

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 20, 2023

The Council Work Session of June 20, 2023 was called to order by Council Vice President, Heather Lewis, 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
Tiffani Hendley
Dustin Queenan
Lauren Hughes
Heather Lewis

Also in attendance were:

Acting Chief Michael Bishop, Norristown Police Department; Patrick Hitchens, Acting Municipal Solicitor; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Amrinder Singh, Codes Manager; Erica Genuardi, Director of Parks and Recreation, Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Minutes of the June 6, 2023 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council Vice President Lewis announced that Council met in Executive Session to discuss litigation and real estate issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ACLAMO "Summer Bash" June 21st from 9 to 1, 801 West Marshall Street, Norristown.

Summer Concerts at the Bandshell – June 25th 7 pm, "Plaid Salmon."

4th of July Celebration – 10 am Parade starts at St. Francis Church to Main Street. There will be a concert in the Park and Fireworks at 10 pm.

Movie Nights at Elmwood Park, Thursdays at 8 pm. There are flyers available.

PRESENTATION

Update to Council by the Government Affairs Consulting Firm, Pugliese Associates

There was a Power Point presentation with Rocco Pugliese regarding the revenue available from Harrisburg that Norristown could use for major projects such as Main & Dekalb. He provided information about the State's budget and noted that State Representative Matthew Bradford spoke with the Secretary of the Department of Community & Economic Development regarding Main & Dekalb to emphasize the importance of getting the funding. He stated that the Governor will put out a new system of the post-approval process. He said that if there's an approval, it will be known by the end of October 2023. Jayne Musonye explained the RCAP process where the cost is shared and must be approved by the Governor. Mr. Pugliese noted that all 4 caucuses must vote "yes."

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Watters, Hamilton Street – Mr. Watters said there was no Veterans meeting – they will be back in September. He reported that he was denied a request regarding the Freedom of Information about the blighted properties not on the tax records. He said there is an appeal process. He was going to the school board meeting after the Council meeting because he said that if the blighted properties aren't being taxed, it would affect them.

Solicitor Hitchens provided the rules for Public Comment.

Michael Board, 1013 Bill Smith Boulevard – Mr. Board is a Pastor and shared some upcoming events: Jazz Night at Lady T's Restaurant on June 30th and a Street Festival on August 19th at the Cherry Street Park. Flyers were available.

Max Kolsten, 701 E. Fornance Street – He had concerns about whether or not the roads would be dedicated that are part of the 600 E. Fornance Street project.

Rocky Romanielles, Kohn Street – He complained that his neighbor doesn't cut their grass. He said there are neighbors who switch car tags. He also noted that him and his wife were denied Handicapped Parking.

Jane Pekol, 726 E. Marshall Street – Ms. Pekol addressed the comment about the unhoused getting gift cards to go to Villanova. She accused Council of gaslighting. She said that President Lepera didn't respond to her. She said that Council should donate the money they supposedly would have used for gift cards and donate to the homeless. She asked for a public renouncement.

Sherry Johnson, 1680 Beaver Hollow Road, West Norriton – She held up a poster which read, "House Keys Not Sweeps." She said there are success stories about the homeless but that there are so many that need proper housing. She suggested people volunteer at the Hospitality Center.

APPOINTMENTS

Administration of Oath of Office for Entry Level Police Officer

Chief Dillon shared that Matthew Davison was number one on the hiring list. Mr. Davison accepted the job in February 2023 and graduated from the Academy in June 2023. Judge Hunsicker performed the swearing-in of entry-level Police Officer Matthew Davison.

POLICE

Resolution 23-43: Request for Council to approve payment to CODY Computer Services, Inc.

Chief Dillon explained that this is for Report Management.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 23-43 authorizing payment of \$24,024.03 to CODY Computer Services, Inc. for the period between 8/1/2023 to 7/31/2024. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution for Council approval to file and accept the Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Program Grant for FY 2023

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve an application for a Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Program Grant to bolster available funds in creating a community camera system for Norristown to assist the Norristown Police Department in preventing, detecting and investigating violent crime. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Resolution 23-44 of 2023: approving an agreement with the Montgomery County Norristown Public Library for the implementation of a Story Path Pilot Program at Scag Cottman Park and Guardino Park

Jayne Musonye explained that Council Vice President Lewis told her about Story Path that she saw in Ardmore.

Ms. Musonye conducted a Power Point presentation. She said they reached out to the Norristown Public Library and the sites were selected, which had to be approved by engineers. There would be 20 Story Book Stations. The cost would be \$91,000 for Guardino Park and \$169,900 for Scag Cottman Park. Ms. Musonye explained that this is only the concept and that she will be back with the actual specifications.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hendley**, to approve entering into a cooperative agreement with the Montgomery County Norristown Public Library to pilot a story trail program in two (2) Norristown Parks. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 23-45 of the Municipality of Norristown granting Preliminary/Final Approval to Harold Kamal (c/o K&K Acquisitions, LLC) for twenty-five (25) new rowhouses at 600 East Fornance Street

Jayne Musonye provided a background of the process that led to the Preliminary/Final Approval request. She added that the Developer met with neighbors on April 26, 2023 and May 4, 2023 before they submitted their development plan.

Tom Knab, Project Engineer and Consultant from Renew Design Group, was present as well as the owners. He said there will be 25 rowhomes with rear garages with privately-owned roads and stormwater management to reduce the rate of runoff. The Power Point showed renderings of the homes. Mr. Knab addressed the Waivers. Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering, recommended the Waiver requests.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hendley, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 23-45 granting Preliminary/Final Land Development Approval to Harold Kamal (c/o K&K Acquisitions, LLC) for the development of twenty-five (25) rowhouses on existing vacant land at 600 East Fornance Street. **The motion passed 6-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 23-36: requesting Municipal Council to approve the License Agreement with DAJ Brewery for park and playground area at 151 W. Marshall Street, known as Cherry Street Park, located at 151 W. Marshall Street, owned by DAJ Brewery in exchange for an annual fee of \$1.

Solicitor Hitchens explained that the owner discovered that the “pocket park” was privately owned and was offered a license agreement for public use.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 23-36 permitting the Municipality to continue to maintain and allow public access and use of Cherry Street Park, located at 151 W. Marshall Street, owned by DAJ Brewery in exchange for an annual fee of \$1. **The motion passed 6-0.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo