

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
WORK SESSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 15, 2024

The Council Work Session of Tuesday, October 15, 2024 was called to order by Council President, Thomas Lepera, at 6:30 PM in Municipal Hall Chambers, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

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

The following Council members were in attendance:

Rebecca Smith
William McCoy
Lauren Hughes
Dustin Queenan
Thomas Lepera

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Norristown Police Chief Jacqueline Bailey-Davis; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Sean Turner, Assistant Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Keith Gordon, Code Enforcement Manager; Bri'Ana Hawkins, Recreation Director; Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to approve the Minutes of the October 1, 2024 Council Meeting. **The motion passed 5-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

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

PRESENTATION

Sewer Authority Updates to Council

Barry Thompson, Director of the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority, informed Council that the treatment plant is able to handle the capacity for the development in Norristown. He

provided a Power Point of the plant from a drone shot from Ford Street. Mr. Thompson invited everyone to take a tour of the treatment plant. He noted that the Administration Building is now off-site due to a flooding issue.

He explained that the treatment plant was built in 1932 along the river due to its low point. He noted that the bad news is that it is prone to flooding. He said there is a pump station in West Norriton that flows to the plant.

He proceeded to provide details about the operations. He noted that the 3 blowers are from the 1950s and inefficient so they have been replaced with 3 new blowers, which are modernized and flood-proof. He added that a building has been built for them. He said that the pumps and equipment have been replaced which have impacted electric usage so PECO was contacted and they ended up receiving a rebate of \$182,000. He said there was an article in the Times Herald about this.

Mr. Thompson noted a brick structure used for some maintenance work was knocked down and replaced with a larger maintenance garage for 3 vehicles.

He said they received a 50% \$467,000 State Grant to replace some of the remaining equipment damaged by flooding. The new pumps are modern, submersible and the electrical system is flood-proof. He said there is a 6 to 9 month lag time in receiving the equipment. He said this is part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Another item for the Capital Improvement Plan is replacing some poles. He added that the Transformer has passed its usage life so they will need to purchase a new one and use the old one as a backup. He noted that they ordered one but it is not expected until 2025-2026. He said they will not use the Capital Improvement Plan funds until they are ready to. He added they also need new fencing and sidewalks. He said they want to work with Council regarding the development including trees as a buffer. He suggested they can cover the tanks and can use solar panels.

He said he hopes to come back next year to talk about sewers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Vice President Queenan announced that there is a Spanish translator in the back of the meeting room providing headsets.

Public Meeting for the Elmwood Park Master Site Plan on October 29th from 7 to 9 pm at the Recreation Center at 340 Harding Blvd.

Norristown Annual Trunk or Treat – Thursday, October 31st from 4 to 7 pm at the Norristown Recreation Center on Harding Boulevard. Info: thenry@Norristown.org.

Leaf Collection – October 21 to December 9. Follow street-sweeping schedule.

Norristown Clean Sweep – Saturday, November 2nd starting at 6 am until dumpsters are full. The locations are: Municipal Hall on Airy Street, Haws Avenue and Marshall, Roberts Street in Norris Hills, Arch Street & Oak Street, Pine Street and Fornance, Guardino Park, Haws Avenue and Washington Street, Corson Street and Marshall Street, Buttonwood and Elm. No Contractor Items, ID may be required.

“Boo at the Zoo” sponsored by State Representative Greg Scott on October 24th from 5 to 8 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Yvonne Platt, 410 Arch Street – She came again to say she has received no response regarding the parking sign for the Police Chief. She said it is a mistreatment of women which she says happens here and everywhere. She said other places have signs and she asked when our Chief’s sign will be back. She said she will continue coming back.

C. Chandler, 616 Gary Lane – She said that it is only common sense that the Chief should have a sign.

Brianna Chandler, 616 Gary Lane – She supports a sign for the Chief.

APPOINTMENTS

Oath of Office: Swearing In for Jaleesa Davis for the position of Police Officer

Police Chief Bailey-Davis noted that Ms. Davis completed all requirements and checks and she provided background information about Jaleesa Davis which included a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Temple University, 9 years in the Federal Reserve, Gate Keeping Systems and Explosive Threat training, a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Perdue University.

Judge Hakim Jones conducted the swearing in.

BUILDING & CODES COMPLIANCE

Request to approve HARB COA’s

Keith Gordon, Codes Manager, asked for approval for HARB COA’s for 539 Hamilton Street, 558 Noble Street and 622 West Marshall Street.

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the HARB COA’s for the above addresses. **The motion passed 5-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 24-101: Request for Municipal Council to approve a Resolution supporting the Pennsylvania Commission for the United States Semiquincentennial (America250PA)

Leonard Lightner asked Council for approval to participate in the America250PA.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to approve Resolution 24-101. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Motion to award the bid to the Lowest Responsible Contractor for the Demo RFP and to authorize demolition at 1020 Dekalb Street, 633 Haws Avenue and 1400 Plymouth Boulevard

Mr. Lightner said the bid amount was \$200,000 for the blighted properties.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve the bid for 1020 Dekalb Street and 633 Haws Avenue and to use the leftover funds to demolish 1400 Plymouth Boulevard. **The motion passed 5-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Hearing and Resolution 24-102: to consider approving the application of Abel & Daniel Management, Inc. for a new economic development restaurant liquor license for premises located at 1700 Markley Street, Suite 10, Norristown, PA 19401.

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

Solicitor Kilkenny introduced the exhibits: the proposed Resolution and approval, a Copy of the Notice in the newspaper on September 30, 2024 and October 7, 2024.

Dan, the presenter, told Council that the restaurant will be serving authentic Mexican food.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to close the Public Hearing. **The motion passed 5-0.**

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-102. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Presentation for a proposed development at 902 Violet Street by JES Capital Investments consisting of five (5) Single Family Row Homes

Justin Smith presented a Power Point about the property. He said it used to be his grandparents' property. He said he has experience in rehabbing with over 100 renovations. He

said the name for the development would be “The Blockson,” in honor of his grandparents. His Power Point highlighted the leadership team, services and their portfolio.

Ordinance 24-05: Request authorization to advertise Ordinance 24-05 for the vacation of a portion of Wood Street

Jayne Musonye stated this is a housekeeping matter. She noted that the owner asked to separate the residence and the business and receive one tax bill.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve advertisement of Ordinance 24-05. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Ordinance 24-06: request authorization to advertise Ordinance 24-06 for the vacation of a portion of Violet Street

Ms. Musonye said this is the same issue as Ordinance 24-05. It requires a formal vacation.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the advertisement of Ordinance 24-06. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Resolution 24-103: Request for authorization to apply for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) to install electric vehicle service equipment

Ms. Musonye explained that an application was submitted for the Grant on May 5, 2024 and it was approved on May 17, 2024. She said that 4 locations were identified: McCain Park, Main Street and Green Street Lot, Walnut Street Park and Riverfront Park.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve Resolution 24-103. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Resolution 24-104: Request for authorization to apply for the 2024 Bonus Round – PECO Green Region Open Space Program

Ms. Musonye explained that the grant amount is \$50,000. She said she received an idea from Public Works for a Dog Park at the Walnut Street Playground.

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-104. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Updating Council on 1 West Main Street Food & Event Hall Project utilizing County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

Sean Turner, Assistant Planning Director, explained that there was a discussion with the owner about more funding. He said there were issues with converging deadlines and that the proposed funding is not enough. He said that other funds are being pursued but the result won't be available until next year. He asked that the current funding be used for rental assistance, etc. in order to jumpstart the space with businesses.

Resolution 24-105: Approval of Preliminary/Final Minor Subdivision Plan for 1161 Markley Street (Roosevelt Field)

Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering, was present on behalf of the Municipality of Norristown. He said the proposed plan is for the school building, the parking area, the snack stand and any other accessory facilities. He said they are in the R2 District. He noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval on October 8th and October 10th the Zoning Hearing Board held a Special Meeting to approve the requested Variances and a letter from the Planning Commission dated October 7th and a Pennoni letter was written to grant the Variance.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-105. **The motion passed 4-1 (Councilman McCoy voted nay.)**

Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Municipality of Norristown and the Norristown Area School District for reciprocal priority uses of the Roosevelt campus parking area and the Roosevelt Field area.

Sean Turner explained that the parking area is accessible by both parties. He said that in order to use the Field, a Recreation Use Form must be filled out but no fees will be collected.

POLICE

Resolution 24-100: Motion to approve Handicapped Parking

Police Chief Bailey-Davis said that after 3 application submissions, resident Ms. Hall could not get neighbor approval for a Handicapped Parking space so the Police Chief said she asked the Administrator to look into it. She said she was advised to obtain legal advice from Sean Kilkenny's Law Office and to bring it before Council. She said that if it is approved by Council, the Police Department will be submitting a new application.

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-100. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Motion: Application for PCCD Grant FY 2024-25 VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION (VIP)

Police Chief Bailey-Davis asked for approval to apply for this Grant in order to bolster crime-fighting strategies.

There was a **motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve the application for the PCCD Grant FY 2024-25 VIP. **The motion passed 5-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a **motion by Councilman McCoy, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to adjourn the Council Work Session. **The motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Roseann Santangelo