The regular monthly meeting of the Town Council of the Borough of East Rochester was held Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Lacock Housing Association, East Rochester, Pa.

PRESENT: Joyce Gordon, Kendra Hill, Jim Simon, Joe Seminick, and Mayor Bob Knox.

ALSO PRESENT: Solicitor Paul Steff, Chief Frank Mercier, and Engineer Jeff Frye.
Code Enforcement Officer entered the meeting at 7:05, also present maintenance worker Sam Landis, and tax collector Debra Ahern

ABSENT: Cathy Hutsky

CITIZENS: Abigail & Tony Pieta of International Webmaster explained that the East Rochester website was down for a while because someone tried to hack into the system. They have moved to Bluehost.com which is a very secure company. They explained that our webhost is good through December 2018 and then need renewed for 1-2 or 3 years. They explained that they can put anything on the website that council wants, they will provide training, we can email documents to then and they will upload for us. If council wants changes on the website, discuss it and let them know. The agenda for this meeting was not on the website, because they didn't have it in time, but if that's what council wants in the future they will do that. They would be taking pictures of the group that evening to put on the website on the gallery, they asked that council check the contact section to make sure all the info is correct. Joyce Gordon asked if the Secretary would be trained to make changes – Abigail said the Secretary can upload documents and make changes, but not make changes to the design of the website. President Gordon asked Council would they be interested in having the Secretary trained to maintain the website, Council agreed that it would be a good idea. President Gordon asked the Secretary if she would be interested in the training, and the Secretary agreed to be trained. Tony Pieta recommended that if we do take over part of the website that we do it the same as they have been, so that it cannot be altered. President Gordon thanked them for their presentation and said council would think things over and get back to them with their decision.
Rick Krepps approached council with concerns he is having with Rochester Township. Mr. Krepps has questions with parcel location whether they are in Rochester Township or East Rochester Borough. Mr. Krepps stated he paid taxes for years to East Rochester Borough, but Rochester Township is claiming they own the property. The property is vacant land 1122 Pentland Avenue. Mr. Krepps said he put a trailer on the property to store equipment in but wasn't sure which municipality to pay the zoning fee to. Code Enforcement Office Clay explained to Mr. Krepps that it would be whichever parcels the trailer is sitting on – that would be the municipality that would get the money. Mr. Krepps said Rochester Twp. told him they "took over" the side he always believed was owned by East Rochester Borough. East Rochester Council explained to Mr. Krepps that municipalities can't just take properties, and the Borough line hasn't changed. It was explained to Mr. Krepps that his tax bills will show him his tax parcel #'s and to which municipality he pays his taxes. Mr. Krepps said he was cited by Rochester Twp. For code violation for the property he believes is in East Rochester Borough. Code Enforcement Office Clay said he will reach out to Mr. Pella (code enforcement office for Rochester Twp.) to see if they can't get this resolved. Solicitor Steff spoke to the matter telling Mr. Krepps he is certain there's been no change to the border of East Rochester Borough. He asked Mr. Krepps if he has legal council. Mr. Krepps asked if his tax bills say East Rochester does he need a lawyer. Mr. Steff said yes – this situation cannot be solved at this council meeting. Solicitor Steff went on to explain to Mr. Krepps that if Rochester Township is charging him with some type of zoning violation, they are only allowed to charge within their municipality, and Mr. Krepps is claiming they don't have jurisdiction over the property in East Rochester. Code Enforcement Office Clay asked Mr. Krepps about him putting a modular home on those parcels at one time – Mr. Krepps said he's being told now they are non-building lots. Code Enforcement Office Clay stated to Mr. Krepps he remembers a conversation about assembling the 5 lots and to comply with our zoning regulations to do that. Code Enforcement Officer Clay stated that once again it doesn't change the Borough line – it'll still be part in Rochester Twp. and part in East Rochester Borough. Mr. Krepps stated that the citation from the Township was no longer an issue because he cleaned the area in question – even though it was East Rochester not Rochester Twp. property. Solicitor Steff reiterated for Mr. Krepps to seek council if the wrong municipality is citing him illegally.
John Barrett – Rochester Borough Manager presented a Parks Program to council. The three Rochester's are in the beginning stages of a new project and Manager Barrett presented to East Rochester council the information. There are the 3 parks and sometime ago the Rochester VFW approached Rochester Borough about redoing the War Memorial that is located in the one park. Council agreed to let them look into it and it's escalated into a whole "parks project". They are relocating the war memorial to one of the other parks and reconstructing the current war memorial park into a history center. The 3rd park had an old fountain in it that no longer works, they're going to install a new fountain. There will be new walkways, benches and new lighting throughout the parks.

They're making it a Rochester Area project, because all the Veterans that are on the memorial are from the whole Rochester are, not just Rochester Borough. The history center will have history about all three communities. They've developed committees: Executive Committee – to oversee the entire project – then sub committees – a committee for each park to keep things focused to see things move forward: A fountain park committee / A war memorial park committee / A history park committee They would like to have a representative from all 3 Rochester governing bodies to go on the Executive Committee and are asking for volunteers for any other committees. They broke the committees up so if people had special interests they could volunteer for what interest them. The estimated budget for the project is $572,000. Manager Barrett explained that they got almost $200,000 from a state grant, they're going to apply for $150,000 community development grant, there's $40,000 in a bank account, The Rochester VFW pledged $25,000, they've received $15,000 in donations, and Rochester council is looking to give $10,000 which totals $700,000. That leaves a shortfall of $172,000. The committee will then put together plans for fundraisers – eventually put together a fundraiser committee. The executive committee will be looking for volunteers from the other communities along with monetary donations. Rochester Borough is committing to $10,000 – they don't expect that type of commitment, but anything would be greatly appreciated as a way of support to the project. They have a separate bank account set up and all monies will be kept separate. Ed Hancock will be the architect. The project is still in the design phase. The final budget will be determined after the final design from Hancock is done. A big dedication will be planned later next year, they will closed the roundabout so people can go from park to park and everyone who donated and volunteered will be part of the celebration. Mayor Knox will be East Rochester's Executive representative.

Mr. & Mrs. Fuller and Mike Tooch – residents from 8th Street. Mr. Fuller started with a few questions for council…stated he was not happy – he pays his taxes – maintains his property but suddenly he's not happy with how things are being maintained in East Rochester. He wondered who all of a sudden made the decision to stop plowing snow on 8th Street. Mr. Tooch – his neighbor resident for 14 years – Fullers – residents for 3 years, road plowed all along until this years – no notice – just stopped – they are not happy and they want to know why? Mr. Fuller realizes the Road maintenance worker only does what he is told, and the residents are being told (now) that 8th Street is private. Mr. & Mrs. Fuller and Mr. Tooch are at this meeting to find out who made the decision to made this a private drive and who decided to not plow 8th anymore. Mrs. Fuller stated that due to facts from PennDot they could not legally take possession of a public road. Mrs. Fuller informed council that many residents use 8th Street for parking. President Gordon asked Mrs. Fuller why that is Mrs. Fuller said she didn't know why, but it was completely packed with cars all the time. The Fullers were confused why the East side of 8th was being plowed. Mrs. Fuller stated there are children on 8th Street with illnesses and they needed to be aware the Borough was no longer going to maintain their street. Mrs. Fuller also stated she cannot find evidence of when 8th Street became a private drive & it is listed with PennDot .03 miles & .05 and when the Borough get Liquid Fuels money to help 3.31 - she wants to make sure it's handled correctly, because if it's not, it would have to be paid back. The Fullers don't want to shut their street off (the neighbors heard about it and are upset, because they park on it so much). They would like to have it attached to their deeds. They want to take the street light and stop sign down if it truly is private, and do it legally.

It was explained that if a road is to be released to the residents there is a process, the engineer explained to make it private, all property owners have to agree to make it private within the plan. Mr. Tooch stated his father-in-law put the road in. The engineer said the evidence of that would have been in the plan documents. Mrs. Fuller wanted to know how the street light and the stop sign got put in that were paid for with tax payer's money. Council members said that could have been done by a former council member as a courtesy. Mrs. Fuller objected to that. Solicitor Steff spoke to the subject and stated that many of the things Mr. & Mrs. Fuller are referring to about their feed and this situation – he reminded them that a deed is a point of reference – things on a deed are markers, things change after deeds are recorded that are not going to be on your deed. The issue for this discussion is maintenance – that's why the Fuller's & Mr. Tooch are at this meeting – because the question is what changed – or when did the road become private??? Nothing changed – it's the same today as it was years ago – there was never action on that street – so why The Fuller's and Mr. Tooch are at the meeting are maintenance. Mr. & Mrs. Fuller and Mr. Tooch want 8th Street plowed.

Recorded plan of lots – there is a dedication to public use – that alone does not make it a Borough Street that is a dedication for public use that give all the people in the plan and the public ingress and egress over a street. If a street is put in up to Borough specs, and that is something that has to be done, all specs are met, dedication for public use – but when it becomes a Borough Street is when the official act of acceptance of it and that's done by an ordinance – you accept a street by ordinance & you vacate a street by ordinance. Solicitor Steff stated he has not had that happen since he's been solicitor here in East Rochester Borough since 2008, no official action of any sort by way of an ordinance. He went on to say the Fullers cannot block 8th Street. Mrs. Fuller again wanted to know who decided to stop plowing 8th Street. More discussion from the Fullers about taking down the street light and stop sign, the Solicitor re-iterated they could not alter the use of a public road/street. After much discussion Jim Simon made the decision as head of the street department committee to have the road maintenance worker start to plow 8th Street until further notice.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: A Motion was made by Kendra Hill to accept the minutes and seconded by Jim Simon. By way of roll call vote, all in favor. Motion carried.

COMMUNICATIONS: The Secretary reported receiving copies of Rochester Area Joint Sewer Authority's minutes of their December 14, 2017 and Reorganization and regular meetings on January 11, 2018. The Secretary had a copy of an email in each council persons folder from Mark Skosnik from Duquesne Light regarding the refund of $2,292.48 for the lights on route 65 that were our for 12 months. The secretary requested to change from COGO's to Martino's for fuel to save on fuel costs and late fee charges from COGO's. A motion was made by Jim Simon and seconded by Joe Seminick to change where fuel is purchased.

MAYOR and POLICE: Mayor Bob Knox presented the police report for February. There were fifty-nine total calls, four retail theft, one disorderly conduct and twelve vehicle citations. He also thanked Chief Mercier for taking him on a tour of the Rochester Borough Building. Chief Mercier told all of Council to come for a tour anytime. Mayor Knox mentioned that when it snows Railroad Street needs plowed and it's a public safety issue if it's not being done. President Gordon asked if Valvoline plowed the area, and Mayor Knox said they only plow inside their gates. Chief Mercier spoke up and said Rochester Borough plows to Beaver Concrete then East Rochester should start from there and go to Valvoline. It's East Rochester's responsibility from Beaver Concrete to Valvoline. President Gordon told the maintenance worker to begin plowing that area going forward, he said he already is. Motion was made to accept February's police report by Joe Seminick and seconded by Kendra Hill.

STREETS & SEWERS: Nothing to report. President Gordon made Jim Simon chairman of streets and sewers and Joe Seminick co-chairman. Sam Landis mentioned the army truck is out of inspection, that he put 2 ball joints in – the truck has no lights. Jim Simon asked if Sam check the switch for the lights. Jim Simon told Sam it would be discussed later.

BUILDING PERMITS: Code Enforcement Officer, John Clay reported 2 complaints about snow plowing that had already been discussed and resolved earlier in the evening, he had 6 zoning inquires, and -0- building permits issued in February.

FINANCE & BUDGET: The President reported the Schedule of Bills presented to each councilperson totaled $32,990.34 for the month. .

TAX REPORT: The Secretary reported $665.50 in taxes collected in January 2018 and the tax collector's commission is $33.28. Jim Simon made a motion to approve the bills and to approve the tax collector's report and commission. It was seconded by Kendra Hill.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Nothing to report. Mayor Knox asked Mr. Simon if he could talk to the other members of the fire department – Mayor Knox had a discussion with Chief Mercier and it was discussed that maybe the fire department would consider donating 1 or 2 of their big generators to East Rochester to be kept at the Rochester Police Department for when the lights in East Rochester go out like they have in the past. Mayor Knox stated that this is a safety issue that would be appreciated if the department would take under consideration. Jim Simon said he would take it back to the department for discussion.

SOLICITOR, ORDINANCE & LITIGATION: Solicitor Paul Steff had nothing to report. He then mentioned that he will be getting with the tax collector after the meeting because he has information on the bond and that has to be turned in and squared away. President Gordon asked if the issue on the bond was the dividing of the cost. The solicitor explained that in the renewal of the bond the company wanted some information and the Solicitor had the old file with all the information the new collector needed to complete the necessary forms.

BOROUGH ENGINEERING: Jeff Frye told Council he received plans for the RAJSA project from Lennon, Smith & Souleret – he will review.

Jeff Frye told Council there had been some issues at the pump station in February with a blown fuse and a blockage and Reno Brothers had to be called in – but things seem to be working now.

Jeff Frye said the applications for the CDGB grant preliminary paperwork are due on February 16th – Council needs to decide tonight and make a motion which area's to apply for. Jim Simon made a motion to apply for Atlas Ave., Pine Ave. & Landell Street. Kendra Hill seconded the motion.

RECREATION: Cathy Hutsky was absent from the meeting. President Gordon named Cathy Hutsky chairperson of recreation committee, Kendra Hill as co-chair.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Code Enforcement Officer Clay asked if Council would have any interest in having local businesses pay to advertise on our website. It could generate some revenue – anywhere from $25.00 yearly. President Gordon asked Mr. Clay who would be the person from the Borough that would be responsible to interact with the businesses and he said he could do that. A motion was made by Kendra Hill. Jim Simon seconded the motion.

A motion to adjourn was made by Kendra Hill and seconded by Jim Simon. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Mohrbacher, Borough Secretary