

November 17, 2025

The Hon. Gregg A. Padovano, J.S.C.
The Bergen County Justice Center
10 Main Street
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

Re: I/M/O The Village of Ridgewood
Docket No. L-777-25
Residents' Opposition to Kensington Proposed Development in Ridgewood

Dear Judge Padovano:

We are a coalition of Ridgewood residents, Ridgewood Neighbors United, and write to the Court, in advance of the settlement conference scheduled for November 19, 2025, to express our concern about development of an assisted living facility by Kensington Senior Development, LLC ("Kensington") in an overly busy residential neighborhood adjacent to a flood zone area.

We write because the neighbors wish to have their interests represented in the upcoming settlement conference. In August, we were forced to retain counsel to stop Kensington's Ordinance No. 4052 to amend the Village Master Plan and create the S-1 Senior Housing Overlay Zone which would have allowed Kensington to construct a 125 bed, multi-story facility which operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week in a quiet residential neighborhood without environmental, traffic or flooding studies and in violation of the Village's Master Plan:

Work to keep a "small-town/village feel" while allowing aspects of the Village to evolve, adapt, or change if necessary and beneficial to the Village in ways that maintain or complement the "small-town/ village feel."

(Village Master Plan, p. 10). We discovered, through documents obtained by OPRA requests, that the Ordinance was not drafted by the Village attorney, but by Kensington's attorneys. Our attorney communicated various concerns, including numerous procedural irregularities, to the Village Council:

Please note it is of serious concern that representatives of the Village have

repeatedly advised Ordinance #4052 is a “done deal,” despite significant noted concerns of several Planning Board members and most importantly the residents who will be directly irrevocably impacted. Ordinance #4052 as drafted is incomplete at best and is inconsistent with the Village Master Plan last updated 8/23/2022. The Village Master Plan envisions at-grade senior housing options with master bedrooms and full living quarters on the ground floor, not 56 feet tall buildings containing small single room living with approximately 130 beds.

Procedurally, there are concerns as to who and when the “meetings” with Kensington Assisted Living occurred and the lack of records pertaining to same. Especially in light of the history with this particular developer and Village, wherein the Village has not supported two similar assisted living facilities proposed due to the size and scope of the building, traffic concerns and setbacks, advising that the previously proposed assisted living facilities were not consistent with the Village Master Plan and the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. However, now a rushed Amendment to the Village's Housing Plan coupled with proposed Ordinance #4052 may provide the developer with a possible matter-of-right site plan application that will fundamentally destroy the character of the Village along N. Maple Avenue and Franklin Avenue and the surrounding residential communities.

There are also concerns as to possible closed session discussions of this matter, in violation of the M.L.U.L. and Open Public Meetings Act under the guise of “Affordable Housing.” It is also suspect that the Council’s Affordable Housing Planner only first mentioned a proposed assisted living facility to be created on North Maple Avenue at the Council Workshop meeting of July 2, 2025, while the 2025 Fourth Round Housing Plan adopted by the Planning Board on June 23, 2025 identifies the corners of North Maple, Franklin Avenue and Marshall Street as being in the B-2 zone and that “the Village and developer agreed to zoning permitting the assisted living development.” How could the Village and developer agree to zoning to permit the assisted living development, when proposed Ordinance #4052 had not even been introduced or referred to the Planning Board yet? N.J.S. 40:55D-26 provides that all “development regulations” must be referred to the planning board for comment and report to meet the requirement of consistency.

(See A.Y. Strauss letter dated August 13, 2025). The Village Council did not approve Kensington’s proposed Ordinance. However, we know they will return with a slightly modified plan which will have the same impact on our neighborhood and violate the Master Plan.

Kensington proposed to construct their 125 unit facility in Ridgewood at a site on Maple Avenue, bound by Franklin Avenue and Marshall Street. Their development concept is to demolish three existing medical/office buildings on a narrow two lane road, Maple Avenue, and replace it with one massive commercial building. Maple Avenue is considered by the

developer's team and their consultants to be too narrow & congested for access to the large building. Maple Avenue is also County Road 507,¹ and we have since learned that the County did not permit commercial traffic to exit onto the County road.

Therefore, Kensington's alternate plan is to direct all staff, medical personnel, emergency services, deliveries and garbage services to use the two narrow residential streets, Franklin Avenue and Marshall Street, as their only entrances and exits. Both roads have homes with families and are some of the most walked roads in Ridgewood New Jersey not only by residents but also by junior high and high school students. Both are primary access roads to the town's Central Business District. The location is directly adjacent to a residential neighborhood which is an area that is already severely impacted by flooding and traffic congestion.

1. Flooding

Flooding has increased significantly in recent years because the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook cuts through the middle of the Village. The Village Hall and surrounding homes, one block from the proposed development site, flood constantly, with boat rescues of the residents along with significant property losses (flooded basements, cars trapped in flood water, artificial turf fields submerged, etc). One of our residents in the flood area has been tracking rainfall accumulations and correlating it with the flooding impact. Recently, less rainfall has been needed to trigger flooding. It appears that other issues are in play that impact flooding, one of which is how much water is allowed to absorb/filtrate into the ground before reaching the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook and then flowing downstream to cause flooding. The proposed Kensington Senior Living Facility is one of the areas that should be managed before considering construction, but,

¹ Master Plan, p. 72

inexplicably, it is not.

Because the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook flows through multiple towns, all of which contribute to excessive water levels from storm run-off, and through the middle of the Village, flooding is a challenging issue. Thus, it is not something that can be “easily” modified by any single town/location. There truly is a need to develop long term solutions to control the floodwaters through various water management practices. Unfortunately, the current developer seems insensitive to this challenge.

Our goal is simple – make things better for all, those currently living in the area along with everyone downstream and anyone who is considering the area as a future residence.



Ridgewood Village Hall

The Village of Ridgewood is in the process of reviewing the flooding situation in the area with the Army Corp of Engineers, established a Residential Flood Committee and is upgrading flood protection for village hall. This validates the residents’ concerns that this

is an ongoing flood prone area and extreme caution should be taken into consideration for future development.

 Village of Ridgewood
From: info@ridgewoodnj.net
To: John Frei

 Fri, Oct 24 at 7:22 AM ☆

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**VILLAGE OF
RIDGEWOOD**

WEEKLY E-NEWS
Latest News and Events

RESIDENTIAL FLOOD COMMITTEE TOUR



The Residential Flood Advisory Committee recently went on a field trip, touring the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook (pictured), Saddle River and flood-prone areas in the Hope Street neighborhood. Committee members observed conditions, identified areas of concern, and discussed flood response as well as ways to protect homes and infrastructure from future flooding.



Village of Ridgewood
From: info@ridgewoodnj.net
To: John Frei

Fri, Nov 7 at 8:11 AM

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VILLAGE OF
RIDGEWOOD

WEEKLY E-NEWS
Latest News and Events

image

FLOOD WALL INSTALLATION



image



On Monday, **November 10**, weather permitting, construction will begin on the new flood wall system at Village Hall. The project is expected to take three weeks to complete, with the majority of work occurring during the first six days. Both the Main Entrance and the Community Center Entrance will be impacted. However, only one entrance will be closed at a time so that employees and residents can continue to access Village Hall throughout the project.

FLOOD WALL PROGRESS



Construction on the new flood wall system at Village Hall started on Monday and is moving along nicely. The project is expected to take three weeks to complete, with the majority of work taking place this week. Both the Main Entrance and the Community Center Entrance will be impacted. However, only one entrance will be closed at a time so that employees and residents can continue to access Village Hall throughout the project.

Monday, November 10, 2025

..... construction will begin on the new flood wall system at Village Hall.

This updated Flood Barrier/Shield system is a great addition towards the communities' efforts to protect facilities from future flooding.

This begs the question why a new major senior residential facility would be even considered a short distance away adjacent to major flood area

2. **Traffic Safety**

Traffic safety, both vehicle and pedestrian, is another significant concern with this area being comprised of major arteries towards the Ridgewood High School, multiple athletic fields (Veterans and Stevens Fields), Public Library and the Central Business District (“CBD”).

The Maple and Franklin Avenues intersection has been deemed an “unsafe intersection” in the Village Master Plan (p. 87) and has not had significant modifications in decades. We believe a County traffic professional proposed modifications years ago, but it required acquiring land. The Mayor said Kensington had no interest in giving up land to improve vehicle and pedestrian safety.

While we do not have exact traffic or pedestrian counts for this intersection, we all travel through the area daily and can confirm it is very busy. Groups of students walking to school, large groups heading to CBD for coffee and lunch breaks, along with residents out for walks, all add to the safety concern: the proverbial “accident waiting to happen.”

We recognize that on a typical day we are all in a hurry, whether driving our cars or students walking, riding bikes or the new challenges of e-bikes. Being in a hurry is not a valid excuse to jeopardize lives – safety should be the first concern. An additional challenge with a 24/7 health care facility is the additional traffic of medical & support staff along with tractor-trailer delivery vehicles, all in an already congested village location. This location is comprised of narrow residential streets, not designed or intended for routine commercial traffic: trucks can’t fit on the narrow streets without blocking existing local cars or jumping curbs. While the property is available for redevelopment, intersection improvement seems like a logical first step before a new building is considered, designed and built, and one in keeping with the neighborhood. *This is the time to act.*

Step One Safety:

- Thorough traffic study (pedestrian & vehicle) should be performed by an independent expert group over an extended period, to capture seasonal activity.
- As athletic programs on the fields slow/pause during the winter, *a comprehensive study should encompass several months of active field-based activities, typically from April through October.*
 - Monitor street activity which includes parking on different days of the week (as weekends are heaviest)
 - Street conditions during various seasons (heavy rains, snow, leaf collections, etc) as they all impact access on both Marshall, Franklin & North Irving Streets.
- From a residential observational perspective Marshall Street typically has at least one impediment where only one vehicle can get through, so it is very limited for additional traffic and emergency vehicles.
- Area is heavily used for drop-offs & pickups for school and athletic activities

3. General Infrastructure Concerns:

- Sewer
- Water
- Power
- Natural Gas
- Emergency Services including Fire, Ambulance, Police
- Sanitation Services

Adding a facility like what Kensington has proposed will tax all of Ridgewood's current infrastructures & services. **Who will be responsible for expanding the services to accommodate the proposed facility?**

- a. Currently we live with extensive water restrictions during irrigation seasons, it seems adding so many additional units can jeopardize current residents. This is exasperated when we acknowledge that Ridgewood Water serves multiple communities, all of which have continued increasing water demands.
- b. We are not confident that PSE&G can accommodate the additional electric power & natural gas demands by upgrading parts of their distribution system, but if they can, who will be responsible for the upgrade costs and road paving, etc?
- c. Ridgewood has an excellent Emergency Services operation with Fire, Police, Ambulances and EMTs, but an additional senior living facility will have a significant impact on them. Will Kensington be responsible for this or will it fall on the overall taxable community to expand services as needed?
- d. Sanitation Services are a necessity. Careful attention should be given to the time-of-day dumpsters are emptied. It is customary for sanitation companies to arrive during "early morning quiet hours" which is not conducive to a quiet residential

neighborhood. Coverage and rodent related aspects will have to be professionally managed.

4. Character of the Village of Ridgewood

Maintenance of the Village's "small-town/village feel" is a key concept in the Master Plan. (Master Plan, p. 4). This is reflected in an excerpt from a September 2025 letter to the Mayor of Ridgewood, by a long-term resident:

"As a seventy-three-year resident of Ridgewood, I write to express my strong opposition to the Kensington Senior Living plan. This massive over-development poses a major threat to the unique character of the village. An alumna of Ridgewood High School (Class of 1958), I returned to my Ridgewood roots after graduating from Wellesley College and Harvard Law School to pass the New Jersey Bar and then commute to New York City to build a career in international banking.

To relocate and reside in the dehumanized urban congestion and chaos of Manhattan, however, held absolutely no appeal for me. I've always treasured the peace, community spirit, and charm of my home town which was described by a friend from Brooklyn as "the spot where Norman Rockwell meets Wall Street". Preserving this priceless legacy now rests in your hands, as well as in those of your fellow Council members.

With gratitude for your service to the village, which we're all privileged to call home, and with appreciation for your attention to my message."

*Respectfully,
Janet E. Hunt, Attorney-at-Law (Ret), Ridgewood, NJ*

Other residents have talked about the "small town feeling" with buildings of limited height and managed setbacks, all of which were part of the reasons they chose to raise their families here vs the cities they moved from. They were extremely disappointed that Kensington was proposing such a large facility and that it would even be considered for the community.

HOW HIGH IS TOO HIGH



5. Community Opposition

Concerned neighbors have been working on a grass roots effort to make everyone aware – distribution of ~400 lawn signs, ~5,000 door hangers, active participation in town council and committee meetings, and raising funds to support our efforts. Widespread local support shows this development is genuinely unsuitable/undesirable for the area. We recognize the community's need for diverse housing options. This includes senior assisted living and low-income options, but unfortunately the developer has not selected a viable location in our Village considering flooding, traffic safety and Village character.

In informal discussions with fellow residents there is an appreciation for the concept of senior housing in our village, unfortunately this location is undesirable for a multitude of reasons as previously described. If Kensington and the Village of Ridgewood leadership are willing to explore other locations, we expect a plan can be agreed to, assuming infrastructure issues can be resolved. Currently they decline to even discuss the matter.

The fair sharing housing aspect on this facility seems to be a tactic to coerce the Village to change the village master plan to meet the developers' financial goals. In the spirit of fair share housing having a few units in this facility to force the project to be governed by these regulations


and have the Village adjust its Master Plan does not seem justified to the community at large. Residents have purchased and maintained their homes in this neighborhood based on the Village integrity, masterplan and overall village character. Why should a developer be allowed to potentially devalue their properties with a massive nonconforming facility while profiting off the fair housing clause?

In the past, there have been properties in town that have been retrofitted by developers for use by those that need a residence. Has this developer considered a soft renovation of the current structures, or considered other properties in town that would be more suitable from the community's perspective? We are a caring community and there is a better option. It was disappointing that Kensington's first step after community pushback was to file a lawsuit and go radio silent with residents. This does not seem the way to favorably embrace the community you want to be part of.

We trust this gives Your Honor a glimpse of developing issues here in Ridgewood and the overwhelming concerns with the proposed Kensington Senior Living Facility. Our concerns are not being addressed by our representatives and therefore we are reaching out to the Court to express our concerns and request to be included in the settlement conference.

Respectfully,

Ridgewood Neighbors United

By: 
JOHN A. FREI
10 North Irving Street
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

(201) 410-2720

cc: Matthew Rogers, Esq.
Village of Ridgewood Council Members
Danielle Kinback, Esq

Door hangers as distributed by Ridgewood Neighbors United



**STOP**
MASSIVE
OVERDEVELOPMENT
PROTECT, RESPECT & PRESERVE
The Village of Ridgewood

Ridgewood
Neighbors United

<https://ridgewood-united.com>
Email: Ridgewoodunited@googlegroups.com

Please Get Involved

- Share Your Opinion
- Donate
- Display Lawn Sign
- Help Spread the Message

Link to Website

**CRITICAL THAT RESIDENTS
VOICE THEIR OPINION & GET INVOLVED
This Will Impact Our Entire Town
Village Council Decides Our Fate**



**STOP**
Proposed
Massive Living Facility
on Franklin-Maple-Marshall Streets
PROTECT, RESPECT & PRESERVE
The Village of Ridgewood

Critical Community Concerns:

- ☐ **Traffic & Safety**
Busy school zone; deliveries, shifts and emergency trips create more conflict points near already confusing crosswalks
- ☐ **Flooding & Environmental**
High coverage and grading changes can worsen street and basement flooding without strong mitigation and maintenance
- ☐ **Village Character, Charm & Integrity**
Height, density, lighting, and service activity must respect the downtown gateway and nearby homes—especially overnight. *PLUS New Zone Regulations to Accommodate Developer*
- ☐ **Process & Transparency**
The review process to date has featured limited transparency, compressed timelines, & limited community notification...
What's the Next Surprise From Village Hall?

venmo

**Your support helps us get
the word out.**
Ridgewood Neighbors United Thanks you!

Sampling of Community Support



Informational Table During Chamber of Commerce Fall Auto Show



Flooding Experience

Government, Police & Fire

A River Ran Through It: Flooding Cut Village in Half on Sunday

Power back in many areas; Village Hall, turf fields took significant water

By James Delmann | Email the author | August 28, 2011 | Print

13 Comments

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Ridgewood Fire Department personnel evacuate the Welch family and their dogs from Marshall Street. Credit: [Boyd A. Loving](#)

The sun was out, residents were kayaking on the football fields, a river had split Ridgewood in two and citizens were walking through their slushed lawns to assess the damage of departing Hurricane Irene.

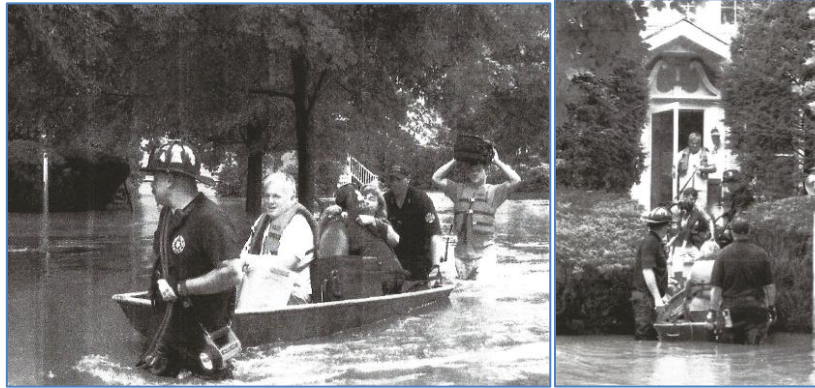
Some areas in the village escaped with minimal damage. Many West-siders had cable television, running refrigerators and dry basements by the time Irene bid farewell and hopped up the eastern seaboard.

But others laid in wait as waters rose as high as waist high. Firemen in rowboats outstretched their reaches, grabbing residents and their pets on the streets behind the brook, on East Glen and further down by the Saddle River in The Lawns.

Evacuating residents; no long-term relief for some

Rowboats were dispatched to the low-lying areas near the Saddle River and the Ho-Ho-Kus Brook. Marshall Street and Warren Place were heavily flooded, as was East Glen Avenue around the fire headquarters. Fire department and other emergency responders used dunk bucket trucks and row





Flooding images on street of proposed Senior Living Facility



Corner of Franklin Avenue and North Irving Streets



Ridgewood Village Hall and Veterans Field

FLOODING EVENTS

December 18, 2023 Flooding

News 12 video of water pouring from windows of Village Hall and turf fields destroyed:

<https://newjersey.news12.com/recreational-field-village-hall-flooded-in-ridgewood>



March 9-10, 2024 Flooding:

<https://theridgewoodblog.net/ridgewood-athletic-fields-under-water/>

January 10, 2024 Flooding:

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/ridgewood/more-10-roads-close-ridgewood-due-storm-flooding>²

December 19, 2023 Flooding:

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/ridgewood/ridgewood-village-hall-reopen-after-flooding-closed-offices>

² North Irving Street, and surrounding streets, were specifically mentioned and closed due to flooding:

- N. IRVING BETWEEN E. RIDGEWOOD AND OVERBROOK ROAD.
- FRANKLIN AVENUE BETWEEN MAPLE AVENUE AND N. IRVING.
- MARSHALL STREET BETWEEN MAPLE AVENUE AND FRANKLIN AVENUE.

October 6, 2023 Flooding:

<https://theridgewoodblog.net/ridgewood-village-council-fails-to-reach-out-to-residents-hurt-by-flood-damage/>

April 8, 2022 Flooding:

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/ridgewood/sections/education/articles/rhs-fields-and-village-hall-flooded-again>

September 1, 2021 Hurricane Ida

<https://theridgewoodblog.net/hurricane-ida-causes-damage-in-ridgewood-and-across-the-state/>

October 4, 2011 Hurrican Irene

<https://patch.com/new-jersey/ridgewood/residents-pitch-their-ideas-to-prevent-flooding-at-village-hall>



View of Residential Backyards on North Irving Street

Flooding in this area is a repetitive issue which has become more frequent in recent years. Building a massive Senior Living Facility on the edge of the flood water does not seem to be a wise or safe action.

Traffic on Franklin Ave & Marshall Streets



Informational Flyer Distributed by Ridgewood Neighbors United

**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO,
VOLUNTEER OR GET A SIGN TO
SHOW SUPPORT**

Ridgewoodunited@googlegroups.com

***We are just getting started
and moving fast***



Follow Link for more Info
on FaceBook

Ordinance #4052 will add a zoning overlay which will allow for the construction of a massive multi-story luxury assisted living facility that will take up the whole block at one of the busiest, and most dangerous intersections in town.

SOME OF OUR KEY CONCERNS – all need independent studies

- ☐ Vehicle Traffic on key intersections & local streets
- ☐ Safety Concerns for Students plus ALL Pedestrians
- ☐ Increased Commercial Traffic 24/7 (Deliveries, Garbage, EMS Transports, 911 Calls, etc)
- ☐ EMS & Fire Dept Increased Call Volume & Emergency Needs
- ☐ Impact on Aging Village Infrastructure – Sewer, Water, Power, Gas, Storm water
- ☐ Destruction of Residential Neighborhood & Property Values --- Quality-of-Life Issues
- ☐ Building Setback on Maple Ave only 10ft, Franklin 15ft, Marshall 8ft
- ☐ Impact on All Local Streets (damage from construction, long term parking, snow removal, parking, property owner's street blockage, parking in public/private lots)
- ☐ Parking for Employees & Guests
- ☐ Future Expansion Setting Village up for Developmental Crawl
- ☐ Ordinance Designed by Developer for Their Profit, Ridgewood is Secondary for Them. Changing Village Master Plan so Kensington Development will Make More Profit
- ☐ What will the REAL COST be to the Village of Ridgewood?
1. Short Term Cost \$TBD 2. Hidden Long Term Community Costs for Decades \$TBD

Proposed to be tallest building in our Village, images based on building in City of White Plains



PLEASE GET INVOLVED BEFORE IT IS APPROVED & BUILT!

Many of us think there must be a better way to solve the need