

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 7, 2023

The Council Meeting of February 7, 2023 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 19401.

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

The following Council members were in attendance:

Rebecca Smith
Rashaad Bates
Dustin Queenan
Lauren Hughes
Heather Lewis
Thomas Lepera

Also in attendance were:

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator; Acting Chief Michael Bishop, Norristown Police Department; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Amrinder Singh, Codes Manager; Erica Genardi, Director of Parks & Recreation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2023 Council Work Session. **The motion passed 5-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council met in Executive Session to discuss litigation issues.

OATH OF OFFICE

Oath of Office – Council member, Lauren Hughes, 4th District

Judge Monica Gibbs conducted the swearing-in ceremony of Lauren Hughes, who was surrounded by family members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dana Dentice, PHS, provided information to Council about Tree programs at the PA Horticultural Society. She shared information about a project PHS has embarked on. She provided information about the benefits of trees in the community including improving mental and cardiovascular health, reduce symptoms of asthma, hypertension, ADHD, reduce stress and contribute to lower crime and death rates. She added that they have partnered with such agencies as Keep Norristown Beautiful, CCATE, ACLAMO, Norristown School District, MCPC, Colonial Canopy Trees and Penn State Extension on a successful fall planting and tree giveaway of 70 trees. She said she would like to work with any resident or staff member to share more information about their program.

Jim Watters, Hamilton Street – Mr. Watters said that Public Works gets an A+. He said that PECO replaced rotted poles on Buttonwood Street; cars on Hamilton Street parking in muddy backyards; Ordinance or issue with DEP? Going to Code next; Handicapped curb cuts – one side not done; Whitehall Road open when it floods; can use Sterigere – drew a concept.

Lynn Watters, Hamilton Street – She shared that there is a large number of people living in tents under the bridge. Some are drug addicts and flood victims where some suffer from PTSD. She said that permanent housing is the answer.

Gloria Llanos, 806 West Airy Street – She explained that she was involved in a car accident at Main and Haws Ave. and the other driver provided his ID to the Police but the ID was from Mexico. The car was towed and she is wondering how he got his car back with his ID being from Mexico. That same car had been towed before and brought back.

She was referred to Acting Chief Bishop.

Dominic Guiffrida, 1419 Boyer Blvd. – He shared ways to make the community better that includes the stormwater management and he suggested working together for a resolution to the homelessness. He also said he has connections for an opportunity to use new technology and funding to build a hydrostructure. He also shared information about an electric bus program with government supplied money.

Julianne Schaffer, Montgomery County resident – She shared that there is assistance available towards the care of trees. She said that an Ordinance could help towards training, etc.

APPOINTMENTS

Resolution 23-12: Appointment to various Advisory Boards, Committees and Commissions

Crandall Jones provided the names for the appointments to the Planning Commission: Omar Livingston, term expiring December 31, 2026; Amber Queen, term expiring December 31, 2024; Tim Kozack, term expiring December 31, 2023.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 23-12. **The motion passed 5-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Council to consider appealing the Zoning Hearing Board decision approving with conditions a Code Blue homeless shelter at 800 West Marshall Street

Ms. Musonye noted that the ZHB decision was made on January 24, 2023 with the stipulation of “until perpetuity.”

Solicitor Kilkenny explained that there is a 45 day period for a written decision. He added this is a Variance case.

Council President Lepera noted that the problem is “perpetuity” because it could stunt the growth in Norristown. He said he was in favor but it must be applied for every year, giving notice about the location and the community must be notified.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to appeal the ZHB decision. **The motion passed 4-1 (with Councilwoman Smith against.)**

BUILDING & CODES ENFORCEMENT

Historical Architectural Review Board – January 2023

Amrinder Singh provided the addresses for HARB applications which are in compliance with the HARB Ordinance:

901 Dekalb Street	335 E. Marshall Street
312 Stanbridge Street	1221 W. Airy Street

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve the HARB applications. **The motion passed 5-0.**

PARKS & RECREATION

Resolution 23-14: ratifying a contract in the amount of \$23,500 with Zambelli Fireworks to provide July 4th fireworks for the Municipality of Norristown

Erica Genuardi noted that the company is local and provides fireworks for neighboring areas. She said she is looking into a grant from PECO.

President Lepera asked about using sponsors. Crandall Jones said they would look into that.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to ratify the contract with Zambelli Fireworks. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Crandall Jones noted that the Meeting Schedule needs to be ratified.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to ratify the Council Meeting Schedule. **The motion passed 5-0.**

POLICE

Resolution 23-11: Motion to approve requests for Disabled Parking Spaces

225 East Elm Street

Acting Chief Bishop noted that the applicant provided all the required medical documents and there is no off-street parking for her.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the Disabled Parking Space. **The motion passed 5-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Council approval of a one-year agreement between the Municipality of Norristown and Lodge #31 of the Fraternal Order of Police for January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

Crandall Jones explained that the agreement includes a 3% increase. He added that a drug testing program was established and should be ready for summer.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the one-year agreement. **The motion passed 5-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Public Works

Mr. Odenigbo shared there were right-of-way inspections, filling potholes, alley paving, striping. He added that they are getting equipment ready; there was tree trimming; street lights; trash collection; recycling; street sweeping. They are looking to fill positions in the department.

Administration

Crandall Jones stated that an analysis of the Police Department is underway then it's the interview process. Regarding Poley Park – the contractor did not meet the Responsible Contractor Ordinance requirements so all bids were rejected – will go through the Keystone process. Regarding the illegal sale of guns, he suggested targeting gun manufacturers regarding illegal guns. As far as Roosevelt Field – Mr. Jones noted we have an agreement with NASD regarding an appraiser; a security check was conducted of the Municipal network – will move to multi-factor authentication; employee satisfaction survey – on February 18, 2023 at the retreat, the results will be discussed. The Municipal building may be open in May/June 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Lewis, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo