

Norristown Municipality
Council Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2026

The Council Work Session Meeting of Tuesday, August 18, 2026, was called to order by Council President, Rashaad Bates, at 6:38 pm in Municipal Hall Chambers, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members – Present:

Natalie Colson
Jasmine Griffen
William McCoy
David McMahon
Mydera Robinson
Dustin Queenan
Rashaad Bates

Also, in attendance were:

Jayne Musonye, Interim Municipal Administrator; Patrick Hitchens, Municipal Solicitor; Michael Trail, Norristown Police Chief; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Keith Gordon, Code Enforcement Manager; Vincent Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning; Ngoc Gaiser, Senior Planner

Executive Session Announcement

Council President Bates announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting for negotiation and personnel matters.

Announcements

Council Vice President Queenan announced the Washington Carver Community Center is sponsoring Back to School haircuts/hairstyles from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on August 30, 2026.

On behalf of the Norristown Municipal Council and community, Councilwoman Robinson extended thoughts and condolences to the family of Darlene Wright-Burruss who passed away on August 8, 2026. Ms. Wright-Burruss was a resident of Norristown and a long-time educator in the Norristown Area School District. She most recently was a teacher at Hanock Elementary School.

Public Comments

The following residents of 1301 Powell Street (Montgomery Park Senior Apartments) addressed Council:

- Holly Allen
- Saadiqah Morgan
- Linda Williams
- Anita Hampton
- Felicia Cray
- Nadine Hedgeman
- Delila Lewis

The residents expressed concerns about the following problems within the apartment complex: theft of vehicles or theft of possessions in vehicles, towing of resident vehicles, inoperative front doors and intercom system, inoperative elevators, no planned fire drills, residents ignoring fire alarms, and no security cameras. In general, residents are concerned about safety and security at the apartment complex and the inability to have repairs completed in a timely fashion. Residents have been waiting for several months to over a year for repairs to be made. Residents are frustrated with the management of the complex and request assistance with addressing these items.

-Dr. Channel: She addressed Council and the public as an advocate for senior citizens and the disabled. She stated that she was not here to repeat the concerns already expressed by residents of Montgomery Park Senior Apartments but wanted to emphasize that the community needs to support the needs of seniors and the disabled, treat them with respect and dignity, and support them in addressing their concerns. The housing developments in Norristown should be held to a standard that reflects compassion, responsibility, and respect.

-Al Johnson: Mr. Johnson commented about illegal parking, and cars parking on sidewalks or overnight parking. Tickets need to be issued for these cars. In relation to Montgomery Park Senior Apartments, he stated a fourth building is being considered and there is not enough parking now.

-Synnita Griffen: Ms. Griffen expressed concern about the Montgomery Park Senior Apartments, and she applauded the seniors for attending the meeting. She also spoke about trash dumping and the condition of the streets in Norristown. She stated that residents are seeking answers to resolve these problems and want to know exactly where they should address concerns so that problems are resolved.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Colson, to approve the Minutes from the following meeting: August 5, 2006 - Council Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Statement – Mr. Patrick Hitchens – Municipal Solicitor

Mr. Hitchens stated that he reviewed his records and the last resolution for building construction at Montgomery Park Senior Apartments was for building #3 (Resolution 24-68 in 2024). The current property owner would need to apply and go through the land development process approval and possibly zoning approval before any further buildings could be constructed - that process would result in either approval/disapproval by Council. Mr. Hitchens stated no fourth building is under consideration by the Municipal Council for development and no applications are pending.

Presentation

Lafayette Street Trail Gateway Project Final Report Presentation Montgomery County and SALT: Presenting the final report on the Lafayette Street Trail Gateway Master Plan Planning & Municipal Development

Ellen Miramontes, a planner for the Montgomery County Planning Commission addressed Council regarding the final draft of the Lafayette Street Trail Gateway Project. This is a linear space that runs for about one half mile on Lafayette Street, from Dekalb to Ford. This space was identified in a study conducted in 2020 to improve accessibility and diversity in having access to the Schuylkill River Norristown Trail, and a grant was pursued and received. After a Request for Proposal (RFP) was developed, the Commission moved forward with a master plan and engaged the services of Salt Design Studio. This project started about one year ago, and the planners sought the input of the public through various methods, including Norristown National Night, focused interviews with staff and local organizations, and input from residents through meetings at the library.

Katrina Rogus, of Salt Design Studios, reviewed the project timeline and showed pictures of the present River Trail. She also reviewed the project vision and goals. The goals included safety, connections and exchanges and wellness.

Two distinct concepts of the trail were developed, and Salt Design Studios came back to the community for input regarding the two designs. The first concept was the Lafayette Promenade, which has distinct gathering sites. The second concept was called River Rhythm. Pictures were provided of both concepts in the presentation. Between the months of October 2025 and December 2025, surveys were distributed to obtain input about the two designs, and which one was preferable. There was an online survey as well as in-person stakeholder surveys. In January 2026, a public event was held at the Norristown Public Library to gather further input and ideas about the concepts.

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The final plan is a hybrid of the two concepts. Public feedback largely wanted this space to be a destination for Norristown, where residents could walk, have programming or gatherings, and walk or bike ride the trail. The final design includes space for gatherings, multi-generational fitness equipment, and open spaces for children to play. Also, space for concerts, food trucks, terraced seating and places for rest were reviewed. Pedestrian safety methods were reviewed for people crossing East Lafayette Street onto the trail, and pictures were provided of the kinds of equipment, materials, and topography to be incorporated.

The estimated final costs and funding sources were reviewed. A three-phase development plan was also reviewed so that as funds became available, the project could be completed over time. In response to a question from Council President Bates, Ms. Rogus clarified that yellow flashing lights and signalized signage were included in the costs for crosswalks on Lafayette Street.

Planning and Development – Public Hearing – Proposed Ordinance No. 26-04

For the Record: There is a stenographic record of the Public Hearing for Proposed Ordinance No. 26-04 on file with the Municipal Solicitor. These minutes only summarize the hearing.

Public Hearing: Ordinance 26-04: Data Centers in the Heavy Industrial District
Public Hearing for Ordinance 26-04, to amend the Municipality of Norristown Zoning Code to define data center-related uses and permit Data Centers and Data Center Accessory Uses in the Heavy Industrial (HI) District by conditional use.

Mr. Hitchens, Municipal Solicitor, formally opened the Public Hearing on proposed Ordinance No. 26-04: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE MUNICIPAL OF NORRISTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 320, TITLED “ZONING” OF THE GENERAL LAWS OF NORRISTOWN TO AMEND ARTICLE II, SUBSECTION 320-11 RELATING TO DEFINITIONS AND TO AMEND ARTICLE XVI, SUBSECTIONS 320 161 RELATING TO USES IN THE HEAVY INDUSTRIAL (HI) DISTRICT TO ESTABLISH AND REGULATE DATA CENTER USES BY CONDITIONAL USE.**

Mr. Hitchens outlined the format of the public hearing. He noted that a revision to the zoning laws in a municipality requires a Public Hearing. For this Public Hearing, Mr. Hitchens marked the following documents:

N-1 – Advertisement of the Public Hearing

N-2 – The proposed ordinance for revision

N-3 – The Montgomery County Planning Commission’s Review Letter.

(*N = Norristown)

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Second, Mr. Hitchens noted that the Public Hearing will be conducted in this order:

1. Mr. Hitchens will provide a brief explanation of the ordinance.
2. Municipal staff will provide an explanation of the ordinance.
3. Council will comment or ask questions.
4. Members of the public can ask questions and/or comment.

Mr. Hitchens explained the following:

The proposed amendments to the zoning code are as follows: to create code definitions for uses called data centers and data center accessory uses and permits said uses in the HI Heavy Industrial district by conditional use. The proposed ordinance includes definitions for the term data center, data center accessory use, data center campus, and sensitive receptor. The proposed ordinance also includes specific conditions applicable to the new uses that are included, but not limited to the following:

1. Street access requirements
2. Bulk standard requirements, including lot size, height, setbacks, coverage and distances from residential users and sensitive receptors
3. Design standards
4. Energy Usage Plan requirements
5. Energy generation system and backup power usage requirements and limitations
6. Water usage requirements and restrictions
7. Thermal impact mitigation plan requirements
8. Noise restrictions and noise study requirements
9. Air pollution and plume study requirements
10. Emergency response plan requirements
11. Electronic waste plan requirements
12. Parking requirements
13. Decommissioning plan requirements, including financial security for future decommissioning
14. Applicant public engagement requirements prior to the commencement of a conditional use hearing.

Mr. Hitchens also reported that the initial draft was reviewed by the Municipal Planning Commission on July 14th and feedback was provided. That feedback was reported back to the Municipal Council. The comments from the planning commission were incorporated into the proposed ordinance and were related to the utility infrastructure upgrade costs. The revised draft also clarified the primary energy generation and backup energy generation, as suggested by the Montgomery County Planning Commission review.

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Mr. Hitchens spoke about Pennsylvania law in relation to this ordinance. If there is legal use in Pennsylvania, municipalities have an obligation to provide for that legal use somewhere within the jurisdiction. Even if Council does not like the use, there is a legal obligation to provide for it. Local government does not have the authority to impose a moratorium, or the authority to impose restrictions or prohibit a use that Council finds incompatible with the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Municipal Staff Comments on Proposed Ordinance 26-04:

Mr. Vincent Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning, reviewed the timeline for the proposed ordinance revision. On May 25, 2026, Council authorized the proposed ordinance for advertisement, and on July 14, 2026, the Planning Commission reviewed the ordinance and recommended approval. On July 20, 2026, the Montgomery County Planning Commission reviewed it. On July 21, 2026, a Public Hearing was held to receive comments on the proposed ordinance. Mr. Poppa emphasized that this is an ordinance that outlines the requirements, if there is an application for a data center submitted to the Municipality. Currently, there are no pending applications for a data center within Norristown.

Council Comments on Proposed Ordinance 26-04:

-None

Public Comments on Proposed Ordinance 26-04:

-Amber Queen: She is in support of the proposed ordinance and would like to see it unanimously passed this evening. It is proactive and protects the community both now and in the future. She thanked Council for their forward thinking and providing a framework for which surrounding communities can follow.

-Kaden Begle: He stated that he had commented at the previous hearing, but he wanted to reiterate that he is in support of this ordinance. It is well defined and will protect the Norristown community both now and in the future.

-Stephania Luciani: She noted that she is a resident of Norristown and grew up here. She has walked the trails many times and is an artist. Ms. Luciani started to refer to the presentation regarding the Lafayette Trail. At this juncture in the meeting, the Municipal President, Mr. Bates, informed her that this was a Public Hearing, taking comments solely on the proposed Ordinance 26-04. Ms. Luciani commented that any new structures or buildings in Norristown should be required to give money to art so that public artwork can be put in place. Having a data center in Norristown will not benefit the residents and it is just corporate greed.

-Paul Sutherland: He commented that he lives in West Norriton, about one mile from Norristown. He has been following the Plymouth Meeting and Upper Merion public

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hearings, where a developer is attempting to force his way into constructing a data center. He commented that the purpose of these centers is to obtain large amounts of wealth. He is grateful for the development of the ordinance and commented that would be helpful if the use of fossil fuels were not permitted, but he encouraged Council to pass the ordinance.

-Saadiqah Morgan: She commented about the data centers in the State of Tennessee and electricity and water supplies have been stolen from residents of certain townships due to the building of data centers. She also expressed concern that data centers would place many people on unemployment.

-Nadine Hedgeman: She commented that she is against data centers.

Mr. Hitchens, Municipal Solicitor, reiterated that Pennsylvania law requires that municipalities must comply with the legal use law. He also commented that no land development application for a data center has been submitted to Norristown. If this ordinance is adopted this evening, there are conditional requirements that must be completed and addressed as part of the conditional use process.

Since there were no more public comments, Mr. Hitchens formally closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting and recommended that Council take a vote on the proposed Ordinance 26-04.

Motion to Consider Ordinance 26-04: Data Centers in the Heavy Industrial District
Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-04, amending Chapter 320 of the General Laws of Norristown to establish and regulate Data Centers and Data Center Accessory Uses as conditional uses in the Heavy Industrial District.

A motion was made by Vice President Queenan and seconded by Councilwoman Colson to approve Ordinance 26-04. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Planning & Municipal Development – (continued)

Request Authorization to Advertise Ordinance 26-05 for Chicken and Rooster Zoning Amendment - Request for Council to authorize advertisement to amend Chapters 103 and 320 of the Norristown Code to permit and regulate the limited, noncommercial keeping of hens as an accessory use.

Mr. Vincent Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning, reviewed with Council that this motion is to advertise the ordinance which begins the process of bringing the proposed ordinance before Council and receiving public comment later. This proposal creates two separate forms of municipal enforcement: Zoning Enforcement under Chapter 320 and Building/Codes Enforcement under Chapter 103. Mr. Poppa reviewed the proposed

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zoning requirements which would allow no more than four (4) female chickens/hens as an accessory use in single family dwellings in the R1 and R2 residential districts. Roosters would be prohibited, and chickens would not be an accessory to apartments, multifamily dwellings or townhouses. Commercial and residential slaughter would also be prohibited. Structures/coups for the chickens would also have to be approved by the zoning officer and could not be constructed until approval has been given. There are specific rules for location and sanitary upkeep of the coups. A permit would be required by Buildings/Codes and would be renewed every two years. This ordinance would assist residents that complain about the public nuisance of having chickens in the community and would assist in regulating this problem.

Councilman McCoy inquired about residents that currently have roosters, and what would happen to them. Mr. Hitchens, Municipal Solicitor, stated this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. It would depend on the factual circumstances of the property owner and whether there would be a grandfathering instance. Mr. Hitchens stated that as a resident, if you currently have a rooster, you should notify the Municipality (Zoning Department) now.

For the record: Prior to the roll call vote, Ms. Griffen left the room and was not present for the vote.

A motion was made by Vice President Queenan and seconded by Councilwoman Colson to approve the authorization to advertise Ordinance 26-05. **The motion passed unanimously.**

For the Record: Councilwoman Griffen returned to the room during the Progressive New Homes presentation.

Presentation: Progressive New Homes, LLC

Presentation for 600 E. Fornance Development and to Request Authorization to Prepare an Ordinance for A Proposed Zoning Text Amendment to R-2 Residence District Progressive New Homes, LLC is requesting a zoning text amendment to the R-2 Residence District to permit a 48-unit townhouse/multiplex development at 600 E. Fornance Street.

Mr. Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning, introduced Sarah Peck of Progress Homes who is interested in constructing a 48-unit townhouse multiplex development at 600 E. Fornance Street.

Background: A land development use for the property was proposed in 2019 for a Dollar Store. This application was denied. In 2021, a developer proposed a housing

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development which was approved in 2023. No further action has been taken by the developer on this property.

M. Peck has spoken to the current developer and proposed taking over the project. She did not think current engineering plans would be successful. The developer agreed to have Ms. Peck take over the project as long as action was completed quickly. She reviewed the current plans which involved steep slopes and retaining walls. She is concerned that the plan is not feasible and may not meet the market because homes are only eighteen feet wide. The current R-2 zoning regulations forces the developer to do it this way because it does not permit townhomes, only row home styles which can only be twenty feet wide. No homeowner's association is permitted, and individual lots are required. Ms. Beck reviewed a plan based on a development (Arbor Place) that Progressive Homes developed previously in Norristown. The proposed residences have three bedrooms, and two-car garages. Making the planned homes wider and less shallow permits a product that allows a community setting with a green space, and keeps out of the slopes. It meets the market and still has communal space. Ms. Peck reviewed the text amendment language needed to proceed with these plans, for building townhouses rather than a row home type structure. She explained she is not requesting a vote this evening but is seeking feedback that this is an appropriate direction so that Progressive Homes could move forward.

Her option is limited and expires at the end of this month. Estimated tax revenue: \$200,000 and another \$200,000 in fees, resulting from the development. Council Vice President Queenan inquired about the availability of guest parking, and Ms. Peck reviewed the location on the draft plans. Ms. Peck reported that if you own more than two cars, the company does not permit more than two vehicles. Councilwoman Griffen inquired about three vehicles may be something to consider as adult children may be living with parents. Ms. Peck replied the company is strict about limiting two vehicles. Mr. Hitchens, Municipal Solicitor, reminded Council that Council is not approving this particular plan this evening, but rather just considering whether Municipal staff can move forward with revising language in the ordinance to allow this plan to move forward, and consider the ordinance for future land development.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Colson and seconded by Council Vice President Queenan, to direct the Solicitor and staff to prepare a draft ordinance for Council to consider, as suggested by the developer. **The motion passed unanimously.**

For the Record: Items IX, E and F as listed on the August 18th agenda were combined and voted on in one motion.

Resolution No. 26-70: Bid Award for 129 East Main Street Historic Facade Project Request Council authorization to award the bid for the Historic Facade Program project at 129 E. Main Street to Watts Restoration Co., Inc. in the base-bid amount of \$32,700.00.

Request Council approval to authorize the use of \$32,700 in Unobligated Historic Facade Program Funds to Amend the Historic Facade Grant for 129 E. Main Street Request Council approval to authorize the use of \$32,700 in unobligated Historic Facade Program funds to amend the Historic Facade Grant for 129 E. Main Street.

Mr. Poppa, Assistant Director of Planning, reviewed the two resolutions. These bids were advertised and a mandatory pre-bid meeting was held. Bids were due on July 22, 2026, and the lowest responsible bid was with Watts Restoration in the amount of \$28,612.50 with matching funds of \$4,087.50 from the property owner. Mr. Poppa explained that approval is also recommended to approve the awarding of alternate bid #1 to Watts Restoration in the amount of \$32,700 (unobligated funds). The total to award Watts Restoration is \$65,000. These are ARPA funds that if not utilized will need to be returned at the end of the 2026 year.

Councilwoman Robinson inquired about additional matching funds from the property owner for the alternate bid #1. The \$4,087.50 of matching funds from the property owner is for the initial \$32,700 only. Interim Municipal Administrator, Jayne Musonye, clarified that for Council that many of these projects had to be re-bid because they exceeded the \$40,000 cap that was originally outlined for property owners. Since the first and second phase of this project exceeded \$40,000 cap, and staff would like to use the unobligated funds prior to the end of the year, Administration did not go back to the businesses for additional matching funds for the second part of this project. Therefore, the business owner matched \$4,087.50, as originally proposed.

A motion was made by Council Vice President Queenan and seconded by Councilman McCoy to approve Resolution No. 26-70 and to approve the use of \$32,700 in unobligated Historic Program Funds to Amend the Historic Façade Grant for 129 E. Main Street. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Police

Motion: Request for Approval – All Stars Program MOU

Chief Trail reported to Council that the District Attorney's office applied for and was awarded a grant for violence prevention in youth. The DA's office would like Norristown

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police officers to partner in administering/teaching the program. Chief Trail likes to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other agencies when the police department is involved. This outlines that \$24,000 in grant monies would be used toward overtime payment for officers involved with the program. There is an additional \$5,000 in costs that the DA is currently trying to obtain a grant that would also underwrite the additional money. Councilman McCoy, Councilman McMahon, and Councilwoman Robinson had several questions regarding age of students, how students were identified, how the District Attorney's office is involved in violence prevention rather than other community agencies, and officer overtime. Chief Trail explained that the District Attorney's office is interested in crime prevention and partnering with the police department to assist in this aspect. The program would serve grades 5-8 students, with primary focus on grades 5 and 6. There would be a total of twenty students over a two-year program (total of 40 students) and at-risk students would be identified to participate. The goals would be to prevent bullying, drug use, and violent crime. The police officers used for the program would be the SROs and other officers selected by Chief Trail. Chief Trail has control over which officers would be assigned to teach the program, and overtime will be paid when classes are held after scheduled shifts. The two schools that Norristown Police would be involved in providing this program are Eisenhower and Blockson.

A motion was made by Council Vice President Queenan and seconded by Councilwoman Colson to approve the All Stars MOU. **The motion passed as follows: 6 – Yes, 1 – No, with Councilman McCoy voting no.**

Building and Codes Report

Mr. Keith Gordon, Building/Codes Manager, provided a report to Council covering the time period of June 26 through August 17, 2026. He reported the following:

-1,222 -Quick ticket violations

-606 – Proactive code violations

-479 – Property inspections

-2,270 – Contractor Registrations

-240 – Rental inspections

-133 – Property transfers

-On the See/Click/Fix online citizens' complaints: 378 complaints were registered with 72% of those complaints addressed by the Codes Department.

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-17 - Remediation projects completed with the help of the Public Works Department – Private service cleaned up trash and property owner was invoiced.

-3 – Community outreach events.

Mr. Gordon answered Councilman McMahon's question regarding trash: The trash violations are mostly illegal dumping of trash, not the lack of trash being picked up by the contracted trash provider. He also commented on Councilwoman Colson's inquiry – when violations are received, about half respond to the first violation.

Planning and Development Report

Ngoc Gaiser, Senior Planner, updated the Council on the work of the Planning and Development Department.

Land development for the Preserve at Stony Creek (State Hospital) received design review board approval. Owner occupied housing rehabilitation program funded with the Department of Community and Economic Development funds: There are six projects that have been completed and four projects are in the pre-construction phase.

Norristown Small Business Assistance Center has hosted seven workshops through the year for small businesses, and the next one is scheduled for September 2026.

The COVID-19 Business Assistance funded loan program which is funded through the American Rescue Plan Funds and additional funding has provided \$148,049 in forgiveness loans issued to five small business in Norristown.

The Historical Façade Improvement Program has sixteen approved projects, with one in pre-construction phase, three in construction, six out for bids, and six with submitted bids that are in the review phase.

A pre-construction meeting has been scheduled for the sidewalk renovations at 109 E. Main St.

Motion made by Council Vice President Queenan and seconded by Councilwoman Colson to adjourn the meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Scott

Municipal Clerk