



Ridley Park Borough Council  
Regular Council Meeting  
December 19, 2023

CDBG Hearing-

Engineer stated that there are projects within the Borough eligible for the grant, but there are only certain areas that are zoned for these grants. The purpose of this meeting is to speak about projects that can be submitted for these grants. We can choose one primary project and a secondary project. Engineer Catania stated that the sanitary sewers need updating, and the Rosemont Ave. foot bridge. We have two eligible options Rosemont Sewer Ave. project and the Rosemont Ave. foot bridge that goes over the Amtrak tracks.

Public Comment-

Eileen Somers- 21 W. Hinckley asks that the main project be the Rosemont Ave. bridge.

Mike Gale 51 Collier – Says that the bridge should be first for the kids.

Mike Dougherty 315 Burke-

Are these the only two options? Engineer stated that these are what is recommended.

MaryPat King 309 Johnson Ave.- stated that the bridge is the best project. She asked for clarification on the sewer project. Mr. Catania stated that the sewers are old, and the joints are starting to fail. These are only used for residential waste. There is also people who place their sump pumps into the sewer causing more flow.

Jim 448 Hillside Road- What is the cost of leaving the sewer? If its more than the bridge?

Helene Harris- Lindsay Ave. How much is the grant?

Bob Berger 104 W. Sellers Ave.- as the CDCA representative, he suggests doing the sewer project. 85% of the costs to CDCA are fixed costs. There is about 15% that we can control, which is our flow. There are about 8-10 meters within the Borough. This in a major way impacts the community. It makes sense to use grant money to fix this issue.

CDBG hearing closed.



Ridley Park Borough Council  
Regular Council Meeting  
December 19, 2023

**Welcome**

An executive session will be held after this meeting regarding a settlement on Prospect Medical Holdings (Taylor Hospital).

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call**

Councilor Michelle Stock Mattus	Present
Councilor Michelle Endriss Dalessio	Present
Councilor Kim Collins	Present
Councilor Michael McGinley	Present
Councilor Len Pinto	Present
Council Vice President-Richard Guerra	Present
Mayor Hank Eberle	Present
Council President Dane Collins	Present

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Hank read a letter from Ridley Township about an incident on 12/01/2023. Police Officers Quinlan and Currie were honored for their police work. A Ridley Park resident's car was stolen; the officers retrieved the vehicle.

Mayor Hank honored Chief Frazer and presented an award for his retirement after 28 years. He spoke about how they started around the same time 28 years ago. Chief Frazier was the first officer to implement a two-officer schedule. He also was vital when we saw influxes of people at the train stations, especially during the 2017 Super Bowl Championship.

Junior Councilor Christopher Capozzoli

Christmas Light Winner 2023- The Parks and Recreation Board presented the winners for the house decorating contest.

The winners are:

1<sup>st</sup> Place- 412 Harrison Street

2<sup>nd</sup> Place- 10 W. Ward

3<sup>rd</sup> Place- 337 Nicholson Road

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Planning and Zoning (Councilor Len Pinto)**

- Planning Commission-Did not meet.
- Zoning Hearing Board- Did not meet.
- Code Enforcement- See attached report.
- HARB-Motion to approve 2023-32 East Ridley Ave. Pillar Repairs is on the agenda.
  - o New application for a like for like replacement which does not require a HARB review. All applicants are required to submit applications the Friday prior to the meeting. In the past we have accepted applications the day of or the day before the meeting.

Maker of the motion M. Mattus

Second M. Dalessio

Passed 7/0

#### **Communications (Councilor Michelle Stock Mattus)**

Councilor Mattus stated that this was her last meeting, and it has been a great experience. She still plans to serve on HARB. She thanked her counterparts for serving with her.

Library report is on file.

In the interest of time, this report will not be given.

#### **Parks and Properties/ Trash and Recycling (Councilor Michael McGinley)**

- Highway Department
  - o Leaves are still being collected. Make sure leaves are placed at the curb, and try to park away from the leaf piles, so collection can be easier.
- Trash and Recycling
  - o Thank you to J.P. Mascaro, coming 2024 we are taking on a new trash company, Opendeker. We are asking for patience with this new company. They are learning a new town and collection route.
  - o There is way too much recycling that is being placed in with trash. Please make sure that all of this goes in recycling. It's costing the Borough more in tonnage.
- Parks and Properties

Maker of the motion L. Pinto

Second K. Collins

Passed 7/0

### **Community Affairs (Councilor Kim Collins)**

**Thank you to everyone who helped with community affairs.**

- School Board
- Recreation Board
  - o Reviewed some events over 2023: there were community events for adults, children, and young people. The Board also teamed up with the library on events.
- Barnstormers
  - o Have put on great shows this year from various genres.
- Main Streets of Ridley Park

Maker of the motion M. McGinley

Second M. Dalessio

Passed

### **Community Organization (Council President Dane Collins)**

- Seniors- No meeting
- RPAC- D. Collins invited Bob Berger, President of RPAC to the floor to speak on the 2023 Ridley Park Athletic Club season.
  - o The Cheerleaders just finished up a great season. They have 550 members.
  - o He is looking for a guest speaker for their RPAC awards banquet.
  - o All 5 cheerleading teams took first place at this final event.
  - o There is a food collection bin (Parker Pantry) for those families that are in need. This is your opportunity to donate cans and nonperishable goods.
- Shade Tree- No meeting
- RPBA D. Collins invited PJ Dolan up from the RPBA
  - o They reformed the RPBA this year. They meet the first Monday of month.
  - o They worked with the Borough on the new parking meters, the town clock, the bridge updates, beautification downtown, the outdoor dining ordinance.
  - o This is currently only open to Brick and Mortar businesses in Ridley Park.
  - o PJ wanted to thank Borough Council, Borough Manager and all the business owners for all their help.

Maker of the motion L. Pinto

Second M. Dalessio

Passed 7/0

### **Finance and Personnel (Council Vice President Richard Guerra)**

- Finance-
  - o There is a motion for accounts payables.
- Grants
  - o There is a motion for the CDBG grant.
- Personnel
  - o No meeting
- CDCA

- Bob Berger, RPB representative, spoke on the CDCA. People need to understand what they do. CDCA handles the sewer, the sewer charge trickles down from Philadelphia to four largest authorities (DELCORA) then several from that. These prices are fixed. We can control our flow, making sure that everyone is paying their fair share, ie businesses.

Maker of the motion M Dalessio  
 Second M. McGinley  
 Passed 7/0

**Public Safety (Councilor Michele Endriss-Dalessio)**

- Police Department Report- Please make sure that all packages are taken in. We have not seen any reports of porch pirates, but please take them in or have the neighbor take them in for you.
    - If you are out of town for the holidays, please notify the police department so officers can keep an eye out and report any issues to you.
    - See attached report.
  - Fire Department Report
    - 20 calls for the month:
      - 3 building fires
      - 3 gas leaks
      - 10 cancelled calls
      - 1 fire alarm
      - 2 CO alarms
      - 1 accident with entrapment
    - Total hours in service – 12 hours 6 minutes
    - Total staff hours – 61.55
    - Cumulative firefighters responding – 69
- \*\* Santa will make his annual trek by firetruck through the Borough on Christmas Eve starting at 11am. \*\*
- Board of Health
    - Met earlier this month due to the holiday, they discussed health inspections. We are still operating as a board of health and plan to for the future.
  - Emergency Management- No Report
  - Civil Service- No Report

Maker of the motion L. Pinto  
 Second M. Mattus  
 Passed 7/0

**Manager’s Report-See attached report.**

**Solicitor’s Report- Legal issues will be discussed regarding Prospect Holdings at Executive Session.**

**Engineer’s Report- See attached report.**

Updated on the Sellers Ave. Bridge- Utility work is underway. The next items are the communication wires. July 2026 is the new projected date. This is only 9 days from the most recent project completion date, but we need to keep an eye, so it doesn't get any longer.

### **Council Business**

President Dane Collins gave a PowerPoint presentation on how the budgeting process works in Rudley Park, how its broken down and where income comes from (primarily property tax, trash and swere fees) and where itdoesnot come from (Ridley Park does not have EIT, Mercantile Tax).

See attached slides.

### **Public Comment**

Louann Bulock 406 Cresswell Street

Thank you for all your hard work and the information you prepared. Prospect is not paying taxes. The CEOs make 120 millions dollars and 98millions dollars. Can we sue them?

D. Collins stated we can't speak on a possible litigation.

Mike Gale 51 Collier Circle

Chamber of Commerce shouldn't give grants to for-profit businesses.

The 2021 Audit had a deficit of \$500,000.00, this is the largest deficit in 16 years. The 2022 audit still has not been submitted.

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Borough voted on a one mill increase, less than a month later Council stated that Prospect hadn't paid taxes. It was also stated that Prospect would not pay 2023 and 2024 taxes. In December the newspaper reported that the millage would be 7.14 but the sewer and trash fees were not listed. Council approved a 300,000.00 transfer from Capital Reserve, then Council requested a TAN for an additional 300,000.00 these funds could cover the Taylor Hospital bill.

On Tuesday 12/12, a press release was issued by the Borough explaining the 2024 budget issues and said that Borough Council would vote on an 17% tax increase. There were typos and grammatical errors.

Mike calculated that the new tax increase as a 31% tax hike as a opposed to 17%. The 17% figure is a huge lie.

Eileen Somers 21 W. Hinckley Ave.

The 17% lie is an insult, residential and commercial, who are increasing the taxes 31%. No one caught the typos or errors in the press release, which states that the Borough is being transparent. We deserve better.

Mike Dougherty 315 Burke Ave.

He notedthat on 12/28 there is a proposed meeting, when will be hear about the budget? After last meeting, Mike contacted all the news outlets. The news did a lot to help us, but he doesn't see any help coming from our lawyers, no one is telling residents what is going on and what is being done for us. He has tons of residents who said they won't pay the increase in taxes. Does anything get

done about those who don't pay taxes? Residents deserve the truth and what exactly they have to pay.

D. Collins stated at as of January , all delinquent taxpayers, no matter who, will go into delinquency.

Chirs Bucannon 507 Stiles Ave

In Ridley Park our taxes are due no later than May 31<sup>st</sup>. Why are we not going after them?(Prospect) He appreciates all the work being done on the budget.

Are we freezing raises for Ridley Park employees?

What other services can we get rid of? The computer service is \$30,000

Mary Pat King 309 Johnson Ave.

31% or even 17% is not acceptable.

Can you identify the finance committee?

How many parttime employees do we have?

Prospect took over in 2016. There was no decrease in taxes when they became for profit. Where did that money go? Downtown Ridley Park is beautiful, a tax hike like this will truly affect our businesses. How many residents are seniors that can't afford this?

D. Collins identified the finance committee

We have roughly 15 parttime employees

We used those funds to pay for expenses.

106 W. Ridley Julia S. 106 W. Ridley

Is it a matter of they can't pay or they don't want to? Is there a likelihood of the settlement, that includes the reassessment? This would be helpful to know if this would be resolved. How to we avoid this in the future and there is an opportunity to look at shared services that wouldn't impact the Borough?

D. Collins this is to make up for the shortfall, the only thing to make up this is an Earned Income Tax (EIT) and Mercantile tax. This is not liked and has been shot down every time it has been proposed, but this would make up this shortfall.

Brian Shultz -102 Penn Street

Prospect says on their website that they donate millions of dollars to local municipalities.

He looked at the budget, and looked at the overtime for patrol last year it was \$12,000, this year it says 120,000. The police pension was \$381k, the new budget is \$689k. Council is in an awkward position, residents can't do anything about Prospect, but the Borough can. What happens when they do pay?

Susan 407 Stiles Ave-

She loves the Borough and has lived in Ridley Park for 55 years. Why are you getting caught off guard with the press that has been out for years about Prospect. If you negotiate and they pay, will you decrease our taxes?

D. Collins explained we have the ability to amend the budget to the middle of February. If Taylor pays and says they will pay in two years. The millage would come down, because it's based on a balance budget and the assessment amount would go down.

Andy Furman 419 Pomeroy Street

It hasn't been mentioned that the police pension expenses have gone through the roof the past several years. This is due to the DROP Program which was instituted in 2021. \$125K in 2023 and in \$267k increase, close to a \$400k increase in two years.

3 components to the tax increase Taylor Hospital, Police Pension, 82k misc. within the budget. \$330 is outstanding for Taylor. Council is trying to pass a 30% increase, this seems like Council is double dipping and not telling the residents about the police contract. Can this tax be increased by half this year and half in 2025? This is not only a short-term problem. Once Taylor goes non-profit, we no longer have that tax income. A large part is the police pension. 15% 2024 and 15% 2025.

D. Collins- Yes, we saw a huge increase in the police pension. Andy is blaming this on DROP. This is not the case. D. Collins stated he spoke with the actuary about this pension. In 2022 we had a -15%

13.6 increase. We are obligated at odd years to evaluate the pension. We have performed the investments by 17%. We are in the negative. This has a huge impact on our plan.

We also had a severely injured officer, when you go out on disability you get 75%, unlike normal retirement which is 50%

We have also had Cost of Living adjustments for the pension that affects it.

Yes we have seen the numbers go up, this is not due to the DROP. This is unfortunate but this is the obligation we pay.

Patty McCaffrey 213 Water Street

What can residents do about Prospect? The care has gone down, they are not paying vendors, etc. What can we do as a community to make an impact?

D. Collins- contact your Senator, State Representative, Congress etc.

Elizabeth Sabo 8 Myrtle Ave-

She is a senior, she dropped cable, phone, internet etc. School taxes took those funds.

Will you seize that property?

She suggests dropping fireworks, the Victorian fair, etc.

If funds continue to drop the company needs look into a new person to handle funds.

D. Collins, unfortunately there is pension board. A lien can be placed on Taylor.

Fireworks cost \$8k, the calendar is 8k, these are small items that are a drops in the bucket. If you take those traditions away, you don't have what makes Ridley Park "Ridley Park" anymore.

Steve Keeney 101 Baldwin Ave.

Can you put a lien against the property so they can't sell it? Can you pull the occupancy permit?

Steve Valentin

The slideshow had Zillow estimates, those are so wrong.

You said you have a check for the sewer bill but you didn't explain two years of taxes. You also said there was a settlement, are you going to accept an offer for less? If that's the case, will residents' taxes be reduced by that amount?

D. Collins, the Zillow was just the heading. The estimates are actually pretty accurate; D. Collins cross-referenced with Tac Collector to confirm.

No, we don't know what the proposed settlement number is and this will be something discussed about during executive session.

Katie Wolverton Swarthmore Ave.

If you are looking at removing part time employees, that is the entire Library staff as well as herself. All the crossing guards are part-time employees as well, her son was student who was hit by a car. What happens to the kids?

If they eliminate employees, the library can't keep up with certain standards need to qualify for grants, etc.

Chris Atkins 29 Collier Circle

He works as an ER nurse and worked at Hahnemann Hospital when it closed. He moved to Ridley Park for the same reason everyone else does. He suggested fighting Prospect Medical Holdings. Find ways to fix this. In the ER we fight for our patients, we are asking you to do the same. Taylor is not the problem, it's the company. The people in Taylor are saving lives.

We are unable to do this, this is why we need Council to advocate for us.

Thresa Rosetta 9 N. Swarthmore Ave

10% is a lot. Don't we have a close relationship with Prospect? Why didn't we know sooner? Can you put together letters for the Borough to send? Can we spearhead an effort to help this? Pickett? Seniors make up 17% of the residents in Ridley Park, and they live at or below the poverty line. They can't afford this increase.

### **Action Items**

-Motion to approve Accounts payable for November 2023 in the amount of \$143,132.98

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra

Second M. Mattus

Passed 7/0

-Motion to approve separate line item of Accounts Payable for Borough Cleaning Service Accounts Payable in the amount of \$800

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra

Second L. Pinto

Passed 6/0 Abstained 1- Dalessio

-Motion to approve Regular Council Meeting Minutes November 21, 2023

Maker of the Motion K. Collins  
Second M. Mattus  
Comment-“Maker” is spelled incorrectly  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to approve Fraternal Order of Police Memorandum of Understanding for Ridley Park Police Department for years 2024-2027

Maker of the Motion D. Collins  
Second K. Collins  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to approve Teamsters 107 contract extension for 2024 based of Memorandum of Understanding.

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra  
Second M. McGinley  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to POSTPONE Ordinance 2023-8- Fixing 2024 Tax Rate to 7.15 mills

-Motion to POSTPONE Ordinance 2023-9 Fixing 2024 Sewer Rate to \$515 per living unit

-Motion to POSTPONE Ordinance 2023-10 Fixing 2024 Trash Rate to \$395 Per living unit

Maker D. Collins  
Second R. Guerra  
Question, are we postponing this until the next meeting? D. Collins said they are going to postpone until the next meeting.

-Motion to approve Resolution 2023-24 Approval of 2024 Tax Advance Note in the amount of \$500,000.000 {is this 300?}

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra  
Second M. Mattus  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to POSTPONE 2024 Ridley Park Borough Final Budget

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra  
Second K. Collins  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to approve HARB Application 2023-32 E Ridley Ave. Pillar Repairs

Maker of the Motion L. Pinto  
Second M. Dalessio  
Passed 7/0

-Motion to approve Resolution 2023-25- Allowing Ridley Park Borough Tax Collector to Utilize Ridley Park Borough Hall for in person tax collection for 2024

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra  
Second M. McGinley  
Passed 7/0  
CDBG Project votes.  
Dalessio Sewer, Bridge  
L. Pinto- Sewer, Bridge  
R. Guerra- Sewer, Bridge  
D. Collins – Sewer, Bridge  
K. Collins Sewer, Bridge  
McGinley Sewer, Bridge  
M. Mattus Bridge, Sewer

Council will apply for a 2024 CDBG Grant to repair the sanity sewer on Rosemont Ave.

Maker of the Motion R. Guerra  
Second M. Mattus  
Passed 7/0

Mayor Hank Eberle read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.

## **Adjourn**

Maker of the Motion L. Pinto  
Second M. Mattus  
Passed 7/0