

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
NOVEMBER 18, 2025

The Council Work Session of Tuesday, November 18, 2025 was called to order by Council President, Rebecca Smith, at 6:30 PM in Municipal Hall Chambers, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following Council members were in attendance:

Dustin Queenan
William McCoy
Mydera Robinson
Natalie Colson
Jasmine Griffen
Rashaad Bates
Rebecca Smith

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Michael Trail, Norristown Police Chief; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Vincent Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amanda Ciarlante, Assistant Director of Finance; Alecia Fields, Senior Analyst; Keith Gordon, Code Enforcement Manager; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Bri-Ana Hawkins, Director of Recreation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to approve the Minutes from November 5, 2025. **The motion passed unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Smith announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to the Council Work Session to discuss personnel issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Vice President Bates announced that if anyone has any announcements they would like him to make at the Council Meetings, go to rbates@norristown.org.

Councilwoman Colson thanked all who attended her Town Hall and to the speakers for their hard work and dedication. She said it does not go unnoticed. She also wanted to recognize Miss Sheila Carter. She had addressed a few concerns at her father's home in the past and said they were very kind. She said that Miss Carter recently passed and she said her condolences go out to her family and the Mt. Zion Church community. She said she is grateful to have had the opportunity to know her.

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT (moved up on the agenda)

(CU3-25) Request for Conditional Use Master Plan Approval for "The Preserve at Stony Creek"

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Colson**, to open the Public Hearing. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Solicitor Kilkenny explained that this Conditional Use application is being treated as a Permitted Use with certain criteria. He said there will be an opportunity for questions or comments from Council.

He asked if any member of the public would like to request "Party Status?" He explained what that is. There was no requests.

Mr. Kilkenny presented the Exhibits: M1 – Copy of the Times Herald advertisement; M2 - Copy of Continuation Letter dated 10/24/25; M3 – Public Notice of a Public Hearing for 11/5/25 (which is continued until now); M-4 –

Depiction of the Property Posting; M-5 – Depiction of Posting at Gate 1; M-6 – Copy of the Montgomery County Planning Commission Review Letter dated 10/10/25; M-7 – Pennoni Review Letter of the Public Hearing dated 11/10/25.

An additional series of Exhibits from the applicant:

A-1 Site Plan

The following Resumes to meet the requirements for a Witness:

A-2 Shapiro Resume

A-3 Hetzel Resume

A-4 Vigilante Resume

A-5 Jordan Resume

A-6 Haas Resume

A-7 Duplicate – removed

A-8 Langan Engineering Memorandum Copy

A-9 Fiscal impact Study

Mr. Kilkenny explained that Mr. Anthony Maras, Pinnacle Realty Development Company, will qualify each Witness to Council. He noted that Council may call up a Witness if they have questions.

Mr. Anthony Maras was sworn in as the Attorney.

Mr. Maras noted he provided members of Council with a 17-page Packet regarding the Site Plan.

He provided the background and education of the Witnesses according to their Resumes. There was no opposition by Council.

There was **a motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to accept the background and education of the Witnesses. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Seth Shapiro, BartonPartners Urban Design and Architecture, was sworn in before conducting a Power Point presentation.

The first slide of the Power Point was Exhibit A-1 (Site Plan 2024) followed by the “Current Site Plan.” He was asked by Mr. Maras how many residential units are being proposed. Mr. Shapiro responded there were 423 Townhomes (including 166 stacked, 157 rear loading, 250 rental apartments.) He noted they were Mixed Use (Retail & Residential.) He said there is a Podium Building with parking on the ground floor.

He was asked if he agrees with the submittal to which he responded “yes.”

Mr. Maras noted there is 69,450 sq. ft. of Retail. Mr. Maras noted the Office/Tech was driven by Stormwater Management. He said some changes were made on the current Site Plan where Open Space was added and a large Stormwater Management area was added.

The next slide was “Land Use – Current” which was color-coded as Retail, Mixed Use, Walk-Ups, Townhouses, Office Flex/Tech.

The next slide highlighted the Townhouses and Walk-Ups along Sterigere Street followed by Mixed Residential and Mixed Use & Retail. Mr. Shapiro said it is Shared Space known in Dutch as Woonrf which means a connected area.

The next slide shows the Townhouses along Stanbridge Street as a refined version. Mr. Shapiro explained the parking: 2 off-street, the Stacked comes with 1 garage and 1 driveway, the front-loaded comes with 2 car spaces, and rear-loaded comes with a driveway & garage space.

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Shapiro if there is Pedestrian Access? to which Mr. Shapiro responded “yes.” He said it is as pedestrian friendly as possible.

Next slide – “Open Space Diagram.” Mr. Shapiro commented that “Streets are for people and roads are for cars.” He said the streets are tree-lined with a connection to the Liberty Bell Trail along Stanbridge Street.

Mr. Maras asked if the dimensional requirements for Setbacks, building heights, etc. as submitted comply? to which Mr. Shapiro responded “yes.”

The next slide is “Engineer’s Version” – which depicts 12.16 open space acres. Mr. Maras asked if that complies? Mr. Shapiro responded “yes.”

Mr. Maras noted there is also Architecture Preservation.

The next slide shows “Phasing Plan” which is 3 phases. Mr. Maras said he is not sure of a Timeline.

He explained that Council gets the benefit of their bargain. He said the components all come together and Council “gets a bit of everything.”

Council comments:

Council President Smith thanked Mr. Maras for the reduction in amount of townhomes and the additional Green Space throughout the plan.

Next to be sworn in was Ann Marie Vigilante.

She said she examined the traffic flows on the current Site Plan. She was asked what she would be doing for safety. She said that a Transportation Impact Study would be conducted to get an estimate of generated traffic and the impact on intersections. She said they will work with Municipal Staff regarding additional traffic mitigation.

Mr. Maras asked if this will be done in consultation with townships, planning professionals and engineering professionals? Ms. Vigilante responded “yes.” Mr. Maras asked if they will obtain Trip Count Projections and historic norms to see what future growth could be? and will this start to be prepared after the Conditional Use? She responded “yes” and that there will be traffic mitigation such as signal timing, etc. and a variety of improvements.

Mr. Maras had no more questions and there were none from Council.

Next to be sworn in was Erik Hetzel.

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Hetzel to explain what a Fiscal Benefit Summary is. Mr. Hetzel said it includes a Fiscal Impact Analysis Cost (the Rutgers Method) per

Capita Cost and an Economic Impact Analysis to note the regional Economic Ripple Effect.

Mr. Maras asked what the total projected regional economy total is. He was told there could be over \$660 million in jobs (1,690 Construction Phase, 2,178 Industries and Trades supporting) with total Fiscal Wages over \$226 million. He added that Investment in the project in construction dollars is estimated to be around \$300 million. Non-Resident full-time jobs 472 plus 446 indirect with earnings over \$43 million. Residential household incomes is estimated to be \$65 million annually with an annual fiscal benefit to the Municipality, the Norristown Area School District and the County. He said the net amounts are projected to be \$1,313,225 for the Municipality, \$2,284,000 for the School District and \$153,755 for the County, accounting for 104 school-aged children using a statistical method.

Mr. Maras said he had no more questions and asked Mr. Hetzel to confirm he helped prepare Exhibit A-9. Mr. Hetzel responded "yes."

Next to be sworn is Zach Jordan (Langan Engineering).

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Jordan if he helped prepare Exhibit package A-1? Mr. Jordan responded "yes."

Mr. Maras asked if Mr. Jordan reviewed Exhibit A-7 and A-8 (Pennoni Review Ltr. containing all the Conditional Use requirements. Mr. Jordan stated that were no items that were not compliant and he noted that some items will be addressed during the Land Development process.

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Jordan if it is, generally, a clean Review Letter? Mr. Jordan responded "yes."

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Jordan to verify if the letter is a summary of all Conditional Use permitted under the Ordinance? If the Site Area acreage is the allowed amount? If Parking will comply? Mr. Jordan responded "yes."

Mr. Jordan reported that the 18.1 Open Space Public Access was accounted for and he referred to page 2 of Exhibit A-1 regarding the green spine area.

He said he looked into Stormwater Management by doing Infiltration testing but noted there are not many infiltration areas. He said there would be a Basin with vegetation and beautification of the site. He said there are other Stormwater measures throughout site.

The next slide showed “Conceptual Stormwater Design” for which they made some modifications. He said they will comply with the Stormwater requirements. He explained the water would be discharged into the Stormwater System and Stony Creek. He added that the Stormwater is breaking 2 ways with 2 watersheds for water collection.

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Jordan to explain Direct Discharge. He said it involves holding the flow on site with a slow release to abate flooding. He said it is authorized by the DEP and the Act 167 Plan.

Mr. Maras asked Mr. Jordan if this will improve the condition of the Stormwater Management on the site? Mr. Jordan said “it will likely have a positive impact.”

Mr. Maras asked if the Basins and detention areas underground acceptable? Mr. Jordan agreed. He added that there are 12 points of vehicular access with sidewalks. Mr. Jordan confirmed that he helped prepare Exhibit A-5.

Mr. Maras stated he had no more questions for Mr. Jordan and there were no questions from Council.

Mr. Maras said that the testimony has concluded and that Exhibits A1 – A9 with the removal of A-7 is being submitted for approval.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman McCoy** to admit Exhibits A1 through A-9 with the removal of A-7 (a duplicate). **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Maras said they have met the criteria which is consistent with the original vision and he asked Council to approve the Master Plan.

Public Comment:

Mr. Christopher Jackson, homeowner – He said there are far greater impacts such as higher property taxes for homeowners and senior citizens. He asked Council how they plan to prevent this? He said that protections for residents are not optional and we need concrete answers.

Steve Kovacic – Homeowner. He said he originally argued against this development. He asked about stormwater protection and if there was any assessment on the wildlife population? He asked if there is a plan for public transportation and walkways? He had concerns about Green Space and the destruction of pine trees, etc. He asked about consideration of a buffer zone. He said he rejects the indoor and outdoor sports complexes. He said that many Flex/Tech facilities sit dormant. He said we need more individual shops to be a value to local neighborhoods. He said this could be beneficial.

Andrew Geden – resident. He thinks the Flex/Tech may put a strain on electric. He said this is not in the best interest of everyone and he asked Council to reject the Data Center Use.

Joan, 1400 Stanbridge Street – She is concerned with the one way in and one way out and that across the street from there is the most impacted. She said there should be roads to stay off Stanbridge Street.

Mr. Maras responded:

He said that the Flex/Tech facilities are placeholders for PECO. He said they are an Accessory – not Primary Use. He said there will be Commercial with restaurants, etc. under the Zoning classification.

He added they will need an Arborist regarding the trees.

Regarding Taxes, he said they are putting money into the local economy. He noted that abating taxes is not the responsibility of the Developer.

He said that regarding the 104 students proposed (school-age children) – it is Transitional Housing with a conservative approach.

He noted that the area is not a native habitat and there is a large State Park.

Mr. Maras said they could work with Council regarding the access roads that connect to Stanbridge. He said they can refine the plan and accept as a condition.

Solicitor Kilkenny said this is “not the end of the road.” He said there needs to be other approvals, reviews and comments.

Mr. Maras noted that all traffic signals must be approved by PennDOT. He said then there is the Conditional Preliminary Plan Approval and Sewer and Water Permits.

He said that if everything goes well, it could be an 18-month window but 20-24 months is more realistic. He said because it is a Phased Plan, they will be back before Council several times.

He added that this is a partnership and they want feedback.

Solicitor Kilkenny explained the process. He said that Council can close the Public Hearing and then they have 45 days to issue a written decision including the proposed Condition. There is then a Review process, then a vote.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates** to close the Public Hearing. **The motion passed unanimously.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cynthia Culbreath - 323 Bristol Avenue, Norristown, PA – She said would like to present another visionary. A Walk of Fame including history, sports, etc. A paved walkway. A symbol of pride. On November 14th, she went to Seiler Architecture and they said they would help with it.

Olivia Brady – 728 Stanbridge Street – She thanked the Police Department for helping her son find his stolen truck which was recovered in 7-10 days found at a towing facility.

Tiffani Todd – East Freedley Street – She came before Council about the possible shelter at 1430 Dekalb Street which is supposed to open in 2026. She asked what the status is?

Denise Agurto – 335 West Marshall Street – She said there have been ICE incidents last week and this week. On November 5th at Brown & Pine Streets and Barbados & Marshall. She said the Police Department is fighting against us. She asked Council to investigate and she said that Community members sent videos to Mr. Lightner.

Council President Smith said she will look at the videos.

Steph Vincent – Community Watch – She said there has been a lot of ICE activity. Construction workers, etc., taken by ICE without criminal history. Federal agents are breaking windows. Can turn worse. Do something. They are looking for anyone with an address but not all are criminals.

Jane Pekol, 900 Buttonwood Street – November 5th ICE incident. 5 ICE agents in a work van. Police told her they were called there because of a car accident. She asked does he not know they are not to work with ICE? She asked if they are powerless. You're not checking - they could be Cartel or thieves. Figure out policies and procedures.

Matthew Greene, 234 East Oak Street – He has a 4.0 and he has ADHD. His Football Team is going to Naples, FL and he asked for help to go. His mom said he needs \$500 for him but that does not include travel expenses. He received \$300 from Councilman McCoy and Councilwoman Robinson offered him \$1,000.

Chris Jackson, 510 Thomas Circle – He said he has received no update from Public Works about the dumping on a property across from his. He said he sent pictures took pictures. He said the property is still filled with trash. What's being done? He had sent emails to Amrinder Singh in April 2023 but nothing changed. He said it signals that no one cares. Need answers not excuses. It's unacceptable.

Yvonne Platts – in for Heather Lewis. An email was sent to the Solicitor, Administrator and Council regarding an illegal vote for the termination of Thomas Odenigbo. She said that Councilwoman Colson said at her Town Hall that she

voted to terminate Mr. Odenigbo in Executive Session. Since then, she has gotten a response email that said there was no vote and he was given the option to resign which is a stark contrast to what Councilwoman Colson said in her recorded message. Is this is an untruth to cover up this illegal action? She said we expect swift disciplinary action to take place, namely, the removal of Rebecca Smith, Natalie Colson, Rashaad Bates, Mydera Robinson and the elected officials who voted and Leonard Lightner who looked over the illegal action.

Sean read the email that was sent to her. He said that Mr. Odenigbo had the chance to resign.

APPOINTMENTS

Resolution 25-62: appointment of members to various Boards, Committees, Authorities

Leonard Lightner had the list of appointed members.

Councilman Queenan asked if Terence Barnes requested Stormwater because it was not up for a vote.

Council President Smith said that it was brought up in a previous meeting. She said that alternatives are suggested if there are more applications than spaces are open.

Councilman Queenan asked what the qualifications were for Brad McLaughlin and asked if any other Council person chose Brad over Terence?

Council President Smith said that she saw a need for Planning.

Councilman Queenan said he nominates to give Terence a chance for his first choice.

Council President Smith said that every Council member was given multiple opportunities to weigh in on this.

She added that there will be a vacancy after her term on Stormwater and that was her line of thought.

Council Vice President said he offered him Planning but Stormwater was his choice.

Councilman Queenan said we should give preferences to residents and we need to advertise vacancies.

Leonard Lightner brought to the attention of Council past applications from Mr. Barnes.

Councilman McCoy said he heard from Mr. Barnes and that Sewer was his 1st choice but he felt he wasn't in the pool to be selected.

Council Vice President said that Terrence wants to help where he can.

Councilwoman Griffen said that a resident should have their 1st choice.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to amend the motion to have Terence Barnes replace Brad McLaughlin on the Sewer Authority Board. **The motion passed 5-2** (with Councilwoman Robinson and Councilwoman Colson voting no.)

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to approve the selection of Terence Barnes to serve on the Sewer Authority Board with term ending 12/31/30. **The motion passed 5-2** (with Councilwoman Robinson and Councilwoman Colson voting no.)

PARKS & RECREATION

Resolution 25-98: adoption of the Elmwood Park Master Site Development Plan

Council President Smith asked Bri-Ana Hawkins if there are any changes. Ms. Hawkins said there were not.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to adopt the Elmwood Park Master Site Development Plan and the recommendations as prepared by Simone Collins, Inc. and the Department of Parks and Recreation with funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). **The motion passed unanimously.**

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Kathy Pfister noted this is the 3rd Presentation – October 21st was the Preliminary; November 4th was the Proposed Budget Presentation and November 18th was the Request for permission to advertise.

Proposed 2026-2030 Capital Improvements Plan – Resolution 25-94

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide Council an opportunity to publicly comment on and discuss the Proposed 2026-2030 Capital Improvements Plan with Administrative Staff.

She conducted a Power Point on the Capital Improvements Budget. She noted that the total CIP amount is \$75,676,028. Department totals: \$13,871,091.

Proposed 2026 Consolidated Fee Schedule – Resolution 25-95

Proposed 2026 Consolidated Fee Schedule.

Kathy Pfister noted that the Fee Schedule changes are based on current salaries.

Authorization to advertise and first reading of Ordinance 25-08 adopting the FY 2026 Budget and establishing the Real Estate Tax Rate for 2026

A request of Council to authorize the first reading of the 2026 Budget Ordinance, increasing the millage rate from 18.25 to 19.25, including the Fire Tax Rate and the EMS Tax Rate. (General Fund 12.02, Fire Tax 7.16, EMS Tax 0.07)

Kathy showed Prior Balanced Budgets on the Power Point including Revenue, Expenditures and Balancing Options.

Councilman Queenan asked if “Civic Activities”, which is under Administration, could be moved to Council’s Budget so they could “have oversight.” Leonard Lightner noted it would still have the same procurement laws.

Authorization to advertise and first reading of Ordinance 25-09 adopting the FY 2026 Budget and establishing the Fire and EMS Tax Rate for 2026

A request of Council to authorize the first reading of the 2026 Budget Ordinance, creating the Fire Tax Rate of 7.16 mills and the EMS Tax Rate of 0.07 mills.

Kathy Pfister stated that the potential Final Adoption Budget will be considered at the December 2, 2025 Council Meeting.

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 25-99: Request for Preliminary/Final Land Development Approval – 1001 Powell Street (Montgomery County Library)

The applicant said they received Variances and the Design Review Board recommended Preliminary/Final. They also received Planning Commission approval. There were no questions.

Ted Dymtryk noted there is a Waivers correction - 282-433.2b should be 282.433.3b (street trees).

He was told this was addressed.

The applicant said there will be negotiations and interviews and bidding in January 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to adjourn the Council Work Session. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo
Clerk of Council