

## **Draft Minutes for the Rose Valley EAC MEETING of January 28, 2025**

### **Attendance:**

EAC Voting members: Katie Rubin, acting Chair; Kathy Siwicki; Ron Ploeg; Olivia Nnadi

Associate Members: Dave Firm

Other attendees: Bill Hale, Mayor; Marya Bradley.

### **Call to Order:**

Katie called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

### **New EAC voting member**

Katie acknowledged Kathy Siwicki as the newest voting member of the EAC.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ron moved and Kathy seconded that the minutes of for EAC meeting of November 26, 2024. Be approved.

### **Update on Community Choice Aggregation**

Ron updated the group on the status of the EAC's exploration of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) as a potential source of electricity for Rose Valley. CCA is a way for municipalities to negotiate renewable electricity for their residents. Approximately six boroughs (including Swarthmore) have signed MOUs indicating interest in participating in the CCA for PA project. The project currently is being reviewed by an administrative court. A decision by the court should be available by the end of February. If the court decision is favorable, the EAC can

discuss whether or not to pose specific questions to CCA for PA representatives, including those about how effective the CCA is in increasing green energy sourcing, then decide whether to recommend participation by Rose Valley. Ron's son, John Ploeg, is an expert in sustainable energy sourcing and has offered to be a resource for the EAC through this process.

### **Update on Pew Park collaboration with Rose Valley Gardeners**

Katie reported on her meeting with Kim Olson and Cheryl Hayes of the Rose Valley Gardeners in December. They discussed a collaboration between Rose Valley Gardeners and the Borough at Pew Park with the goal of using the landscaping there to better manage storm water runoff. Cheryl and Kim offered to use their experience maintaining that space to identify areas that receive the greatest amount of run-off from the surrounding streets. They also discussed making sure the ongoing management of Pew Park is performed in a way that minimizes environmental impact – no more fertilizer, reducing non-native turf grass, and increasing the use of beneficial native plant species.

Katie further reported that the EAC has received \$1,250 in the 2025 budget to hire a designer who specializes in planning green space to reduce water runoff to help plan this project. Matt Houtman, the Borough engineer, will be sending Katie the names of landscapers who do this type of work to include in our pursuit of bids. Matt Houtman also said that this project will likely count toward meeting our current 5 year Pollution Reduction Plan requirement. He will contact the DEP to confirm that this project would qualify before we begin work on it.

Dave Firm reported that a Pollution Reduction Plan project of some form must take place by the end of February 2027 to satisfy our current MS4 requirement. Options include stream bank stabilization on Vernon run at either the Old Mill or near the Rose Valley Pool, or perhaps the project at Pew Park. He recommended having plans in place this year so that we can begin work in late winter/early spring 2026 before the plant material sets its buds. Mayor Bill Hale reminded the group that roughly \$17,000 is available from the Monsanto settlement for MS4 compliance projects.

### **Stroud Water Research Center “Cut the Salt” week**

Katie reported that the current week of Jan 27, 2025 is Winter Salt Awareness Week - a collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States and Canada including the Stroud Water Research Center with goal of raising awareness around salt pollution and reduction solutions. Winter salt use damages infrastructure and person property and threatens the health of lakes, streams, and drinking water. Once in the water cycle, it is extremely difficult to remove - plants cannot absorb and filter it, and it is not removed by typical water purification. It is estimated that 1 teaspoon of salt permanently pollutes 5 gallons of water. Anyone else who wants to learn more can visit [wintersaltweek.org](http://wintersaltweek.org).

Katie will make create a flier with recommendations for proper salt use based on information being shared through Winter Salt Week. So far, the recommendations focus on reducing over-all salt use, using a material that offers traction under 10 degrees Fahrenheit when salt no longer creates melting, and sweeping up whatever material you use once ice is gone. Katie will bring

additional information to the next EAC meeting on actions that can be taken at the municipal level.

### **Review tentative dates for EAC-related events in 2025**

The following dates were selected for upcoming EAC activities:

- February or March - an educational event, topic TBD.
- Mid to late April - Leaf Packs will come out of the stream. Katie will invite members of the public to participate, but we will not involve Stroud until the Fall.
- April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Free the Trees Weekend.
- May 10<sup>th</sup> - The Native Plant Sale.
- May 17<sup>th</sup> - workday and tree planting in Chadwick led by Friends of the Preserves
- Another date in May will hopefully be found for a work day in Saul.
- October, specific date TBD – we discussed an event to educate the public on the ecological benefits of bats
- November, specific date TBD – a fall Leaf Pack event with Stroud.

### **Plans for Free the Trees 2025**

Kathy Siwicki reported on her plans so far for Free the Trees Weekend. Last year, volunteer groups from across the Borough “freed” 150 trees of English Ivy. They will repeat the process of tagging target trees ahead of that weekend in order to keep track of how many are freed and where. Kathy will try to replicated having neighborhood captains and engage the Borough’s institutions (Pool, Theater, School, etc...) on localized projects. April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> were selected so that other trees have not yet started leafing out and obscuring the ivy leaves.

### **Planned work days in Saul and Chadwick preserve**

Katie delivered a report from Jim Audley on planned work days for the spring. Jim is planning a work day for each of the preserves, Saul and Chadwick, in both the Spring and the Fall.

Currently, the plan for the spring work day in Saul would include removal of Garlic Mustard and other invasive plants, trail grooming, and side clearance clean-up. The plans for Chadwick include removal of garlic mustard, switchback maintenance, and the planting of 56 trees Jim ordered through a tree giveaway by PA Interfaith Power and Light. May 17<sup>th</sup> was selected for the work in Chadwick. We are still working with the Folk to find a day that works for a Saul work day.

### **Update on Rose Valley Gardeners Native Plant Sale**

Katie reported that Marge Firn has secured May 10<sup>th</sup> for the Plant Sale at the Old Mill. She has ordered the plants and will be recruiting volunteers in April for volunteers. Ron reported that he still has Mosquito Dunks from last year that we can sell. Dave Firn has potted some bare root perennials and will donate the ones that have thrived to the sale. Olivia brought the suggestion of printing large photos of the plants on offer in bloom, as well as some sample garden layouts using native plants. Olivia and Katie will look at resources they've found online that offer such layouts.

### **Discussion of EAC Goals and Priorities for 2025**

The group had an open-forum conversation about our goals and priorities for 2025. The following were identified as topics that either held the most significance to the Borough, were

the most urgent environmentally, and/or that the group felt our Borough was best-able to make a difference in.

- Our water ways and preserves – care and ongoing maintenance
- Encourage residents to view their properties as habitats that are part of a larger ecosystem, a wider community of all living things and provide residents with resources to manage their properties accordingly. We discussed making sure residents knew about and could access the information and resources on this topic that are on the EAC website.
- Explore ways to develop an Ecological History of Rose Valley, example: who are our trees?
- Continue to educate the public about chemical-free Mosquito management
- Educate the public on the environmental dangers of Leaf Blowing
- Educate the public on ways to support Dark Skies with better nighttime lighting choices.

### **Identify EAC Community Outreach and Education initiatives for 2025**

The group had an open-forum conversation about education events that could support the above goals.

- Eco friendly property management
- Composting
- A fall Leaf Pack event with Stroud Water Research Center
- A Bat education event – Mosquito management and creating habitat on our properties.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55pm.