

COUNCIL MEETING

February 12, 2025.

The monthly meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held on February 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. and noted that Council had just met in executive session prior to the meeting to discuss a tax appeal and real estate issues. Other Council members present were Leonard Busby, Joe Hare, Cheryl Harner, Kathryn Meehan, Tony Orr and Shannon Prown. Mayor Bill Hale, Controller John Neilson, Solicitor G. Guy Smith and Secretary Paula Healy were also present. Treasurer Chris Bourke was absent.

Residents attending the meeting were Kelly Caulfield, Aaron Childs, David Dee, Ginny Gibson, Hilary Hughes, Larry Kutys, Rob Laird, Sally Laird, Rich O'Flynn, Teresa O'Flynn, Ron Ploeg, and Kyle Sperry. Gina Gibbs, Jim McGaffin and John Williamson from the Rose Valley Folk, and Amy Caruso from the "Swarthmorean" attended as guests.

MINUTES

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

School Lane residents David Dee, Ginny Gibson, Hilary Hughes, Larry Kutys, Sally Laird, Rob Laird and Kyle Sperry attended to again express their concern about what the School in Rose Valley (SRV) intends to do with the property at 2 Roylencroft Lane which it soon plans to purchase. They said SRV had invited them, and Borough officials if the residents wish to invite them, to attend a meeting on February 18, 2025 to hear their concerns. Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Hale were then invited by residents to attend the meeting. Mr. Hale noted SRV was asked to attend tonight's Council meeting to disclose its intentions regarding the property but did not come. Hilary Hughes said survey work was being done at 2 Roylencroft and that SRV is known to be working on a master plan for the school. David Dee asked if the property could be used for short-term rentals or as an Air B&B. Mr. Hale responded that the Zoning Code only allows long-term rentals for use as a single-family residence. Kyle Sperry noted that SRV said it was not going to discuss its intentions regarding 2 Roylencroft at the upcoming meeting, just listen to residents' concerns. If the residents' concerns are not satisfactorily resolved at this meeting, the residents will ask the Borough to inform SRV that they are no longer to use the vacant 15 School Lane property for staff parking. This property is zoned Residential and Solicitor Smith indicated a parking lot is not a permitted use for a residential property. Mr. Hale noted that if SRV wanted to pursue this use, it would have to request zoning relief.

Kelly Caulfield asked what the status of the rooster ordinance was. Mr. Busby responded that a draft Fowl Ownership ordinance was presented at the December Council meeting and that EAC member Ron Ploeg had volunteered to meet with fowl-owning residents to discuss the ordinance and possible modifications.

Gina Gibbs, Chairperson of the Rose Valley Folk Board of Directors, distributed Rose Valley Folk Financial reports to Council members for the prior fiscal year, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, and for the current fiscal year to date, July 1, 2024 through Jan 31, 2025. Mrs. Gibbs asked that the Rose Valley Folk be permanently exempted from paying the Borough amusement tax after this fiscal year. She said that July and August wedding rentals have markedly declined as summers have gotten hotter while competition from other venues has substantially increased. Folk treasurer Rich O'Flynn said the Folk has many projects it needs to do over the next ten years to maintain the existing property and remain competitive including repairing the roof, replacing the carpet and dance floor, removing the old air raid siren in the tower, re-parging the masonry walls, rebuilding the rear wall of the storage area, and replacing the bridge to the marrying meadow. He noted the Folk tries to maintain at least \$150,000 of reserves in case the building is damaged. In response to questions, he said the Folk is charging more for member events, dues were increased by 20% last year, and that Queen of Hearts, who replaced Donald Connor as the caterer for the Old Mill last year, is working out well.

ENVIRONMENT & EAC

Mr. Busby reported that he is still in the process of working on the Fowl Ownership Ordinance to incorporate input from Ron Ploeg's discussions with fowl-owning residents. Approval to advertise the Ordinance will be considered at the March Council Meeting. He also reported that the deer hunt resulted in the culling of 1 buck and 5 does. The EAC will consider recommending expansion of the hunt next year into the Chadwick Preserve by our one presently approved archer since the deer population in Rose Valley remains out of control. The EAC will sponsor its third annual "Free the Trees" weekend on April 5-6 to remove English ivy from trees. Kathy Siwicki is coordinating this event. The Gardeners of Rose Valley and EAC Annual Plant Sale, chaired by Marge Firn, will be held May 10 at the Old Mill.

HIGHWAYS, INSURANCE & TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Orr reported that a money-saving, Voice-Over-Internet phone system has been installed in the Borough office along with a new scanner. He also obtained table-top microphones, a camera, a refurbished computer, and a YouTube channel for livestreaming future Borough Council meetings.

LIBRARY

Ms. Mehan distributed a report from the Helen Kate Furness Library listing 2024 accomplishments including replacing outdated fixtures with energy-efficient LED lighting, raising \$40,272 through the first-ever Delco Gives Day, raising \$107,434 via the Annual Appeal, launching a Library of Things with over 80 unique and useful items to borrow, offering 319 programs attended by 7,514 people, and performing building repairs. The 2025 Annual Appeal Drive will begin next month, and the Library will participate in the second Delco Gives Day later in the year.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Harner reported that a January Police Report was not received because the Borough's State Police Liaison recently retired. The January Fire Report listed one response to assist EMS. Town watch patrols are proceeding as usual. Typical data was received from the Rose Valley Road speed device near Thunderbird Lodge, but the Borough Parking Lot device is still not working. Cheryl is trying to obtain help from All Traffic Solutions to resolve this problem.

PLANNING

Ms. Prown reported that PECO recently notified the Borough that it intends to start meeting soon with homeowners to discuss tree work that needs to be done in preparation for upgrading the power distribution line along Rose Valley Road. PECO representatives have also scheduled a meeting with Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Hale and Mrs. Healy on February 24 to walk Rose Valley Road along the route of the proposed walking path and discuss the PECO project. Shannon then asked Mr. Hale to discuss some subdivisions and construction easements related to the walking path.

Mr. Hale explained that the Seiders wish to give a small amount of land, where part of the walking path built as an Eagle Scout Project lies within their current residential lot, to the Borough to avoid liability and potential responsibility regarding the path. The Thomases also wish to give the 25-foot-wide municipal right-of-way where the proposed walking path along Rose Valley Road will be located, which is currently part of their residential lot, to the Borough to avoid liability and potential responsibility regarding the path. Both the small Seider parcel and the Thomas right-of-way parcel will be incorporated into the adjacent Borough-owned Pew Park property. Mr. Hale therefore asked that Council authorize the Borough Engineer to prepare one subdivision plan for the conveyance of a small amount of land from the Seiders to the Borough to become part of Pew Park, and a second subdivision plan for the conveyance of the 25-foot-wide municipal right-of-way from the Thomases to the Borough to become part of Pew Park. Mrs. Prown made a motion that the G.D. Houtman & Son be directed by Council to prepare these two subdivision plans, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Mr. Hale also asked Council to approve the Borough entering into temporary construction easements with the Seiders and the Thomases on their residential lots to enable the safe construction of the walking path on the adjacent Borough property and the removal of trees, regrading, and the installation of landscaping in the construction easement areas. The construction easement on the Seider property will be approximately 70 feet wide by 75 feet deep to allow tree-work and construction equipment to safely access the work area on both properties via the Seider's driveway instead of from Rose Valley Road, and to serve as a staging area. The area will be re-landscaped or re-seeded following construction and the Seider's driveway within the easement will be repaved. The construction easement on the Thomases property will be approximately 15 feet wide and 275 feet long. A new hedge replacing the one removed for construction of the walking path will be planted within the construction easement. Mr. Hare made a motion that the Council approve the Borough entering into these two temporary construction easements, which was seconded and unanimously approved.

Kelly Caulfield asked if the walking path along Rose Valley Road is a sidewalk, and if so, why we don't just call it a sidewalk. Mr. Hale responded that it will be a macadam sidewalk but that

our Delaware County grants from the Green Ways Municipal Grant Program are for the construction of a “trail”. We have been calling it a walking path because “sidewalk” suggests concrete while “trail” implies a natural surface. Rob Laird asked if the walking path would increase the Borough’s liability. Mr. Smith responded that the PA Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act will protect the Borough from liability. Teresa O’Flynn asked if the Borough’s liability insurance would have to be increased. Mr. Smith replied that it would not.

FINANCES

Mr. Hare reviewed the January 31, 2025 Status of Funds and went over the January Income Report. Mr. Neilson reviewed the February Bills for Approval and answered questions. The Bills for Approval in the amounts of \$42,796.09 from the General Fund and \$11,005.00 from the Highway Aid Fund for snowplowing and salting were approved on a motion made by Mrs. Prown, seconded and unanimously passed. Council will take under consideration the request of the Rose Valley Folk to be permanently exempted from paying the Borough amusement tax.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Mr. Smith’s February Solicitor’s Report noted that when Council announces an executive session, the reason stated must be of sufficient specificity to inform the public. The Fence Ordinance was tabled until the March Council meeting.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Paula W. Healy, Secretary