COUNCIL MEETING

May 13, 2015

The regular meeting of the Rose Valley Borough Council was held in the Borough Office, 9 Old Mill Lane, Rose Valley, Pa. on May 13, 2015. President of Council Bill Hale called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were: Bob Giorgianni, Al Meyer, Stephanie Middleton, Penny Sass and Bob Siwicki; Mayor Tim Plummer; Controller Cheryl Haze Luehrs; Treasurer Jennifer Rimerman; Solicitor G. Guy Smith and Secretary Paula Healy.

Councilman Dave Firn was absent.

Residents attending the meeting were: Holly Baker, John Best, Elizabeth and Wayne Brown, Maria Luisa Guardiola, John Innelli and Mandy Veil.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Minutes of the April 8, 2015 Council meeting were approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

The residents’ purpose for attending the Council Meeting was to voice their objections to the new Delcora billing format. John Innelli spoke for the group. They are very unhappy that Delcora switched from basing the sewer bill primarily on water usage to flat fee billing. All of the attendees have one or two person households with correspondingly low water usage. Their sewer bills have consequently increased under the flat rate system. Mr. Smith explained that the Borough transferred ownership of its sewage collection and processing system to Delcora because it was keenly aware that it could soon lose its permit to operate the sewer plant off Long Point Lane. If that occurred, it would have been prohibitively expensive to bring the plant up to modern standards and the Borough would have nowhere to send its sewage. The Borough's only viable option was to transfer the system to Delcora, a not-for-profit sewer authority, who was required to accept the system by its mandate.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has now told Delcora that their permit to operate the Rose Valley sewage disposal plant is not going to be renewed. Delcora will therefore have to close the plant and construct a pipeline to pump the sewage to Delcora's plant on the Delaware River in Chester. This plant has spare capacity to accept the sewage from the Rose Valley system, and Delcora has the engineering and construction expertise to design and build the necessary pipeline and the ability to borrow money cheaply. Delcora will be able to carry out this work at much less cost than the Borough ever could have. As a result of this project however, most of the cost in future sewer bills will be fixed costs associated with financing this capital intensive project, and not variable cost associated with water usage. Delcora has therefore decided to alter its billing methodology in anticipation of this upcoming project.

PLANNING

Ms. Middleton had nothing to report on planning.
HIGHWAYS

Mr. Meyer reported that Engineer Matt Houtmann had prepared the bid specification and estimates for the 2015 Borough road work. Mr. Houtmann’s estimated cost for milling and repaving Locust Lane, and doing assorted patching on other Borough roads was $57,690.00

Mr. Smith asked that Mr. Houtmann include the following in the bid specification: The Contractor is required to have liability insurance which indemnifies the Borough as a named third party insured and the insurance carrier shall issue a certificate of insurance to the Borough before the work begins. Such insurance shall be in a minimum amount to be determined by Mr. Houtmann.

On a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, Council approved the bid specification with the above addition and granted permission for Mr. Houtmann to advertise the bid.

ENVIRONMENT & EAC

Mr. Firn submitted the following report:

There is a public forum on Wednesday, May 27, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Wallingford Elementary School regarding the Recreation, Parks and Open Space project for which Rose Valley, Swarthmore, Rutledge and Nether Providence received grant monies. It is very important for people to make their views known to the study team and it would be great if Rose Valley was well represented.

The Invasive Workshop/Native Plant Sale was held as scheduled on April 18. We had about 15 volunteers between weed-pullers and those manning the sale tables. Major targets were English Ivy, multiflora rose and garlic mustard. Multiple contractor bags of invasive plants were removed from the Sanctuary during the workshop and 5 volunteers recently returned to remove several more bags worth of garlic mustard. For whatever reason, this is a particularly prolific year for garlic mustard as many may have noticed in their gardens. We will continue to pull garlic mustard from the Sanctuary – if anyone is interested in helping, please contact Dave Firn or Roger Latham. On the sales side, we sold over $800 in plants, which still left many plants to be planted in the Sanctuary. Our cost for all the plants was $600. The difference brings the EAC’s “surplus” to date to about $1300, which can be used for future EAC projects.

LIBRARY

Mrs. Sass reported that the Library’s financial committee was working hard. The elevator is in need of some repair due to water leakage. A camera for the second floor has been installed. The May Fair held on May 9 netted $6,900. The membership drive has begun and hopes are that contributions will increase from last year. Jen Stock is conducting focus groups with various members. A donation has been made to the Castellan Endowment Fund from Kevin Castellan. On May 14 there is going to be a book sale of one bag of books for $1.00, which is a great deal.
PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Giorgianni reported that the Borough did not receive a Police Report for April. The Fire Report cited no incidents for April. Town Watch Appreciation Night held on April 21 went well. It was attended by about 40 Town Watchers. Mr. Giorgianni expressed his thanks to all who helped to make the event a success. The Town Watch Program is in need of a base station operator. This led to a discussion of transitioning completely to cell phones rather than the radios to call into the base station or directly to the police.

The speed device is up and running.

FINANCES

Ms. Haze Luehrs reviewed the income reports and the Status of Funds for the month of April. The income is very healthy due to the influx of Borough real estate taxes. The Highway Aid Fund also received a Liquid Fuels payment of $23,456.08 from PennDOT. Mr. Vaughan is going to begin developing the last 5 units in Traymore on the former Belson property this summer. Ms. Rimerman reviewed the Bills for Approval for May and answered questions. On a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the Bills in the amount of $27,310.45 were approved.

GENERAL

Mr. Hale met with tree surgeon, Jim Carney. Mr. Carney assessed the trees surrounding the Borough Parking lot and will trim back limbs overhanging the parking area. The work will have to be coordinated with residents so they can remove their vehicles from work areas.

Mrs. Healy received a suggestion from a Locust Lane resident that Aqua PA replace the water main in the street before the road repaving is done. She called Aqua PA who indicated they had no plans to replace the water line. According to their records, the Locust Lane water pipe had not had a leak since 2003. The Borough will therefore go ahead with repaving Locust Lane.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Mr. Smith addressed the use of the 12 Chestnut Lane property which is for sale. This property is one of the several properties grandfathered to allow apartments even though they are zoned for single family occupancy. The property has been used for many years as a family residence with two apartments, for a total of three units. One of the apartments has been vacant for an extended period of time. Because of this, a neighbor would like the permitted use to change to a family residence with one apartment. Mr. Smith has sent a letter to the neighbor explaining that Delaware County courts have ruled on numerous occasions that the abandonment of a non-conforming use requires not only the abandonment of a use, but also the intent to abandon that use, often requiring proof that the use of a unit has been converted to something different.

Mr. Smith also reported on the status of the Kauffman reassessment case.
MAYOR'S REPORT

Mr. Plummer reported that he has 8 new residents to visit and welcome to the neighborhood.

Mr. Plummer also discussed two topics regarding the property at 41 W. Rose Valley Road known as Thunderbird Lodge. First, a request has been made to have a State historical marker honoring Mildred Scott Olmsted installed on this property, her former home. Mildred achieved national recognition in the causes of social justice, racial equality, women's rights, planned parenthood, social work and the international peace movement, serving as the United States Director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom from 1922 to 1966. This request was approved on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed.

Secondly, Mr. Plummer informed Council that the Olmsted family has moved out of Thunderbird Lodge and that the Trustees under the Will of Mildred Scott Olmsted are now looking for a suitable non-profit or municipal entity to accept a gift of the property and maintain it as an historic landmark in perpetuity. The Rose Valley Centennial Foundation, a 501.c.3 non-profit entity, is exploring the possibility of serving as the gift recipient. If discussions proceed in a positive direction, the RVCF plans to ask the Borough to agree to take over ownership of the property and its preservation as a historic landmark should the RVCF cease to exist. Mr. Smith indicated that maintaining the property as a historic landmark would essentially require ensuring that the building not be torn down. It was also noted that municipalities are often designated as the recipient of an organization's property should it go out of business. For example, the Borough has been designated to take over the property of the Rose Valley Folk, Hedgerow Theatre and Rose Valley Swimming Pool should they cease to exist.

There being no further business, on a motion made, seconded and unanimously passed, the meeting adjourned at 10:14 pm.

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Paula Healy, Secretary