

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

October 17, 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:

Sonya Sanders, President
Derrick Perry, Vice-President
Heather Lewis, 2nd District
Valerie Scott-Cooper, 3rd District
Hakim Jones, 4th District
Olivia Brady, At-Large
Suanne Gardiner, At-Large

Also present were:

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator
Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor
Chief Mark Talbot, Norristown Chief of Police
Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Municipal Development
Chenora Burkett, Director of Finance
Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works
Michael Simonson, Code Manager

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Meeting Minutes from 10-03-2017

There was a motion on the floor to approve the October 3, 2017 meeting Minutes.

Councilman Hakim Jones noted there is a correction in the voting for the PAL building acquisition. He voted "no" but it was recorded as a "yes" for him.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve the Minutes from the October 3, 2017 Meeting.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Special Meeting Minutes from 10-05-2017

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Suanne Gardiner to Motion to approve the Minutes from the Special Council Meeting from October 5, 2017.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Sanders announced that Council met in Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

LEAF PICKUP

Monday, October 16, 2017. Scheduled for trash pick-up day. A biodegradable bag should be used. Avoid parking on or adjacent to leaf piles. Avoid piles in front of access areas. Contact Public Works for more information.

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

Thursday, October 19, 2017. There will be a public information meeting from 2:30 to 3:00. There will be Committee training from 3 to 6 pm. Contact BFord@norristown.org for information.

HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL

Norristown Recreation is the sponsor. Saturday, October 28 at the Elmwood Park Bandshell. Arrive in costume by 12:25.

TRUCK OR TREAT

October 31, 2017 at Roosevelt Field from 4-7 pm.

CADCOM

Girls, grades 7-12. Contact Councilwoman Lewis at 610-277-6363 ext. 166. Application deadline is October 31, classes start November 7, 2017.

FREE MOVIE AND GAME NIGHT

First Presbyterian Church, Airy & DeKalb Streets from 5:45 to 8 pm.

ELECTION DAY

Come out and vote on November 7th.

MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER

Saturday, October 28, 2017 at NASD. Registration is at 8:30 am and the Walk starts at 10 am.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no one signed up for Public Comment.

COMMUNICATION:

There were no Communication items.

Items for Discussion

Norristown State Hospital Facility

Council will be discussing a decision made by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to construct a temporary forensic mental health treatment unit on the grounds of the Norristown State Hospital.

Council President Sanders shared that Council is disappointed in the lack of communication to Council and the constituents regarding the State Hospital facility.

Crandall Jones provided background information. He noted the State declared it an emergency project to extend the forensic unit in Building 52. He noted that construction began in Building 10, knowing of the Municipal plans for re-development. He stated they violated the procurement process and went through emergency procurement.

He also noted that State Representative Matt Bradford contacted them on Norristown's behalf and he is vigorous in his opposition.

Mr. Jones explained that they are trying to work through a resolution and move forward. At this point, he stated, there have been several discussions and the Labor Union is also in discussion.

Solicitor Kilkenny noted the options to Council. He stated that legal courses of action can be explored. He suggested to authorize the filing of an injunction relief in the Commonwealth Court in order to prove irreparable harm. Research finds there is an exception in that problems with Zoning have been identified. He suggested to file in Commonwealth Court and hope for no litigation.

Solicitor Kilkenny noted that Mr. Jones and Representative Bradford are talking to a representative from the Commonwealth and the Solicitor prepared a motion to consider that his office moves if no action is acquired.

There was a motion on the floor to authorize the Solicitor to file for injunction relief in the Commonwealth Court to stop the expansion of facilities on the Norristown State Hospital in the event that a settlement cannot be reached with the Commonwealth.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Norristown State Hospital Facility - Discussion. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

ITEMS FOR ACTION:

Municipal Council

Resolution 17-159: Support for the Circuit Trails Initiative

Council will be considering a resolution to support the Circuit Trails Initiative which aims to complete a total of 500 miles of trails in the Greater Philadelphia Area by 2025.

The Regional Planner for the Bicycle Coalition was present. He explained that the aim is for cyclists to be able to ride to places such as Philadelphia, Princeton, Marcus Hook, Wilmington, DE, Bordentown, NJ. He noted that healthy lifestyles provide a vital transportation network.

He explained he is asking for Letter of Support that doesn't obligate Norristown for funding.

He said they need to conduct a feasibility study and look to connect those areas not on the circuit.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve Resolution 17-159: Support for the Circuit Trails Initiative. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

FINANCE:

Resolution No. 17-157 Act 205 Pension Plan Distribution

Council will be presented with a resolution to distribute the 2017 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania allocation of General Municipal Pension System State Aid and deposit funds into the Norristown Police Pension Plan and the Norristown Paid Fire Fighter Pension Plan.

Chenora Burkett noted that funds were received from the Commonwealth to support pension obligation costs and the money received must be distributed by September. She noted it is required under Act 205.

Ms. Burkett stated that the Municipality received \$1,092, 004.30 this year - \$840,968.00 for the Police Pension Plan, \$251,000.00 for the Paid Firefighter Plan.

Ms. Burkett noted that the required amount is also included for the Norristown Non-uniform Pension Plans which was overfunded so there is no contribution required.

There was a motion on the floor with a second to distribute the 2017 Commonwealth of PA allocation of General Municipal Pension System State Aid and deposit funds into the Norristown Police Pension Plan and the Norristown Paid Firefighter Pension Plan.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to approve Resolution 17-157 Act 205 Pension Plan Distribution. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Advertisement of Ordinance 17-17

Council will be presented with the motion to advertise an Ordinance which would redesignate the 1200 block of Green Street from a two-way to a one-way street.

Chief Talbot noted this is in regard to changing the 1200 block of Green Street from a two-way street to a one-way street. He stated that a traffic study was conducted and it was found that 85% of the traffic traveled northbound. He said in order to alleviate parking, it is being proposed to make the pattern change.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Derrick Perry to Motion to approve/disapprove advertisement of Ordinance 17-17. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Adoption of Ordinance 17-13: Use and Occupancy Regulations

A motion to adopt the advertised Ordinance 17-13 which amends Chapter 128 of the Municipal Code regarding the requirements for use and occupancy of structures.

Mr. Simonson explained that the difference between Act 133 and Act 99 is the distinction between violations and substantial violations for occupancy and transfer inspections and it also sets the guidelines for 3 different types of transfer permits. It also reduces the time to prepare a property from 18 months to 12 months.

He noted that Chapter 128 currently includes the 12 months as a guideline and also includes Occupancy Permit, Temporary Occupancy Permit and Temporary Access Permit.

He explained this advertisement for an amendment is strictly a language change distinguishing between violations and substantial violations.

Motion Carries (7-0).

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to adopt Ordinance 17-13: Use and Occupancy Regulations. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT:

Redevelopment Proposal for 1651 Markley Street

Presentation of a proposed redevelopment plan for 1651 Markley Street.

Mr. D'Arcangelo, Developer and Builder, was present. He has 2 projects in Norristown: the apartments opposite Kennedy Kenrick and the townhomes next to Eisenhower School. He would like to get feedback from Council and provided renderings of similar buildings he has built. He is proposing 18 units next to the Citgo on Markley Street.

Director Musonye noted this is only for discussion purposes so the Developer will know how to proceed. Council members posed questions regarding the architecture, parking, landscaping, amenities.

Council President Sanders spoke for Council in stating that they are interested in proposed projects that require ownership as opposed to rental apartments.

The idea of condos was presented and the Developer was in agreement. He noted they are a "hands on builder" that supports local labor and they also do a lot of "in-house" work.

Community Development Block Grant 2018 - Projects

Present proposed projects with budgets to Council; requesting authorization to advertise a public hearing for November 6, 2017 and to prepare proposed 2018 CDBG Budget Ordinance for proposed projects.

Director Musonye provided information about the CDBG process. She noted that the Municipality has been an "entitlement community" since 1986 but this classification has gone down over the last 3 or 4 years. She noted that according to HUD requirements, an assessment is done every 5 years. Ideas for projects are collected throughout the year.

Ms. Musonye noted she sent a memo to Council asking for project ideas and a Public Hearing was scheduled to obtain ideas but it turned out to be a "no-show." A budget was developed based on what was received in 2016 which was \$795,355. Ms. Musonye explained that all of the money is not spent. She noted that 3 years of interest was paid but now the principle is due to HUD in the amount of \$514,872.

Mr. Jones noted that he, Director Musonye, the Solicitor and Council President Sanders met with Congressman Boyle and representatives from HUD to seek relief. He stated that Congressman Boyle pushed that HUD would give assistance but Mr. Jones noted he hasn't heard back from the HUD representative. Mr. Jones commented that the money has to be set aside to pay back.

Ms. Musonye went over the 2018 budget with Council. She noted that some line items were not able to be carried over.

Councilman Jones commented that he would like to get information about large debts and

loans through Council discussion, not from the public.

Director Musonye and Crandall Jones both commented that these matters have been discussed with Council as a whole on multiple occasions.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Finance Report

Ms. Burkett provided an overview of the budget which included the Capital Improvement Plan and the Budget Process for 2018.

She noted they are working with TD Bank to open accounts and transition over. She noted they are working on next year's tax bills and implementing a more comprehensive tax program. She added there have been Rental License issuances, outstanding debts for trash fees have been collected, the HVAC system was installed.

She provided figures for the Cash Balances, Expenditures and Tax Bills collected through September 2017.

Public Works Report

Mr. Odenigbo reported that 10 streets have been paved; they are working on IDs for some streets. Other issues covered brining, striping, grass cutting for the parks and storing mulch for residents to pick up.

Planning & Development Report

Director Musonye noted there was an Economic Development Meeting.

They are hoping to have second interviews for a Retail Recruiter. They are working on the uploading of pictures for the website of construction and development happening in the Municipality. There have been several conversations with proposed developers.

A micro-brewery wants to open in Norristown. The owner of the PNC Bank project is in China so there is no update.

Office of the Administrator Reports

Mr. Crandall Jones noted that labor negotiations are moving forward and he is hoping for a resolution. He is setting a date to talk with the FOP. They had an initial discussion.

CIP process is going forward. Underground tank issue - going with fleet cards. The building s currently heated with oil. Working with the Engineer about establishing the master plan and construction manager for all the improvements.

The Road Paving program is well underway.

Regarding an issue with concrete contractor - they petitioned with the State for the paving season. PAL project - should have information at the next mtg. Working on a draft for food trucks. Keep Norristown Beautiful - having an orientation meeting. Planning a series of workshops.

Looking for parking management service ideas so it can reduce overhead. Software for Finance. Looking into software for all depts. currently getting feedback from depts.

Leadership Academy underway and doing well. The Recreation fall program is in place.

Non-presenting Department Reports

ADJOURNMENT:

There was a motion on the floor with a second to adjourn. Motion carried.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to adjourn the October 17, 2017 Council Workshop Meeting.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo