

Ridgewood High School Home and School Association

Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2008

Welcome and Approval of October 14 Meeting Minutes – Elizabeth Resnick, HSA President

Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the meeting and proposed the October 14, 2008 HSA meeting minutes be voted on for approval. The Minutes were approved by all those present.

Principal's Report – Jack Lorenz

The visitors from the Shetland Islands were sad to leave Ridgewood. The four students and one teacher had been here for four weeks to among other things observe the Presidential election. They had a wonderful visit and learned much about the election process here in the United States.

A mock election was held at RHS and 50% of the students voted. The students had to take the initiative, like registered voters, to actually go to the Election Booths which were located around the school. The result of the student vote was very similar to the national outcome.

The Beverly Road drainage and landscaping work has been completed. The lighting is still being installed. The neighbors on Beverly are very pleased with the how things look and are grateful that the landscaping of the RHS property has finally been addressed.

Other capital improvements being made to the school include the Boys' Locker Room. Twelve showers are now in operation and this summer the walls in the locker room will be replaced. The 90' high flag pole outside the school has been painted thanks to a \$2,500 parent donation.

The Ridgewood Athletic Association has donated a "stimulation unit" to be used by the physical therapists at the school to help treat student athletes.

The Pfizer Corporation has generously donated 50 desktop and 25 laptop computers to RHS.

Regarding verifying student's residency, the Board of Education has hired someone to help guide the schools in confirming the residency of its students.

Nick Nicholaides, the RHS Athletic Trainer, was featured on national TV during a discussion on concussion testing for athletes. RHS is at the forefront in protecting its athletes.

Jack met with the parents of freshman to get their feedback as to how to improve the transition to high school for students and parents alike. He and the other administrators have been working in response to the valuable feedback to provide more information and improved means of communication to the parents of incoming freshman.

Assistant Principal's Report – Jeff Nyhuis

It is important for parents to know that dates for SAT and ACT registration are posted in the Guidance Voice on the RHS website under "Guidance". Parents who have not done so, and would like to receive the Guidance Voice as it is posted, can sign up on listserve.

The Financial Aid meeting for the parents of seniors is November 20 at the Campus Center at 7:30. This is a worthwhile presentation to help parents navigate the various forms required by colleges to apply for financial aid. Local scholarship information will be presented to seniors on Wednesday, December 3 at 9:30 a.m. The deadline for the local scholarships is January 9.

The first quarter grades will be mailed at the end of this week.

The RHS dance held on October 30 was very successful. The Ridgewood Police called the next day and thanked RHS for hosting an event on "mischief night". The police noticed a significant decrease in pranks and toilet paper rolling!

Student Representatives – Nick Aynilian and Jacob Levitsky

The goal of the HSA Executive Board this year is to highlight different aspects of RHS. Tonight, we have requested that Basil Pizutto, Nick Aynilian and Jacob Levitsky give us an overview of the Student Congress.

The Student Congress comprises delegates from each of the four classes. Any RHS student can submit a petition and run for class delegate. The elections are held each spring except for the freshman class which holds its election in October. Meetings are once every two weeks during unit lunch. Each class has four officers: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. They are considering restructuring the positions of the officers so that each class would have 1 President and 3 Vice Presidents. In addition to the 4 officers, each class also has 8 delegates which comprise the Student Congress. It is a student run organization. Basil Pizutto's role is to serve as an advisor to the Student Congress.

The role of the Student Congress is to communicate information to and from RHS faculty and students. They run the concession stand at home football games and sponsor a variety of events including dances and blood drives.

One of the questions the HSA directed to the Congress to report back on at this meeting was, "In an ideal world, what would you like to see at RHS?" Nick, Jacob and Basil said this question generated a lively discussion with many worthwhile suggestions to enhance life at RHS. Some of the things the student delegates suggested were:

- a) Have more teachers use Blackboard and have them all use it more often.
- b) They would like to have laptops available for use in the Campus Center. It is hard to find someplace at RHS for groups to work on their projects together on a computer. The library is for quiet study only.

- c) They would like to see a more active and thorough recycling program initiated at RHS. They would love to see the school become more environmentally friendly by recycling more and using more recycled products, such as recycled paper.
- d) It would be nice to be able to access their computer files at school and at home. This is called a "U-drive".
- e) It would be wonderful to have a student lounge, separate from the Campus Center.
- f) The parking spots are limited at RHS. It would be great if a proposal as to how to provide more parking for students was brought forward.
- g) How could RHS utilize solar panels in its quest to be more environmentally friendly?
- h) Many of the lockers need to be replaced. Some are too narrow to utilize and others too small to hold all the books, spirals, and coats most students have.
- i) The Student ID should be used more, like at colleges, where it can be swiped to purchase food, to pay for copies, to access computers.....

The other question the HSA asked the Student Congress to respond to was, "What are some of RHS strengths and weaknesses?"

The students felt some of the strengths of RHS are:

- a) A strong student/faculty relationship
- b) The freedom the students are given, such as having an open campus. They feel it is good preparation for life after high school. The students are able to learn about independence and responsibility.
- c) It is easy to find teachers for extra help.

The students felt some of the weaknesses are RHS are:

- a) Some of the class rooms and hallways are in need of repair. For instance last year Room 310 was dismal, but due to work over the summer, it is a much brighter, more pleasant room to be in.
- b) The boys' locker room needs to be improved.
- c) Many classes are crowded, particularly in freshman and sophomore year.
- d) There is limited student parking.

Teacher Representative Report - Donna Antonellis

It is important for students to be aware that the computer program used at RHS is Microsoft Office 2003. If students want to send files back and forth from home to school, files saved at home must be saved with a program no higher than Microsoft Office 2003 if they want to open those files with the computers at RHS.

Donna, on behalf of the RHS faculty, thanked the HSA for the wonderful Halloween breakfast that was provided for them. The faculty room was completely transformed and the food and coffee were tremendous!

Board of Education Report – Laurie Goodman

The Board spent much of its last meeting laying out the timeline for working through the 2009/2010 School Budget. The projected enrollment is over 5,700 students in the Ridgewood Public Schools. By February 2009, the Board will be discussing the details of the proposed budget. Public hearings on the budget will be held in March 2009 and the budget will be put before the voters in April.

The budget forecasts are fairly grim. A significant portion of the budget is for fixed costs including salaries, benefits and transportation. As most of you are aware, revenue comes from local and state taxes and that the total revenue is capped by the State of New Jersey. The Board is looking at a \$1.9 million dollar deficit, thus significant cuts will need to be made.

The Board is also working on a referendum that would be put before the voters in the fall of 2009.

Everyone is encouraged to utilize the Board of Education website. The website has been the focus of many enhancements to make it more user-friendly. Available via the BOE website are links for Advocacy including the Garden State Coalition and Dollars and Sense. The Board also posts the agenda for its meetings on the website.

HSA President Report – Elizabeth Resnick

RHS was the recipient of two Ridgewood Education Foundation grants this fall. There were 7 grant winners in total. The RHS grant winners were: Will Shakespeare Enlighten and Engage RHS Students? ; and Investigating Newton's Law of Motion: the Physics Behind Construction, Launch and Flight of Air and Water Rockets. Please remember that you can purchase a REF donation in honor of a teacher or administrator.

At this time of thanksgiving, Elizabeth extended her gratitude to all the parents, HSA volunteers and RHS staff who have helped to make this year so special.

HSA Constitution and By-Laws Update – Michele Lenhard

Rola Baddoura is working with a small group of volunteers to complete the revisions to the HSA Constitution and By-Laws. The updated Constitution and By-Laws will be available for review later this winter so that they may be voted on by the HSA this spring.

The two new HSA Committees created this year, Development and RHS Cares, are in accordance with the current HSA Constitution.

Communications and Webmaster Report – Sara Erwin

Four hundred and fifty seven families are now signed up to receive the RHS HSA Enews . The RHS directory has been mailed to all families that paid their 2008/2009 HSA dues. Those who have not paid their dues, but would like to do so, and receive a directory, may send their payment to Wendy Wong, HSA Treasurer.

Thank you to Linda Willks for coordinating the Directory design. As most of you are aware, quite a few glitches arose this year in gathering the directory information from MIS via the Community Pass system. A committee is already working on trying to resolve these issues so that next year's directories are produced more smoothly.

Thank you to Rosemary Chersi for overseeing the proofreading and distribution of the directories.

Development Committee – Katie Van Saun and Theresa Callaghan

Fifty eight families to date have responded to the Development Committee's letter campaign. Their contributions total \$4,800 which can in turn purchase one Smart Board. There are currently no Smart Boards at RHS. A \$1000 donation has been received from Exxon.

The Development Committee has begun planning for the March 6 fundraising social which all RHS parents will be invited to.

RHS Cares – Anne Zusy and Kate Douglass

A calendar of meals that will be provided by the RHS families who volunteered to cook for the DiModugno family in December has been made. If you volunteered to cook, please make sure you have marked your own calendar accordingly, no reminder phone calls will be made.

Curriculum Committee – Maryam Alsop, Cheryl Sabath, Jessica Butler

The first Curriculum meeting of the current school year was October 23. The objective of the meeting was to listen to the feedback gathered from the parent focus groups that had discussed the elementary math programs. A few of the very worthwhile suggestions gathered were: provide more "life skills training" such as balancing a checkbook and doing percentages; provide on-line math skill worksheets and websites; have a parent guidebook; possibly separate the students into different levels based on their ability.

By September 2009 a uniform math program will be in place at all six of the Ridgewood elementary schools. The information gathered from the focus groups has been compiled and will be presented to the Board of Education and the Math Curriculum Team.

Hospitality – Nancy Stewart and Amy Scher

The RHS staff greatly appreciated the Halloween breakfast that the HSA hosted. Thank you to all the parents who provided baked goods, fruit platters, and juices for the breakfast. A volunteer sheet is being passed around, please add your name to the list if you would be willing to provide a baked item for any of the upcoming HSA sponsored staff breakfasts.

Freshman Class Representatives – Audrey Fink and Arlene Sarappo

The Class of 2012 sweatshirt blankets have been sold out. This first fundraising project for the class has been a huge success!

Sophomore Class Representatives – Terri McAteer , Lisa Gobble, Cristy Sippel

The Sophomore Parent Social held this fall and hosted by the Gobble family raised \$1,600 for the class. The next fundraising effort will be December 3-6 with holiday shopping at the Grazi Collection and Robin's Cookies. Information regarding these shopping days will be emailed to the parents of sophomores. Umbrellas are still for sale for \$20, please contact any of the class reps if you would like to purchase one. They are great umbrellas because they fold up to such a small size!

Junior Class Representatives – Lisa Manderano and Cheryl Alterman

Key chains are still available, please contact Lisa or Cheryl if you would like to buy one. Information on the upcoming sweatshirt sale will be available shortly.

Senior Class Representatives – Lisa Diss and Patty O'Herlihy

Lisa and Patty are pleased to report that coordinators have volunteered for all of the numerous Project Graduation committees. An overview of Project Graduation will be given at the next HSA meeting on January 13. This will be an informative presentation on what Project Graduation is responsible for, why fundraising is so important, and how dependent it is on parent volunteers.

Town Council Report – Anne Zusy

The Ridgewood Town Council is currently evaluating the following projects with a keen awareness of the current economic turmoil the country is experiencing. The projects that are under review are:

- 1) Schedler Property – is being looked at by the Ridgewood Recreation Department and various Ridgewood sports organizations for potential field use
- 2) Vets Field – the Council is looking into proposals to replace the restrooms that were removed during the renovation of Village Hall
- 3) Habernackel Park – plans and funding are being finalized for passive walking trails throughout the park property
- 4) Graydon – A wonderful plan is on the table which proposes a concrete pool area as well as a swimming lane area. The plan also includes a lazy river and a slide pool area. The Council is very

excited by this master plan and is hopeful that the funding will be self-generated by attracting many Ridgewood families back to Graydon.

- 5) Parking – a new parking committee is looking at the Parking Garage Proposals and is also looking at an interim solution of parking lifts

All of this information is listed on the Village Council website.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next HSA meeting is Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Granski, HSA Secretary

In attendance:

Sara Erwin, Dixie Taylor, Vicky Herbert, Jamie Fredrick, Christine Shea, Laurie Goodman, Annie Zusy, Jacob Levitsky, Nick Aynilian, Basil Pizzuto, Jeff Nyhuis, Donna Antonellis, Jack Lorenz, Elizabeth Resnick, Diane Lynch, Traci DuBois, Lynn Granski, Wendy Wong, Margie McKeon, Rose Boniello, Terri McAteer, Lou Sarappo, Jeanne Potter, Nancy Stewart, Maureen Burke, Patty O'Herlihy, Joanne Delaney, Kate Douglass, Beth Abbott, Cheryl Sabath, Michele Lehnard, Theresa Callaghan, Christine Shippee, Maryam Alsop, Audrey Fink, Lessa Manderano