

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2018

The Council Workshop Meeting of November 20, 2018 was called to order by Council President, Sonya Sanders, at 6:30 PM in the Municipal Conference Room.

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
Rebecca Smith
Derrick Perry
Sonya Sanders

Also present:

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator
Patrick Hitchens, Acting Municipal Solicitor
Chief Mark Talbot, Norristown Chief of Police
Betsy Helsel, Assistant Director of Planning & Development
Rochelle Rawlins, Assistant Director of Finance
Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works
Amrinder Singh, Code Manager
Chief Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

There was a motion on the floor to approve the Council Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2018 by Councilwoman Lewis with a second by Councilwoman Brady. All in favor. Motion carries.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

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

PRESENTATIONS:

A. ELON AT MONTGOMERY PARK – PHASE II UPDATE

Council President Sanders noted that the presenters are not present because they need more preparation.

B. HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – FUTURE OFFICE LOCATION AT 200 W. MARSHALL STREET

Marian Lynch, CEO for Habitat for Humanity, explained that they would like to move their corporate offices back into Norristown.

They would like the opportunity to teach empowerment classes, held 3 times per year with one session in Norristown.

Ms. Lynch explained that the property is in a R-2 District so a Variance would be needed to use it as an office building and community space.

Ms. Lynch noted it would be beneficial to the neighborhood. They would also need to make it ADA compliant.

Solicitor Hitchens explained that the applicant is asking for a letter of support for their Zoning application.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Go to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) for employment opportunities.

Santa Express will be going through Norristown on Saturday, December 22.

23rd Annual Patty Simons food drive. Drop off at the Municipality.

Help a Single Parent “Ugly Sweater” Cabaret. Saturday, December 8. Tickets \$25.00.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Doris Smith-Starks – Ms. Starks expressed her strong support of Habitat for Humanity. She has been affiliated with them and attends their meetings.

COMMUNICATION:

There were no Communication items.

APPOINTMENTS:

RESOLUTION 18-162: APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Smith with a second by Councilwoman Brady to appoint Obed Alemyda to the Keep Norristown Beautiful Advisory Board. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes
Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes
Sonya Sanders	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

ITEMS FOR ACTION:

CONSENT AGENDA

Council will consider approving the following 2 items with one vote:

RESOLUTION 18-160: RESERVED DISABLED PARKING

Council will consider adding reserved residential handicapped parking spaces at 647 E. Basin Street, 9 W. Spruce Street, 823 Tremont Avenue and 118 Stanbridge Street and remove one from 1112 Astor Street.

PennDOT MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION FUND (MTF) GRANT APPLICATION

Council will consider authorizing submission of the MTF grant application for \$524,399.00 to construct Phase IV of the Main Street Streetscape project from Dekalb Street to Green Street in Norristown, PA.

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper with a second by Councilwoman Lewis to approve the Consent Agenda which includes Resolution 18-160 and the PennDOT MTF Grant Application. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

CODES ENFORCEMENT

611 SWEDE STREET PROJECT REVIEW (HARB APPEAL)

Mr. Singh, Code Enforcement Manager, explained that a HARB application for 611 Swede Street was denied and the applicant appealed the decision. Mr. Haggerty, the property owner, presented his appeal before Council.

Solicitor Hitchens read the appeal and Council was provided a copy of the HARB application. Mr. Hitchens noted that there is not representative from HARB

present so, therefore, no HARB comment will be made in person and there is no HARB comment in the paperwork.

Mr. Haggerty, accompanied by his business partner, explained what he understood the denial to be.

Mr. Singh commented that Code Enforcement believes that the application is complete but the HARB Board does not.

Mr. Haggerty noted that the property at 611 Swede Street has significant structural damage but he made a deal to purchase it. He brought the application to HARB and when he mentioned windows, he asked for suggestions with conditions. He stated he was insulted and denied but that he was not aware of the denial at that time. He is looking to restore the historical character.

Mr. Hitchens asked if Code had any comments on the proposed specs and plans.

Mr. Singh stated they had no objections to the materials being proposed. He added that a complete review of the application was not completed during the HARB meeting.

Mr. Hitchens asked about the type of windows and the applicant explained what restorations are being made to the existing double door and the floor and he siding on the 4th floor.

Mr. Haggerty's business partner noted that HARB made a determination that the application was not complete.

Council presented their questions regarding renovations and encouraged the applicant to use local hiring according to the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Comment

Doris Smith-Starks – Ms. Starks commented that she agrees with having local workers involved and asked the applicant to consider it.

There was a motion on the floor by Councilman Perry with a second by Councilwoman Smith to direct the Code Enforcement Department to issue a HARB Certificate based off what was presented at tonight’s Workshop Meeting. There was a Roll Call Vote taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes
Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes
Sonya Sanders	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE 18-06: SOBER LIVING HOMES

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Brady with a second by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper to open the Public Hearing. All in favor. Motion carries.

Solicitor Hitchens marked 2 documents as exhibits: M-1 which is a copy of the draft Ordinance and M-2 which is a copy of the letter from the Montgomery County Planning Commission dated October 12, 2018.

Mr. Hitchens explained that the purpose is to create a definition for Sober Living Home facilities.

Mr. Hitchens further explained the criteria for those individuals trying to integrate back into society in the R-2 District. He read Section 3 - #s 7, 9, 10, 11.

Section 4 – parking space requirements, was reviewed and a suggestion was made regarding the use of alternative language. There was a proposed revision by the Norristown Planning Board to state “a minimum of 5 off-street parking spaces for 6 or more residents.”

Crandall Jones, Municipal Administrator, noted this has nothing to do with the State Hospital project.

Solicitor Hitchens noted this is being proposed for adoption in order to better capture the concerns specific to residents of sober living homes.

Betsy Helsel, Assistant Director of Planning, noted this allows control of the location because it can be addressed through Zoning.

Solicitor Hitchens added that the purpose is to try and have an objective process in view of these applications.

Council voiced concerns over such issues as a limit to the number of people living there and if there is a house manager on the premises.

Solicitor Hitchens noted that there is no requirement for a house manager and the building will be overseen by Code regarding the number of residents living there.

Public Comment

Doris Smith-Starks – she asked if the home will be supervised?

Solicitor Hitchens referred to Section 3 items H-1 in the Ordinance which notes that there is a requirement for proof they are licensed and in compliance. He also added that the Sober Living Homes cannot be within 600 feet of any other Sober Living Home.

There was a motion on the floor to close the Public Hearing by Councilwoman Smith with a second by Councilman Jones. All in favor. Motion carries.

Council members were asked for their concerns about adopting the Ordinance. Councilman Jones would like to see a list of these facilities, Councilman Perry would like to change the Zoning which would require relief. Councilwoman Sanders asked if Council wanted to take action tonight? Councilman Jones stated he would like to research it more. Councilwoman Lewis pointed out that more applications could come in with the Ordinance the way it is currently stated.

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Lewis with a second by Councilwoman Smith to adopt Ordinance 18-06 with the modification to section 4 relating to off-street parking as dictated into the record. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes
Hakim Jones	no
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	no
Sonya Sanders	no

Motion carries 4-3.

ADVERTISEMENT OF ORDINANCE 18-08: PROPOSED 2019 CDBG BUDGET

Betsy Helsel noted that copies of the Budget breakdown were provided to Council. She added that administration of the entire grant is at 18%.

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper with a second by Councilwoman Brady to authorize the advertisement of a Public Hearing and to consider adopting Ordinance 18-08 at the December 18, 2018 Council Workshop meeting. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes

Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes
Sonya Sanders	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

NORRISWOODS APARTMENTS – FUNDING SUPPORT FOR COMPLEX UPGRADES

Betsy Helsel stated that a representative from HDC Atlantic is present. She said that the upgrades include the addition of a Community Room.

She noted that the applicant is looking for a letter of support from Council for state funding in the form of 2019 tax credits to fund the proposed renovations. Mr. William Kerr, representing HDC, explained that the intention is to renovate the apartments at 1830 Arch Street. He noted that the HVAC and plumbing are upgraded.

There was a motion on the floor by Councilwoman Lewis with a second by Councilwoman Scott-Cooper to send a letter of support for the state funding in the form of 2019 tax credits through PHFA for improvements at the Norriswoods Apartment Complex located at 1830 Arch Street. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes
Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes
Sonya Sanders	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

POLICE REPORT

Police Chief Talbot noted there was a 22% reduction of serious crimes in October. The Police Department is down 2 parking enforcement employees and a community affairs liaison. Four officers are on long-term leave. He put together a set of principles for the Opioid crisis.

Per a suggestion by Council President Sanders, Crandall Jones noted that an authorization can be made to increase the number of days one has to pay a parking ticket to 10 days.

FIRE REPORT

Fire Chief O'Donnell reported there were 96 incidents in October. Response time 3 minutes 54 seconds. \$5,450 in loss of property. Saturday at 9 AM was the busiest time. There were 27 training events. 1 Firefighter injury. 1 U&O. Hosted 9 fire drills. There were 49 public education events. Fire detector installations.

There will be open house to meet the new fire truck. A name the fire truck contest was suggested. Through Councilman Jones, Chief O'Donnell was able to meet with the NASD Superintendent regarding recruitment of students. A meeting is scheduled to do career days.

BUILDING AND CODES ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Mr. Singh noted that for October, he put together an executive summary about ongoing projects; met regarding projects that Council mentioned; 18 properties are eligible to be taken off the violations record; there are 101 unsafe properties; a field study was conducted; permits are up this year; report - pgs. 4,5 includes total cost of construction, pg. 6 breakdown of activities and the top 5 violations. There will be an educational outreach. Page 9 – property transfers. 10,853 properties – over 45% inspected. Page 12 – overview of ratings.

There was an additional item brought to Council's attention by Solicitor Hitchens: A Zoning Appeal for Oaks Property LLC for the property at 605 Swede Street which they desire to turn into a 4-apartment building. This was denied at the Zoning Hearing Board because it is a non-permitted use in the TC District.

There was a motion on the floor to send the Solicitor to deny this application by Councilwoman Lewis with a second by Councilman Perry. A Roll Call Vote was taken:

Olivia Brady	yes
Valerie Scott-Cooper	yes
Hakim Jones	yes
Heather Lewis	yes
Rebecca Smith	yes
Derrick Perry	yes
Sonya Sanders	yes

All in favor. Motion carries.

ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion on the floor to adjourn the Council Meeting by Councilwoman Smith with a second by Councilwoman Brady. All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo