



City of Coatesville
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Council Chambers
Monday, September 9, 2024

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris, Councilwoman Charrisse Allen, Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green, and Councilwoman Fran Scamuffa

Council Absent: Councilwoman Villa Hunt and Vice President Carmen Green

Staff Present: Roberta Cosentino, Assistant City Manager; Lieutenant Rodger Ollis, Police Department; Aaron Flook, Codes Department; Robert Jefferson, Solicitor; and Ruthann Mowday, Recording Secretary

President Lavender Norris announced an Executive Session was held earlier this evening to discuss personnel, real estate, and legal matters.

President Lavender Norris announced that Vice President Green and Councilwoman Villa Hunt would not be in attendance.

Approved Minutes

Ms. Scamuffa motioned to approve the August 26, 2024 meeting minutes; Ms. Al Amin seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Ms. Al Amin motioned to approve the accounts payables; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Presentation

1. Swearing In – Codes Enforcement

Dawn Jones was sworn in as Codes Enforcement Officer by the Honorable Judge Gregory Hines as Aaron Flook held the Bible.

2. 2nd Century Alliance

My name is Shakira Davis, and I am the new Coatesville community coordinator with the Second Century Alliance. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to speak before you today and formally introduce myself in this role. I am deeply passionate about community development and am honored to be a part of a dedicated team, dedicated to uplifting the city of Coatesville. As a longtime advocate for social equity and community empowerment, I bring a background in social work, psychology, and holistic wellness to my role. My vision is to foster strong, engaged, and resilient communities in Coatesville, and I look forward to collaborating with the city council to make that a reality. So, my objectives as Coatesville community coordinator, in my role in Second Century, I have several key objectives over the next five years, all of which aim to create a more vibrant and thriving Coatesville. These include fostering resident engagement and empowerment. So I believe in the power of community-driven change.

My goal is to engage residents at every level, ensuring that their voices are heard and that they feel empowered to take an active role in shaping their neighborhood's future. This includes providing platforms for dialogue, offering opportunities for participation and local initiatives, and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes. The second one is expanding economic opportunities. Coatesville is rich with potential, and I am committed to helping unlock that potential by supporting local businesses, creating more jobs, and drawing investment into the city. Partnering with small business owners, promoting local entrepreneurship, and working to secure funding and grants are crucial steps I aim to take in expanding economic opportunities for all residents. The third one is mitigating criminal and antisocial activities. A safer Coatesville is a stronger Coatesville. My goal is to collaborate with local law enforcement, community groups and organizations to develop initiatives that reduce crime and antisocial behavior. We will work together to provide positive alternatives for at-risk youth, increase neighborhood watch programs, and improve relationships between residents and law enforcement. The fourth one is supporting positive youth activities. Engaging our youth is critical for the future of Coatesville. I aim to expand after-school programs, recreational opportunities, and leadership development initiatives to ensure our young people have the support and resources they need to succeed. Collaborations with schools, churches, and local organizations will be key in achieving this goal. And the fifth and final one is addressing housing affordability and gentrification concerns. So gentrification is a reality facing many urban areas, and Coatesville is no exception. My goal is to work with the city leadership and the community to balance development and progress while preserving affordable housing and protecting long-term residents from displacement. We need to ensure that, as Coatesville grows, it remains a place where people from all walks of life can thrive without losing the cultural fabric that make the city unique.

I strongly believe that meaningful changes come from collaboration, having the city council and city leadership as critical partners in achieving this goal. My approach is to work closely with you to align our efforts and ensure that the projects and initiatives we develop serve the best interest of the Coatesville residents. By fostering open communication and collaboration, we can maximize resources and avoid duplication of efforts, work together on community cleanups, beautification projects, and events that strengthen Coatesville's identity and sense of pride, address shared concerns such as public safety, economic development, and housing affordability, ensuring that, as Coatesville undergoes revitalization, we remain mindful of the impact on all residents, particularly in relation to gentrification and displacement. So I am incredibly excited about the future of Coatesville and the opportunities we have to create long-lasting positive change, and I believe that, by working hand in hand with city council and community leaders and residents, I am confident that we can make Coatesville a better place for both current residents and future generations. Thank you for your time and for your continued support of Second Century Alliance. I look forward to working with each one of you closely as we move forward in our shared role of making Coatesville a vibrant, inclusive, and bright committee-- city, sorry. In addition, we have several events coming up in September. We have an adult field day coming up this Saturday at Abdala Park. We have a

citywide community cleanup planned for Saturday, September 21. That'll start at 7:00 AM. They're doing Route 82, both sides, at 7:00 AM to 10:00, and then 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, we will do streets in the city. On September 19, we have a path to home ownership workshop sponsored by [Kiebling?] and the [main?] Coatesville networking event in partnership with Western Chester County Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Allen asked if the events that you just said, is that on your website? Like on the calendar or something? Ms. Davis replied they are on the website and the Coatesville Community Calendar. Lieutenant Ollis asked Ms. Davis, if there are things that you find in your assessments and interviews, travels, that you feel could make us be even more effective as a department, please feel free to share those.

Ms. Davis asked, because several people have asked me this. They would like the city council meetings to be Zoomed because if they can't attend physically, they still want to watch or see. So take that into consideration.

3. Women Destined for Change
There was no presentation at this time.

Discussion Items

There were no discussions at this time.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were no citizens hearings on regular action items only.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on regular action items only; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider a motion to appoint Wendy Whitaker term 2022-2025, Jonathan Kasitz term 2023-2026; Donald Folks term 2023-2026 to the Board of Housing Appeals.
Ms. Al Amin made a motion to appoint Jonathan Kasitz term 2023-2026 and Donald Folks term 2023-2026 to the Board of Housing Appeals; Ms. Scamuffa seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Just for the record, I did not mention the third person's name because they have rescinded. So there are those two gentlemen up for a vote right now.

Ms. Al Amin made a motion to close action items; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

Mr. Jefferson announce he provided a more detailed attorney-client privileged report to Council. Since the last Council meeting; I have communicated and continue to communicate with outside counsel regarding certain litigation matters; communicated with the RDA's Solicitor and the Developers Solicitor regarding the Flats development; reviewed and edited a proposed easement amendment; attended meetings regarding the River Walk; communicated and continue to communicate with outside counsel regarding land development matters; provided opinions regarding the opioid litigation and communicated with the District Attorney's Office regarding a litigation matter.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan announced during our executive meeting, I provided updates and comments on city and real estate matters that are current. In terms of our city's economic and community development projects, as you all know, we still have a lot of economic development revitalization momentum going in the city. We continue to make progress on the sale of The Flats, working with the RDA, leading the negotiations with the IDG Group. If it wasn't reported in the earlier meeting or last month's meeting, we anticipate the sale of The Flats to be completed by the end of October. So we're very excited about that. The other update is the CTown, the grocery store that's going to be opening in the city. That opening is slated for October this year, so we anticipate a nice grand opening ceremony with the owners of CTown and community. We'll be working with our Western Chester County Chamber of Commerce, along with the Second Century Alliance to provide that ribbon-cutting ceremony. The RDA is also working with local investors on two pad sites near the Marriott. This is right off of the manor road, as we call it. Recently, RDA received a number of proposals to review the potential opportunities for the commercial and residential projects in those two parcels. This request was made by the county and the RDA to explore possible future developments. Right now, it's still under review. We are monitoring the progress that the state is going to be making on those parcels. If you recall, there is some legal issue that we need to resolve with the state in terms of the ownership of the property. And Mr. Jefferson is actually part of those discussions to determine what our next steps are. But right now, it's kind of in the hands of the state to make their decision. And then once they make their decision, the county, the city, and the RDA can move forward.

The RDA is also working with local investors on two pad sites near the Marriott. This is right off of the manor road, as we call it. Recently, RDA received a number of proposals to review the potential opportunities for the commercial and residential projects in those two parcels. This request was made by the county and the RDA to explore possible future developments. Right now, it's still under review. We are monitoring the progress that the state is going to be making on those parcels. If you recall, there is some legal issue that we need to resolve with the state in terms of the ownership of the property. And Mr. Jefferson is actually part of those discussions to determine what our next steps are. But right now, it's kind of in the hands of the state to make their decision. And then once they make their decision, the county, the city, and the RDA can move forward. The City of Coatesville is exploring a partnership with local industry leaders to create training for the trades. We are looking to kind of expand that conversation with some of

our regional partners. For many years, I've talked to a number of stakeholders in the community and outside the community to bring some sort of trades training to the city of Coatesville. We have a number of individuals that-- young individuals as well as adults that can benefit from trades training and certifications. So we'll be looking to explore those aspects in the near future.

An update on the city's ACE Conference. Last year, we had a very successful economic forum in the month of August. This year, the forum has been moved to November. We had to move the date due to other commitments from some of our panelists and prospect panelists. So the new date is November 1st. That will be held at the training facility in South Coatesville. And we're very excited that we have secured the keynote speaker, and Roberta and Vince are going to be working on some of the panelists and the program agenda. So we're very excited about hosting our second annual ACE Conference.

Let's see. This item is for, mostly, our council members here. The municipal update, which is produced by the Western Chester County Chamber, this year is going to be November 8. If you haven't attended before, it's an opportunity to hear from a number of municipalities in the western region of what's going on in their backyards, from new store openings to their economic revitalization efforts. This week held that Vietri Electric and a little bit further west. And we hope that you all have seen-- I think, in your packets, you should have seen there's a one-pager in there of the invitation. So please let Ruthann know if you plan on attending so we can make sure that we get your information and secure you a seat for this event.

The next one that's also in there, if I'm not mistaken, is NAACP dinner that's coming up. I think most of you have responded to that, and we're very grateful that you all would be attending that. And I will not tell you who the surprise awardees are this year, so you have to come and see for yourself. That concludes my report.

3. Assistant City Manager

Ms. Cosentino announced to begin, the city would like to welcome any Spanish-speakers and other non-English-speakers that need assistance in city matters to contact the city as needed, either in person, on the phone, or via our website. We want everyone to be able to share their questions and concerns. [foreign]. For my report tonight, I just want to share a few updates.

On Thursday, September 12th at 5 o'clock, there will be a landlord forum hosted by H2O and the Housing Authority of Chester County at 190 West Lincoln, and Mr. Logan will be speaking there to speak with landlords, investors, and real estate agents in Chester County about the state of housing. In a similar vein, quality of housing remains a priority for the city. We are actively working with landlords to get inspections up to date. We have received several inquiries about Regency Park Apartments, and we are currently awaiting response from the property management company about the status of the first set of repairs that were due.

Last week, I met with the regional office of HUD. We had a productive meeting, and I believe that continued collaboration with HUD and the Chester County Housing Authority will benefit city residents, and I look forward to continuing that collaboration. A little update on road work.

As Mr. Logan mentioned, the road work on Coates Street continues. That final paving should be complete at this point. There is some paving throughout the city that PA American Water is doing. That won't have final paving until the end of October. And also, the PECO work on 3rd and MLK is continuing as well.

The Millview Basin project, as you recall, has been ongoing for several months, but that project is coming to a close. I should have final updates on that soon. And the inlet project that was recently awarded several months ago, the inlets have been-- are currently still being surveyed, so that project is ongoing as well. As you recall, in the last meeting I had mentioned the sinkhole that formed on Harlan Drive. The city is currently reviewing estimates for that work on Harlan Drive, so we should be moving forward with that soon.

And last but not least, I want to welcome Dawn Jones to the team. She's our new code enforcement officer for the codes department. She started just over a week ago now, and she comes to us with a great deal of varied experience from another municipality, and we're very happy to have her on board, and she's been doing great so far. And as you know, the codes report is in your packet tonight. Because this is Aaron's last meeting with us, I have asked him to give the code report. Many of the successes in this report are thanks to him, so I'd like him to update you all.

Mr. Flook explained when he first started here in Coatesville, one of the things that I started was to look to how things would be 5, 10 years when I left. So everything that I've built so far has been to continue on after it. And while I loved working for Coatesville, I respectfully disagree with her that these are my results. These are the results of the department. I gave a little bit of inspiration and maybe kicked a butt a couple times, but they did all the work, so they deserve all the credit.

There's a number of very good things that are going on. One of them is with our business privilege licenses and our real estate inspection licenses or real estate licenses. The advantage of those is that the real estate licenses actually control how we get our inspections done, and inspections are the key to us improving the quality of affordable housing and overall housing within the city, which we all believe can be a lot better than what it is right now. For the first time, we are under 10% in delinquencies for our real estate inspections. We have installed a process with which to make sure that we are following up and getting as many of these done as possible before the end of the year, and this is the first time we've ever been this low, from all the records that we can find, and it's the fastest we've ever achieved it also.

The other big thing that's interesting is that we did do a big push for getting rid of unregistered and illegally abandoned or parked vehicles. If you notice in the last page of the report, they are the second-most code violations that we've had. Obviously, grass and taking care of property is the number one. But we did do a big push and were able to eliminate a lot of cars that have been sitting there for months, years. We did catch a boat that was full of garbage that's been moved across the city about 16 times that we've been chasing and eventually made its way to the dump. It took us a little while, but we caught up with it. We'd cite them, and then they'd move it to

somebody else's house. Overall, the code department-- I will say this. When I came in, as I said before, I came in with the idea of how is it going to function when I'm not here. And you have everything in that department to make a huge change. And now, they have the processes and procedures, and we spent five months with quick bootcamp education on how to do it. And I am thoroughly endorsing the way that they work.

I know that you guys have given me a lot of feedback and great feedback and appreciation on what the code department has done. So you're doing a great job. You're doing a great job. I have the easiest job in the world when it came to actually getting the results because they busted their-- excuse my language. They busted their arse to get it done. So if you get a chance and you see any of the people in the codes department, just say thank you because they've done a great job, and I appreciate being here and helping them and mentoring them just a little bit.

And my last thing before I go; I just want to say thank you for the opportunity. I enjoyed 99% of everything that I did here. I enjoyed working with people. I enjoyed working with the administration, the solicitor, the police office, pretty much everybody in this community. And I thank you for the opportunity.

President Lavender Norris stated I need to say one thing. We're going to miss you. It's unfortunate that, as you say, the city is short, but we do wish you the best of luck. And we know that, wherever you land, you'll bring your talents to that particular municipality. Please don't tell them to call me for a reference. Just kidding. I should have known. But seriously, you have, as you mentioned in your report, [inaudible] some of the initiatives and processes that you put in place, and we are grateful. Thank you very much for that. Ms. Turner Green stated I also want to say thank you for all you've done and for the mark you've made in that codes department in the short amount of time you stayed here. We greatly appreciate it. I wish you the very best and envy wherever you're going to. Thank you so much. Stay safe, and God bless you.

4. Police Department

Lieutenant Ollis Wished Aaron, good luck. He was humble when he said he didn't do any of the work. But I recall one of our first meetings was a ride-along, and I'm looking for crime, and he said, "Stop." And there was a sewage issue, and you dealt with that immediately. So it's about creating a process, and I believe you've done that. So thank you. I am not Chief Laufer, for those of you that aren't familiar with me, I'm sitting in for him. And in your packets, you have the statistical information that he typically provides. And I'll hit some highlights that he likes to talk about.

1,808 calls tracked by Chester County police radio, also known as the 911 center. And we took a little more than 1,000 at the desk as well for the month of August. We had three Narcan administrations that were successful, so we had a good outcome with those. 14 car seat checks provided by a certified seat tech. And we just wrote another grant. We'll get more seats. Timing is good. This month is child passenger safety month. I did ensure that we got a mini-grant, so there'll be additional enforcement concentrating on child passenger safety. So it's always a good

idea to wear your seatbelt, but you might want to do that even more so this month because additional cars would be out there at no additional charge to our taxpayers.

We talked about vehicles, so I figure I'd put that out. 23 vehicles were labeled as abandoned in August. We ended up only having to tow six. So that means that they've removed it or took care of the issue, such as overdue inspection or emissions or plate issues. And Shakira also kind to talked about all the collaboration. So I figured I'd just mention a few, just in case you didn't know what the police department was up to or who we're partnering or collaborating with. Coatesville Tower Senior Center, Second Century Alliance, The Alliance for Health Equity, Coatesville College Educational Equity Alliance, many churches, Parks and Recreation. We're also part of Chester County Reentry Initiative, the DA's Task Force for Race and Justice, School Task Force, Chester County Drug and Alcohol Recovery Courts, Coatesville Youth Initiative, Salvation Army, Safe Kids of Chester County, Chester County Safety Unit. The list goes on and on. We try to stay relevant in our neighborhood, and we can't do that alone.

I should mention that we are continuing to do the catching kids doing something right and ticketing them, that program. We love that. It makes officers smile, as well as some families. But if kids are caught not doing something right, we are continuing on with the youth aid panel. They met on August 27th. I can't say enough great things about our community panel. They are fabulous, and they're holding the kids accountable, but they're also getting another chance. So it's a fabulous program.

Upcoming, we have Coffee with the Chief at Second Century Alliance on October 2nd. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. So right after we get done with the coffee, we're going to go out with the ribbons and the info awareness cards and take care of the downtown. So anybody that goes to coffee with the chief, or if you just want to join us for that awareness event, that'll be on the 2nd of October. Also in October is the DEA takeback. In April, I think we got about 500 pounds of prescription drugs. Now is a good time to start looking in your medicine cabinet or wherever you store them. If they're expired, no longer needed, bring them to us. We'll make sure that they're properly disposed. We don't want them in the water system, we don't want them in landfills, and we certainly don't want those drugs in hands to which they're not intended. Yes, October 26th, from 10:00 to 2:00. Like previous events, Coatesville PD will be a collection site. We'll do some announcing on social media. But unfortunately, sometimes there's a death in the family and you have all these drugs. You don't want to flush them. You want to get them [dispersed?] the right way. Sometimes you get well and you don't need them. We'll take animal meds, pet medication, supplements. If it's in your medicine cabinet or stored away, you don't need it, bring it to us. We'll make sure it gets to the right place. I think that's it. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to take them. Otherwise, thank you.

Citizens Hearings Non-Agenda Items Only (3 Minutes) – Residents/Tax Payer/Property Owner

President Lavender Norris explained this is our citizen hearing portion for non-agenda items. And we would just ask that, when you mount the podium, then state your name and address. Understand that you have three minutes at the podium, and if you hear the buzzer, please end your comment and take your seat. Thank you so much. Appreciate that.

Khadijah Al Amin

I live at 1110 East [inaudible]. Tonight's not all complaints. It's a little bit of good news. So on September 4th, after my neighbor getting fined almost on a daily basis, he had a landscaping company come out. And I have to say, for the first time in five and a half, almost six years, the entire grass is cut, the shrubbery was trimmed out front, the dead shrubbery was removed from the backyard, the flower beds were cleaned out, and no flowers or anything, but they mulched. There's three issues that I would ask the city to continue to pursue because it's part of responsibilities of a homeowner and occupant, which is what he was cited for. The first is the big tree out back. I'm no tree expert, but if you go in the alley and look at it, there's a nice portion of the tree that looks like the tree is rotting from the inside out. I provided pictures below that. I complained about the tree always being on my roof and cutting it back, and a week later, it was on my roof again, which I knew it meant something was wrong with the tree. So two days before the storm in July, the portion of the tree that was on his garage fella and caused a lot of damage. So that tree needs to be addressed. The fence going eastbound needs to be addressed. And if he doesn't want to fix it, it's falling down. He can remove it. Because it's my understanding that fences are not required, but if you have them, you have to maintain them. And the last thing is the garage. There's a nice-size hole in the roof, some of the bricks are missing, and the downspouts, parts on the garage, parts hanging down, parts laying on the ground, and there's still wires hanging from the garage. But this is the most movement that I've seen in five and a half years it's taken to get here. So maybe if the city continues to push and pursue, he'll get the other things fixed as well.

Ms. Al Amin motioned to close citizens hearings on non-agenda items; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Special Events

Mr. Logan announced every year since 9/11, the National Iron and Steel Heritage Museum puts on or produces an event called [Folks Still?] Remember 9/11. This year, of course, it takes place September 11th. There will be a commemorative service Wednesday, September 11th, beginning at 8:40 AM. I think some of the council members have attended this event in past years. Once again, if you do have a morning that you'd like to come by, I'm sure that the museum would appreciate it. Oftentimes, they bring in guest speakers from law enforcement, from police and fire, first responders. We should never forget that day and what those first responders did for the country. So just wanted to let you all know that's taking place again this year.

Council Comments

Ms. Turner-Green thanked everyone for coming out this evening. Of course, as always, I want to keep it short. Shakira, I wanted to say thank you for the presentation. I look forward to [looking into the?] future. As well, congratulations to Dawn Jones, she left also. Welcome. I'm sure you'll do great things. Of course, as always, Aaron, it's bittersweet, and I wish you well in everything that you do, but I do want to just truly send my gratitude for everything that you've done here since you've been

here. You've made huge leaps and bounds, and you've made an impact. And so we're very sorry to see you go, but I know you'll have a wonderful [inaudible]. Thank you all for coming out.

Ms. Allen thanked everyone for coming out and Shakira [for her?] presentation. We look forward to working with. Me and Aaron spoke, and we all are not excited to see you go 'cause you've done a lot in the five months, like a year's worth of work in five months. So we do appreciate you for all of the hard work you said you didn't do.

Ms. Al Amin thanked everybody for coming in. And I do look forward to working with Shakira. I've known her for a long, long time. And Aaron, I wish you well when you next endeavor, and safe travels, everybody, and have a good night.

Ms. Scamuffa said I echo everyone else. Thank you, everyone, for coming out. Aaron, I wish you the best, and I hope you succeed in 10 years about your dream of becoming the world's worst fisherman. Yeah, but it is a bittersweet moment to see you go. But with that being said, I also-- Dawn's gone for the night, but I send her a very warm welcome. Thank you, everybody. Have a great night and a wonderful week. See you in two weeks.

President Lavender Norris stated I, too, echo my colleagues. Aaron, I expressed my sentiments earlier. To the staff, thank you so very much for all you do. Know that you're appreciated. To our community, thank you for coming out. Thank you for hanging out. There's only a few of you, but a faithful few. [That's that, what?], 80/20, 70/30 thing. The little do the most. Thank you. We appreciate you as well. I just ask that you keep Councilwoman Hunt and her family of in prayer. They're going through a hard time right now. And while we can all go and knock on the door and hug and kiss and laugh and talk and whatever else it takes, this is something only God can do for them. So by all means, keep them in your prayers. Thank you all so much for coming out. And God bless you all. And it's 8:30 and it's Monday night football. Y'all have a blessed night.

Adjournment

Ms. Al Amin motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.