

COUNCIL MEETING

May 12, 2021

The regular meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held via Zoom on May 12, 2021. President of Council Bill Hale called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Other Council members present were Councilpersons Deb DeMasi, Dave Firn, Stephanie Middleton, Bob Siwicki, Judy Voet and Vippy Yee; Treasurer Joe Hare; Controller John Nielson; Mayor Tim Plummer; Solicitor G. Guy Smith and Secretary Paula Healy.

Members of the public attending the meeting were: John Baycich, Bob Caulfield, Kelly Caulfield, Aaron Childs, Kevin Coan, Diane Corbett, Tina DiChiara, Alan Gee, Cindy Holston, Peter Howell, Julio Loor, Edward Matey, Richard O'Flynn, Martin O'Rourke, Ron Ploeg, Owen Redgrave, Sally Redgrave and Richard Taxin.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the April 14, 2021 Council Meeting had been distributed to members of Council. Mrs. DeMasi noted the following should be added to the Public Safety section: "Mrs. DeMasi requested that persons named in the Notification and Resource Manual (NARM) of the Rose Valley Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) make certain their contact information is current and send any updates to the Rose Valley Borough Office. Additionally, Borough residents with special needs during an emergent event are encouraged to send their information to the Borough Office." With this correction, the Minutes of the April 14, 2021 Council Meeting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Diane Corbett asked if past Council Meeting minutes could they be corrected. Mr. Smith said that they could be amended by notifying the Secretary, Mrs. Healy, who would then bring necessary corrections to Council's attention.

Bob Caulfield voiced his concerns about a sidepath along Rose Valley Road bringing undesirable individuals into the Borough, in light of the recent theft of the Minquas Indian Trail plaque and beaver sculpture.

Kevin Coan, a homeowner along Rose Valley Road where the sidepath might be located, noted that no one had yet talked with him about the sidepath. Ron Ploeg, the member of the Planning Commission in charge of talking with homeowners, responded that this was an ongoing process and that everyone would be contacted, and their opinions sought out.

There was much discussion regarding the Rose Valley Road sidepath feasibility study. Ms. Middleton, Chairperson of the Planning Commission, assured everyone that the study was focused on improving safety and was still in an exploratory stage. Everyone was encouraged to attend the Planning Commission meetings which are scheduled for the first Thursday of each month.

Mr. Taxin questioned how many people would actually use the sidepath to walk to the train station. It was noted that walking to the train was often mentioned because multi-modal transportation grants are available to fund improved pedestrian access to train stations, but that many if not most of the users of the sidepath would probably be Borough residents simply walking around the neighborhood.

Mr. Loo asked about the new trail along Rose Valley Road across from Hedgerow Theatre with the wooden bridge. Mr. Hale noted that this trail was an Eagle Scout project by a Scout from Rose Valley Troop 272 on Borough land between Old Mill Lane and Traymore Lane.

EAC & ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Firn reported that the EAC Plant Sale and Invasives Workshop on April 24 was a great success. All the plants quickly sold out and the EAC netted \$641 after expenses, which flows into the Borough operating fund as income. Although the Borough budget for the year and EAC line item were set at the end of last year, it was noted that it would be acceptable for the EAC expenses to go overbudget by the plant sale net income. Although there was not much invasives work, Jim Audley and other volunteers planted numerous trees above the switchback trail behind the Old Mill.

Mr. Firn had distributed to members of Council a Wildlife Preserve Public Information Plan prepared by the EAC which calls for the construction of two information kiosks, one a large 12-foot-wide gateway structure with kiosks on either side at the entrance to the Saul Preserve near the Old Mill parking lot and the other a small single kiosk where the new upper trail diverges from the main path in the Chadwick Preserve on Longpoint. The kiosks would have weatherproof bulletin board cabinets to display maps, points of interest, rules and educational information. The plan also calls for installing numbered posts to mark various point of interest in the preserves.

Solicitor Smith noted that the deeds for the Saul Wildlife Preserve state that the land is to be used “as and for a wildlife refuge and bird sanctuary for the inhabitants of the Borough of Rose Valley and for no other purpose whatsoever” and that, as a beneficiary of the deed restriction, any landowner or inhabitant of the Borough of Rose Valley could sue the Borough to enforce it. Much discussion followed which included the proposed construction of a pedestrian bridge across Ridley Creek from the Saul Wildlife Sanctuary to the Chadwick Wildlife Sanctuary. Mr. Smith noted the construction of a bridge would also violate Section 701 of the Zoning Code, since it is not one of the uses permitted in Open Space, and increase the Borough’s liability.

HIGHWAYS & TECHNOLOGY

The restoration of the embankment at the corner of Longpoint Lane and Knowlton Road has been completed with the planting of native plants by McCusker Landscaping at a cost of \$1,803.89. Mr. Hale has been watering the plantings. John Baycich thanked the Borough for improving the sightline at this intersection on behalf of all Longpoint residents.

The plan for the Price's Lane sightline improvement project is to first bid the dismantling of the existing stone wall and cutting back of the embankment which require less skill, and then bid the reconstruction of the wall further back from the road by an expert stone mason.

The new website is nearing completion but still has various things which need to be added or corrected. Intern Shane Houseman and Ms. Yee have been working hard and would like to know of any problems people encounter and suggestions for additional information.

Ms. Yee and Borough Engineer Matt Houtmann conducted the 2021 Road Inspection. All the roads in the Todmorden development have been greatly impacted by Aqua's water line replacement project. Mr. Houtmann will contact Aqua to see if he can work out an arrangement whereby Aqua gives us the money they would have used for final repatching, so we can use it to help repave the roads. Mr. Houtmann will let the Borough know what he finds out.

LIBRARY

Mrs. Voet reported that the Library staff is preparing for the reopening of the Library building on June 1st. The reopening plans include: a 30-minute browsing limit; a 40-minute computer use limit; a capacity limit of 10 people per floor; closed meeting rooms; virtual or outdoor programming; and contactless pickup by request only. The summer hours will be Monday & Thursday 1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Tuesday, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The annual fundraising paper mailing will go out within two weeks. Last year's \$73,000 was raised with great support from Rose Valley. Mrs. Voet encouraged everyone to give generously again this year.

The Kids Summer Reading Kickoff will be on the Library Lawn on June 17 at 6:00 p.m. with free Rita's Water Ice and probably food trucks as well.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. DeMasi reviewed the Police and Fire Reports for April. The Police Report showed 1 theft and 1 car crash. The Fire Report showed that the Fire Company responded to the car crash and to two automatic fire alarm activations.

Trooper Tobin sent a report stating that the State Police had confiscated \$17,784,894 worth of illicit drugs from Pennsylvania communities in the first quarter of 2021 including 253 pounds of cocaine, 361 pounds of methamphetamines and 58 pounds of fentanyl. Changes were recently made to Pennsylvania's Move-Over Law requiring drivers to change lanes or slow down when approaching a disabled vehicle.

The Town Watch Program is in need of a recruitment drive. Bob Giorgianni is retiring as Captain of the Longpoint Town Watch. John Baycich has volunteered to take over this position. Many thanks to Mr. Giorgianni for his many years of volunteer service to the Borough.

Mrs. DeMasi reviewed the data from the speed devices on Rose Valley Road.

The State of Pennsylvania is still under Pandemic restrictions. Gov. Wolf is expected to lift most restrictions at the end of May. Vaccines are now available for anyone over 12 years old and all residents are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible. To date, there have been 32 reported Covid cases in Rose Valley and 1 death.

PLANNING

There was no Planning Commission Meeting in May. Mr. Ploeg is continuing to meet with homeowners along Rose Valley Road between Possum Hollow and Woodward Roads to get their input regarding the possibility of a sidepath.

FINANCES

Mr. Hare reviewed the Status of Funds for April. Mr. Siwicki went over the Income Report for April noting continued real estate tax receipts. Mr. Neilson went over the Bills for Approval and answered questions. The Bills for Approval in the amount of \$40,309.06 from the General Fund and \$1,803.89 from the Road Improvement Fund for McCusker Landscaping's planting of native plants along Knowlton Road were approved on a motions made, seconded and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mrs. Healy reported the Annual Large Trash Collection went well.

The Borough will be eligible to receive Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act in excess of \$90,000.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mr. Plummer reported that the William L. Price historical marker will be dedicated on Saturday, November 6, 2021, with lots of activities being planned for that weekend by the Rose Valley Museum and Historical Society. He noted that Paul Leonard, who lives in Price's old home on Price's Lane where the new marker will be erected, joined the Rose Valley Centennial Foundation board of directors. He also noted the RVCF has applied for a \$100,000 Keystone Historic Preservation Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to continue renovation work on Thunderbird Lodge.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Smith's solicitor's report for May discussed unclaimed funds held by the State, the delay of the Real ID deadline to October 2023, the upcoming May 18th election, the filling of vacancies in office, the transition from Zoom to in-person meetings, and legal issues related to the construction of a bridge across Ridley Creek on Saul Wildlife Preserve land as discussed above.

Mr. Smith also informed Council that there are two properties in Rose Valley that appealed their assessments and are ready for stipulated settlements. The first is the Roberts property at 67 W.

Rose Valley Road. This property's assessment was reduced from \$5,541,180 to \$1,750,000 to reflect its market value. The second property is the Seider property at 6 Todmorden Lane. This property's assessment was reduced from \$591,860 to \$351,775, which was the purchase price in April of 2020. Mr. Smith was authorized to sign the stipulations reducing the assessed values of these two properties on behalf of the Borough on motions made, seconded and unanimously passed.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed the meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Paula W. Healy, Secretary