

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday, June 4, 2020

The Council Meeting of June 4, 2020 was called to order by Council President Derrick Perry at 7:30 PM by way of the virtual gotomeeting.com application.

There was a **Moment of Silence** followed by the **Pledge of Allegiance**. The following Council members were connected to the meeting:

Valerie Scott-Cooper
Thomas Lepera

Hakim Jones
Rebecca Smith

Sonya Sanders
Derrick Perry

Heather Lewis

Also tuned in were: Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator; Chief Mark Talbot, Norristown Police Chief; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Development; Norman Butts, Director of Finance; Amrinder Singh, Code Manager.

Motion to Approve Minutes

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper, seconded by Councilwoman Sanders**, to approve the Council Work Session Meeting Minutes from May 19, 2020. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Session Announcement

Council President Perry announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to the meeting to discuss litigation issues.

Public Comment

Jayne Murray, 1341 Markley Street, Norristown - "I would like to ask some questions about the drug issues going on around the schools around Markley Street, the thefts, the cleaning issues with Public Works street cleaners not using their trucks right, along with Mascaro's inability to run trash correctly and also if Norristown ever looked into working with the trash company, Whitetail, ever before. Much better service, more trucks, cheaper company cost, and way better services to use and they would love to help take care of Norristown's trash removal. Also, would like to ask about the possibility of bringing back the Town Watch but have them work close with the Township to help curve the crimes that have been on a rise. I think it would help the community to talk to one another again so we know our neighbors and we can help get this town back up and running like it used to be."

Steve Connerton - "I wanted to propose the idea of building a skatepark at this location (Arch Street and Johnson Highway) due to the large plot of land that it offers. Here is a story and some other reasons why I want to move forward with such a cause.

My name is Steve Connerton and I have been a local resident living on Dartmouth Drive for the last 12 years. I am also a (very) small business owner of about 10 years. I say this because I see potential in a number of areas of how a skatepark is a lucrative opportunity for state/borough money and interested investors. My background is in Marketing, Web Design and Development to put it simply. So not only do I want to contribute my personal efforts into building the skatepark, but I can market it, build the website, and maintain all those efforts as well. Skateboarding has done such good in my life and I still skate at the ripe age of 38 and will continue until I can't anymore. This is my way of giving back, not only to skateboarding but to my community. This is one of the ways that I can do just that. Since I have the boring and sappy stuff out of the way, I'd like to give analysis of the current situation. As mentioned, living in Norristown and owning a business, I take notice of the businesses that thrive and the ones that don't. I think we can all agree that the neighboring strip of storefronts is struggling

greatly. Certain storefronts (Painting with a Twist store, for example) never even reopened as a new business, due to what I guess is poor location. A skatepark would bring in hundreds of skateboarders a day that would frequent the local shops, like Joe's Water Ice and Eve's Zeps. These are the businesses that clearly dominate that terrain. And, to be honest, I don't know that any other businesses are even open in that strip, let alone thriving. A skatepark can alleviate some of the shortcomings of the location by the pure numbers aforementioned. Additionally, it will add the need for new businesses like a skate shop (phase 2 – I'd like to own the skate shop – money will be raised for this or donated by myself) and a clothing storefront. If you're unaware. Skateboarding is more than a sport. It is a culture and a way of life that has been embraced by the likes of celebs (Jack Black, Owen Wilson) and Hip Hoppers as well (Wu Tang Clan, Del the Funky Homosapien). This is a booming opportunity, to say the least, and I know how to market to that. Another point that is extremely important to make is the poor condition of this corner. I have been disgusted over the years at some of the trash that I have come across. This includes underwear, condoms, trash and debris among other disgusting and hygienically unsafe items to say the least. At a minimum, the ongoing cleaning of this corner needs to happen AND we build a skatepark for this great community we call home! At the moment, my only concern is if the property is currently under someone's ownership and how to proceed. I want to start to get petitions for this but not until I know that the council is on board with such an effort. Thank you for your time!

Announcements

Council Vice-President Smith provided some information regarding the County move from Red Phase to Yellow Phase as of June 5th such as Work and Congregate Setting Restrictions and Social Restrictions. This information can be found on the Municipal and County websites.

Council President Perry expressed his condolences to the Floyd family. He also gave kudos to all Municipal public service departments for coming together during these challenging times. He also was thankful that the residents were given an opportunity to express themselves through protests. He said that we are leading by example.

Municipal Administrator

A motion to authorize the Municipal Administrator to advertise Ordinance 20-11 related to the potential sale of the Municipality of Norristown's Sanitary Sewer System to Aqua Pennsylvania Wastewater, Inc. for \$82,000,000.

Mr. Crandall Jones explained that this has the support of the Sewer Authority. An application to advertise bids was agreed on and, to date, 2 Public Meetings were held, the next being June 9th at 6 pm.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper, seconded by Councilwoman Lewis**, to approve the advertisement of Ordinance 20-11 for Council's consideration at the June 16, 2020 Work Session. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Council discussion and consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Norristown Chamber of Commerce Norristown Experience Commission

Kym Ramsey, Norristown Chamber of Commerce, provided information about the collaboration of Chambers in Montgomery County and Mr. Bill Corbett of Bill Corbett, Inc. conducted a video Power Point regarding the goals of the Norristown Experience Commission which would create and re-establish districts in the Municipality attracting new diverse businesses and developments. Also included is the plan to hire a Chief Experience Officer.

There was **a motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilwoman Lewis**, to draft a Memorandum of

Understanding with the Norristown Chamber to formalize a public/private partnership for economic development and civic engagement. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Building & Codes Enforcement

ISO Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Assessment Report

Amrinder Singh, Building & Codes Enforcement Manager, provided information about the on-site assessment of the Municipality's building department's operations and their grading and classification from the Building Code Enforcement Evaluation Report issued by ISO.

Police

Resolution 20-43 – Motion to approve or deny requests for Disabled Parking Spaces

Request for the removal of a Handicap Parking Space at the following location:

1002 Arch Street

Chief Talbot explained there is no longer a need for this Space.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Lepera**, to approve Resolution 20-43. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Resolution 20-44 – Motion to approve or deny annual payment of the Police Department's Records Management System

Chief Talbot explained that this payment in the amount of \$23,858.36 has been budgeted for since 2006.

There was a **motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper**, to approve Resolution 20-44. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Departmental Reports

Monthly Reports to update Council on May 2020 activities within presenting departments

Police, Fire and Code Enforcement May updates and activities:

Chief Talbot presented his views regarding recent protests against Police brutality and the recent incident involving a machete-wielding man. He provided many insights and noted that the Police need to practice "Heroic Acts of Restraint."

There was no Fire Report due to Chief O'Donnell receiving an incident call.

Amrinder Singh provided the Code Enforcement Report details. He noted they started property inspections, more building permits, department online training classes and old records were cleaned up.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion to adjourn the virtual Council Meeting by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilwoman Sanders**. **The motion passed unanimously.** There being no further business, the meeting

was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo, Clerk of Council