

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 17, 2023

The Council Work Session of Tuesday, October 17, 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:

Municipal Administrator, Crandall Jones; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Acting Police Chief, Michael Bishop; 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, Municipal Engineer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Minutes of the October 3, 2023 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council did not meet in Executive Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

“Trunk or Treat” October 31st at the Recreation Center from 4 pm to 7 pm. If interested in having a trunk, contact or thenrie@norristown.org or hlewis@norristown.org

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Watters, Hamilton Street, Norristown – Mr. Watters passed out copies of a Times Herald article regarding live wires falling on a school bus. He said that 404 West Airy Street and other blighted properties need to be brought up to code and he found 30 properties that are “eyesores.” He commented that 500 Cherry Street no longer has graffiti.

Olivia Brady, Norristown – She said that the humane response for the prison would be to re-purpose it. She said the prison building is an asset. She said that it was never offered for sale and it should be used for the benefit of the town.

Pauline Braccio, Towamencin – She said she was surprised to see Thomas Lepera was in Harrisburg because she said that Town Council doesn’t usually go to Harrisburg. She asked why the \$7 million in the County budget can’t go to renovating the prison. She thinks it is because there is money to be made and that the County does things underhandedly.

Peggy Dellisanti, Norristown – She said to take time to do studies regarding the prison. She said it is a gem and to not let it go. She said that someone in the community commented, “That’s been there my whole life.” She also commented that the “underpass is ugly.”

David McMahon – He provided a little background on the prison saying it was in a design competition that is not in our era now. He said there is an opportunity to tell a story and that this is one more case where the County isn't doing good by Norristown. He asked that Council press the County to do something better.

APPOINTMENTS

Administration of Oath of Office for Entry Level Police Officers

Chief Bishop said that these Officers are part of the Civil Service List from 2022. He noted they received May 2023 Academy education and training. He provided some personal information about Ausavin Vickyanont and Edward Butterworth, Jr.

Judge Denise Ashe conducted the swearing-in.

POLICE

Recognition of Corporal Jason Hoover for multiple life-saving incidents

Chief Bishop explained that Corporal Hoover saved 4 shooting victims in 4 separate shootings. He was presented with a Citation of Commendation.

Recognition of Officer Edward Butterworth, Sr. for a life-saving incident

Chief Bishop said that the incident occurred on September 4, 2023 when a pickup truck went into the river. Two people were unable to swim. There was a water rescue because the truck was sinking. He said that Officer Butterworth dove in and guided the victims to the edge of the river. He was presented with a Citation of Commendation.

The Supreme Court Justice of PA also presented him with a plaque of Commendation.

Resolution 23-72: Appointments in the Norristown Recreation Masterplan Advisory Committee

Crandall Jones said that a grant was received. He named the appointed members of the Recreation Masterplan Advisory Committee. There was **a motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 23-72. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

A Public Hearing to consider adoption of Ordinance 23-06 for an amendment to Chapter 320, Zoning, of the Municipal Code to include Section 320-271 “Amendment Devices”, to include definitions for “AMUSEMENT DEVICE” and “ARCADE”, to amend the Use Regulations subsection of all applicable Zoning Districts, and to amend the off-street parking and loading requirements for Arcades.

There was a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Lewis, to open the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Solicitor Kilkenny marked the exhibits: M1: Zoning Ordinance Amendment; M2: Montgomery County Planning Commission Review Letter; M3: Recommendation by the Norristown Planning Commission; M4: Copy of the Advertisement.

Solicitor Kilkenny explained that Council can either take action or continue the Public Hearing.

Planning Director, Jayne Musonye, provided a background of how the Ordinance Amendment came about. She said that research was done in order to make a recommendation. She said that the Municipal Planner recommends approval.

Council Vice President Lewis asked if there is an official count of businesses with 4 or more machines and, also, if it is approved, what would be the process?

Director Musonye responded there is no official count and there are businesses that are being grandfathered in until a final approval of the Ordinance.

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

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to adopt Ordinance 23-06. **The motion passed 6-0.**

A Public Hearing to consider Resolution 23-73 of the Municipality of Norristown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, approving the application of Abel and Daniel Management, Inc., for an Intermunicipal Transfer of Liquor License Number R-13874 from its prior location in Upper Moreland Township, Montgomery County, to 1719 Markley Street, Norristown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania; repealing all inconsistent Resolutions; providing a Severability Clause and providing an effective date.

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

Ed Tarascus, the occupant's Attorney, provided copies of the floor plans, photos and menus.

Solicitor Kilkenny entered the following exhibits: M1: Copy of Resolution; M2: Copy of Public Hearing advertisement.

Mr. Tarascus said the license is in safe keeping with Daniel Ceron, President of Abel and Daniel Management. Mr. Tarascus was sworn in by the court reporter in order to testify.

He said that all 14 liquor licenses in Norristown were taken. He explained some of the details of the Floor Plans such as the entrance, the Bar and the Kitchen. He said the food being served will be Seafood and Steak Mexican Style. He provided the days and hours of operation and number of patrons. He said he will hire locally. He noted they will be RAMP certified.

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

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 23-73. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Presentation of a proposed Mixed-Use development at 48 East Main Street by JKRP Architects

Amy Ferrell, Attorney, noted that this presentation is for information purposes only with no decisions being made.

There was a Power Point presentation showing an aerial view of the property which is across from the Courthouse on Main Street. The proposed development includes 7 stories and a ground floor. There will also be 140 apartment units to the rear and auto access from Lafayette Street. She added they will need Zoning Relief and will also discuss LERTA. She said the target buyer is the mobile single professional.

Resolution 23-71: request for Preliminary/Final Land Development approval for 825 Dekalb Street

Jayne Musonye explained that this application was brought before the Norristown Planning Commission on August 8, 2023 and they recommended approval. It also went before the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).

There was a Power Point by K & Y Enterprise, Inc. The 4 parcels in the development are: 801 Dekalb Street, 815 Dekalb Street, 821 Dekalb Street and 825 Dekalb Street in the NC District but tonight is focused on 815 and 825 Dekalb Street. They plan on demolishing 825 Dekalb and add on to 815 Dekalb. There will be a 2,000 sq. ft. addition to the grocery store.

The applicant went before the Montgomery County Planning Commission and the Norristown Planning Commission recommended approval. The HARB recommended approval subject to maintaining some of the historic features. Pennoni also recommended with compliance.

Solicitor Kilkenny asked Mr. Dymtryk, Municipal Engineer, if there were any issues with the requested 5 Waivers? Mr. Dymtryk had no issues.

Councilman Queenan asked what will be going in the space and President Lepera asked if the existing building is being demolished.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 23-71. **The motion passed 6-0.**

POLICE (cont'd)

Resolution 23-68: Request for Council approval to purchase and upfit (3) Ford Interceptor SUV Patrol Vehicles from Chapman Auto Group, a Costars vendor, at a cost not to exceed \$276,000.00.

Chief Bishop noted that there is short window to order Police vehicles. They require specialized equipment. He said the Canine vehicle is \$98,000.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 23-68 for the purchase of 3 new Ford Explorer Police Interceptor Hybrid SUVs to replace 3 current fleet vehicles that have been approved through the 2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) presented by the Police Department. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 23-69: Request for Council approval to enter into a 3-year contract with United Public Safety, Inc. (UpSafety) in the amount of \$139,958 as the new Parking Enforcement and Traffic Citation vendor with e-File.

Chief Bishop explained that Officer Nick Dumas spear-headed the project. He noted they had issues with PASSPORT, the vendor responsible for the technology used to issue parking violations, so they cancelled their contract.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve Resolution 23-69.

PUBLIC WORKS

Resolution 23-70: Authorizing a purchase not to exceed \$196,000 from Chapman Ford and Dejana Truck and Utility Equipment for two (2) 2024 Ford extended cab F-350 4x4 Pickup Trucks with snow plows and salting capabilities.

Thomas Odenigbo, Public Works Director, asked for approval to authorize the purchase of 2 vehicles.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 23-70. The trucks will be procured through Chapman Ford and the snow equipment will be provided and installed by Dejana Equipment. **The motion passed 6-0.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
Roseann Santangelo