

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 1, 2025

The Council Meeting of Tuesday, April 1, 2025 was called to order by Council President, Rebecca Smith, 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:

William McCoy
Dustin Queenan
Rashaad Bates
Rebecca Smith

Also in attendance were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Lieutenant Angelucci, Norristown Police Department; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Municipal Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amanda Ciarlante, Assistant Director of Finance; Tom O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Deputy Fire Chief, Richard Lockhart; Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Keith Gordon, Code Enforcement Manager; Bri'Ana Hawkins, Parks & Recreation Director.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a **motion by Council Vice President Bates, seconded by Councilman Queenan**, to approve the Minutes. **The motion passed 4-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Smith announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss Personnel and Real Estate matters.

PRESENTATIONS

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful 2024 Community Partner of Keep Norristown Beautiful Award presented to Stony Creek Anglers

Lisa Bobyock, Director of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, presented a Power Point with photos highlighting the Stony Creek Anglers at work. She introduced "Chas" Chaswood who has been

involved with the Anglers and noted they have been doing clean-ups for almost 40 years. She said that the Anglers help strengthen community involvement. “Chas” was presented with a Certificate and Award and he thanked the Municipality for their support.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Community Pride Award and Citation presented to Lisa Bobyock

State Representative Greg Scott presented the Award and Citation to Lisa Bobyock to commemorate her assistance in coordinating community clean-up activities. She was presented a Citation and Plaque for her efforts in keeping the city streets clean. State Representative Scott noted that this a State-Wide Award.

Recognition of Firefighter for Life-Saving incident

State Representative Greg Scott noted “These brave men and women go in when everyone else is heading out.” He noted that on September 10, 2024 at 4:45 am there was a fire with entrapments at 529 Cherry Street in Norristown. Representative Scott shared that the other Firefighters were handling the blaze and Brian Drennen was a sole Firefighter available to conduct the rescues. He said he took a ladder to the third floor and went up and down five times to rescue multiple people. He said his actions most likely prevented more injuries and possible death.

State Representative Scott, on behalf of Joanna McClinton, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Governor Josh Shapiro, he presented Brian Drennen with a Plaque.

Council President Smith also presented Brian with a Plaque and said, “We’re all safer because of Firefighters like you.”

Members of his Squad came up for a photograph.

Presentation for the proposed Zoning Text Amendment to create a Mixed-Use Overlay of the 68 acres of the Norristown State Hospital

Jayne Musonye said that the Developer and Professional Planner will be coming back before Council on many more occasions. She noted that these text changes will help achieve the vision for the project that was approved and an Agreement of Sale was signed for. She also noted that some of the Zoning Text Amendments include Residential/Retail, Residential/Mixed-Use, Townhomes, Offices, Service Uses, Commercial, Industrial Light, Public Transportation. She said they will go through a review process. She asked Council for approval to Advertise which will be followed by a Public Hearing and the presentation for Conditional Use in order to present a Master Plan in Phases by the Developer and Professional Planner.

Councilman Queenan asked if the Developer could provide a short overview of the plans for the project.

The Developer explained that there will be housing for sale, apartments for rent, commercial, retail and some flex space, as well as other Uses. He said the Ordinance is written so that there will be no changes without Council being made aware of them. He said this forces the Development to move in an orderly fashion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Vice President Bates announced that there will be a Master Plan Public Meeting for Elmwood Park 15 minutes after the end of the Council Meeting.

William McCoy will conduct a webinar for “Next Steps for Home Ownership” on April 2nd from 6 pm to 7 pm.

“What’s the 411?” on April 11th 1 and 6 pm on Councilwoman Robinson’s Instagram Page.

Response to questions from the last Council meeting

Leonard Lightner provided an answer to the Handicapped Parking request on Kohn Street. He explained that there are State Laws that must be followed regarding the installation of Handicapped Parking Signs. He showed photos on the Power Point screen and noted that this particular request would involve blocking a driveway which is against the State Law (Article 75 Section 33-54). He noted there are also restrictions regarding the distance from a fire hydrant, stop sign and crosswalk.

The second question was regarding dog waster on Spruce Street that the resident called a park. Mr. Lightner noted that it is not designated as a park but it is owned by the Municipality. He said that it is not designed for playing sports. He said they will put up signs about Dog Waste and they will provide waste containers.

Mr. Lightner addressed the issue of pedestrian crossing issues at Harding Blvd. and Fornance Streets. He said that traffic-calming measures can be addressed at the Master Plan meeting for Elmwood Park. He said they can put up signs and more lighting in the meantime.

Mr. Lightner addressed the issue of the unhoused individuals behind the Recreation Center. He explained that the policy involves giving them a 30-day notice to leave and they are told that Law Enforcement, Fire and Public Works can provide resources for them. He said they check on them at the 20-day and 10-day mark. The area then needs a clean-up when they vacate the area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cynthia Alvarado, 1102 Dekalb Street – She is part of the SRC (Systemic Reformatory for Change) and said she is here on behalf of the children. She said she is grateful for the progress

being made for dog waste clean-up but she will come back to make sure the efforts are addressed.

Rocco Romanoff, Kohn Street - He said he was told he can't park in front of his driveway or get a Handicapped Parking sign in front of his house due to the driveway. He said he also smells his neighbor's trash and there are houses with 9 people living in them. He said his neighbors put trash bags in his truck. He said he was told he could park ½ block away but he doesn't want his wife to walk there. He said he is still looking for an answer.

James Watters, Hamilton Street – He asked what was done on James & Hamilton to help with flooding. He said that there was an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer in 2022 stating that the PA waterways are the most polluted. He read some of the article. He said he sent info regarding the Department of Environmental Protection to the government and nothing was done. He said that the Gauge on the bridge at Barbados Island had been turned off in 1933 and was then turned back on by his wife in 2001.

Kaden Beegle, 1109 W. Washington Street - He said he applied to run for Council-at-Large. He wanted to share what he would work on if elected. He said he could speak on the homeless, the drug epidemic, PECO issues, infrastructure, cleaning up litter, participation with the SRC but he wanted to address the legislation that was proposed and put on hold regarding cleaning up the litter for businesses. He said he would like to see it expanded to include residents and parks.

Derek Johns, 1102 Dekalb Street – He thanked the Council members who showed up for the SRC Community Outreach. He said he is here to work with everybody and he commended all for doing a great job.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments of Council Members

Council President Smith noted that 12 applications were received and of those, 4 were invited to have conversations.

There was a **motion by Council President Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to nominate Natalie Colson for the 4th District Council position.

Council President Smith asked if there were any other nominations.

Councilman Queenan nominated Chevaughn Satchell for the 4th District. There was no second.

Natalie Colson was selected to represent Council in the 4th District.

Councilman Queenan thanked Chevaughn for running for office.

There was a **motion by Council President Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Bates**, to nominate Jasmine Griffen for the Council-at-Large position.

Council President Smith asked if there were any other nominations.

Councilman Queenan nominated Blayne Pierce for the Council-at-Large position. There was no second.

Jasmine Griffen was selected to represent Council At-Large.

Councilman Queenan thanked Blayne for running for office.

(Judge Hakim Jones was not present at the time so the Oaths of Office were conducted later in the meeting.)

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 25-40: Request for Municipal Council to approve the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Vehicle and Equipment Purchases

Leonard Lightner noted that there is not a change in the Budget since this has already been budgeted for.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 25-40 to approve the purchase of vehicles and equipment in accordance with the approved CIP Resolution 24-120. **The motion passed 4-0.**

FIRE

Resolution 25-31: Motion to hire Michael Drennen, Nicholas Keller and Michael McKenney as Firefighters

Fire Chief O'Donnell introduced the new Firefighters.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve the hiring of Michael Drennen, Nicholas Keller and Michael McKenney as Firefighters. **The motion passed 4-0.**

Council President Smith conducted the swearing-in ceremony for all 3 Firefighters at one time.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Resolution 25-37: Request Council to approve Rotation Productions for the 2025 Summer Concert Series for \$29,000.00

Bri-Ana Hawkins noted that Rotation Productions will maintain the stage and lighting.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 25-37 approving Rotation Productions for the 2025 Summer Concert Series for \$29,000.00. **The motion passed 4-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Request to advertise the proposed Zoning Text Amendment to create a Mixed-Use Overlay of the 68 acres of the Norristown State Hospital

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve the request to advertise the proposed Zoning Text Amendment to create a Mixed-Use Overlay of the 68 acres of the Norristown State Hospital. **The motion passed 4-0.**

POLICE

Resolution 25-39: Request the purchase of Axon Fleet 3 Bundle from AXON Enterprise

Lieutenant Angelucci noted this would include the camera, the mount, 3 years' license and storage in the amount of \$24,529.32 with a discount of \$6,875.88 for the obtaining the license for 3 years.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 25-39 for the purchase of Axon Fleet 3 Bundle from AXON Enterprise. **The motion passed 4-0.**

PUBLIC WORKS

Resolution 25-38: Request Council approve submitting a Grant application to PA Small Water and Sewer Program for \$403,246 for Stormwater Improvements at Stanbridge and W. Elm Streets

Thomas Odenigbo provided some details of the improvements.

There was a **motion by Councilman Queenan, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 25-38 to construct recommended stormwater improvements at the intersection of Stanbridge and W. Elm Streets, which has been prioritized as an area prone to stormwater runoff and flooding. **The motion passed 4-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police

Acting Chief Angelucci reported on the Goals of the Department. He noted there was a reduction of Gun Violence and Part I Crimes were down 31%. There was an 8% increase in robberies including an attempt to steal vehicles. He noted the Department is down 16% in manpower. There were Shots Fired incidents on January 20 and March 6. There were 8 Firearm Seizures; domestic violence down; 33% increase of non-fatal overdoses of Opioids. He said the focus is on the dealer, not the user. There were 8 Community Events and 4 PSA Meetings. He explained that the PSA Meetings cover 4 Geo Areas and they are held quarterly.

Fire Department

Chief O'Donnell provided details of his report: Operations Summary – 144 Dispatches, Average Response Time was 4 minutes, 12 seconds; busiest time Saturday 11 am, 58 Department Training Classes which equals 253 hours of training, 1 Civilian injury; 43 Commercial Fire Inspections; 13 Public Education Events; 50 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide alarms were installed. He also noted that the Fleet had 3 out-of-service hours.

Oaths of Office for new Council Members

Judge Hakim Jones was present for the Oaths of Office for the new Council members, Jasmine Griffen and Natalie Colson.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted,
Roseann Santangelo