

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
JUNE 21, 2022

The Council Work Session of June 21, 2022 was called to order by Council President Thomas Lepera at 6:30 PM in the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit 23, 2 West Lafayette Street, 1st Floor, Norristown, PA.

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

Hakim Jones	Rashaad Bates	Rebecca Smith
Tiffani Hendley	Dustin Queenan	Thomas Lepera

Also present were: Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator, Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Chief Derrick Wood, Norristown Police Department; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amrinder Singh, Code Manager; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Chief Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Deputy Chief Richard Lockhart, Norristown Fire Department; Allison Lee, Municipal Engineer.

Motion to approve Minutes

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve the Minutes from June 7, 2022. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Executive Session

Council President Lepera announced that Council did not meet in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting.

Presentations

Presentation on the Adaptive Reuse and Renovation of the Trail Junction Center at Lafayette and Dekalb Streets

Mr. Bill Hartman, Montgomery County Trails & Open Space Planning Manager, provided a history of the site. He noted that the RFP was awarded to Seiler & Drury Architecture. He added that this is the next point for the Chester Valley Trail. He concluded by noting that the purpose of this presentation is to gain input from for future stakeholder interviews.

Doug Drury, accompanied by architects Jeff Drury, Simone Collins and Eric B. He explained that the goal of the building is to provide a place for community use and trail users. He provided a slide presentation. He noted that they plan on having a public meeting at the site to inform people of what has been occurring in the past few months regarding the vision for the site. The slide presentation included topics such as Universal Design, Public Outreach, which included use ideas from potential users of the site, Research, Development Alternatives. He pointed out that the County and Municipality should discuss management of the facility.

Announcements

4th of July Celebration: Monday, July 4th, 10 am Parade, 3:00 pm concerts. Fireworks will begin after dark. Visit norristown.org for more information.

Public Comment

Jim Watters, Hamilton Street

Mr. Watters said he has an issue with the water company charging for sprinklers. Regarding a PUC Public Meeting on June 16th, he said that, according to some data, the tariff supplement may be unlawful and unjust. He added that he has a couple of ideas for how to push this forward. He ended with citing the “Soldier’s Creed.”

Municipal Administrator

Public Hearing on Comcast Cable Franchise Renewal in the Municipality of Norristown

Crandall Jones explained that the Municipality does group purchases of things including Franchise agreements because of the group discount.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Jones**, to open the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Solicitor Sean Kilkenny read a statement pursuant with Act 626 of the Federal Cable Act to be put into the official public hearing record. The statement included benefits such as state of the art services, customer service, free services, recording requirements, franchise fees, protection of right-of-way.

Public Comment:

Leroy James Watters III, Hamilton Street – Mr. Watters stated that he was a lineman with the telephone company and that there are wires with defects between Cherry & Norris Streets that need addressing and there are also some poles in bad condition. He said there should be a stipulation that the network should be held responsible for issues regarding safety and clearances.

Sean Kilkenny noted that any complaints could be addressed to the Municipal Administrator.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to close the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 22-35: Request Council approval for the purchase of storage shelving and police lockers in the amount of \$96,756.13 from Corbett, Inc.

Crandall Jones remarked that the renovations at Municipal Hall are about 60% completed and equipment is needed.

There was **a motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve storage shelving and police lockers in Municipal Hall. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 22-40: Request Council approval for the purchase of audio-visual equipment from Delco Solutions in the amount of \$331,665.

Crandall Jones explained that this equipment is for the chambers, lobby and waiting areas. He said the equipment was taken from the COSTARS list.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the purchase of AV equipment for Municipal Hall. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Request of Municipal Council to direct the Solicitor to attend the June 28, 2022 meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board to support the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority's application for variances required to subdivide the State Hospital grounds related to the 68-acre conveyance to the RDA on behalf of the Municipality.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman Jones**, to approve the request to direct the Solicitor to attend the June 28, 2022 meeting of the Zoning Hearing Board to support the RDA's application for variances required to subdivide the State Hospital grounds related to the 68-acre conveyance to the RDA on behalf of the Municipality. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 22-44: Land Lease Agreement with the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County

Crandall Jones explained that the RDA publicly approved this so it needs a Resolution.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hendley**, to approve the Municipality to enter into a lease agreement with the RDA related to the State Hospital site. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Planning & Municipal Development

Resolution 22-41: Request Preliminary Final Land Development for 1011 New Hope Street (Current Terrace)

Director Jayne Musonye provided a history of the application process for this development.

Mr. John Anderson, Cornerstone Consulting, showed renderings of the proposed project which he said will include a green area. He also stated that they will comply with the Municipal Engineer's comments.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Preliminary Final Land Development for 1011 New Hope Street. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 22-42: Request Preliminary Final Land Development for 1651 Markley Street (Stinson Hall)

Director Jayne Musonye provided a history of the development including 4 waivers in 2005, one of which was for the color of the shutters.

The applicant, Carmen D'Arcangelo and Project Engineer, Joseph Estock, were present. Mr. Estock noted they will comply with the Municipal Engineer's comments. Mr. Estock presented a sampling of the new technology for energy efficiency which included styrofoam on the brick.

There was a **motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve the Preliminary Final Land Development for 1651 Markley Street (Stinson Hall). **The motion passed 6-0.**

CDBG Main Street Economic Development and Job Creation and Retention Assistance Program – 14 W. Main Street – Simply Divine Restaurant application submission for consideration of \$100,000 grant award proposal.

Director Musonye noted that Morgan Prestige LLC bought the building proposing Simply Divine Restaurant.

Director Musonye shared that the information was submitted federally and it was bid through the Planning office. She provided information about the requirements and details of the program.

Ricole, daughter, provided a presentation including their vision, their mission, their goals and their strengths and weaknesses. They asked Council for the \$100,000 to complete their financials.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve \$100,000 for Simply Divine Restaurant in the Main Street Economic Development and Job Creation and Retention Assistance Grant funding to retrofit the current commercial space. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Seeking Council feedback on a proposed sketch plan for the Elmwood Park Zoo Master Plan to transform its facilities and continue its mission of fostering wildlife preservation and educating the expanded 72 acres footprint.

Director Musonye explained that the improvements expand beyond the footprint at the ballfields. She said the purpose is to have a Masterplan rather than piece meal. She added that they need feedback because Zoning is needed in the early stages.

Al Zone, Zoo Director, noted that the Zoo's 100th Anniversary is in 2024. There was a slide presentation that included the Master Plan and Veterinary Hospital. He said there are 4 Phases in the Plan, including exhibits for Asia and South America. Phase 1 includes the Welcome Center and Veterinary Hospital with rare animals and a learning facility. Phase 2 is North America and the Bridge. Phase 3 is Asia and Phase 4 is South America. Welcome Center construction is scheduled to begin prior to the end of the year. He said there are still issues to address regarding Municipal Engineer comments.

Fire Department

For Municipal Council to discuss a potential Municipal Ordinance requiring that all buildings containing more than two apartments be retroactively required to install fire sprinklers within a period of 12 years.

Deputy Fire Chief Lockhart showed a video of a building with a sprinkler and one without a sprinkler.

Deputy Lockhart commented that with all the plastics today, the fire spreads quicker. He provided statistics of fires in Norristown since 1980.

Code Manager Singh noted that there are 1,750 buildings that are affected by this.

Solicitor Kilkenny advised that the insurance carrier be contacted first before moving forward.

There was some discussion regarding ways to fund the sprinkler purchase.

Director Musonye suggested looking into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Council agreed to start the process by drafting an Ordinance.

Public Works

Ordinance 22-01: request for Council to approve changes to the Solid Waste Ordinance, amending Sections 274-2, 274-60, 274-62, 274-63 and 274-68 of Chapter 274.

Director Thomas Odenigbo noted this is a housekeeping issue and it has been advertised.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the amendments to Section 274 “Solid Waste” of the Code of Municipal Ordinances. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Adjournment

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo, Clerk of Council