

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2018

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.

Council President Sanders asked that everyone join in for a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following Council members were present:

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

Also present were:

Rebecca Geiser, Acting Municipal Solicitor
Chief Mark Talbot, Norristown Chief of Police
Jayne Musonye, Director of Municipal Planning and Development
Rochelle Rawlins, Assistant Director of Finance
Chris Cossman, Assistant Fire Chief, Norristown Fire Department
Thomas Odenigbo, Director of Public Works

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Meeting Minutes from 05-01-2018

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve Meeting Minutes from May 1, 2018.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

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

PRESENTATIONS:

Proclamation for Jake's Run 2 Remember

Council will be presenting a proclamation to acknowledge and honor the 5th Anniversary of the Jason Moletzsky's Run 2 Remember.

Council President Sanders read the proclamation to acknowledge and honor the 5th Anniversary of the Jason Moletzsky's Run 2 Remember. This is awarded to a high school senior who plan to enter the military service after graduation.

Open Agenda

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to open the agenda to add a representative from "Norristown Citizens in Action" and authorization for the Solicitor's office to enter an appearance regarding Docket #2018-12744 for 213 Haws Avenue appeal.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Norristown Citizens in Action

Norristown Citizens in Action representative, Denise Hall, distributed Welcome Packets and conducted a Power Point presentation which included the events such as clean ups, holiday basket distribution, neighborhood welcome.

CURRENT FOCUS: Planning "Rock the Block."

Moving forward: Community Garden, improve neighborhood appearance, engage residents to be the voice, participate and reach out.

Ms. Hall noted there is a Facebook page and she asked Townwatch to distribute packets. They also have resources in Spanish.

They noted they will work in tandem with the Municipality. Council President Sanders noted she can provide information about the businesses in Norristown.

Assessment Appeal

Rebecca Geiser, Acting Solicitor, explained this application is for a multi-family dwelling.

Ms. Musonye explained this is a non-conforming use and the application was denied so the applicant appealed the decision. It was also denied by the Zoning Hearing Board and now the applicant is taking it to a higher court.

Ms. Musonye noted it appears to be an abandoned use. She will report back to Council and will see that the appropriate actions are taken by the Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Musonye also noted that she agreed to enter the appearance of the Solicitor's Office as part of the case.

Public Comment:

Doris Smith-Starks -She asked: "They (Montgomery County) don't always keep up records?" Ms. Musonye explained the process to her.

Councilman Perry commented that steps need to be taken to rectify this when we know this has been done multiple times.

There was a motion on the floor with a second to authorize the Solicitor's office to enter an appearance and to monitor and report back to Council regarding Docket #2018-12744 for an appeal of 213 Haws Avenue, Norristown.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Assessment Appeal for 213 Haws Avenue.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Close Agenda

There was a motion on the floor with a second to close the Agenda. All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Close Agenda. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Norristown Garden Contest:

Now until June 25th, hosted by the Norristown Garden Club. Beautify your home, garden, neighborhood and enter before June 25th for the chance to win prizes from the Norristown Garden Club. Entry forms are available at Municipal Hall, the Norristown Public Library and online. All entries are FREE and the contest is open to all residents of the Municipality.

Battle of the Badges Blood Drive:

Tuesday, June 12th from 9am to 7pm at the Montgomery County Human Services Center Community Room, 1st Floor, 1430 DeKalb Street. Everyday firefighters, police officers and other emergency personnel help those in need. Respond to the call and help make a difference in our community by donating blood in their honor at the American Red Cross of the Badges blood drive. Go to www.redcrossblood.org to sign up.

Summer Concert Series at Elmwood Park:

Thursday, May 14th at 7pm - The Allen Reynolds Band

Sunday, May 20 at 7pm - Old School Rock Band

Norristown's Annual Summer Concert Series is back starting this Thursday. This event and all of our summer concerts are FREE thanks to funding from the Arcadia Foundation.

Norristown 4th of July Celebration:

The Municipality has partnered with the Norristown Chamber of Commerce to present Norristown's Annual 4th of July Celebration! This year's celebration will be introducing a NEW Parade Route, a block party on Main Street (from DeKalb to Arch) and the traditional concert at Elmwood Park with FIREWORKS to cap off the night!

If you or someone you know are interested in participating in the parade, showcasing your group or business at the block party, or performing at either or both, contact the Chamber's Event Coordinator, Tenee King at TenneKing@gmail.com.

Tremont Clean Up Event:

Saturday, May 19th from 8am to 4pm (weather permitting). First Baptist Church, Keep Norristown Beautiful and other local groups will be working to restore the historic Tremont Cemetery on Sandy Street. This clean-up is dependent on the weather, so please check the morning of the event for cancellation notices.

Help a Single Parent Foundation:

Fundraiser: Saturday, May 26 8am to 12pm, Cedar Club on Germantown Pike, \$25. Proceeds benefit single parents..

Men of Excellence Scholarship Gala:

Stokesbury Mansion, Rittenhouse Square, 830 pm to 1 am. Google Men of Excellence.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Richard Bradford provided information regarding a production that Iron Horse Theatre presented regarding a day when slavery was ended. It has been 2 years since the production and they want to bring it back. He noted that the work of the emancipation must continue.

Mr. John Doyle, 336 Sweetbriar Road, King of Prussia - provided information regarding bringing back a walking tour to spotlight African American in the community. He partnered with the NAACP. There will be actors to meet and questions can be answered. It would start at the Distillery down to Ann Street. There will be specific locations.

He explained that he spoke with the businesses along the tour. It would run from 10 am to 4 pm on June 16th 2018.

COMMUNICATION:

There were no Communication items.

ITEMS FOR ACTION:

Municipal Engineer

Hiring a Construction Manager

Recommendation by the Municipal Administrator and Municipal Engineer to hire Gorski Construction Engineering as the Construction Manager who will be responsible for overseeing construction projects associated with Norristown's first-ever Capital Improvement Plan.

Khal Hassan, Municipal Engineer, explained that the new construction manager will be responsible for overseeing construction projects associated with Norristown's first-ever Capital Improvement Plan and must provide input based on practical experience and guide them financially, oversee and supervise with minimal change order requests.

He stated that Gorski is familiar with our process and is a member of the NJ PA Purchasing Program.

Their cost is \$13,500. Initial tasks pertain to the main Municipal building, location of offices, HVAC and outlay of cubicles. The next phase would involve a more detailed design.

Mr. Hassan noted that the plan doesn't start until Council decides what the plan is.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Derrick Perry with a second by Valerie Scott-Cooper to Motion to approve the hiring of a Construction Manager.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR:

Food Truck Waiver Request for Fourth of July Celebration on Main Street

A request of the Municipal Council from the Norristown Chamber of Commerce to waive a section of the Municipal Code to allow Food Trucks as part of the Chamber's planned Block Party on Main Street, which is part of Norristown's Fourth of July Celebration.

Brandon Ford, Special Assistant to the Municipal Administrator, noted that an event coordinator was hired for the Parade, block party, traditional concerts and fireworks.

He noted that the request is from the Chamber of Commerce to waive a section of the Municipal Code to allow Food Trucks as part of the Chamber's planned Block Party on Main Street and to allow conforming Food Trucks to operate between DeKalb and Arch.

Councilwoman Lewis stated that Council should receive feedback about what is being planned because they are not being told what is happening.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Rebecca Smith to Motion to approve a Food Truck Waiver request for the 4th of July Celebration on Main Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Alcohol Waiver Request for Fourth of July Celebration on Main Street

A request of the Municipal Council from the Norristown Chamber of Commerce to waive a section of the Municipal Code to allow the sale and consumption of alcohol in designated areas as part of the Chamber's planned Block Party on Main Street Beer Garden, which is part of Norristown's Fourth of July Celebration.

Brandon Ford explained that the working idea is to have the sale and consumption of alcohol in the Municipal lot across from Five Saints Distillery.

The Waiver is to allow them to have the beer garden but there needs to be approval from the Police, Fire and Public Works for the blocking of the streets. Brandon Ford stated there will be additional meetings and they will try to get local vendors involved.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to approve an Alcohol Waiver Request for the 4th of July Celebration on Main Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

FINANCE:

Resolution 18-128: Fee Schedule Amendment

A request of Municipal Council to approve the proposed amendment to the Municipality's Fee Schedule to update the fees associated with Towing Services in Norristown, as well as to add the fees for the recently adopted Mobile Food Vendor License Policy.

Rochelle Rawlins, Assistant Finance Manager, noted that at the last meeting, Council approved the update of the towing service fees as well as the recently adopted Mobile Food Vendor License Policy.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to approve Resolution 18-128: Fee Schedule Amendment.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT:

1001 Sterigere Street -Request for Land Development Approval

Request for preliminary/final land development approval from PA Department of Human Services for a parking lot expansion at Building 10 at the Norristown State Hospital.

Timothy Diehl, P.E., provided an overview. Also present was Gary Raisner, Chief Operating Office of Norristown State Hospital.

They are looking to provide a parking lot expansion at the Building 10 entrance on Locust Street. He noted that the State would like to alleviate an issue on Circle Drive and add this overflow parking area.

He noted that waivers were requested with an additional partial waiver: granting of stormwater management and an Operation and Management Agreement with the State. 2nd part: easement.

Khal Hassad, Municipal Engineer, suggested granting the partial waiver: section number 276-36a for not providing the easement that is referenced but provide the Operation and Maintenance Agreement as the second part of the waiver (276-34) in compliance with section 33.

Motion carries 6-1.

There was a motion by Olivia Brady with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to approve preliminary/final land development approval for 1001 Sterigere Street.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Resolution 18-126: Disabled Parking

Council will consider a resolution to establish handicapped parking at the following Norristown addresses: 329 E. Marshall Street & 402 E. Moore Street

Chief Talbot noted there were handicapped parking requests for the following addresses:

- 329 E. Marshall Street
- 402 E. Moore Street

He noted that the residents have conditions that impact mobility.

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Olivia Brady to Motion to approve Resolution 18-126: Disabled Parking. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Police Report

Chief Talbot provided information from his report:

50% violent crimes 2014-2017 down 50%

Gun violence - strategy in place. There were 6 incidents involving fatal or non-fatal gun violence. Over 5 yrs. as Police Chief, data driven strategy. There are training courses related to violent crime. Compare to similar areas.

An article compared homicide rates in various communities. Norristown is #33 on list of homicide rates. At end of 2016, 5.8 per 100,000. Chester is 67.4 per 100,000. Falls Township: 8.8 per 100,000. Chambersburg 9.6 per 100,000. National rate: 5.3 homicides per 100,000.

Continue to move into what resources are available. What are we doing for those neighborhoods?

Push for community events. Go back to where an event happened.

Councilwoman Scott-Cooper suggested getting this info out into the community.

Fire Report

In for Chief O'Donnell - Assistant Chief Cossman -

82 emergency dispatches

38 department activities

Installed detectors

Fire education events

A custom made fire truck will take delivery this summer.

Alarm system upgrades.

Twitter feed update.

Non-presenting Department Reports

owner occ onsp

rental inspections

violations up to 201

33 tp 52 bldg.

34 to 41 elec

mech 25

U&O

citations 83 to 30 for licensing

code appeal 25 to 20.

Thomas - tires 1 per family for Mascaro to pick up.

ADJOURNMENT:

All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a motion by Valerie Scott-Cooper with a second by Heather Lewis to Motion to adjourn Council Workshop.. A Roll Call Vote resulted in:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann M. Santangelo