

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 2, 2023

The Council Meeting of August 2, 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
Thomas Lepera

Also in attendance were:

Municipal Administrator, Crandall Jones; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Acting Police Chief Michael Bishop, Norristown Police Department; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning & Development; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; 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 July 5, 2023 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 5-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council did not meet in Executive Session prior to the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The newly renovated Municipal Hall will be open on Tuesday, August 8th.

“Taste of Norristown” Street Food Festival – Saturday, August 19, 2023 from 4 to 9 pm at von C Brewing Company, 1210 Stanbridge Street. Councilwoman Smith shared that there are flyers on the table as well as applications for vendors.

Concerts in the Park – Sunday, August 6 at 7 pm - “Deja Groove.”

PUBLIC COMMENT

Matthew Ritts, 450 Forrest Avenue, “Housing First” - Mr. Ritts handed out a “Housing First Fact Sheet” and explained that this is the first permanent, stable housing choice for programs. He said that it saves more money than it costs. He said that we must start fixing the homelessness situation. Council President Lepera suggested that Mr. Ritts bring this to the attention of the County, who has the ability to implement this program.

Pastor Mike Ward, New Birth Church – Pastor Ward said there are flyers on the table providing information about “Free Food and Music” on August 19th at the Church and “Music Night” on August 25th at Lady T’s, 312 Johnson Highway.

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

(CUI-23) Request for Conditional Use Approval for “The Grand at Main & Dekalb.” MM Partners, as the selected Developers of the Main & Dekalb property, are seeking approval of Conditional Use Application (CUI-23) for the proposed Mixed-Use residential building in the TC (Town Center) District.

There was **a motion by Council President Lepera, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to open the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Solicitor Kilkenny explained that this Hearing was previously opened on July 18th where he entered the Exhibits but there was a request to have the Hearing continued until tonight.

Mr. Mark Kaplan, Esquire, representing MM Partners (equitable owners), provided a binder with Exhibits. This binder included an "Offer of Proof," which summarized what some of the witnesses have said and a presentation regarding the application. Also included were a copy of the Deed, a copy of redacted document, Agreement of Sale copy, copy of Land Survey, copy of Conditional Use Request Letter, Pennoni Conditional Use Review Letter copy,

Mr. Kaplan noted that the Review Letter doesn't show any areas of the project as "non-compliant".

Solicitor Kilkenny said that he explained "Party Status" at the first Public Hearing and he explained it again for tonight's Public Hearing. He asked if anyone would be cross-examining any of Mr. Kaplan's witnesses and if anyone brought their own witnesses. No one requested any cross-examination.

Mr. Kaplan provided information about the proposed project including the amenities, site improvements, commercial use, loading berths, window coverage (which will be raised during the Design Phase.)

Mr. Chris Boccella, Project Director for DAJ Main & Dekalb Inc., affiliate of MM Partners LLC, was sworn in by the Court Reporter. Mr. Chris testified "yes" to adopting the information provided by Mr. Kaplan regarding the project plans and his contribution to the proposed project with no changes, additions or clarifications.

Mr. John Grant, Engineer, Stantec Consulting Services, was also sworn in by the Court Reporter. Mr. Kaplan said that due to the fact that the Pennoni Letter stated there are no deficiencies with this application, Mr. Grant will testify to subsections A through G without explaining each one. Mr. Grant testified "yes" to adopting the information provided by Mr. Kaplan regarding the details of Mr.

Grant's contribution to the proposed project with no changes, additions or clarifications.

Mr. John Marshall, Architectural Design and Project Engineer, was also sworn in by the Court Reporter. Mr. Marshall read the material in the presentation binder regarding the architectural elevations, designs and facades. Mr. Kaplan asked if these features comply with other objective material. Mr. Kaplan confirmed that "the facades create a variety of styles that delineates the commercial spaces." Mr. Marshall adopted as his testimony that which Mr. Kaplan presented as well as his own explanation with no changes, additions or clarifications.

Ms. Nicole Kline Elsier, Licensed Professional Engineer with McMann Traffic Consultants, was sworn in by the Court Reporter. Ms. Elsier performed a Traffic Study according to PennDOT's guidelines. She provided the results of the Study. She swore that her testimony was correct.

Council members asked questions about EV charging as well as other sustainability features.

Regarding questions regarding the number of parking spaces, Director Musonye noted that this project is "transit oriented" and marketed for tenants that don't drive.

Municipal Administrator, Crandall Jones, added that it's part of the Plan to reduce the carbon footprint.

There was no Public Comment.

There was **a motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to close the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Solicitor Kilkenny advised Council that they can deliberate on this matter privately.

BUILDING & CODE COMPLIANCE

To approve or deny the Historical Architectural Review Board Applications received, reviewed and recommended for approval by the HARB for July 2023

Amrinder Singh, Code Manager, provided the addresses of the applications that were submitted for approval for repairs, construction and demolition in compliance with the Code Ordinance:

129 W. Airy Street
613 Noble Street
825 Dekalb Street
“The Grand at Main & Dekalb”

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the HARB applications for the above properties. **The motion passed 5-0.**

FIRE

Resolution 23-53: Adoption of the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Fire Chief O'Donnell explained that this is a housekeeping item, noting that the Plan must be updated every 5 years according to the Disaster Mitigation Act, which addresses most man-made and natural disasters. He added that this makes them eligible for grant money.

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the adoption of Resolution 23-53. **The motion passed 5-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 23-54: Waiver to have Food Trucks at 1210 Stanbridge Street, Norristown, PA 19401, on August 19, 2023 for the “Taste of Norristown” event

Mr. Jones explained that the event will take place at vonC Brewery.

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

American Rescue Plan Act funding recommendation

Mr. Jones conducted a Power Point. He noted that the remaining amount is \$7,575.520. The breakdown for the spending was as follows:

- \$4,000,000 Recreation Center and Roosevelt Field
- \$2,000,000 Budget support for future CIP projects
- \$ 700,000 Blight Remediation
- \$ 500,000 Poley Park
- \$ 250,000 Crawford Park or additional park and contingencies upgrades
- \$ 130,000 Storybook Signs

They decided not to fund the Norristown Library project. There were 2 other requests that may be eligible for funding from ARPA.

There was a **motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to accept the recommended funding. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Pennsylvania Municipal League – 2023 Municipal Leadership Summit: appointment of Voting Delegate and Alternate for the 2023 Resolutions Committee and Annual Business Meetings Representative

There was a **motion by Council President Lepera, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to nominate Dustin Queenan as the Voting Delegate and to nominate Crandall Jones as the alternate as per the bylaws of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. **The motion passed 5-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Monthly Updates to Council on the July 2023 activities within the presenting Departments: Finance, Planning and Recreation

Finance

Director Kathy Pfister presented her report via Power Point.

The presentation included “Financial Status” and the “Budget Summary for June 2023.” She presented the numbers for the Revenue including Real Estate Taxes, Act 511 Taxes and the Federal/State/Local Taxes. She presented the numbers for Expenditures by Department and Expense Category. She said that the Expenditures were on track.

Planning

Director Musonye noted that they are waiting for proposals for the State Hospital grounds; the Main & Dekalb project will return to Council; the Montgomery Park Housing project will go before the Zoning Hearing Board for an extension; the “First Time Home Buyers” is encouraging; the Baer Building is continuing with the Axe Throwing proposal; she has not heard back from 257 E. Main Street; Elmwood Park Zoo additional parking is moving fast with Land Development approval needed for the Bridge; Benjamin Court – 5 houses already sold; Green Valley Road – final engineering comments need to be met; 15-17 East Fornance Street completed; 2636 W. Wood Street finishing up; 820 Thomas Street – not heard back; 722 Sandy Street – requested a 1 year extension; 1651 Markley Street – going through Final Land Development Agreement; Curren Terrace is going through the engineering comments; Justice Center continues; Kennedy-Kenrick is seeking a Demolition Permit; 600 East Fornance Street will record Plans when Land Development approves; Main & Arch will have bidding in 2 weeks.

Recreation

Erica Genuardi shared that the Summer Camp has 106 kids. There was good feedback. New equipment was delivered to McCann & Bartash Parks. Fall projects include a Basketball League and Indoor Soccer. The Concerts and Movie Nights have good turnouts and good feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Santangelo
Clerk of Council