

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

June 20, 2017

The Council Workshop Meeting of the Municipality of Norristown was called to order by Council President, Sonya Sanders, at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers.

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

The following Council members were present:

Olivia Brady
Valerie Scott-Cooper
Hakim Jones
Heather Lewis
Suanne Gardiner
Derrick Perry
Sonya Sanders

Also present were:

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator
Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor
Richard Clowser, Captain of the Norristown Police Department
Karen Helsel, Assistant Director of Planning and Development
Chernora Burkett, Director of Finance
Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works
Michael Simonson, Code Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Meeting Minutes from 06-06-2017

Motion passed 7-0.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to approve Minutes from 6-6-17.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUCEMENT

Council President Sanders announced there was no Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting.

PRESENTATIONS:

Schuylkill River Town Program Accomplishments

Ms. Kim Stever of the Schuylkill River Town Program explained that their grant has been

extended and she provided information regarding activities and examples of way-finding signs. She directed everyone to their website: SchuylkillRiverTowns.com.

PA State Association of Boroughs Discussion - Councilwoman Suanne Gardiner

Councilwoman Gardiner explained that she attended the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs Conference in early May 2017.

Topics from the Conference included ethical dilemmas and social media; how to engage residents and communities; using a hashtag to access happenings; legal Updates - Acts and Ordinances, which is currently in the House of Representatives and information on local police radar.

She also shared that she went to the State Capitol and met with Senators and Representatives including Matt Bradford, who she said is a big supporter of the Municipality, and suggested implementing a Junior Council Person Program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Leadership Academy - September 14 - gprete@norristown.org

Habitat for Humanity - Home Repair Program.

5K Race - 8:30 on July 4th - Farm Park .

Community Block Party - Sunday - Simmons Park - Youth Summer Basketball League opening. Herra, Wawa, Shoprite, Coke are sponsors.

CADCOM - August 5 - Simmons Park.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Sue Bertucci

Ms. Bertucci explained that her home backs up to Hunter Run Apts. and the dumpster backs up to the parking lot. She said the dumpster is not adequate for the amount of apartments. She also said the fence is broken. The trees were sprayed so there are dead trees laying there that need to be taken away. She also noted that Ackey's playground is up the street and the swings are very old, the sliding board is unsafe, there is a need for more bleachers, there needs to be signs to alert about children at play. She also commented about trucks and cars being parked in front of houses on the yards. Council President Sanders asked her to leave her contact information.

Justin Spencer - 205 and 209 Chain Street

Mr. Spencer commented about the overgrown trees in his area, drug activity; he can't put in a surveillance camera because of trees; 233 Chain Street has a gravel driveway and the sweeper takes the rocks away and they are spread down the street; 200 and 500 Lafayette - using porches as storage unlike other areas of Norristown. He noted it brings down the property value. Crawford Park between Chain and Pearl - he noted that kids made their

own trail. He said you can't tell the park is there and there are many weeds that block the view to the river. He noted there needs to be a connection to Lafayette Street from the trail such as an off-ramp or bridge because Ridge Pike gets backed up.

Mary Ellen DiGregorio

She commented that the Home Rule Charter was changed in 2004. She said that this government is repeating history. She asked, "How do you get Junior Council persons to stay on? She said the Gateways are a pigsty, she is not happy with the trash situation, the taxpayer's money is being wasted. She noted her home value went down.

Charles Earnest, 41 E. Freedley Street

Mr. Earnest commented about the stormwater management in his area. He noted that Freedley Street between Dekalb and Willow doesn't get swept 2 out 3 wks. He noted the sewer on Willow Street gets full and floods over the sidewalk. He said when the storm drain was re-done, he told them it was too low. He asked if there is a plan to re-route the children from Hancock that used to cut through now that the 1529 DeKalb Street housing project will be starting? He said there needs to be park in the north end or a child-oriented setting. He noted that the four trees listed in Resolution 3 are in the public ROW and wanted to know if that is something run by the Shade Tree Commission to remove them?

Mr. Earnest was told by Mr. Crandall Jones that the Municipalities and Utilities are not subject to the Shade Tree Commission, therefore, the Municipalities and Utilities are allowed to take care of trees on the public ROW and they can choose to have them removed.

COMMUNICATION:

There were no Communication items.

ITEMS FOR ACTION:

Municipal Council

Resolution 17-136: Affirming Norristown's Support for the Paris Accord

Council was presented with a motion to publicly recognize the impact of climate change on our community, pledge full support for the Paris Accord, and publicly disagree with the withdrawal of the United States from the Agreement.

Motion passed 6-0. Councilwoman Gardiner was not present for the voting.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve/disapprove Resolution 17-136: Affirming Norristown's Support for the Paris Accord.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Absent: Gardiner

PUBLIC WORKS:

Noise Ordinance Waiver

Motion for Council to approve or disapprove request for waiver of Noise Ordinance 320-281 to perform night work at DeKalb St. from Schuylkill Ave. to Main St. and Lafayette St. from Green St. to Swede St.

Mr. Odenigbo provided an explanation and noted that there were PECO representatives present. Suzanne from PECO explained that the noise includes construction equipment, mostly on Dekalb at Lafayette.

Councilwoman Brady asked if there was communication to residents and was told that letters were provided to residents and posted on social media and the Municipal website.

Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to approve/disapprove a request for a waiver of Noise Ordinance 320-281 to perform night work at DeKalb Street from Schuylkill Avenue to Main Street and Lafayette Street from Green Street to Swede Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT:

Award construction contract for Selma Mansion Historic Facade

To secure a contractor to complete the Selma Mansion Historic Façade renovations.

Assistant Director of Planning Karen Helsel explained that this contract is a result of an Einstein Grant of \$20,000 to complete the Selma Mansion Historic Façade renovations..

Councilwoman Brady asked about the communication with HARB and Asst. Director Helsel explained that they are working with Mr. Doug Seiler, who is a consultant for HARB.

Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Suanne Gardiner to Award construction contract for Selma Mansion Historic Facade. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Cooperation Agreement with Redevelopment Authority of the County of Montgomery

A Cooperation Agreement between the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Montgomery (RDA) and the Municipality of Norristown (Municipality) authorizing the RDA to carry out specific acquisition and redevelopment activities provided for in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Asst. Director of Planning Karen Helsel explained this is a Cooperation Agreement between the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Montgomery (RDA) and the Municipality of Norristown authorizing the RDA to carry out specific acquisition and redevelopment activities provided for in the Capital Improvement Plan.

It was reviewed by Council and Solicitor Kilkenny noted it is a standard RCAP agreement that is being affirmed with the scope of the project.

Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Cooperation Agreement with Redevelopment Authority of the County of Montgomery.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Resolution 17-140: Final Land Development Approval - 1529 Dekalb Street

Request from Progressive Housing Ventures for final land development approval for 1529 Dekalb Street.

Asst. Director of Planning Karen Helsel noted this is a request from Progressive Housing Ventures for final land development approval for 1529 DeKalb Street.

A representative from municipal engineering firm, Pennoni Associates, noted that 2 new waivers have been requested and there is no objection. He noted that Pennoni recommends approval with the conditions outlined in Engineer's letter incorporated into the Resolution.

Sarah Peck, Developer of the proposed project, explained that demolition should begin in September 2017 and the project is identical to Arbor Mews in decoration.

A Roll Call Vote passed unanimously (7-0).

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to approve Resolution 17-140: Final Land Development approval for 1529 DeKalb Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Request for Zoning Change - 200 E. Logan Street

Discuss potential zoning and map change as requested by property owner.

The property owner was present and provided the background information regarding her property. She noted it has become a financial burden with upkeep and taxes since the proposed projects have failed which would have included her property.

She requested a Zoning change for part of her property so that it would all be R2 so it would be more cost effective to sell or develop.

Asst. Director of Planning Karen Helsel asked Staff to examine the pros and cons of the Zoning and Map Change request.

Motion passed unanimously (7-0).

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Suanne Gardiner to Motion to approve request for a Zoning change at 200 E. Logan Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Ordinance 17-09: Zoning Amendment - Group and Institutional Homes

Authorize the advertisement of public hearing to consider Ordinance 17-09 of 2017 establishing new criteria for the regulation of group and institutional homes.

Solicitor Kilkenny explained this amendment should be respectful of Federal Law to the benefit of the Municipality without the possibility of litigation issues.

Ms. Helsel said that the Planning Department is asking to advertise a Public Hearing. This would be to consider Ordinance 17-09 of 2017 establishing new criteria for the regulation of group and institutional homes.

Motion to advertise passed 5-2.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve Ordinance 17-09: Zoning Amendment for Group and Institutional Homes.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Nays: Gardiner, Jones

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR:

Employee Flexible Benefit Plan Amendment

Council will be asked to approve an amendment to the Municipality's Flexible Benefit Plan for full-time employees.

Municipal Administrator Crandall Jones noted this amendment is to make a restatement of the plan according to IRS Section 125 with an option to opt out.

A motion to approve passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Heather Lewis with a second by Olivia Brady to Employee Flexible Benefit Plan Amendment.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

FINANCE:

Advertisement of Ordinance 17-08: Amending Public Bidding Requirements

Request to approve Ordinance 17-08, which would amend Municipal public bidding requirements to be consistent with those set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Burkett provided details of the amendment stating it would be consistent with the requirements set by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A Roll Call Vote passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Heather Lewis to Advertisement of Ordinance 17-08: Amending Public Bidding Requirements.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Ordinance 17-06 PA Infrastructure Bank Loan

To accept loan of \$3,500,000 from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank ("PIB") to be used for the multi-year municipal road project.

Ms. Burkett explained the loan of \$3,500,000 from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Bank is to be used for the multi-year Municipal road project.

She provided information on the loan terms and interest rate. She noted it is being funded by award from the Liquid Fuels Account.

Ms. Burkett noted it was advertised and the preliminary documents were completed.

A Roll Call Vote to accept the loan passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve Ordinance 17-06: Infrastructure Bank Loan.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Resolution No. 17-137 Handicapped Parking

Motion to approve or deny Resolution No. 17-317 regarding requests for erecting disabled parking and removing disabled parking spaces in front of resident's homes to allow them to maintain independence and have mobility.

Lieutenant provided the addresses as 413 Walnut Street and 718 Astor Street needing Handicapped Parking signs and the removal of a sign on 1008 Arch Street.

A Roll Call Vote to approve passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve Resolution 17-137: Handicapped Parking.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Handicapped Space at a Business Resolution No. 17-138

Motion to approve or deny Resolution No. 17-138 regarding requests for erecting disabled parking space in close proximity to the business at 328 DeKalb Street.

This request is for a Disabled Parking space at 100 Penn Street. This would involve taking up part of the loading zone to put the space in.

A motion to approve passed unanimously.

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Suanne Gardiner to Motion to approve/deny Resolution 17-138: Handicapped Space at a business.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Resolution No. 17-139 Loading Zone

Motion to approve or deny Resolution No. 17-139 regarding requests for a loading zone in the area of the business at 501-203 W Marshall Street.

Lt. noted there are currently no loading zones and it impacts traffic flow when unloading.

A motion to approve passed 6-1.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to approve/deny Resolution 17-139: regarding requests for a loading zone in the area of the business at 501-503 West Marshall Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Sanders, Scott-Cooper
Nays: Perry

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Finance Report

Ms. Burkett provided details of the report such as the CIP Project - working with financial advisor to ensure everything is in place; 3.5 million dollar loan for infrastructure; discussing how to proceed with components facilitated by Finance; Financial Statement Audit; Benefit Plan disclosures; Auditors; Budget is starting shortly - a multi-year budget process; IT Department - server replacement project is finalizing; Police mobile unit; Summer Camp registration; Real Estate tax period ended; Finance is fully staffed; Cash balances - unrestricted balances and restricted balances; issuing banking RFP - looking to replace Bank of America; doing more in-depth examinations with department managers.

Public Works Report

Mr. Odenigbo provided information regarding potholes, alleys, striping, trash pick-up and the need to set up a city-wide trash pick up day.

Planning & Development Report

Ms. Helsel provided details such as the Riverfront Feasibility Study - kickoff meeting tomorrow morning. She noted that people are noticing where Norristown is going and that Planning is busy with inquiries.

Office of the Administrator Reports

Mr. Jones provided details regarding Chamber of Commerce event - 45 plus members now - they filed for incorporation. He noted that President Kim Ramsey will come before Council to introduce Chamber.

He noted that Norristown is about to get out of the underground tank business noting that the latest inspection costs money. He said there will be a discussion about getting out of underground which won't be subject to inspections. He also noted a third tank was discovered.

Non-presenting Department Reports

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was approved unanimously.

There was a motion by Heather Lewis with a second by Suanne Gardiner to Motion to adjourn.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

Ayes: Brady, Gardiner, Jones, Lewis, Perry, Sanders, Scott-Cooper

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo