

MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE CENTRE CIVICS ASSOCIATION MEETING
HELD ON MAY 13, 2025
LOCATION: ROCKVILLE CENTRE PUBLIC LIBRARY
221 N. VILLAGE AVE, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11570

PRESENT: President Meghan Kearns, Vice President Catie Carter, Treasurer Emily Kearns, Membership Director Rich Collett, Corresponding Secretary Kelly Wexler and Recording Secretary Caitlin McEntee

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES: A motion to adopt the minutes from the April 11, 2025 meeting was made by Vice President Carter, seconded by Secretary McEntee and carried.

VILLAGE ELECTIONS: The Village Elections will be held on June 17, 2025. Incumbents Emilio Grillo and Kate Conlon are running unopposed. Judge Mindy Roman is also up for reelection.

TOWN HALL FOR VILLAGE ELECTION CANDIDATES: A Town Hall to be hosted by the Rockville Centre Civics Association and run by the League of Women Voters was proposed to the candidates for June 10, 2025. To be clear, this would not be a debate. Judge Mindy Roman confirmed that she would be out of town on the proposed date. Trustee Grillo acknowledged the invitation and advised during the meeting that they typically host their own Town Hall the first week of June to allow time for enough media coverage prior to the election. Vice President Kearns noted that she had spoken with the Village of Rockville Centre Mayor's office who advised that they would not be holding a town hall because the candidates are running unopposed. Trustee Grillo clarified that the Town Hall would be run by their party (The Family Party) and expressed desire to consolidate both Town Hall events into one to potentially be held on June 4, 2025. Trustees Grillo and Conlon to confirm how they would like to proceed.

UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS DURING CIVICS ASSOCIATION MEETINGS: No presentation is scheduled for July. For the August 12, 2025 meeting, a group from the state will come in to do a presentation to educate us about the Open Meetings Law. It will cover public hearings for any municipal governments within NY State, (village board meetings, zoning meetings, planning meetings) and the public's ability to speak.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN ROCKVILLE CENTRE:

- Hewitt Fair Saturday May 17, 2025 rain date May 18, 2025
- School Board and Budget Vote Tuesday May 20, 2025

- A Night at the Museum to be hosted by the Historical Society Saturday May 31, 2025. Tickets are \$50 per person.
- Vintage Car Show Saturday June 7, 2025
- Village Elections Tuesday June 17, 2025.
- Eat, Shop, Rock hosted by the Rockville Centre Chamber of Commerce, Saturday June 21, 2025.

UPDATES FROM TREASURER EMILY KEARNS:

- Filed certificate of incorporation with NY State and confirmed that the Village of Rockville Centre Civics Association is officially an organization.
- Forms to be filed with the IRS. These are necessary to be filed once you become an organization. A tax return will also have to be filed at the end of the year.
- Member dues are to begin being collected. Yearly dues are \$24 per person not per household. Cash or check made out to the Village of Rockville Centre Civics Association are the acceptable forms of payment. Dues will not be prorated this year but will be in the years following.
- A website will be created and funded by Kelly Wexler.
- All expenses required to fund the creation of the organization have been provided by the board members thus far.
- Fiscal Year runs May 1- April 30.
- A small business bank account as soon as member dues are collected.

UPDATES FROM MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR RICH COLLETT

UPDATES FROM CORRESPONDING SECRETARY KELLY WEXLER

- Logo has been confirmed and official letterhead has been created.
- Letters have been delivered to all senior leaders in the Village.
- A centralized list is being created of all local Rockville Centre organizations to collaborate with.
- President Kearns, Vice President Carter, Secretary Wexler and Treasurer Kearns attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting.
- Secretary Wexler to attend the Women's Chamber of Commerce meeting.
- Official website should be up and running by June/July.

UPDATES FROM VICE PRESIDENT CATIE CARTER ON COMMITTEES: Attended meeting at the Mayor's office with the Chamber of Commerce and several business owners about beautification for various areas in the Village.

209 SUNRISE HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION BY GREG KALNITSKY OF FORCHELLI DEEGAN TERRANA AND ARCHITECT MONTY LIEBER: Principals of the development are David and Lena Chin who are residents of the Village of Rockville Centre were also in attendance.

- Basement will be approximately 3,200 square feet for mechanical space, electrical closet and sanitary facilities. Will not be generally open to the public.
- First floor will be approximately 3,200 square feet for restaurant use.
- Second and third floors will be approximately 3,700 square feet each. These will be used for general office space, nothing medical.
- 4 variances are needed:
 1. Front yard variance (business zone requires 10 foot setback). They are proposing zero. All surrounding buildings have zero setback.
 2. Parking. 38 spaces required. A traffic engineer has been retained. Restaurant parking needs should not conflict with commuter parking needs as they would be on opposite schedules.
 3. Height Variance of 14": A small part of the roof slope needed to divert water runoff is not meeting the code. The roof design is crucial to accommodate mechanical infrastructure. The roof will have no visual impact on the surrounding area.
 4. Substantial occupancy permit. Required by the Village for any occupancy over 50 people.
- 2 attendees requested that the building be brought down to 2 stories to alleviate parking and to honor the 10 foot setback. Mr. Kalnitsky advised that this would hinder the buildings ability to attract viable tenants.
- Façade would be colonial antique brick.
- There will be egress and ingress on from both Sunrise Highway and the rear municipal lot. There will be no parking or stopping in front of the building on Sunrise Highway that's within the principal's control.

UPDATES FROM THE BUDGET COMMITTEE PROVIDED BY ED GRIM CHAIRPERSON:

- Treasurer Kearns and Mr. Grim attended the Village budget meeting and had the opportunity to ask questions about the budget as well as have follow up discussions with Village officials.
- Significant increases in the budget are due to state mandated expenses such as insurance, liability insurance, workman's compensation, contractual salary increases, union benefits and pension funding. Pension funding alone increased Village expenses by \$1M last year.
- Expenses exceeded revenues by \$1.7M. These differences are typically funded by reserves.
- There will be a 6.5% tax increase for next year.
- An official copy of the adopted budget can be found on the Village website under the comptroller's section.
- 2/3 of Village revenue are from taxes the other 1/3 comes from multiple small sources and state funding.
- Offsets to these costs have not been discussed with Village officials (hiring freezes, additional revenue streams etc)
- Trustees Grillo and Conlon addressed cost increases. Largest part of the budget is public safety (Police Department and Fire Department). Largest revenue stream is parking tickets and fees.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

- Police Department: Is police presence increasing as our Village population does? Trustee Grillo advised that the Village has increased from 54 to 58 police officers.
- Hawk Lane Fence:
 - The residents of 6 properties on Westminster Road that back up to Hawke Lane have voiced concerns to Village officials about mature trees that were cut down as well as the fencing off of access to Village owned land between the Westminster Road properties and Hawke Lane as well as poison ivy growing on the fence.
 - After discussions with Village officials in which the Westminster property owners offered to cover costs of a fence as well as landscaping that was agreeable to everyone, Village officials advised that they would get back to the Westminster Lane property owners but only did so as the work was beginning. They do not feel as though the Village included them in the process and are questioning why Hawke Lane has access to it and why is it only a liability for Westminster Road property owners but not Hawke Lane property owners.
 - Secretary McEntee reached out to the Rockville Centre Department of Public Works who advised her to direct all questions and concerns to Trustee Grillo who would be in attendance at the Civics Association Meeting held on June 10, 2025 as he is the liaison to the department. Trustee Grillo addressed the group and clarified that Trustee Conlon is now the liaison to the Department of Public Works. There was dilapidated fence and a compromised tree growing through the fence.
 - The goal is to plant new trees. Access to the land cannot be permitted as it's a liability to the Village from a safety standpoint and a new fence must be installed.

UPCOMING CIVICS ASSOCIATION MEETING: To be held on 6/10/25 at 7:00pm at the Rockville Centre Public library.

MOTION TO ADJOURN – Motion made by Rich Collett, seconded by Catie Carter and carried

Please email any questions and concerns to RVCCivics@gmail.com