presence of the archaeological monitor.
  - iii. The monitoring program shall include an outline of the responsibilities of all parties with respect to the archaeological monitoring, including:
    - 1. Full contact information for the archaeologist.
    - 2. Specification of the number of days prior to project implementation that the archaeologist will be notified that the project is about to proceed.
    - 3. A chain of command identifying the individual(s), such as the project site officials and archaeological consultant, with the authority to require work cessations in areas where archaeological deposits are encountered.
    - 4. The duration of work cessations.
    - 5. A section specifically addressing how the applicant and the cultural resources consultant will interact, as well as who is responsible for what aspect of monitoring.
    - 6. If contributing and complex archaeological deposits are encountered during monitoring, work stoppages shall be defined, and the process for evaluation the deposits for contributing to the listed resource involving consultation with the Historic



Preservation Office shall be conducted. The archaeological consultant shall develop any Phase III archaeological data recovery work plan as needed in consultation within the Historic Preservation Office prior to any additional ground disturbance. Any data recovery plan shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, and establish a schedule for the submission of reporting and artifact curation and incorporate a public outreach/public benefits component. The village shall ensure the approved Phase III plan is implemented.

7. The archaeological monitoring plan shall discuss the report format, report outline, types of graphics, photographs and appendices to be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office for review and comment. The monitoring plan shall specify the time frame in which the monitoring report shall be submitted to the HPO for review and comment after the completion of the monitoring program. The archaeological monitoring plan shall be in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation, September 29, 1983.
- d. The village shall ensure that the archaeological avoidance and protection plan and the archaeological monitoring plan are implemented prior to the start of construction.
3. The Village, using the services of a person meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards [48 FR 44738-9] in History and/or Architectural History, shall design and install three (3) interpretive signs in the Zabriskie-Schedler Park detailing the history and significance of the Zabriskie House and property. The design of the signage shall include a colorful panel mounted on a pedestal, and the content shall incorporate historic photographs, maps, and other graphic materials, as well as text regarding the historic significance of the property and its appearance prior to the construction of the park. The location, content, size, and text of the signage shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval within one (1) year of project authorization and prior to fabrication. The signs shall be installed, and verification of installation shall be provided, within three (3) months of the project completion.
4. The Village shall develop a landscape plan, completed by a licensed landscape architect experienced with historic properties, for the Zabriskie-Schedler Park. The landscape plan shall include a buffer between the Zabriskie House and the athletic field, parking lot, and associated amenities, consisting of evergreen and deciduous understory and canopy plantings adequate to screen the field, parking area, and associated development from the historic property. The plan shall use native plantings and/or plants available to the property owners during the period of significance (1825-c.1924) to the greatest extent possible. The Village shall submit the landscape plans to the HPO for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction.
5. The Village shall develop and implement an operations and management plan for the proposed History & Cultural Center of Bergen County. The plan shall address the implementation of the Center's core goals and the key features of the Center and shall include a timeline. The plan shall also include documentation regarding the Village's proposed partnerships with the Ridgewood Historical Society and the Bolger Heritage Center for Local History and Genealogy, as well as organizations within the wider Bergen



County history and preservation community. The Village shall submit the operations and management plan to the HPO for review and approval within one year of project authorization.

6. The Village shall develop a financial plan, developed by a qualified professional in financial management, for the History & Cultural Center of Bergen County . The plan shall identify dedicated funding sources and potential grant opportunities. The financial plan shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval within one year of project authorization. .
7. The Village, using the services of a Historian or an Architectural Historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards [48 FR 44738-9], shall develop an interpretive display to be installed in a publicly accessible location at the Zabriskie House property commemorating the national America250 initiative. The exhibit shall incorporate research completed in implementing the above-referenced research plan regarding Revolutionary War-era activities at and near the Zabriskie House. The exhibit shall include interpretive panels incorporating current and historic images (e.g., photos, maps) and text documenting Ridgewood's history, including its evolution from a colonial-era settlement and its participation in the American Revolution. The design and content of the exhibit and interpretive display shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval prior to fabrication. Development of the exhibit shall be completed within one (1) year of project authorization, and photos of the installed exhibit shall be provided to the HPO within 6 months of the HPO's approval.
8. The Village, using the services of a Historian or an Architectural Historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards [48 FR 44738-9], shall develop an interpretive display to be installed in a publicly accessible location at the Zabriskie House regarding the history of the Zabriskie House and property, including the archaeological discoveries on the property. The exhibit shall include interpretive panels incorporating current and historic images (e.g., photos, maps) and text documenting the history of the Zabriskie House, the archaeological investigations at the property, and the agricultural history of Ridgewood. The design and content of the exhibit and interpretive display shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval prior to fabrication. Development of the exhibit shall be completed within two (2) years of project authorization, and photos of the installed exhibit shall be provided to the HPO within six (6) months of the HPO's approval.
9. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval of the proposed park plans to ensure their compatibility with the Zabriskie House. The plans and specifications shall be submitted prior to construction bidding for the project.

Please note that, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)9ii(1), you must respond in writing to the conditions of this authorization within 60 days of the date of this letter. If you agree to the conditions specified above, please sign the bottom of this letter in the space provided and return it to Kate Marcopul of the HPO via e-mail at [Kate.Marcopul@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Kate.Marcopul@dep.nj.gov) with your acceptance of the conditions. Signature on the bottom of this letter will constitute formal acceptance of the conditions of project authorization. If you disagree or fail to respond to the requirements set forth within 60 days, I must, by regulation, deny your application.

In accordance with 7:4-7.2(e)10, if an authorized, or conditionally authorized, project is not undertaken within five years of the date of authorization, the authorization shall automatically expire.



Please do not hesitate to contact the Historic Preservation Office at (609) 940-4312 with any questions regarding this project. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Dragon*

Elizabeth Dragon  
Assistant Commissioner for  
Community Investment and Economic  
Revitalization



By signing this letter, the Village of Ridgewood accepts the conditions of authorization outlined above, in accordance with New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act, Chapter 4, Laws of 1970 and N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)9ii(1).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

[enclosure]

cc (via email): Kelly Ruffel

Paul Vagianos, Mayor, Ridgewood Village

Ridgewood Historical Society

Bergen County Historical Society

Elaine Gold, Bergen County Division of Cultural & Historic Affairs

Friends of Historic Zabriskie Schedler House

Capt. Abraham Godwin Chapter NJ Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Preservation New Jersey

Ridgewood Historic Preservation Commission

Ellie Gruber

Manish Shrimali

Kristina Milian

Jacqueline Hone

Cynthia O'Keefe

Phil Dolce

Rurik Haliby

George Wright

Amy McCambridge



NEW JERSEY HISTORIC SITES COUNCIL  
RESOLUTION # HSC-2025-449

NAME OF PROPERTY ON STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	John A.L. Zabriskie House
COUNTY:	Bergen
MUNICIPALITY:	Village of Ridgewood
DATE REGISTERED	8/14/2019
APPLICANT:	Village of Ridgewood

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Sites Council, created pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.128, is authorized by N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.131 to offer advice and recommendations concerning encroachments upon properties listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection; and

WHEREAS, the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Protection's Historic Sites Council under the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.128 to -132, and its attendant regulations, N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.1 to -8.9, concerns the consideration of actions with effects, both direct and indirect, on New Jersey Register of Historic Places listed properties; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Ridgewood (hereafter Village) has requested authorization to construct a multi-sport turf athletic field and associated parking lot, paths and lighting, bleachers, dug outs, fencing and safety netting, playground and restrooms at the John A.L. Zabriskie House (also known as the Zabriskie-Schedler House; hereafter Zabriskie House), which is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.4(a), the Historic Preservation Office (hereafter HPO) determined that the proposed undertaking constitutes an encroachment on the Zabriskie House because the proposed development is within the boundaries of the listed resource on the open space that is historically associated with the agrarian use of the property and introduces visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that are out of character with the registered property and will irreversibly alter its setting. The proposed development is incompatible with the size, scale, and materials of the historic property and therefore does not meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)(6), the appropriate criteria for the Historic Sites Council to use to evaluate the encroachment are the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Rehabilitation* and the criteria in N.J.A.C. 7:4-7.2(e)(6)(ii – iv), which include consideration of the public benefit of the undertaking, feasible and prudent alternatives to the encroachment, and measures to avoid, reduce, or mitigate the encroachment; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Sites Council conducted open public meetings on July 21, 2025, and on August 21, 2025, pursuant to the requirements of the "Open Public Meetings Act," N.J.S.A.10:4-6 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Historic Sites Council, based on the evidence presented at the public meeting, made the following findings of fact:

### BACKGROUND

1. The Zabriskie House was listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 2019 at the request of the property owner, the Village of Ridgewood. The house is a nineteenth-century Dutch-American wood frame building with a large, mid-nineteenth-century addition, also in the Dutch vernacular form. The Zabriskie House is locally significant under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good, late example of a third-period Jersey Dutch-framed house. Its period of significance begins c.1825, with the construction of the first wing of the house, and ends c.1924, when the house was enlarged.

2. According to the New Jersey and National Register nomination, the Zabriskie House is, “one of few remaining nineteenth-century Dutch frame houses in nearby parts of Bergen County and one that still retains an acreage large enough to somewhat reflect its historic agricultural setting.” The nomination goes on to state that “the building’s setting of approximately seven undeveloped acres bolsters its significance, as it is one of the last remaining nineteenth century frame houses in Ridgewood to retain a semblance of its earlier rural setting”. The subject property is bounded by Route 17, a four-lane state highway, on the west and contains approximately seven acres, much of which is undeveloped. Historic aerials indicate that the property was characterized by open agricultural fields as late as 1940. With increasing suburbanization in the area following World War II and the end of the property’s farm use, an increasing number of trees populated the tract from the 1950s until its listing in 2019.
3. The Village of Ridgewood purchased the Zabriskie House in 2009 with funding provided by the Bergen County Trust Grant Program, Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund Grant, and the Village’s capital improvement fund. According to the application, the primary goal of the acquisitions was twofold:
  - i. To preserve open space and prevent commercial development along Route 17; and
  - ii. To create a multi-use recreational park that would serve residents and visitors.
4. According to the application, the Village seeks to transform the seven-acre Zabriskie House property into a “vibrant, multi-use public space that meets the growing recreational and environmental needs” of the community. The application describes the proposed park as including the following key features:
  - i. A full-size, multi-sport, artificial turf athletic field designed for soccer, lacrosse, softball, baseball, and football.
  - ii. A perimeter walking and hiking trail, offering a natural, scenic path for residents of all ages to enjoy outdoor exercise and leisure.
  - iii. A modern, safe, and inclusive playground, with age-appropriate equipment and accessible features to ensure that children of all abilities can access, use and enjoy the amenities provided.
  - iv. Support amenities, including restrooms and ample parking to accommodate visitors both to the park and the Zabriskie House.
  - v. Landscaping and green space, to include native plantings, shade trees, green infrastructure and other landscaping elements to promote environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and aesthetic appeal. Open green spaces will provide areas for passive recreation and relaxation for all ages and abilities.
  - vi. Support for adaptive reuse and public awareness of the Zabriskie House, with landscaping work around the house to create a distinct, segregated setting with carefully planned plantings, hedges, and fencing to establish a visual divide between the house and the multi-use field. A parking lot, positioned away from the house, will be designated exclusively for visitors, offering easy access while safeguarding the property’s historic setting. Informational signage will be positioned throughout the property to guide visitors and offer context on the property’s history and significance.
5. In addition to the above, the proposed park plans dated April 9, 2025, include the following features:
  - i. Lacrosse safety netting at the field’s north and south ends.
  - ii. A backstop and chain link fence behind home plate.
  - iii. Dugout benches on the first and third base lines.
  - iv. Portable five-row bleachers that seat 50 people. No more than two bleachers are proposed.
  - v. Park benches, constructed of black powder-coated steel.
  - vi. Lighting on the access drive and in the parking lot. The proposed light fixtures are 10-foot black poles with decorative globes and are designed to provide consistent and appropriate brightness levels while minimizing light pollution. No field lighting is proposed.
  - vii. A post-and-rail fence on the northern portion of the site, between the field and West Saddle River Road, and an 8-foot chain link fence along the Route 17 frontage.



6. According to supplemental information to the application received by the HPO on June 30, 2025, the proposed comfort station will be a “prefabricated structure designed to blend with the historic character of the site... Featuring a combination of wood and masonry siding, the building materials will be carefully selected to be compatible with the architectural style and finishes of the nearby Zabriskie-Schedler House.” The accompanying plans illustrate a 26-foot by 21-foot, gable-front building with “barnwood texture” exterior walls and “cedar shake roof texture.”
7. The above-referenced supplemental information also includes a landscape plan, which is described as incorporating, “Native tree species, in combination with non-native vegetation that will thrive and require minimal maintenance while being compatible with the uses of the site... Understory plantings will feature native shrubs, grasses, and flowering plants, chosen to reflect the natural New Jersey landscape such as boxwood and lavender.” Based on HPO staff research, neither boxwood nor lavender are native to North America.
8. The landscape plan includes trees around the perimeter of the property and in the northernmost corner of the lot, as well as a vegetative buffer between the house and the athletic field. The proposed buffer is comprised of 14 Norway Spruce trees, 10 Leyland Cypress trees, and 2 Yoshino Cherry trees. Although the site plan shows a continuous landscape buffer planted on a berm, the buffer on the landscape plan does not include a berm and is not continuous; there is a gap in the plantings near the northwest corner of the Zabriskie House. Due to the limited number and type of plantings and the gap between the proposed trees, the athletic field will not be screened from view of the house, and the historic property will not be protected from the visual and noise effects of the proposed athletic field.
9. The proposed parking includes 7 spaces behind the Zabriskie House; 41 spaces on the west side of the athletic field; and 18 off-street parking spaces on West Saddle River Road from the park entrance to the property boundary, including in front of the Zabriskie House. According to the supplemental information received on June 30, 2025, available industry references suggest that between 16 and 40 spaces per field, or one space per 3,000 square feet of field area, is required. The Village states that, because the proposed field can only accommodate one sport event at a time, the proposed 41 parking spaces meet the recommendations.
10. The HPO requested additional information regarding the size of the proposed multipurpose field, parking, and berm in relation to the property as a whole on July 2, 2025. The Village responded on July 11, 2025, that the existing berm area totals approximately 37,100 square feet, or about 12.5% of the overall lot coverage. The proposed athletic field will cover approximately 31% of the historic property. According to the HPO’s calculations, the field and associated parking will occupy 35% of the 7-acre lot.
11. The HPO’s involvement in the proposed project dates back to October 2019, when the HPO was notified of ongoing construction activities at the Zabriskie House. The Village confirmed that trees were being removed and a berm was being constructed along the property’s frontage on Route 17. An application for project authorization was subsequently submitted in January 2020 for the ongoing construction of the berm and development of a park at the site, which included a walking trail, athletic field, gazebo, concession stand, pickleball courts, driveway, and parking area. HPO staff determined that the application was technically and professionally incomplete in February 2020 and informed the Village that the project as proposed would result in an encroachment upon the historic property.
12. At the request of the Village, HPO staff provided technical assistance comments regarding the proposed park design in April 2020, with a goal of developing a plan that would meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and thereby avoid an encroachment on the Zabriskie House. The HPO provided comments to the Village on the proposed park design on five separate occasions between April 2020 and December 2022. In correspondence dated December 13, 2022, HPO staff provided a conceptual approval of the design dated October 27, 2022. This plan included a 150-foot by 225-foot grass field and a 24-car parking lot, with a vegetative buffer between the house and field. Based on the plans dated October 27, 2022, this proposed design did not have bleachers, netting or associated lights.
13. In July 2021, the Village submitted a separate application for construction of the berm, including landscape planting and fencing. The application was administratively approved by the HPO in August. The application was later amended to include an irrigation system, which was administratively approved by the HPO in October 2021.

14. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau of Solid Waste Compliance and Enforcement raised concerns about the quality and origin of the approximately 10,000 cubic yards of fill material used to construct the berm in December 2023. The Village provided the following summary of environmental investigation activities at the site:
  - i. The Village retained Matrix to investigate and prepare a Sampling and Analysis Plan, which DEP conditionally approved in April 2024.
  - ii. Matrix conducted soil investigations beginning in May 2024. Initial sampling from the berm revealed exceedances of DEP Soil Remediation Standards for benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)anthracene, lead, and mercury. The findings were reported to DEP, and the site was assigned a case number. A Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP) was designated, and site-specific Alternative Remediation Standards (ARS) were developed using Synthetic Precipitation Leaching Procedure (SPLP) testing, which showed concentrations below the calculated ARS thresholds.
  - iii. In June 2024, DEP conditionally approved additional grid sampling to assess the remainder of the site. Matrix collected 28 soil samples, identifying further exceedances of DEP standards for semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and metals, including benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)anthracene, and mercury. A resample was also collected and tested for volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
  - iv. To further delineate contamination, Matrix submitted a follow-up workplan in November 2024, which DEP conditionally approved. The plan includes additional sampling, further characterization of areas with suspected fill, and pesticide resampling at previously tested locations. Following the November 2024 Remedial Investigation at the property, Matrix confirmed delineation boundaries at three grid locations. Excavation and offsite disposal of contaminated soil in these areas were recommended.
  - v. To reduce the overall volume of soil requiring removal, Matrix advised further delineation of contaminants at five grid locations due to exceedances of benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)anthracene, and/or mercury. Additional sampling was also recommended at three grid sites. According to the DEP's *Groundwater Technical Guidance*, the current soil sampling results do not warrant a groundwater investigation.
  - vi. Matrix is continuing to work with the Village to develop a detailed scope of work and move toward creating a formal Remedial Action Plan for submission to DEP, which will be incorporated into the overall development's construction phase. The Village will submit a separate application for project authorization to the HPO for the soil remediation activities.
15. The Village has indicated to HPO staff that the entire berm will need to be removed to address the solid waste issues identified through testing. All remedial work will be completed before the park construction begins.
16. A Phase IA archaeological survey was carried out by Hunter Research, Inc., in February 2019. HPO staff concurred with the report's conclusions that the property contained:
  - i. Low archaeological potential within the proposed berm location based on prior ground disturbance.
  - ii. Areas of nineteenth-century archaeological sensitivity within proximity to the Zabriskie House (Report Figure 6.1).

The property contained archaeological sensitivity related to the Revolutionary War period Continental encampments (1776, 1778, 1780) and the March 1780 engagement at the nearby 1735 Paramus Reformed Church (rebuilt in 1800) and adjacent strategic Saddle River crossing.
17. A Phase IB archaeological survey was carried out by Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., in a report dated December 2023; revised Phase I data received via email on February 8, 2024; and supplemental Phase IB report dated June 2024. The survey consisted of a program of shovel test pits (STP), ground-penetrating radar (GPR), and a metal detecting survey within the project's area of potential effects (APE).
  - i. The subsurface survey comprised 81 STPs with 14 additional close interval radial STPs which identified intact and capped fill over intact soil profiles.
  - ii. The survey recovered two pre-Contact period lithic artifacts (waste flakes) and 324 eighteenth-through twentieth-century domestic and architecturally related artifacts.

- iii. Three features were identified comprising two stone rings (Features 1 and 2) or possible shaft features, and a subsurface stone paving and curb for a possible twentieth-century patio (Feature 3).
  - iv. The GPR survey identified two potentially significant archaeological subsurface anomalies near the extant 1825 dwelling, including a possible sheet midden (A1) and a probable shaft feature (A3).
  - v. The report states that the metal detecting survey failed to identify any clear evidence for Revolutionary War period artifacts. The report also notes the presence of a metal detectorist on the property prior to the formal Phase IB survey.
  - vi. HPO staff concurred with the report's conclusions that the Phase IB identification-level archaeological survey identified the potentially contributing, multi-component John A.L. Zabriskie House Archaeological Site (28-Be-232), including two loci encompassing the existing 1825 dwelling (Site Core 1) and known outbuilding areas (Site Core 2; Figure 4.1). Site Core 1 may contain archaeological deposits dating from the 1760s or later predating the known 1825 Zabriskie House occupation. The remaining portions of the tested APE were characterized as containing non-significant "broadcast historic material."
18. HPO staff reviewed and approved the Phase II archaeological survey work plan's research design prepared by Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., dated June 20, 2024, for evaluating the John A.L. Zabriskie House Archaeological Site (28-Be-232) for inclusion in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.
  19. The HPO received a Phase II archaeological survey management summary for the John A.L. Zabriskie House Archaeological Site (28-Be-232), Site Core Areas 1 and 2, dated April 28, 2025, submitted as part of the application for project authorization. The management summary states that 5,638 historic period artifacts and 1 pre-Contact period chert flake were recovered in addition to 15 cultural features identified within Site Core 1. Fourteen features are associated with the period of significance (circa 1825 to 1924) of the Zabriskie House historic property or potentially pre-date that period (1762-1824), including refuse pit middens, a presumed former building, a post hole, and domestic utility infrastructure. In a meeting on July 2, 2025, the archaeological consultant stated that the Phase II report was still in production. Therefore, HPO staff are unable to concur with the stated Phase II results to make any recommendations to the Council until a draft report is submitted for review and comment. Any future project impacts on contributing archaeological deposits will need to be resolved through avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation (Phase III archaeological data recovery).
  20. In a submission dated June 27, 2025, the Village states that Richard Grubb & Associates will conduct archaeological monitoring within Site Core Area 1 and the plantings between the house and the field throughout the project as defined in the submitted Archaeological Overlay figure. No archaeological monitoring plan or rationale for why monitoring, as opposed to other formal archaeological investigations, was provided for HPO staff to make a recommendation to the Council.
  21. The application states that, since acquiring the property in 2009, the Village has engaged the public through a variety of methods, including meetings, discussions, door-to-door outreach, and ad-hoc gatherings. In 2017, the Village Council established an Ad Hoc Committee of residents to make recommendations about the development of the property. Since that time, updates about the project's progress have been regularly communicated to the public through Council meetings and the project website.
  22. The Village acknowledges that, through this public engagement, residents have raised concerns about the park development over the years, covering a range of issues related to environmental, cultural, and community impacts. Many residents and stakeholders voiced concerns over the environmental effects of the project, particularly regarding the use of synthetic materials, water runoff, and the impact of new infrastructure on the surrounding green spaces. From a cultural perspective, there are concerns about how the park's development could compromise or overshadow the historic significance of the site, potentially diminishing its integrity. Community members have expressed concerns about accessibility, increased traffic, and potential impacts on nearby residential areas. Many worry the new park could lead to overcrowding, noise, and added strain on public services, ultimately diminishing quality of life. Additionally, some feel the planning process has lacked inclusiveness, with their input not fully acknowledged in shaping the final design.
  23. The Village indicates that, in response to these concerns, public participation has been a cornerstone of the planning process. It is the opinion of the Village that, in consideration of the extensive outreach efforts, some

concerns raised by critics appear to be based on misconceptions or a lack of understanding of the planning process. For example, in response to concerns about potential environmental impacts, the Village worked closely with environmental experts to ensure that the development adheres to best practices in sustainability, minimizes ecological disruption, and includes plans for proper stormwater management and site/soil remediation as required by State regulations. The proposed plan also incorporates elements that the Village states are designed to maintain the natural aesthetics of the area, such as strategic landscaping and preservation of the Zabriskie House and its surroundings. The Village has also taken steps to mitigate potential issues such as traffic, noise, and overcrowding, consulting with traffic engineers and urban planners to enhance accessibility while minimizing negative effects on surrounding neighborhoods. The designated parking areas and the park's layout are designed to alleviate potential congestion, ensuring that the park will be a local asset without imposing undue strain on nearby residents.

24. The application includes an assessment of the landscape changes and context of the Zabriskie House. The Village argues that the site preparation activities and surrounding development have diminished the integrity of setting of the historic property. However, HPO staff has reviewed the documentation provided and determined that, with the exception of the site preparation activities associated with the current project, the changes to the surrounding environment occurred prior to the property's listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.
25. In 2024, the Village completed the rehabilitation of the Zabriskie House for a total cost of \$2.6 million. In addition to municipal funds, the rehabilitation was funded by a 2021 Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust in the amount of \$199,166, as well as four grants from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Program between 2016 and 2020 in the total amount of \$766,750. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also provided \$80,000 in funding for construction of an ADA ramp on the building. The Village has not identified a future intended use for the house.
26. The project does not require permits from the DEP's Division of Land Resource Protection, and no federal funding or permits are involved in the project. However, a Remedial Action Permit from the DEP's Bureau of Solid Waste Compliance and Enforcement may be required regarding site remediation activities. It is the understanding of the HPO that a permit will not be required if the contaminated soils are excavated from the site.
27. Bergen County holds a conservation easement on the subject property as a result of the Village's use of the county's Open Space Trust Fund for its acquisition. According to a letter from the County Administrator/County Counsel, the easement was established to prevent non-conservation and non-recreational development or activities on a property, not to prohibit the development of public recreational facilities.
28. The Ridgewood Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed the park development project in September 2023 and voted unanimously to support the plans.
29. Village historians Peggy W. Norris and Joe Suplicki commented on the proposed development in a letter to the HPO dated November 27, 2023. They expressed support for recreational development at the Zabriskie House in scale with the historic property, specifically, the use of "native trees and shrubs, a moderate-size athletic field with natural turf, and passive recreation opportunities, and natural habitat for wildlife."
30. The Village provided a petition with more than 1100 signatures supporting the proposed project, and numerous community organizations involved in youth and adult athletics have expressed their support for the project, recognizing the critical need for expanded and improved recreational space to meet growing demand. Letters of support from the Village's Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board, the Ridgewood Baseball & Softball Association, Maroons Soccer Club, Ridgewood Junior Football Association, Ridgewood Lacrosse Association, Ridgewood Soccer Association, and four local residents were included in the application.
31. The HPO received 425 petitions in opposition to the plan and has received approximately 400 letters from 2020 to the present, the majority in opposition to the plan. These petitions and letters were made available to the Historic Sites Council as part of the application.

32. Concurrent with the State Register Review process, the HPO has received a preliminary application from a member of the public seeking to expand the significance of the resource. This consultation is on-going. No formal changes to the New Jersey and National Register nomination have been made.
33. HPO staff conducted a site visit on February 23, 2023, and observed that the berm had been constructed along Route 17, a temporary access road and work area placed north of the house for berm access, and some trees had been removed from the site, reportedly due to disease. The Village's engineer discussed possible rot to a circa 150- to 259-year old sugar maple tree adjacent to the house, which HPO staff recommended leaving in place unless assessed by an arborist as dangerous. HPO staff toured the status of the interior renovation work and discussed the possible re-use of the building's first floor for park restrooms. The portion of the site proposed for the athletic field slopes downhill away from the house through the forested portion of the property. Village staff had marked the corners of the proposed field on the site, and HPO staff expressed concern regarding the proximity of the proposed field to the Zabriskie House. The Village staff asked about acquisition of an adjacent (north) parcel for possible park expansion, which HPO staff informed them was outside of the New Jersey and National Register boundary of the Zabriskie House and therefore not subject to review under the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act.
34. The HPO reviews projects under the NJ Register of Historic Places Act in compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The proposed project does not meet Standard 2 which states that the historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. The proposed project will require the removal of the associated open space that was historically agricultural fields and will turn it into active recreation with artificial turf that will not change color as the seasons change. If the proposed project is approved, the site will have 48 parking spaces, with paved pathways, lights, bleachers, dugouts, restrooms, a large multi-sport turf field and associated fences and safety netting.
35. In National Park Service's Interpreting the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation publication # 39, it is noted that, "The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that a rehabilitation involve minimal change to the defining characteristics of a building and its site and environment." As noted in the nomination for listing the Schedler property on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places that this property is "one of few remaining nineteenth-century Dutch frame houses in nearby parts of Bergen County and one that still retains an acreage large enough to somewhat reflect its historic agricultural setting."

#### PUBLIC BENEFIT

36. According to the application, the project is designed to serve a wide range of community needs, supporting recreational activities for athletes, families, and residents of all ages. The development of the park aligns with the Village's commitment to maintaining high-quality, accessible public spaces and promoting outdoor recreation in a healthy and sustainable environment.
37. According to the application, the Village's athletic fields are a vital community asset, supporting a wide range of youth and adult sports programs, school activities, and community events. More than 5,000 sports registrants and 400-plus sports teams spent upwards of 20,000 hours on the multipurpose fields owned and operated by the Village and the Ridgewood Board of Education in the past year. With high participation rates across sports such as soccer, lacrosse, football, and field hockey, the demand for field space consistently exceeds availability. This issue is further compounded by seasonal overlaps, limited daylight hours, and weather-related disruptions, particularly at fields located within flood-prone areas, which are frequently rendered unusable. The addition of a full-size, multipurpose field at the Zabriskie House would significantly alleviate scheduling pressures, reduce field overuse, and provide a reliable facility not subject to flooding. As the only viable location left for such development, this project represents a critical opportunity to expand recreational capacity, support the health and well-being of residents, and meet the growing needs of the Village's active population. The project will deliver a clear and measurable public benefit by enhancing access to safe, dependable, and well-maintained outdoor recreational space for current and future generations.
38. Within the Village, there are 17 municipal parks, five of which have athletic fields. The Board of Education (BOE) owns 12 educational facilities with athletic fields. All sports fields are natural grass with the exception of three multipurpose artificial turf fields, at Maple Field Park (municipally owned) and Ridgewood High

School's Stadium Field and Stevens Field (BOE owned). The natural grass fields range from small or irregularly-sized grass spaces that support recess, practices, or recreation-level programs to standard-sized fields that support high school competitive level sports. A total of 19 athletic fields are available across all locations, the majority of which (14) are multipurpose, serving the needs of various sports. Five of these fields fall short of regulation dimensions due to inadequate space.

39. Of the five municipally-owned fields, two – including the lone turf field – are located within the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook floodplain and are vulnerable to flooding, which significantly disrupts athletic programs. Between October 2023 and January 2024 alone, the fields flooded on three occasions, rendering them unusable for weeks due to the extensive cleanup and repair efforts required. The proposed project would establish the only full-size multipurpose athletic field in the Village that is not located within a flood zone and is resilient to heavy rain events. According to the application, given the Village's high level of development and lack of remaining open land, there are no other viable locations for new field construction. The historic property represents the Village's only feasible opportunity to expand its recreational infrastructure and meet growing community needs.
40. In May 2024, Suburban Consulting Engineers completed an assessment of existing athletic fields in the Village. The assessment included the following findings:
  - i. The Village's *Recreation and Open Space Plan* was completed in 2003 and updated in 2010 and 2022. The 2010 study utilized the Balanced Land Use Standard established by the New Jersey Green Acres Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which specifies that a minimum of 3% of a municipality's developed or developable land should be set aside for active recreational use. The study, which was completed following the acquisition of the Habernickel Family Park and Zabriskie House and expansion of Citizens Park, indicated a deficit in active recreational space of approximately 14.5 acres. The plan included a review of undeveloped property in the Village and determined that there were no available options for active recreational space.
  - ii. The current study also utilized the SCORP to determine the Village's recreational space deficit and concluded that the municipality had a deficit of 63.7 acres. The assessment did not offer an explanation regarding the growth of the deficit between 2010 and 2024. However, the entire Village area of approximately 3,840 acres was used to calculate the deficit, despite the fact that "developable lands excludes areas with slopes greater than 15%, wetlands, federal, state, and county-owned parklands, and other environmentally sensitive land that is not appropriate for development." The HPO requested clarification regarding the discrepancy on July 2, 2025, and has not received a response.
  - iii. The current study additionally utilized the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Peer Population per Acre Benchmark to assess the Village's open space. The NRPA's 2023 report found that municipalities ranging in population from 20,000-49,999 have 11.3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and 2,014 residents per park. Using the 2020 US Census data, the Village's number of parks meets this metric. However, based on the acres of park space per number of residents, the Village should have a total of 293 acres, a deficit of more than 100 acres. According to the NRPA, the organization's benchmarking tools represent the typical (median) nationwide numbers; the NRPA does not provide standards because of the variations in size, needs, and desires of communities across the United States.
  - iv. The Village's 2022 *Master Plan* recognized the challenges of providing adequate field space to accommodate the various programs. The plan specifically targeted properties adjacent to municipal parks or schools, undeveloped land adjacent to rights-of-way, and property used for private recreation. It concluded that the potential sites may satisfy the need for acquisition of open space; however, many were located within the floodplain, required removal of existing dwellings, or were small in size.
  - v. The Village adopted a Field Policy in 2018, providing formal procedures for field use and allocation for both Village-owned and Board of Education facilities. The primary use of municipal recreation facilities is for public recreation; the use of school recreation facilities is exclusively for the school during school hours, and for the school and public recreation use during non-school hours and on non-school days.
  - vi. The assessment identified 14 recognized groups that utilize outdoor sports facilities in the Village, including 8 school sports programs, 5 youth recreational sports programs, and an adult sports league. The total number of youth participants in the non-Board of Education sponsored sports is more than 5,250.

- vii. The assessment states that the reliance on natural grass fields will continue to be problematic due to the current over-usage of the Village's sports fields and lack of available time to adequately rest fields and perform proper seasonal maintenance. The Village has not intentionally rested fields since the 1980s, nor does the Village have the availability of space to reorient fields, both of which are techniques that natural grass field owners implement to optimize playing conditions. This was evident in Spring 2022, when all Village-owned natural grass fields were closed for a majority of the season due to poor playing conditions and required time for grass to regenerate.
  - viii. The climate in New Jersey limits early spring usage of natural grass fields when roots and shoots of grass are coming out of winter dormancy. If fields are used before they are ready to support play, the Village runs a potential risk of causing significant damage and inhibiting the quality and vigor of grass for the balance of the year. Natural grass provides excellent play surfaces when in top condition, but it is not designed to take continuous play throughout the seasons, especially during early spring, late fall, and during and after significant rain events. The Village's fields are highly programmed and expected to support continuous use, which often results in less than favorable playing conditions. The use of natural grass fields is challenging in the context of the local climate, as the ideal grass-growing temperature range is 65-75°F, which historically occurs later in the spring sports season.
  - ix. Synthetic turf fields allow for early spring and late fall play, while also allowing continuous use during and after rain events. They are designed to withstand extended and intense use, without a need for downtime to recover. The subsurface of these fields is typically made up of a layer of crushed stone and piping to allow the system to store, absorb, infiltrate, and transport far greater amounts of precipitation compared to a natural grass field. Synthetic turf fields are used to increase hours of play, extend seasons of play, and provide a consistent playing experience across the entire field, in varying climatic conditions.
  - x. Based on the Village's field reservation system and program schedules from 2023, the average spring-to-fall usage of all multipurpose natural grass athletic fields in the Village is near or exceeding 1,000 hours. This does not include non-organized program usage or community events. The hours of use expected to be provided by the Village's fields exceed industry standards for maintaining good or fair turf quality condition. According to a study by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension regarding the durability of athletic fields, field use of more than 1,000 hours results in an expected grass field condition of significant grass loss, field surface damage, and increased potential for athlete injury.
  - xi. The assessment includes an evaluation of the physical characteristics at existing sports field complexes owned by the Village and the Board of Education to determine whether they contained open space appropriate for the proposed project without compromising existing fields. Where appropriate space was identified, the properties were further reviewed for the presence of environmentally sensitive areas within the open space. Based on this analysis, none of the existing sports field complexes have available or appropriate open space for this project without compromising existing fields. The evaluation did not include any parks or municipally-owned properties that do not currently have athletic facilities, with the exception of the Zabriskie House.
  - xii. The Village has been subjected to flooding events resulting in significant damage not only to the municipal athletic fields but also to private residences. Several existing fields are located within the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook floodplain, including Maple Field Park, Ridgewood High School's Stadium Field, Stevens Field, Veterans Memorial Field, and Brookside Park. These fields accommodate a majority of the high school-level sports programs in the Village. Three of these fields are turf, and, while they are typically resilient and able to be utilized after rain events, flooding has cost the Village "tens of thousands of dollars" in repair and cleanup, and the fields have been taken out of service for periods of time. According to the New Jersey Stormwater Management Rules, precipitation depths for storm events are anticipated to increase in the coming years. Thus, the fields along the floodplain will be affected more frequently in the future, resulting in more repair and cleanup costs and more time with the fields out of service.
41. In addition to the above application materials, local residents shared a Field Feasibility Study prepared for the Ridgewood Board of Education with HPO staff. The study, which was completed in March 2025 by Gianforcaro Architects, Engineers & Planners, examined fields at four schools within the district to "determine the possibility of improving the fields with new natural grass, improved drainage, irrigation, field improvements (e.g., new clay infields, fencing, foul poles, etc.), and the possibility of installing synthetic turf."

The report includes recommendations regarding the feasibility of various improvements and cost estimates for the proposed upgrades. The expansion of facilities at two schools were proposed:

- i. Benjamin Franklin Middle School – The natural grass field within the 400-meter track oval was determined to be large enough to accommodate five sports with some changes to the track event spaces, increasing its capacity from two sports; and
- ii. Glen School – The overall size of the existing two clay diamonds for softball/little league baseball were determined to be large enough for softball, field hockey, soccer, and boys and girls lacrosse.

According to the most recent available minutes of the Ridgewood Fields Committee, dated May 6, 2025, a decision regarding whether to enlarge the field at Benjamin Franklin Middle School has not been made. The potential expansion of the Glen School fields was not referenced in the meeting minutes.

42. The application included the Village's most recent *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, which was completed in 2022. The plan states that, "Challenges regarding sports programs in Ridgewood include adequate space, overuse, over-scheduling, weather, and time. Increasing numbers of recreational, travel, and elite teams mean more organizations that require practice areas and not enough field space to hold them, especially on multipurpose fields. In the winter months when it gets darker earlier, fields without adequate lighting limit team practice hours on the field. Weather also poses an issue to field use not only due to unpredictability, but also because the fields flood during and after storm events along Ho-Ho-Kus Brook."
43. On July 11, 2025, the Village provided a letter from Scott Bills, a Certified Sports Field Consultant, in support of its application. Based on his review of the above-referenced assessment by Suburban Consulting Engineers, the proposed park plans, and the application for project authorization, Mr. Bills recommended that the construction of an additional park is needed to serve both Village and school sports programs. He further recommended the option of synthetic turf for the multi-purpose field, as it will provide the most hours of use (approximately 1500) and greatly reduce the overuse of the existing natural grass fields. According to this letter, the initial cost or investment to construct would be greater than a topsoil natural grass field, but the total hours of use available could be double that of a natural grass field because the field can be used almost immediately after rainfall, snow melt, and at times of the year when natural grass fields are closed. This option will also give the Village the required time to improve existing grass fields to ensure that they are safe and playable.
44. According to the application, the proposed artificial turf field will provide a durable, low-maintenance, and weather-resistant space for organized sports and recreational activities. The proposed project would be the only full-size multipurpose athletic field not situated in a flood zone and not impacted by significant rainstorms. Thus, it will address the critical shortage of athletic fields in the community and reduce the overuse and flooding issues at other existing fields. The expected heavy use of this field by the community indicates that artificial turf is the best option available for its durability and maintenance. The Village's existing turf fields have a daily fee rate of \$600, with a \$100 hourly rate for partial day additional time.

### ALTERNATIVES

45. The Village considered four alternatives for the project, as follows:
  - i. *Alternative 1 - No Build.* The Village noted this alternative is not considered feasible due to the critical and well-documented need for a community park and athletic field, as consistently expressed by local schools, youth organizations, and community sports groups since 2017. Over the years, a combination of public input sessions, planning studies, and recreational needs assessments confirmed a significant and growing demand for accessible open space and active recreational facilities within the Village. Addressing this need was the primary reason that the Village, supported by funding and partnership with the County of Bergen, acquired the Zabriskie House. This alternative fails to support the Village's long-term goals of enhancing quality of life, supporting youth and community athletics, and preserving meaningful public access to open space.
  - ii. *Alternative 2 - Alternative Design.* Since 2009, the Village has developed and presented numerous design proposals for the property – internally, publicly, and in consultation with the HPO. Early design concepts, created before the nomination of the Zabriskie House to the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, included the potential demolition of the house, and construction of a 90-foot baseball



diamond, soccer field, and a large parking area, with public access from Route 17. This initial concept was withdrawn, primarily due to concerns over removal of the historic house and other elements that conflicted with both the original intent of the property's acquisition and the broader public interest.

The Village then undertook a more collaborative and inclusive planning process. An ad-hoc committee was established by the Village Council, and meetings with various stakeholders and interested parties were convened to ensure community voices were included. In 2017, the committee presented its recommendation to the Council for a 75 by 50 yard (225-foot by 150-foot) artificial turf field with a playground, bathroom building, parking lot, walking trails, fencing, and landscaping.

The design alternatives included consideration of both natural grass and artificial turf for the athletic field playing surface. The field is expected to accommodate a variety of year-round sports and recreational activities, which place substantial wear and tear on the surface. As noted in the application, natural grass, under these conditions, would not withstand continuous use without rapid degradation and failure. Like other existing grass fields in the Village, a natural turf field would quickly become unplayable and require costly and frequent maintenance to restore it to an acceptable condition. Synthetic turf offers a more durable, low-maintenance solution that can withstand the high volume of activity anticipated at the park. The synthetic surface ensures consistent compatibility across multiple sports, with minimal downtime for field recovery. This makes it the most viable option for meeting the Village's goal of providing a high-quality, multi-use facility that serves the diverse needs of its residents on a year-round basis. The natural grass alternative does not align with the Village's long-term priorities for a sustainable, multi-sport facility. The HPO requested a cost analysis for the construction and maintenance of natural grass and artificial turf fields at the Zabriskie House on July 2, 2025. No response was received.

The application states that, "A natural grass field was not proposed in any of the previous design concepts circulated and informally presented to the HPO due to the intended multipurpose nature of the space." However, a review of the project file indicates that none of the concept plans reviewed by HPO staff between January 2020 and December 2022 included an artificial turf field. The HPO was first notified of the Village's interest in changing the design from grass to turf in an email from Village engineer Chris Rutishauer dated December 20, 2022.

- iii. *Alternative 3 – Another Build Location.* The application states that the Village has actively pursued the acquisition of land for recreational use, as documented in the 2003 *Open Space Plan* and the 2007 *Comprehensive Recreational Master Plan*. These plans identified several potential properties for acquisition, with two of the largest ultimately purchased by the Village: the first became Irene Habernickel Family Park, and the second was the Zabriskie House. Other properties identified in the plans were ultimately deemed unsuitable due to size constraints or location within designated floodplains, limiting their potential for development or recreational use.

In 2020, the Village's Affordable Housing Planner completed a Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, which included an in-depth analysis of vacant land for potential development. The study confirmed the scarcity of available vacant land within the Village, underscoring that the community is nearly fully developed, a fact confirmed in the community's Master Plan.

The Village also conducted a review to assess whether the proposed project could be accommodated within existing parks that have athletic fields. This evaluation determined that none of the current parks could support the project without significant drawbacks: either the available space was insufficient, or utilizing the space would require the removal or reconfiguration of existing recreational fields, diminishing current community resources. Multiple locations are also within the floodway of the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and therefore vulnerable to flooding.

- iv. *Alternative 4 – Separation of Zabriskie House and Park Amenities.* The proposed project involves the development of a multi-functional public park on the Zabriskie House property that would segregate recreational improvements and supporting amenities from the immediate setting of the historic house. The Village claims that, "The overall concept emphasizes a thoughtful and deliberate separation between the historic House and the active areas of the park... [including] carefully integrated amenities and access points designed to integrate public awareness, education and use of the house as an additional park amenity."

Based on the concept plan dated April 9, 2025, this alternative includes the multi-sport turf athletic field and associated parking lot, paths and lighting, bleachers, dug outs, fencing and safety netting, playground and restrooms. The athletic field is designed for soccer, lacrosse, softball, baseball, and football and, based on the plans, measures approximately 240 feet by 390 feet. The height of the safety netting is not clearly depicted on the plans, but based on HPO research, netting for similar fields can be tall as 20' to 30'.

The field is located approximately 66 feet from the Zabriskie House at its nearest point. The landscape plan includes a vegetative buffer approximately 44 feet away from the house, separating the house from the athletic field complex. This buffer is comprised of a staggered line of Norway Spruce, Leland Cypress, and Yoshino Cherry trees, none of which are native plants. No understory plantings are proposed in this area. The proposed buffer is inadequate to screen the new facilities from view of the house and is inconsistent with the historic agricultural setting of the property.

The multi-sport athletic field and park is the municipality's preferred alternative.

46. At the request of the HPO, the Village addressed an additional alternative – the plan submitted to the HPO in 2020 and revised between 2020 and 2022 through consultation with HPO staff – in supplemental information provided on June 30, 2025. According to this analysis, “It is important to acknowledge that there have been changes in administration, staffing, and methodology since the earlier phases of the project. As a result, prior submissions and determinations... should no longer serve as the guiding framework for the project moving forward... [The current application] was prepared to demonstrate how the current proposal better addresses the project's objectives. It is important to note that while the project approach has evolved, the fundamental need for a new community park – including an athletic field – has remained unchanged since the inception of the site's acquisition and planning.”
47. In a meeting on July 2, 2025, HPO staff inquired whether the Village had considered installing artificial turf at one of the existing grass multipurpose fields elsewhere in the municipality and creating a natural grass field at the Zabriskie House. In a response dated July 11, 2025, the Village indicated that the existing fields are not suitable candidates for turf installation due to a variety of environmental and logistical constraints. Veterans Field experiences severe flooding. Hawes Field, which also lies within the floodplain, was renovated in 2025 at a cost of \$100,000, making additional modifications impractical at this time. Habernickel Park was developed in 2012-2013, and the Village states that there is no compelling reason to replace its surface with turf. Citizens Park is located at a busy intersection and has only 14 parking spaces, making it a poor choice due to limited access and safety concerns. All other athletic fields in Ridgewood are owned by the Board of Education, over which the Village has no jurisdiction.
48. In the above-referenced meeting, HPO staff noted that the assessment of existing athletic fields did not address whether any of the parks that do not currently have athletic fields, or other municipally-owned property in the Village, was of sufficient size to accommodate a multipurpose athletic field. According to Village Manager Keith Kazmark, the Village is completely built out, and no property is available for acquisition.
49. In the same meeting, HPO staff inquired about the potential acquisition of the Upper Ridgewood Tennis Club, which was referenced in the 2022 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. In a response dated July 11, 2025, the Village indicated that the property is not for sale and presents significant environmental challenges that make acquisition and development problematic. These include its location adjacent to the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook, which presents a flood hazard to portions of the site's level land. The remainder of the site is composed of steep, heavily wooded slopes that are not conducive to athletic field development.
50. HPO staff also inquired about the 2025 Field Feasibility Study prepared for the Board of Education, which included cost estimates for enlarging and installing turf on several school athletic fields. Mr. Kazmark responded that the only project that he is aware of is the refurbishing of the field at Benjamin Franklin Middle School, which may be enlarged to some degree but would not accommodate use for baseball or softball games. He indicated that a decision has not been made regarding the use of grass or turf at this location.
51. The application states that the original purpose and intent of the property acquisition “always included the construction of a full-size, multi-use athletic field as a main feature of the development vision.” A letter from Mayor Paul Vagianos dated November 2, 2023, cites minutes of the Village Council meeting at the time of the property's purchase, which state that, “the conceptual plan for the improvement of the property...includes a

baseball diamond and overlay multi-purpose field....” The letter also references a 2008 plan for the site, which was approved by resolution of the Village Council in 2015 but rescinded the following year. This plan was not submitted to the HPO for review, as the Zabriskie House was not then listed on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

52. The Village states in its application that, “A natural grass field was not proposed in any of the previous design concepts circulated and informally presented to the HPO due to the intended multipurpose nature of the space.” However, HPO records indicate that the initial application for project authorization for the project, which was submitted to the HPO in January 2020, was for a “low-intensity sports field” for young children, a playground, and a walking path. As indicated above, the plans, which were subject of extensive consultation between the HPO and the Village over a three-year period, were for a smaller, 225-foot by 150-foot grass field, not a full-size turf field (390 feet by 240 feet) as currently proposed.
53. The application cites historical and legal precedent for the use of artificial turf on athletic fields at properties listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as a justification for its proposed use of artificial turf at the Zabriskie House. According to the application, the use of artificial turf in athletic facilities has evolved over decades as a practical solution for dedicated fields that face heavy use, environmental challenges, and financial and maintenance concerns. The application states that the HPO has approved the use of artificial turf in “parks of greater cultural significance, particularly those designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm. In evaluating the integrity and materials for the Zabriskie-Schedler Property park development project, it is clear that this property does not possess the same level of historic significance, integrity or sensitivity as other designed landscapes, which renders the application of synthetic turf more so acceptable in this case.”
54. The application and supporting documentation provided on July 11, 2025, cites the following specific examples of the approval of synthetic turf fields by the Council: at Goffle Brook Park in Passaic County, Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge in Union County, and Shadow Lawn in Monmouth County. According to HPO records, only two of these projects were reviewed by the Council, Goffle Brook Park and Homestead Farm. The construction of the turf field at Shadow Lawn was a private undertaking and therefore not subject to review pursuant to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act.
55. The HPO does not maintain data regarding this specific type of undertaking; therefore, a complete accounting of all artificial turf fields reviewed by the HPO – and by extension, the Historic Sites Council – pursuant to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act is not possible. However, with the exception of historic properties that were designed and used as athletic fields (e.g., stadiums), HPO staff has routinely determined that artificial turf fields are encroachments to historic properties and therefore subject to the review of the Council and final action by the Assistant Commissioner, acting on behalf of the Commissioner of DEP.

HPO staff further notes that the above-referenced artificial turf field projects that were approved by the Assistant Commissioner differ from the subject Zabriskie House property in at least two critical ways:

- i. Size – The historic properties are substantially larger in size than the Zabriskie House property. For example, in 2016 the Historic Sites Council recommended approval with conditions of artificial turf fields at Cedar Brook Park, a 78-acre, Olmsted Brothers-designed park in Union County. The Council also recommended approval with conditions in 2017 of an artificial turf field at Goffle Brook Park, also an Olmsted Brothers park. This park contains approximately 103 acres, in comparison to the 7-acre Zabriskie House property. In the same year, the Council also recommended denial of construction of multi-sport athletic fields and related facilities at Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge Park, an approximately 208-acre farmstead and golf course in Union County. All three projects were approved by the Assistant Commissioner with conditions.
- ii. Historic Use – The Olmsted Brothers’ designs historically included areas for active recreation and open space, unlike the Zabriskie House, which historically had an agricultural use. Where artificial turf fields have been installed in Olmsted Brothers-designed parks, they were in areas of existing natural grass athletic fields or open spaces, and thus consistent with the design, if not the materials, of the parks.

### MITIGATION

56. In order to mitigate for the encroachment on the Zabriskie House, the Village proposes the following:

- i. The Village requests that the \$2.6 million restoration of the Zabriskie House completed in 2024 be considered as a major element of mitigation. These efforts led to the listing of the property, the house and the associated 7 acres of land, on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 2019.
  - ii. Development of a strategic use plan for the Zabriskie House. Since the rehabilitation of the house was completed, the Village has not provided a permanent use or long-standing plan for the operations of the site. The strategic use plan will aim to evaluate and define viable, sustainable long-term uses for the house that balance historic preservation with community needs and financial sustainability. The goal is to transform the property into a vibrant space that serves the public interest while honoring and preserving its legacy and history. Possible uses may include community event space, a cultural heritage center, educational facility, museum, or a mixed-use site combining public and private functions.
  - iii. Development of an interpretive plan for the Zabriskie House. This plan will identify key historic and cultural resources and provide recommendations for further study, preservation, and interpretation of the house and its significance within Bergen County. With the support of the interpretive plan, the Village will incorporate the following activities to bring awareness of the site's history and importance to the municipality by:
    - a. Exhibition of archaeological materials uncovered during the recent assessment and surveys at the Village's administration building, library, and potentially the Zabriskie House. The Village will develop informative displays showcasing the site's history and highlighting the work of the archaeologists involved in the project.
    - b. Digital exhibition of the history of the Zabriskie House to be published on the Village's website and local library, together with printed materials permanently held at the library, historical society, and the state museum and library, memorializing the historic research, archaeological investigations, and physical rehabilitation of the building funded to date by the Village.
    - c. Define a reasonable schedule and conditions for the Zabriskie House to be open for public viewing, and possibly a guided talk and tour provided several times a year.
  - iv. Installation of three (3) interpretive panels in the park, illustrating the history of the site and the Village.
  - v. Conduct archaeological monitoring within John A.L. Zabriskie House Archaeological Site (28-Be-232), Site Core Area 1, throughout the park construction period.
57. In a supplemental submission provided on July 18, 2025, the Village amended its mitigation proposal to create the History & Cultural Center of Bergen County [Center] at the Zabriskie House. According to the proposal, the Center's mission is "To preserve, celebrate, and share the rich history, cultural heritage, and evolving narrative of Bergen County and the Village of Ridgewood through inclusive exhibitions, educational programming, and meaningful community engagement." The key features of the Center would include:
- i. An exhibition highlighting the archaeological discoveries at the Zabriskie House and property and the Village's agricultural history.
  - ii. Multi-purpose community rooms designed to accommodate a wide range of civic and nonprofit uses.
  - iii. A partnership with the Bolger Heritage Center for Genealogy and Research at the Ridgewood Public Library, including workshops and exhibitions.
  - iv. Collaboration with the Ridgewood Historical Society through exhibitions, school-based programs, and lectures.
  - v. A platform for Ridgewood's growing arts community through provision of gallery space, artist talks, and other events.
  - vi. Indoor and outdoor accommodations for youth recreation leagues, adult recreation groups, and senior fitness or wellness programs.
  - vii. Participation in the national sesquicentennial with a year-long exhibition titled "Ridgewood: 250 Years in the American Story."

58. The Village has indicated that a multi-tiered funding model will be implemented for the development and operation of the Center, including a coordinated capital campaign, pursuit of targeted public grants, and foundational assistance. It is unclear to the HPO whether sufficient funding is available for the proposed mitigation.
59. At the Historic Sites Council meeting of August 21, 2025, the Village presented a possible reconfiguration plan for the park, moving the ballfield farther away from the house. The applicant stated that there would be no bleachers with this plan. The revised plan also included a second row of trees along the property line, increased the number of parking space, and relocated the bathroom building closer to the parking lot. The applicant provided testimony that proposed layout would potentially avoid archaeological Site Core Area 1. The proposed reconfiguration plan has not been formally submitted.
60. The Council received public testimony regarding the health impacts of artificial turf, and that natural grass at the site would be more in keeping with environmental concerns of community.
61. The Council received public testimony regarding concerns regarding the effects of the installation of an artificial turf field on water quality in a residential neighborhood.
62. According to public testimony, no environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for the project. It is the understanding of the HPO and the Council that no EIS was required because the project is not federally funded and does not require state (DEP) permits.
63. The Council received public testimony regarding the desire to retain the historic integrity of the site to the greatest extent possible, which included having a smaller grass field more in keeping with the historic use of the site.
64. The Council received testimony that the proposed layout of the athletic field is larger than that originally presented to the community. The actual dimensions of the proposed athletic field were not included in the application. Based on the Council's calculations, the proposed multipurpose athletic field is approximately 50% larger than the earlier proposal.
65. The Council also received testimony in support of the project due to the increased need for playing fields within the community.
66. During the Council's meeting on August 21, 2025, the applicant informed the Council that two resolutions, one by the Village Council to set money aside for the development of programming for the Zabriskie House, and one by the Ridgewood Public Library for the proposed collaboration with Bolger History Center, have been passed since the July 21, 2025, meeting. These materials have not been formally submitted.
67. The Council received testimony that there is no program or plan for the use of the house at present, except that outlined as mitigation in the application.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the New Jersey Historic Sites Council, that based on the above findings the Council recommends that the Commissioner temporarily deny the Village of Ridgewood's request to construct a multi-sport, artificial turf athletic field and associated amenities at the Zabriskie House for the following reasons:

1. The applicant previously submitted an alternative for a smaller, natural grass field at the Zabriskie House in 2022, which HPO staff determined met the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and therefore would not encroach upon the historic property. As such, a prudent and feasible alternative to the project exists.
2. The proposed multipurpose athletic field will introduce visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that are out of character with the registered property and is incompatible in size, scale, and materials with the historic property; therefore, it does not meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Standards for Rehabilitation*.
3. The Village did not sufficiently address whether improvements to other existing fields in the municipality could address the project need, particularly in combination with the construction of a smaller grass field at the Zabriskie House. Specifically:

- a. The Village did not provide sufficient information addressing potential collaboration with other field owners, such as the Board of Education and other surrounding communities, to address the need for additional field usage.
  - b. The Village did not address whether a smaller field could be constructed at the Zabriskie House to alleviate demand on other fields and a multipurpose synthetic turf field installed at the site of an existing multipurpose grass field elsewhere in the Village.
4. The application does not provide sufficient information regarding the potential impacts to, and plan for preservation in place of, archaeological resources. Specifically, insufficient information has been presented to assess the potential impact of the project on Revolutionary War-era landscapes and material culture.
5. The application does not provide sufficient information regarding the environmental impact of the project, in particular the construction of the artificial turf field, on the house and property. It also does not address the impact of the number of trees that need to be removed on the historic property.
6. The Village did not provide a plan for the interpretation and use of the house and its relationship to the overall park development that integrates the historic features of the property and the proposed use for recreational purposes, focusing on the contemporary relevance of the historic site.

For these reasons, the Council requests the following additional information:

1. Evaluation of the following alternatives:
  - a. Reevaluation of the size of the field and its location in proximity to the house.
  - b. Specific dimensions of the minimum and maximum size field for the site, including both single-sport and multi-sport options.
  - c. Evidence of the Village's efforts to coordinate with other municipalities and other groups in the Village that own fields, such as the Board of Education, regarding the potential for use of other fields in order to reduce the strain on the existing Village-owned athletic fields and to alleviate the need for such a large field, specifically an artificial turf field, at this location.
2. Evaluation of the impacts of the installation of the athletic field, specifically:
  - a. Environmental impacts to the historic site (both the building and the property), including both the construction of the artificial turf field and the completed project. The analysis should address the minimum and maximum sizes of field, and both natural grass and artificial turf alternatives. The analysis should be completed by a qualified professional.
  - b. Historic landscape assessment of the trees and plantings that are intended to be removed, and a mitigation plan based on the impacts of the installation of the athletic field, to be completed by a landscape architect experienced with historic properties. The assessment should include trees already removed as part of previous work on site.
  - c. Reevaluation of the current plan to ensure that the athletic field is as far away from the historic house as possible and includes additional vegetative buffer, both between the Zabriskie House and the athletic facilities and between the athletic field and adjacent properties, and an indication of where teams and spectators will be located during games due to the non-use of bleachers. The plan also needs to clarify how the need for storage of equipment (e.g., nets, bases) will be addressed on site, excluding the use of the house.
3. Further assessment of archaeological resources, specifically:
  - a. Submission of the Phase II archaeological survey report.
  - b. A plan to complete additional research regarding Revolutionary War-era activity (who was there, what they were doing, and potential archaeological evidence of these activities), to be designed and developed by an archaeologist with specific knowledge of Revolutionary War sites, as well as a commitment to implement the plan.

- c. An analysis of the difference in impacts on archaeological resources between the minimum and maximum size athletic fields, as well as artificial turf and grass fields.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the New Jersey Historic Sites Council, that the Council further recommends that:

In the event that the requested information comes in and the 60-day review period does not allow time for its presentation to the Historic Sites Council at a regularly scheduled meeting, a subcommittee of Historic Sites Council members will review the documentation in order to meet the 60-day review time period.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the New Jersey Historic Sites Council, in the event the Department decides to approve the project based upon the existing record and the additional materials provided, then the Council recommends approval with the following mitigation:

1. Prior to the removal, demolition, or alteration of any components of the Zabriskie House property, the Village, using the services of an Architectural Historian who meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* [48 FR 44738-9] in Architectural History, shall document the existing conditions of the house and its setting to Level III equivalent standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). In lieu of large format photography, the permittee shall include high-resolution digital photos that meet the National Park Service National Register Digital Photo Submission Standards. The standards can be found at the following web address:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NR-NHL-photo-policy-2024-01-02.pdf>

The recordation shall include both archivally stable, 4-inch by 6-inch black and white prints and high-resolution digital RAW and/or TIFF files. A minimum of twenty (20) views of the property shall be produced as part of the recordation. Photography shall include, but not be limited to, documentation of the exterior of the building and the building's setting. The recordation shall also include high resolution digital copies of photos of the site prior to the construction of the berm in 2021, including historic aerials.

The Village shall ensure that all documentation is completed and accepted by the Historic Preservation Office prior to any further construction activities, including site remediation. The Village shall provide one original archival copy of the recordation to the HPO and duplicate copies, with original photographs, shall be provided to the appropriate repositories as identified in consultation with the Historic Preservation Office.

The HABS documentation shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office within 6 months of project authorization.

2. A plan for the maximum preservation in place of archaeological resources.
  - a. If the plan demonstrates that preservation in place is not possible in certain areas of the property, then the Village, using the services of a person meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards [48 FR 44738-9] in archaeology, shall implement a program of archaeological data recovery, as needed.
    - i. If the Historic Preservation Office identifies New Jersey and National Register eligible archaeological sites upon review of the draft Phase II survey report, and cannot be avoided, then plans for mitigating the impact of the project on significant archaeological deposits must be formulated in consultation with the Historic Preservation Office.
    - ii. If archaeological data recovery is recommended, then a data recovery plan or plans shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office for review and approval prior to any archaeological mitigation work. The data recovery plan shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Archeology and Historic Preservation*, and establish a schedule for the submission of reports and artifact curation and incorporate a public outreach/public benefits component.

- iii. Once an acceptable data recovery plan has been developed by the Village and approved by the Historic Preservation Office, data recovery of significant archaeological sites shall be conducted prior to any other project activities including ground disturbance within the defined data recovery area. The data recovery plan shall include provisions for submitting results of the archaeological data recovery to the Historic Preservation Office for review and approval within seven months of the completion of fieldwork or timeframe developed in consultation with the Historic Preservation Office. The Village shall rectify any data recovery report deficiencies identified by the Historic Preservation Office.
  - iv. All artifacts from New Jersey and National Register eligible archaeological sites will be analyzed, catalogued, and curated in accordance with the National Park Service Standards, codified as 36 CFR Part 79.
  - v. All archaeological work shall be conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*. Evaluations to determine the State Register eligibility of archaeological sites must be in keeping with the National Park Service's 2000 National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties*. All archaeological reporting and survey should conform to the Requirements for *Archaeological Survey Reports - Standards for Report Sufficiency* at N.J.A.C. 7:4-8.5.
- b. The Village, using the services of a person meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards [48 FR 44738-9] in archaeology, shall implement a program of archaeological monitoring during construction. The monitoring program shall be referenced in all project plans, documents, and specifications. The monitoring program shall define and describe the location(s) requiring archaeological monitoring, the archaeological methods and techniques to be employed, project conditions requiring the presence of the archaeological monitor, an outline of the responsibilities of all parties with respect to the archaeological monitoring, including:
- i. Full contact information for the archaeologist.
  - ii. Specification of the number of days prior to project implementation that the archaeologist will be notified that the project is about to proceed.
  - iii. A chain of command identifying the individual(s), such as the project site officials and archaeological consultant, with the authority to require work cessations in areas where archaeological deposits are encountered.
  - iv. The duration of work cessations.
  - v. This section shall specifically address how the applicant and the cultural resources consultant will interact, as well as who is responsible for what aspect of monitoring.

The archaeological monitoring plan shall discuss the report format, report outline, types of graphics, photographs and appendices to be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office for review and comment. The monitoring plan shall specify the time frame in which the monitoring report shall be submitted to the HPO for review and comment after the completion of the monitoring program. The archaeological monitoring plan shall be in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*, September 29, 1983.

- 3. The Village, using the services of a person meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards [48 FR 44738-9] in History and/or Architectural History, shall design and install three (3) interpretive signs in the Zabriskie-Schedler Park detailing the history and significance of the Zabriskie House. The design of the signage shall include a colorful panel mounted on a pedestal, and the content shall incorporate historic photographs, maps, and other graphic materials, as well as text regarding the historic significance of the property and its appearance prior to the construction of the park. The location, content, size, and text of the signage shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval within one (1) year of project authorization and prior to fabrication. The signs shall be installed, and verification of installation shall be provided, within three (3) months of the project completion.



4. The Village shall develop a revised landscape plan, completed by a licensed landscape architect experienced with historic properties, for the Zabriskie-Schedler Park. The landscape plan shall include an enhanced buffer between the Zabriskie House and the athletic field, consisting of evergreen and deciduous understory and canopy plantings adequate to screen the field, parking area, and associated development from the historic property. The plan shall use native plantings and/or plants available to the property owners during the period of significance (1825-c.1924) to the greatest extent possible. The Village shall submit the landscape plans to the HPO for review and approval prior to the commencement of construction.
5. The Village shall develop and implement an operations and management plan for the proposed History & Cultural Center of Bergen County. The plan shall address the implementation of the Center's core goals and the key features of the Center and shall include a timeline. The plan shall also include documentation regarding the Village's proposed partnerships with the Ridgewood Historical Society and the Bolger Heritage Center for Local History and Genealogy, as well as organizations within the wider Bergen County history and preservation community. The Village shall submit the operations and management plan to the HPO for review and approval within one year of project authorization.
6. No construction shall be started until a financial plan, developed by a qualified professional in financial management, for the proposed mitigation is reviewed and approved by the HPO. The plan shall include dedicated funding sources, not just potential grant opportunities. Biannual updates of the implementation of the financial plan shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval.
7. The Village, using the services of a Historian or an Architectural Historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards [48 FR 44738-9], shall develop an interpretive display to be installed in a publicly accessible location at the Zabriskie House commemorating the national America250 initiative. The exhibit shall incorporate research completed in implementing the above-referenced research plan regarding Revolutionary War-era activities at and near the Zabriskie House. The exhibit shall include interpretive panels incorporating current and historic images (e.g., photos, maps) and text documenting Ridgewood's history, including its evolution from a colonial-era settlement and its participation in the American Revolution. The design and content of the exhibit and interpretive display shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval prior to fabrication. Development of the exhibit shall be completed within one (1) year of project authorization, and photos of the installed exhibit shall be provided to the HPO within 6 months of the HPO's approval.
8. The Village, using the services of a Historian or an Architectural Historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards [48 FR 44738-9], shall develop an interpretive display to be installed in a publicly accessible location at the Zabriskie House regarding the history of the Zabriskie House and property, including the archaeological discoveries on the property. The exhibit shall include interpretive panels incorporating current and historic images (e.g., photos, maps) and text documenting the history of the Zabriskie House, the archaeological investigations at the property, and the agricultural history of Ridgewood. The design and content of the exhibit and interpretive display shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval prior to fabrication. Development of the exhibit shall be completed within two (2) years of project authorization, and photos of the installed exhibit shall be provided to the HPO within 6 months of the HPO's approval.
9. Final plans and specifications shall be submitted to the HPO for review and approval of the proposed park plans to ensure their compatibility with the Zabriskie House. The plans and specifications shall be submitted prior to construction bidding for the project.

MOVED BY:	Flavia Alaya	The Council's recommendation and
SECONDED BY:	Susan Ryan	Advice are forwarded to the
IN FAVOR:	6	Commissioner of the Department of
AGAINST:	0	Environmental Protection. The
ABSTAIN:	0	Commissioner makes a final



New Jersey Judiciary  
Superior Court - APPELLATE DIVISION  
**COURT TRANSCRIPT REQUEST**

R.O. #

Instructions for Court Reporter or Transcription Agency:

**Please advise appellant's counsel, Bruce I. Afran at [bruceafran@aol.com](mailto:bruceafran@aol.com), with the estimated deposit.**

TITLE IN FULL (AS CAPTIONED BELOW)

**IN THE MATTER OF VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD PARK  
DEVELOPMENT AT THE ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY,  
APPLICATION FOR PROJECT AUTHORIZATION, NEW  
JERSEY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ACT REVIEW**

TRIAL COURT DOCKET NUMBER  
**HPO PROJECT #20-0608-35**

COUNTY / COURT  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**REQUESTING PARTY**

NAME

**BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.  
BRUCE I. AFRAN**

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**10 BRAEBURN DRIVE**

CITY

**PRINCETON**

STATE

**NJ**

ZIP

**08540**

To NAME / ADDRESS (TRANSCRIPT OFFICE or COURT CLERK (if sound recorded))

I authorize the preparation of the following hearing dates, to be completed in the delivery schedule listed here: **Standard**

DATE OF  
PROCEEDING

**07/21/2025**

**08/21/2025**

TYPE OF PROCEEDING  
(e.g., trial, sentencing, motion, etc.)

**HEARING**

**HEARING**

NAME OF JUDGE/ AGENCY

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

I agree to pay for the preparation and any copies ordered of the transcript(s) for the above date(s) pursuant to R. 2:5-3(d).

For Trial Court and Tax Court the filer will be contacted by the transcript preparer for payment of the deposit.

For State Agency appeals, the filer must contact the agency for the amount of the deposit.

**Failure to make contact may subject your appeal to dismissal.**

**BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**

NAME OF REQUESTING PARTY

BAR ID#

**010751986**

**10/03/2025**

DATE

EMAIL  
ADDRESS

**[bruceafran@aol.com](mailto:bruceafran@aol.com);  
[princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com](mailto:princetonparalegalservices@gmail.com)**

Transcript fees are set by New Jersey Statute 2B:7-4. An additional sum or reimbursement may be required prior to or at the completion of the transcript order.

**BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**  
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Before Appellate Division,  
Superior Court of New Jersey  
DOCKET NO.

**STATE AGENCY**

**IN THE MATTER OF VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT AT THE  
ZABRISKIE-SCHEDLER PROPERTY, APPLICATION FOR PROJECT  
AUTHORIZATION, NEW JERSEY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES ACT REVIEW  
PROOF OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that an original of the following documents, **CERTIFICATION OF  
CONFIDENTIAL IDENTIFIERS, NOTICE OF APPEAL, CASE INFORMATION  
STATEMENT, TRIAL COURT ORDER/JUDGMENT/DECISION (08/27/2025),  
TRANSCRIPTS REQUEST FORM, PROOF OF SERVICE** were submitted and transmitted  
to the parties listed below in the following format:

**ELECTRONICALLY TO:**

**ATTORNEY NAME: SOOKIE BAE-PARK, Esq.**  
**dol.appeals@law.njoag.gov(DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US;**  
**DOLAPPEALS@LPS.STATE.NJ.US)**

**ATTORNEY NAME: MATTHEW S ROGERS, Esq.**  
**msr@mrogerslaw.com; lpr@mrogerslaw.com**

**STATE AGENCY: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**TRANSCRIPT OFFICE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**BY MAIL:**

I certify that the forgoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of  
the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

**Attorney for APPELLANT**  
**FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ZABRISKIE-**  
**SCHEDLER HOUSE, INC.**

Dated: **10/03/2025**

By: **S/ BRUCE IRA AFRAN, Esq.**