

ROSE VALLY BOROUGH
COUNCIL MEETING
May 14, 2025

The monthly meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held on May 14, 2025 in the main room of the Old Mill, 9 Old Mill Lane. President of Council Matt Sullivan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Other Council members present were Joe Hare, Cheryl Harner, Kathryn Meehan, Tony Orr and Shannon Prown. Mayor Bill Hale, Controller John Neilson, Treasurer Chris Bourke, Solicitor G. Guy Smith and Secretary Paula Healy were also present. Councilman Leonard Busby was absent.

Resident Deb DeMasi and Kaitlyn McDevitt from the Swarthmorean attended the meeting.

MINUTES

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Minutes of the April 9, 2025 Council Meeting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ENVIRONMENT & EAC

In Mr. Busby's absence, Mr. Sullivan read the following report. The EAC and Rose Valley Gardeners Annual Native Plant Sale on May 10 was another big success. In the range of 1400 native plants were sold. Total revenue from the plant sale already exceeds \$7,460, with a few more sales yet to be included. Marge Firn and many other volunteers, including from the EAC and the Gardeners of Rose Valley, organized and staffed this year's plant sale. It has become more and more of an event in recent years with many people making special trips to our Borough to buy native plants and learn more about them. More revenue has come in each year for the fourth year in a row.

A regular feature of the plant sale is a tour of the Saul Preserve led by Roger Latham, the founder of the Rose Valley EAC, its long-time Chair, a former biology professor at Swarthmore, and a walking Wikipedia of all the plants and trees in our Borough. Roger led two tours this year. I have attended many of these tours and every time I learn new things. For example, this year I learned that our American basswood trees in the Saul allée, planted long ago by Maurice Saul, are also known as "buttonwood trees" because their wood was used to make buttons. Roger educated all who took the tour about our invasive plants which are diminishing, and our native plants that are rebounding in the Saul Preserve.

Also on May 10, Jim Audley led a Stewardship Workday in the Saul Preserve. Among other things, fallen tree debris was cleared, many native trees were planted and then caged to protect them against deer, and a picnic table overlooking Ridley Creek was created using six thick slices from a large and recently fallen ash tree. The slices were the result of using a chain saw to clear

a path blocked by the fallen tree. The table was made by stacking two slices and positioning the remaining four as seats. The collective judgment of the work crew was that this repurposing was an improvement over leaving the slices scattered alongside the trail. Jim had a check list of 32 items to get done in the Saul Preserve, not all of which could be completed, but Jim's organizational and logistical expertise continues to be a great gift to our Borough. A second Stewardship Workday has been scheduled by Jim and the EAC for Sunday, May 18 in the Chadwick Preserve; all volunteers are welcome. Details are available on the Upcoming Events section of the Borough website. I would also like to give a shout out and an expression of appreciation for Tony Orr's prompt and excellent help as our webmaster in getting information onto the Borough website.

The EAC adopted at its April meeting Council's excellent tradition of inviting public comment at the outset. The primary discussion raised during public comment involved the upcoming work by PECO in Rose Valley to replace existing transmission-line poles and to remove or prune certain trees in the right-of-way. PECO has announced that it will make replacement trees available after the work has been done. An announcement with details and environmental recommendations for homeowners will be provided by the EAC in an upcoming email blast.

Work continues at the EAC regarding winter salt awareness, MS4 compliance, and an ongoing citizen science leaf-pack project to assess the health of Ridley Creek by measuring types and numbers of invertebrates. Katie Rubin has been instrumental in leading all three of these areas.

Lastly, I express on behalf of the EAC and the Borough our great appreciation for the recent \$1,000 contribution from the Ronald and Audrey Winkelvoss Charitable Fund, a gift that follows many previous annual gifts from this Fund. The Winkelvoss family has always requested that their gifts be used for environmental progress and the EAC is consulting with them on ideas for projects. I will in due course share with Council the project proposed by the Winkelvoss family and the EAC to use this year's contribution along with last year's, and I will then ask Council for approval of what is proposed.

HIGHWAYS, INSURANCE & TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Orr reported that people are accessing livestreams of our Council meetings on YouTube with about 100 views of the March meeting and 45 views of the April meeting.

Mr. Sullivan noted our 1-year recycling contract ends in December and that bids would normally go out in the fall. However, if there is any interest in changing to a combined contract for recycling and trash in 2026, Council would need to start deliberating this soon to allow time to prepare a request for proposals and bid the work.

LIBRARY

Ms. Mehan reported that the Library had the highest number of donors and placed 6th in donations overall during Delco Gives Days with 393 individuals donating a total of \$49,536. The Library is considering hiring a part-time person to manage the 7 or 8 fundraising projects it holds each year. The Library also needs volunteers for the front desk, which is a 6-month

commitment of approximately 2.5 hours a week. Anyone interested should reach out to library director Leah Kulikowski at leah@hklibrary.org. The automatic front door hinges will soon be replaced with better hinges. She encouraged everyone to become an annual donor to the Library.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Harner reported that the April Police Report listed 5 calls for service including a welfare check, an identity theft, and a patrol check. The April Fire Report listed responses to two brush fires and one automatic fire alarm. Town Watch patrols are proceeding as usual. Both speed devices along Rose Valley Road are working but we are only receiving a data report from the device near Thunderbird Lodge. Ms. Harner has been working with All Traffic Solutions to determine why the Borough Parking Lot device stopped reporting data after doing so in March. She noted All Traffic Solutions offers a service contract for \$3,000 per year for 2 devices which the Borough has not been purchasing. She will explore alternatives for resolving the problem.

Mr. Sullivan noted that PennDOT has approved reducing the speed limit on Rose Valley Road from 35 to 30 miles per hour, which will make speed enforcement easier, and that new speed limit signs have been ordered.

The Delaware County Consortium of Governments has asked the leaders of the 49 municipalities which make up Delaware County to all sign a letter to the State legislature in support of SEPTA's budget increase request. It was agreed that Mr. Sullivan will sign this letter on behalf of the Borough.

PLANNING

Mrs. Prown made a motion that the revised Fence Ordinance be advertised for adoption in June. Mr. Sullivan noted the fence ordinance is based on Nether Providence's and that a definition for deer fencing has now been provided, the permitted fence height has been increased from 6 to 8 feet, and the separate property line setback for deer fencing has been removed. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Mrs. Prown also reported that Matt Houtman posted the bidding documents for construction of the walking path on PennBid with the bids due June 4 and that a pre-bid meeting was held this morning at 10:00 with 8 contractors attending. PECO is working on upgrading their distribution lines from 4,000 volts to 13,200 volts by installing taller poles and removing threatening trees. This work is expected to be completed around the end of June. Directional drilling will be used to install underground power lines on White Pine Lane, Roylencroft Lane, and in the Traymore development. Mr. Hale noted that a separate bid was requested from a pre-qualified COSTARS company for the fencing, which could avoid the markup a general contractor would apply to this work. The bidding documents do not include replacement landscaping because the design for this work has not yet been finalized with affected homeowners.

Shannon also reported on four items addressed during the Planning Commission Meeting held on May 8, 2025. The first item was a proposed subdivision for a lot line change conveying a 12-foot-wide by 168-foot-long strip of land from Bill and Gail Hale's property at 20 Hilltop Road to

Shawn and Erin Stancill's property at 35 Rabbit Run Road. Mr. Hale explained that the Stancills want to put an addition on their house but need slightly more land to meet their required side-yard setback. Bill noted that he and Gail will still have over 1.5 acres of land after the conveyance and that this strip already appears like it is part of the Stancill's property. Mrs. Prown noted that the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend that Borough Council approve the subdivision plan and made a motion to this effect which was seconded and unanimously passed.

The second item discussed was another proposed subdivision for a lot line change conveying a small, elongated triangle of land from the Warren D. Seider Living Trust's property at 6 Rose Valley Road to the Borough of Rose Valley. Mr. Hale explained that the Seiders allowed a small portion of the crushed stone walking path, constructed as an Eagle Scout Project, to be built on some of their land with the understanding that this land would later be transferred to the Borough to avoid liability and become part of Pew Park, which extends across Rose Valley Road in front of their property. Mr. Sullivan remarked that the triangle is indeed quite small, containing only nine-tenths of one percent of an acre. Mrs. Prown noted that the Planning Commission unanimously voted to recommend that Borough Council approve the subdivision plan and made a motion to this effect which was seconded and unanimously passed.

The third item addressed at the meeting was an invitation to provide comments regarding the potential effect on historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of a proposed small cellular facility on the Thunderbird Lodge property at 41 Rose Valley Road. This project would involve mounting a 2-foot-high antenna atop a 40-foot-tall pole across from Price's Lane near the Minquas Path Historic Marker and Monument with a large equipment box about 10 feet up in the air. The unanimous and strongly held view of the Planning Commission was that the installation of a cellular facility on the Thunderbird Lodge property, the most historic property in historic Rose Valley and home to the Rose Valley Museum, would have a profound negative impact from cultural, aesthetic and historic preservation perspectives on this property and the historic district in which it resides. Mrs. Prown subsequently wrote a letter to EBI Consulting, which requested the comments on behalf of cell-tower-company Crown Castle USA, conveying our concerns and opposition.

The fourth item addressed at the Planning Commission meeting was a preliminary discussion of proposed second Ger or yurt buildings at the School in Rose Valley (SRV) slightly larger than the one they built previously. Rod Stanton, Head of School at SRV, attended the meeting and explained that SRV did not need to consider stormwater management for the first Ger because it was built on posts which do not impede the flow of water under the building. The second Ger, however, will have a partial foundation for a bathroom and so stormwater management will have to be addressed. The plans SRV brought to the Planning Commission meeting showed the second Ger located in an area known as "fort town" where students presently play and build structures out of sticks, and away from the very-steep slopes along Ridley Creek. Section 303 of Rose Valley Borough's Environmental Ordinance prohibits construction on very-steep slopes within 300 feet of the top of the Ridley Creek stream bank, unless within 50 feet of existing occupied structures. It was written largely in response to the construction of the Grace Building by SRV on very-steep slopes around 2012. Head of School Rod Stanton said he was not sure the SRV Board would approve the proposed location in "fort town" since the second Ger was

located elsewhere in plans the Board saw earlier before SRV became aware of Rose Valley's Environmental Ordinance. SRV will submit Land Development Plans for review after its Board considers the revised location for the Ger.

FINANCES

Mr. Bourke reported he had reconciled all the Borough's bank accounts shown in the April Status of Funds. Mr. Hare went over the April Income Report. Mr. Neilson reviewed the May Bills for Approval and answered questions. The Bills in the amount of \$56,113.58 from the General Fund were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed. The Bills included payments of \$14,800 to Fischer Cunnane & Associates for auditing services, \$4,200 to JPS for large trash pickup, and \$3,000 to Carney Tree Co. for taking down the large poplar tree on Borough property behind 103 Traymore Lane.

Mr. Smith asked that Council approve Resolution 5-2025 authorizing Borough officials to sign a new 10-year franchise agreement with Comcast of Southeast PA. This resolution was approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Hale noted that a house on the cul-de-sac at the end of Brookview Lane in Todmorden recently sold for over \$2 million.

He also reported that he attended a meeting at the request of Mr. Sullivan with representatives of Nether Providence Township, Swarthmore, Rutledge and Morton Boroughs, and Swarthmore Fire Association to discuss how to replace the Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance coverage lost as a result of the closure of Crozer-Chester Medical Center. Most Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulances associated with local fire departments such as Brookhaven and Swarthmore provide Basic Life Support (BLS) care. That means the ambulance is staffed with 2 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) who have hundreds of hours of training. If you have a non-life-threatening incident such as a broken arm, 911 will dispatch a BLS crew. ALS ambulances, in contrast, have an EMT plus a paramedic who has thousands of hours of training and can administer specialized drugs and intubate patients. If you have a life-threatening event such as a stroke or heart attack, 911 will dispatch an ALS ambulance or possibly a BLS ambulance with a paramedic chase vehicle meeting it at the scene.

Media has an ALS ambulance, but much of the County previously received ALS coverage from Crozer. When Crozer's ALS ambulance service closed along with the hospital on May 2, the County agreed to cover the cost of providing paramedic chase vehicles for 90 days to allow time for municipalities to figure out how to provide ALS coverage for their residents starting August 2. The municipalities listed above, which comprise the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District plus Morton, are considering entering into an Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement to cover the cost of upgrading one of Swarthmore Fire Association's two BLS ambulance and operating it as an ALS unit.

Compounding the ALS ambulance problem is the fact that 20-minute round trips to Crozer, which was a trauma-level hospital, have been supplanted by hour-long trips to trauma-level hospitals such as Lankenau or Christiana, Paoli, Jefferson or Penn. Patients that need trauma-level care cannot go to Riddle or other local hospitals because they are only for lower-level ER visits. Wait times to discharge (and treat) patients at all these hospitals' emergency departments are also substantially longer because of increased caseloads resulting from the closure of Crozer. An additional complexity is that ambulances are not dispatched according to municipal borders. Even if we enter into an agreement with local municipalities to upgrade Swarthmore Fire Association's EMS to ALS, there is no guarantee that the Swarthmore ambulance will be the one that shows up when residents call 911. Similarly, we can expect the Swarthmore ambulance to be called away to other municipalities when it is the closest one available at the time.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Smith reported that he has not determined if our local Fire Marshal has the power to declare a ban on open-burning, or if the Mayor should do so through his emergency powers with subsequent ratification by Council. Mr. Smith will continue to investigate this matter. It was noted that some people enjoy a small fire in their back yard, sometimes with food and drink, and that only the burning of twigs, sticks, branches or logs is permitted in the Borough; the burning of leaves or trash is prohibited.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Paula W. Healy, Secretary