

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 2, 2022

The Council Meeting of August 2, 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, Norristown, PA 19401.

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

The following Council members were present:

Hakim Jones
Rebecca Smith
Rashaad Bates
Dustin Queenan
Heather Lewis
Thomas Lepera

Also present:

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Municipal Development; Derrick Wood, Norristown Police Chief; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amrinder Singh, Code Manager; Erica Genuardi, Director of Recreation.

Approval of Minutes

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve the Minutes from the July 19, 2022 Council Workshop Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Executive Session Announcement

Council President Lepera announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues.

Announcements

Council Vice President Heather Lewis announced that tonight is "National Night Out" and residents could check it out after the Council Meeting.

Public Comment

Stanley Darden, 1057 Swede Street, Norristown, PA – Mr. Darden commented about U&Os. He said the issue is a dictatorship. He said that weeds are not a big deal and that unpainted walls are not a requirement to use and occupy. He said a client was told to install a heater on a finished third floor which he said is not a safety issue. He said one client had their first dealing with Norristown with U&O issues such as holes in a door and told that a bathroom needs to be remodeled, which he believes are not safety issues. He asked who is running Norristown and are issues such as blight, street people and crime discussed?

Mike Kingsley, 1151 Sterigere Street, Norristown, PA – Mr. Kingsley said he conducts an outreach program for the homeless. He asked that the Dawn to Dusk Ordinance be tabled until things are figured out. He said to push the County and State to do something.

Penny Johnson, 413 E. Spruce Street, Norristown, PA – She said she was homeless 13 years ago and commented that it is dangerous for a woman to live on the street. She said that since the shelter is closed, she requested that the Ordinance regarding Dawn to Dusk Hours for the parks be postponed until there is a functioning shelter. She commented, "Do not throw them in the woods."

Appointments

Resolution 22-51: Appointments to various Boards and Committees

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator, provided the names of those being appointed to the Recreation Committee, Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board and Human Relations.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman Jones**, to approve the appointments. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Municipal Administrator

Request of Council to advertise Ordinance 22-02 to establish dawn to dusk hours for the Municipality's Parks and Recreation areas.

Crandall Jones explained that the purpose is not to intervene aggressively but that there's a need to address what's happening in the Parks. He noted that they have petitioned the County for help. He added that the calls for issues at the parks have increased.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Ordinance 22-02 which amends Code Chapter 225-2 and establish "dawn to dusk" park hours for the Municipality's many parks and recreation areas to prohibit overnight activities in Municipal parks and recreation areas and protect the public safety. **The motion passed 5-1** (Councilwoman Smith voted "nay")

Council discussion of a possible rebranding campaign for the Municipality

Crandall Jones stated that this may be the right time to discuss a rebranding campaign due to factors such as the current redevelopment activity in Norristown, the skatepark and the land acquisition from the State Hospital. He asked for feedback from Council.

Councilman Jones commented that it seems counterproductive and that we should be working towards cleaning up the town. Council Vice President Lewis, Council President Lepera and Councilman Bates agreed. Councilman Queenan suggested informing the public of what is being done to improve Norristown.

Crandall Jones said he would bring this matter back another time.

Finance

Resolution 22-49: request for Council to approve the execution of a Master Equipment Lease-Purchase Agreement with Banc of America Public Capital Corporation

Jennifer Diercksen, Municipal Financial Adviser, Davenport & Company, presented a Power Point highlighting the RFP process. She stated there were 6 responses to the RFP and Bank of America had the lowest rates and terms. She provided a detailed explanation of their proposal.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Jones**, to approve the Master Equipment Lease-Purchase Agreement with Banc of America Public Capital Corporation to finance the first three years of our approved 2022-2026 CIP Budget. **The motion passed 5-0** (Councilman Bates was not present for voting.)

Police

Resolution 22-48: request for Municipal Council to approve the annual payment of \$24,024.03 to CODY Computer Systems, Inc. to maintain the Police Department's Records Management System.

Chief Derrick Wood said they are currently using 2006.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve Resolution 22-48 to approve the annual payment of \$24,024.03 to CODY Computer Systems, Inc. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 22-50: motion to approve Civil Service Rules and Regulations Amendment

Chief Derrick Wood explained that this would make it possible for more people to qualify to take the exam.

There was a **motion by Councilman Jones, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 22-50 Civil Service Resolution changing Sections 3.6.A(1)(c) – “General Qualifications-Applications for Promotion – Police

Department” and Section 4.4 “Written Examination” of the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Planning and Municipal Development

Presentation by Developer of One West Main Street Project development status.

Ola Alkudsi and Halal Mahdi were present for a Power Point presentation.

Director Musonye provided a history of the project.

Mr. Mahdi noted that the 4th and 5th floor are ready for move-in and he is trying to market for commercial on the 1st floor. He showed the floor plans on the Power Point of the 2nd to 5th floors. He hopes for completion by the end of 2023.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Norristown and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission to complete a Traffic Study of the Norristown Redevelopment Area utilizing \$80,000 in Grant funding awarded to the Municipality through the Transportation and Community Development Initiative.

Director Musonye said that the data will be useful when applying for funds. She stated that a grant was received and that state and federal requirements must be met.

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve entering into a MOU with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to complete the Municipality’s approved traffic study of the Norristown Redevelopment Area. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Gaudenzia Foundation, Inc. Zoning Hearing Board special exception application for an outpatient behavioral health service use at 100 and 102 West Fornance Street.

Director Musonye explained that the neighbors within 300 feet of the location must be notified regarding use of the former Fugo Eye Center. She noted that Council is being advised before the application goes before the Zoning Hearing Board at the end of the month. She provided information about the Gaudenzia Foundation such

as it being a non-profit offering such services as group counseling and detox center with the hours being 5 days a week.

There was **a motion by Council President Lepera, seconded by Council Vice President Lewis**, to send the Solicitor to the Zoning Hearing Board meeting to oppose the application. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Departmental Reports

Public Works

Director Odenigbo shared they are working with Kehoe Construction on re-surfacing from PECO projects until the end of September 2022. He noted that people are parking on the sidewalks on the PennDOT Markley Street project. He is meeting with Mascaro twice a month regarding Solid Waste Collection and also driving around with inspectors. Mr. Odenigbo said that trash dumping has increased and that it is time consuming to pick it up. There are sidewalk repairs and paving being done. He wants to host an Information Session with the community regarding the alleys.

Administration

Crandall Jones shared his report in writing with Council. He said there is an underground storage tank on Main & Dekalb Streets and that the County has taken responsibility for it which includes going through a process with the DEP and RDA. The steel structure for the new Municipality building has been completed. He provided the details of the site work that is being done. He is waiting for the final contract documents for the Riverfront Park project and he gave an encampment notice. He is working with Senator Capalletti and other services regarding the homeless population. He is waiting for documents regarding stormwater measures for Harding Blvd. and Roosevelt Field. Labor negotiations with the Police will be conducted and he will share offers and counters. He will reach out to the Crossing Guides labor union. He will meet with department heads and will start the Operating Budget. He is waiting for the Flow Meter Testing results from the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority. Skate Park Phase 2 is underway in 4-6 weeks – waiting for DEP with soil samplings. Waiting on Governor's Budget regarding the Consolidated Firehouse. Oak Street Courts need new backboards. The Recreation Center grant money that was not spent can be used to resolve Oak Street Park and the slide issue at MLK Park. The Municipality

is 95% responsible for the Crawford Park Foundation wall according to a decision by a Court Judge. It is a Fire, Public Works and Mascaro safety issue at this point. The Municipal Solicitor reached out to an Attorney who advised that it is necessary that the wall be fixed. Mr. Jones said he will bring before Council a Resolution with a CIP amendment. There is a Grant for vulnerable communities to address the issue of equitable energy. The Municipality was asked to participate in an Energy Resilience Project where they could receive \$50,000.

Adjournment

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo