COUNCIL MEETING

March 12, 2025.

The monthly meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held on March 12, 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 Leonard Busby, 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.

Residents attending the meeting were David Dee, Virginia Gibson, Peter Howell, Jim Kaufman, Jessie King, Larry Kutys, Ron Ploeg, Susan Ploeg, Katie Rubin, Kyle Sperry and Bill Thomas. Gina Gibbs and Jim McGaffin from the Rose Valley Folk, Rod Stanton, Head of School at The School in Rose Valley, Abby and Scott Trimborn from Sackville Mills Lane, and Elizabeth Spencer from the “Swarthmorean” attended as guests.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Sullivan reported that former Mayor Tim Plummer died on March 9 and asked for a moment of silence in his honor. Matt then read from a list of his accomplishments provided to Council, noting he served our nation for 20 years after graduation from West Point Military Academy, was awarded the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star four times, and retired as a Lt. Colonel. He moved to Rose Valley in 1985 and served as Controller for 2 years, Council member for 2 years, President of Council for 11 years, and Mayor for 13 years. He was instrumental in rescuing the Borough Green at the entrance to Old Mill Lane from development; creating the Rose Valley Historic District and getting it listed on the National Register of Historic Places; planning the Traymore Development which greatly expanded the Saul Wildlife Preserve; and installing speed devices on Rose Valley Road. He led patriotic ceremonies on Veterans’ Day, Memorial Day and July 4th, and organized the Annual Fourth of July Parade and Picnic for over 20 years. He was the founding President of the Rose Valley Centennial Foundation and created the Veterans’ Memorial and flagpole along Old Mill Lane. He negotiated the gifting of Thunderbird Lodge to the Foundation as a home for the Rose Valley Museum and raised funds through grants and donations to repair and refurbish the building. He also won the Rose Valley Swimming Pool men’s lap competition for more than 15 years, setting a record of 8,000 pool lengths one summer. We will miss him and are eternally grateful for all his contributions to the Borough.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the February 12, 2025 Council Meeting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Howell, vice president of the Rose Valley Museum Board, reported that the Museum will be open the weekend of March 22 with a new exhibit on the Alice, Charles and Owen Stephens, and that a lecture on the Stephens family will take place on March 23 at 4:00 p.m. at the School in Rose Valley.

Virginia Gibson asked what was going on regarding the School in Rose Valley issues. Head of School Rod Stanton replied that staff parking had ceased at 15 School Lane at the direction of the Borough, and that numerous trees had been marked for removal to clean up the property. Rod indicated he would be happy to work with neighbors to review exactly which trees should and should not be removed.

Abby and Scott Trimborn, who live on the Nether Providence Township side of Sackville Mills Lane, attended the meeting to voice their unhappiness about a long, 10-foot-high wooden fence that was erected shortly after they moved in two years ago by the Rose Valley resident who lives across the street. They encouraged the Borough to adopt a fence ordinance, recognizing that the existing fence would be grandfathered.

ENVIRONMENT & EAC

Mr. Busby distributed a proposed Ordinance for the Ownership of Fowl in Rose Valley Borough and indicated that Section 1 should simply state: “The purpose of this ordinance is to establish guidelines for the ownership and care of Fowl in Rose Valley Borough.” He noted in response to a comment that there is no penalty or enforcement provision in Section 4(a) which states: “Outdoor Fowl must be kept in an Enclosure”, and that neighbors will have no reason to complain if chickens remain within their owners’ yard. Mr. Smith advised that Section 6, Effective Date, must read “This ordinance shall be effective 30 days after enactment by Council and approval by the Mayor”, and said he would take care of adding the required ordinance heading lines and signature blocks. Mr. Busby made a motion to advertise the proposed ordinance as discussed for adoption at the next Council meeting, which was seconded. Further discussion followed about fowl ordinances in other municipalities and the possibility of addressing fowl by revising an existing dog or animal ordinance. It was noted that existing roosters would be grandfathered. Mrs. Harner suggested that an ordinance focused on disturbing noise could be used to address the crowing of existing roosters, but asked that we proceed with the vote. The motion to advertise the fowl ordinance for adoption was approved by a vote of 6 to 1 with Tony Orr voting nay.

Mr. Busby informed Council that EAC member Kathy Siwicki will lead a “Free the Trees” event on April 5 & 6 to rid trees of English ivy, a composting webinar will be held on March 27, and the Annual Native Plant Sale and a Saul Preserve workday will take place on May 10.

INSURANCE & TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Orr reported that Council meetings are now being livestreamed via YouTube. He suggested that the Borough try out a calendar app for the website at a cost of $7 per month. Council agreed that this would be a good idea with Borough officials posting events of local organizations.

LIBRARY

Ms. Mehan reported things at the Library were going well.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Harner reported that a new State Police Community Liaison Officer has been assigned to Rose Valley and that she is trying to arrange an introductory meeting at the Borough Office. The February Police Report listed 3 incidents including a motor vehicle crash involving alcohol, a false alarm, and a disabled motorist. The February Fire Report listed 3 responses including a motor vehicle accident, down power wires, and an automatic fire alarm. Town Watch patrols are proceeding as usual. The Rose Valley Road speed device at the Borough Parking Lot is working once again and typical date was received from both it and the device near Thunderbird Lodge.

The Traymore Homeowners Association’s arborist believes a large poplar tree on Borough property behind 103 Traymore Lane is unsafe, and the HOA has requested that the Borough take it down. The Borough obtained a quote of $3,000 from Carney Tree Co. to remove the tree. Mr. Sullivan requested that 2 other bids be obtained for the work. It was also suggested that some money could be saved by not removing the entire tree. Mr. Busby asked if the Borough was required to remove trees identified as posing a safety hazard or if it was protected from a lawsuit by sovereign immunity. Mr. Smith explained that while the PA Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act does provide broad legal immunity to the Borough, there are specific exceptions where claims may proceed, which can include trees. Council will address this matter next month after obtaining additional quotes.

PLANNING

Ms. Prown reported that a draft of the proposed fence ordinance prepared by Mr. Smith had been distributed. After some discussion, Mr. Sullivan clarified that he had asked that the previous draft based on the simple Nether Providence Township fence ordinance be revised to replace its swimming-pool-fence section with the deer-fence section from the Swarthmore fence ordinance, but that tonight’s draft is basically the complicated Swarthmore ordinance. He asked that the ordinance be re-drafted as he previously requested for consideration for advertising at the next Council Meeting.

Ms. Prown also reported that PECO has confirmed it plans to do the tree work along Rose Valley Road where the walking path will go this spring. She therefore made a motion that Council authorize Engineer Houtmann to advertise for bids for the work on the walking path project where the design is final with an anticipated start date of July or August depending on when PECO completes its power line upgrade work. Mr. Neilson asked if final design meant that the comments or concerns of the affected neighbors had been addressed. Mr. Sullivan replied that we have made requested tweaks to the design plans and have been meeting with neighbors. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

FINANCES

Mr. Bourke reviewed that Status of Funds for February and reported he had reconciled the bank accounts. Mr. Hare went over the Income Report for February. Mr. Neilson reviewed the March Bills for Approval and answered questions. After removing the incorrectly included $3,000 quote from Carney for taking down the tree near 103 Traymore Lane, the Bills for Approval in the amounts of $37,414.80 from the General Fund and $5,450.00 from the Highway Aid Fund for snowplowing and salting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Zoning Hearing Board member Scott Laughlin has his own zoning variance request coming up before the Board on March 20. Shawn Stancill was therefore appointed as an alternate member of the Zoning Hearing Board on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed. Mrs. Healy also noted that large trash pickup will be on May 5th.

MAYOR’S REPORT

Mr. Hale noted that the memorial service for former Mayor Tim Plummer will be at St. John Chrysostom Church on April 12, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

He also reported that the Borough recently received its March payment of State Liquid Fuels Funds in the amount of $30,173 which will allow the Borough to pay back the $30,000 beginning-of-the-year loan from Capital Reserve to the Highway Aid Fund. He also noted that $29,730 was spent over the winter on snowplowing and salting, so things worked out quite well. Mr. Neilson asked about possible snow-related work at the end of the year. Mr. Hale replied that such work would be paid for in January out of next year’s budget.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Mr. Smith movingly shared some remembrances of Tim Plummer saying that the country has lost a great warrior, the Borough a great leader, and that we have all lost a great friend.

Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Smith announced that Council would now enter into Executive Session to discuss a possible appeal of a real estate tax assessment. After returning from Executive Session, Council voted unanimously on a motion duly made and seconded, to appeal the tax-exempt status of the vacant lot at 15 School Lane owned by the School in Rose Valley.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

 Paula W. Healy Secretary