

Minutes
City of Coatesville
Regular Meeting – 1 City Hall Place, Coatesville, PA
Council Chambers
Monday, November 12, 2024

Council Present: President Lavender-Norris, Vice President Carmen Green, Councilwoman Charrisse Allen, Councilwoman Villa Hunt, and Councilwoman Fran Scamuffa
Council Absent: Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin, Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green
Staff Present James Logan, City Manager; Roberta Cosentino, Assistant City Manager; Chief Jack Laufer, Police Department; Jessica Arthur, Finance Manager; 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 Councilwoman Khadijah Al Amin and Councilwoman Tiniera Turner-Green would not be in attendance this evening.

Approved Minutes

Vice President Green motioned to approve the October 28, 2024 meeting minutes; Ms. Scamuffa seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Accounts Payables

Vice President Green motioned to approve the accounts payables; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Presentation

1. Promotional Oath of Office from Officer Samuel Snyder to Corporal
Moved to December 9 meeting.

Discussion Items

1. Political stickers and vendors
No discussion at this time.

Citizens Hearings – Regular Action Items Only (3 Minutes)

There were citizens comments on regular action items at this time.

Ms. Allen motioned to close citizens hearings on regular action items; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Regular Action Items

1. Receive and consider a motion to conditionally approve the preliminary/final land development plan for the West Chester Booster Pump Station prepared by HRG, Inc. dated July 16, 2024, subject to compliance with Cedarville’s review letter, dated August 9, 2024, and with requests for waivers from the following sections: §194-308; §194-306.K.2; §194-310.B; §197-9.H; and §197-55.A
Vice President Green motioned to conditionally approve the preliminary/final land development plan for the West Chester Booster Pump Station prepared by HRG, Inc. dated July 16, 2024, subject to compliance with Cedarville’s review letter, dated August 9, 2024, and with requests for

waivers from the following sections: §194-308; §194-306.K.2; §194-310.B; §197-9.H; and §197-55.A; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Scamuffa questioned on page three of the proposal for August 9th that you sent over, page three, at three-quarters of the way down. It says the following shall be addressed. Is it going to make a difference if it says Westchester Pike as opposed to Westchester Road? Mr. Turner replied I get it. It's a formality thing. I get it. It feels like it's overkill to make sure that things are correct. But it's easy enough when you're out in the field for construction crews to not realize certain things. I get it, but it is important to make sure that we're aligning road names to be correct. Okay. A lot of it-- a lot of the letter is more clean-ups [crosstalk] than anything. Like I said, I recognize that it seems very nitpicky, but again, there's a lot of things that go in there to make sure that everything's right for what they get [crosstalk]. Ms. Scamuffa said yeah, because West Chester Pike is way over yonder. Mr. Turner said yes. Yeah, I believe they've already addressed it. We do have representatives here from HRG and PA American as well. It's going to say West Chester Road.

2. Receive and consider a request that the roadway restoration fee be waived in lieu of PAWC completing a curb to curb overlay from Strode Avenue to West 9th Avenue on Charles Street. Vice President Green motion to approve the request that the roadway restoration fee be waived in lieu of PAWC completing a curb to curb overlay from Strode Avenue to West 9th Avenue on Charles Street; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Allen inquired about why are we waiving the fee to PA American Water? They did enough damage, I believe, in our streets that they haven't fixed. Then they keep raising the prices in our resident's water prices, so why are we waiving this fee? Ms. Cosentino explained generally, we always waive fees for PA American because after they've broken a road, they do have to pave curb-to-curb paving. So generally, we don't charge them fees. Mr. Turner explained the roadway restoration ordinance typically doesn't require curb-to-curb paving. PA American is typically gracious enough to cover the costs of paving curb to curb instead of just a single lane of traffic. The cost associated with that additional overlay is typically in excess of what the city would collect from that road restoration fee, which is where Cedarville is typically recommended that we waive the fee. Ms. Allen stated when they tore up the street on 1st Avenue, they took out the railroads. They didn't pave curb-to-curb. And right now we're having problems with it. So I'm just curious as to why we're just waving that fee. Mr. Turner said yeah. So 1st Avenue would be a PennDOT Roadway. I'd have to follow up with the county permits [inaudible]. Ms. Allen stated PA American Water about five years ago now came through and they said that it was train tracks there. And they dug them up. And ever since then, we've been having problems with our road and waterways. Mr. Turner said he I can certainly follow up on that and get back to you. I will note that PA American is typically a lot easier to deal with than PECO. This is something that we've traditionally done with PECO. I'm sorry, the opposite. We've done with PA American. PA America is very gracious to the city. PECO, on the other hand, I'm not speaking ill of them. Just the way that their organization is set up, they typically just come in and they want to pay the restoration fee and only do that single lane of restoration and then bump that out where they need to for additional services. I mean, it's what the ordinance requires, but they don't typically have too much of an incentive. We've reached out to PECO in the past to try to get him to do curve to curb for the city. It just doesn't [inaudible]. President Lavender Norris stated it would cost more than the fee that they're asking to waive to pave the road [crosstalk]. Mr. Turner said correct. I did not do the math to figure out exactly how much it would cost, but it typically is significantly more than the restoration fee.

3. Receive and consider a motion for first reading and advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to reacquire the property located at 99 North 9th Avenue, Coatesville, Chester County, Pennsylvania, (UPI No. 16-6-307), from the Coatesville Youth Initiative, a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation, for a sale price of ten dollars
Vice President Green motion to approve first reading and advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to reacquire the property located at 99 North 9th Avenue, Coatesville, Chester County, Pennsylvania, (UPI No. 16-6-307), from the Coatesville Youth Initiative, a Pennsylvania Non-Profit Corporation, for a sale price of ten dollars; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.
4. Receive and consider a motion for first reading and advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to acquire 97 South First Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-271), 48 Maple Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-298) and 76 Maple Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-302) from Cleveland-Cliffs Plate, LLC, for the sale price of ten dollars
Vice President Green motion to approve first reading and advertisement of an Ordinance authorizing the City of Coatesville to acquire 97 South First Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-271), 48 Maple Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-298) and 76 Maple Avenue (UPI No. 16-5-302) from Cleveland-Cliffs Plate, LLC, for the sale price of ten dollars; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.
5. Receive and consider a motion to approve the Preliminary Budget
Vice President Green motioned to approve the 2025 Preliminary Budget; Ms. Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Vice President Green stated I just want to just thank Jessica, Mr. Logan, Roberta for just putting together this budget, just keeping us in the same path that we've been on for the last few years, and having a fully balanced budget. You guys did a fantastic job as always. And I just want to acknowledge that. Thank you so much. And you're new. You're new as far as accountability. You're not new working for the city, but now you're in charge.

6. Receive and consider accepting the Audit year end December 31, 2023
Ms. Allen motioned to accept the Audit year end December 31, 2023; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Vice President green said I have a comment. Again, I just appreciate it. Thank you, guys. Our audits have been fantastic. Our audit findings [inaudible]. And I so appreciate the effort and the hard work that you all put in to make sure that the city is running efficiently. Thank you so much.

7. Receive and consider a motion to set time by which a quorum must be present for the conduct of the Reorganizational Meeting scheduled January 6, 2025 to 6:00 pm.
Ms. Scamuffa motioned to set time by which a quorum must be present for the conduct of the Reorganizational Meeting scheduled January 6, 2025 to 6:00 pm; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Logan stated So you mentioned from 6:00 to 8:00, and that's really depending on the finish early. That meeting may end at 6:30 or 7:00 [inaudible]. President Lavender Norris replied yes. So we don't have to have an end time. The start time is necessary, but the end time is not required.

8. Receive and consider a motion an in-kind contribution 2nd Century Alliance
Vice president Green motioned to approve an in-kind contribution to 2nd Century Alliance; Ms. Scamuffa seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Vice President Green stated I think that the 2nd Century Alliance is a very necessary organization in the city as a partner. And I think that that's agreeing to serve them with their in-time services is a much better than giving them 2,000 or 3,000 dollars. We're giving them a lot in our daytime. So I don't know if everybody will see it that way, but I think that this is a very generous offer.

Ms. Allen motioned to close action items; Vice President Green seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Reports

1. Solicitor

The solicitor was not present for the meeting.

2. City Manager

Mr. Logan wished everyone a good evening. During the executive meeting, I provided updates and comments on the City of Coatesville's real estate matters and personnel matters. I just have four bullets for this evening. First is, I just want to comment and thank everyone for coming out to the ACE forum that we had a couple of Fridays ago. We placed in your packets booklets from the forum that provides just really good information on the City of Coatesville where we are moving forward in terms of our direction. We have some development recommendations that we added this year, and there is a QR code in the back that takes you to our video. The event was well attended with over 100 attendees. I had a couple of time discussions. And I think the objective for this is to get potential investors to come out. Some of our partners come out as well as new partners and talk to them about what's going on in the City of Coatesville and the greater Coatesville region. I think this year, the panelists, they did a great job. And I just want to thank Roberta, Vince, all of the folks that were involved in it. We got our Codes department and Finance involved. We got some great numbers from our Codes in terms of some stats. So it was definitely a team effort in putting together this publication.

So if you haven't got one, please pick it up. It has some great information in it and our strategy for the next five years as well. The second event that happened just last Friday was the municipal luncheon. That was an opportunity for municipalities throughout the Western region to come together and provide an update to the audience. This was hosted by the Western Chester County Chamber. The location was at South Coatesville Training Center who always does a great job. And we provided information at that event as well and listened to other of our municipal colleagues and some of the great things that they're doing throughout the region. A lot of things are happening in this region. There are companies moving here. There's housing projects going on. The City of Coatesville, of course, is putting in some new housing developments and new housing stocks for anyone to view. So, we are part of addressing some of the housing needs in this region.

The next item I have is just more of a reminder. Last year, we were one of the supporters of the Iron and Steel Museum annual holiday event. This year, we'll be sending out invitations to you all to attend their event. I think it's coming up in about three weeks. Excuse me, not three weeks, but the second week of December. And again, the City of Coatesville has supported them for a couple of years now. Jim Ziegler, Scott Houston, they put on a really nice event showcasing history.

Then the last item I have is regarding Christmas items for the city of Coatesville. We are looking

at Christmas decorations for the downtown district between 1st and 3rd. I will be providing you all with a couple of quotes. Certainly, just like everything else, the price tag is kind of getting up there, but we will provide you with those quotes.

3. Assistant City Manager

Ms. Cosentino thanked Madam President. To begin, the city would like to welcome any Spanish speakers and other non-English speakers that need assistance with city matters to contact the city as needed, either in person, on phone, or via our website. We want everyone to be able to share their questions and concerns. [foreign]. I'd like to point you to the Codes report towards the back of your packets. I just want to give you a few updates from our code department. If you look at the licenses and inspections page, pending licenses. Some pending rental licenses are still outstanding. And the reason why I bring this up is because we have a renewed focus on rental licenses and inspections in the city. So any of those pending licenses you see means that there's a failure to complete an inspection. And per our ordinances, that means that it may result in a rental license being revoked. Currently, we are going through this educational process with a lot of our property owners. And I just want City Council to be aware that that is something we are focusing on. The city is working closely with property owners in this and also the housing authority to ensure that rental inspections are completed. And this includes commercial properties as well as private individual properties.

If you look at page six of that same report, you'll see some additional positive results coming from our Code Enforcement Officers. You can see how many cases were opened and closed at the end of each month. Our goal, of course, is compliance and not just fining people, but actually getting issues resolved. Our Code Enforcement Officers are doing incredible work. They're identifying issues, and they're also getting them resolved in a timely manner. And then on page seven, you can see that the vast majority of our cases are related to trash and property maintenance issues. And soon we'll start seeing the leaf removal and we may or may not see snow become a part of that pie as well. But needless to say, we are seeing many, many improvements coming out of our codes department, and we're looking forward to sharing the end of your report as well. Also, today we have a meeting with our Ash Park engineers. They are at about 90% complete with the design plans for Ash Park. We will be arranging a series of public meetings to share those plans with the public, with yourselves as well. And we'll share the plans. We'll share the timeline so that the entire community is aware because we recognize that Ash Park is a very highly used park in the city, and usage of the park will be limited next year.

I'd also like to mention that thanks in part to PennDOT, our engineer, and some others as well who have helped to advocate, including Dan Williams' office. You see that the sidewalks are being repaired on the West Branch Bridge on the east and the west side. That was an incredible group effort, and I'm very grateful to everyone who played a role in that. But we're happy to see that work happening. We're also seeing some additional road work finishing up around the city this season, including the Harlan Drive sinkhole that's been repaired. We also had an inlet that was flushed in that direction by the same company while they were there. And you'll see a little bit more road work throughout the city before the winter freeze hits. And last but not least, last Saturday, we had another successful litter cleanup here in the city. We had some staff as well as our police department out there. Public works helped to make that happen. And most importantly, I just want to point out Shakira from 2nd Century Alliance, who really planned the entire event, did a great job because 2nd Century has adopted Lincoln Highway from 1st to 13th. And she's become a member of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. And just really thrilled to see that moving forward. And I'm very grateful to Shakira for the work that she's doing.

Vice President Green asked can you talk about the movie that you guys showed here? And are they going to show it again? We screened the trailer for AHA's film on Restorative Justice called -Invisible No More. Thank you. Invisible No More. And it's an incredible project started by AHA with the Juvenile Justice Center. And so it's kids who are in the system who participate in this program. And every Monday, they go and they work with probation officers and other mentors who are in the film production world to not only learn how to do film, editing, sound, but also there's a documentary, so they're telling their own story. And it's really a life-changing experience for these kids. And some of them came to City Hall to screen the movie. Our police department was there. Some of our staff were there. People from the community were there. And the kids who talk about the project really share how much it changed their lives and their perspective. So hopefully, they'll be screening it again here in Coatesville because most of the kids who are involved in the project are from Coatesville. And they will be doing that again. We're also trying to help them look for space to actually do their filming here in the city where there's equipment. They're talking to the school district about potentially using their rooms. But we'd love to help them find some space so that they can use what would work for them. So yes, it's a great project.

4. Police Department

Chief Laufer thanked Madam President. The complete statistical report for the month of October is in your packet tonight. Just a couple key highlights. Calls generated through the 911 center for the month of October was 2, 420. And that was up slightly from the month of September where we saw 2,283. And then taken by our front desk for the month of October was 1,298, and that was up from the month of September where we saw 987. So a slight increase in our statistics for the month of October. Also, additionally, we had four Narcan administrations by our police officers, 12 car seat checks and installations provided by our certified car seat technicians, which include professional installation of the seat and a free seat for city residents for car seats. And also, October was Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Those who attended Coffee with the Chief for the month of October, which was hosted by 2nd Century Alliance. I know that we then, after the Coffee with the Chief, participation for the month of October, we hung the purple ribbons on Lincoln Highway to signify domestic violence awareness for the month of October.

And just to sort of give you an idea of Coatesville's response to domestic violence. Each quarter, the Domestic Violence Center in Chester County puts out a report which talks about the number of screenings for the lethality assessment program, the LAP program, which the officers are all trained in. And Lieutenant Ollis is one of the instructors for that program and actually travels to the state and instructs other Police Departments in the use of the LAP program. But unfortunately, the City of Coatesville leads Chester County every month and every quarter in the number of high danger screenings for domestic violence and a total number of screenings that are submitted through the LAP program. So for the month, for the quarter of, it's not really a quarter, it's two months, July through September and that would be the quarter. July 1st to September 30th, 2024, Coatesville had 14 high danger screenings for the lethality assessment program. And that indicates victims of domestic violence that are at risk of a homicide. So we lead the county consistently each quarter. And these statistics were provided through the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County. So for the month of October, we had our purple ribbon campaign. One of the stats we don't really like to lead the county in, but we consistently do.

Also, we had the officer coordination of the DEA Take Back Program. Once again, Lieutenant Ollis coordinates that for all the surrounding 19320 police departments in April and October of each year in coordination with DEA. And this six-month period, we turned in 635 pounds of prescription medications that have been turned in to the Police Departments in the 19320 area. And as we say all the time, if you think about that conceptually, you know how much a pill weighs or how much a bottle of pills weighs, that's 600-some pounds. That's a lot of prescription

medicine that are taken out of the pipeline, so to speak, so that they're not available to either, A, contaminate groundwater, or B, find their way into the hands of our youth, or maybe not even our youth, but prescription medication that can be abused. So once again, thank you, Lieutenant Alice, for coordinating that. President Lavender Norris asked if the containers are remaining here. Chief Laufer replied yes. They're here year-round. We have one in the lobby here of City Hall, which doesn't see a lot of activity. And then we have the one in the lobby of the police department. Yep. And in the way of upcoming events, we have Coffee with the Chief at the Bridge Academy, which we just had for the month of November. Very well attended. Then upcoming, we have Coffee with the Chief is being hosted at the Arches on December the 4th. And we have our Christmas parade coming up for December 7th and Shop with a Cop for December 14th. And I did have some information on the SBCA bill from last month that I know Councilwoman Al Amin had questioned. So since she's not here tonight, I'll save that for next council meeting if she is interested in that additional information that she had talked about.

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

There were no citizens comments on non-agenda items at this time.

Special Events

There were no special events at this time.

Council Comments

Mrs. Hunt wished everyone a good evening to everyone. Thank you for coming out and being with us. As I said, we all have to be safe as the holiday seasons are approaching. As always, thank our staff for the very good job that you did in making things happen. Have a good night.

Ms. Scamuffa thanked everyone, for coming out tonight. Considering it's only 8:30, I think we did good time for everybody. This is an easy, breezy meeting. So to see you next time around. Have a good night.

Ms. Allen thanked everyone, for coming out. It's nice to see these two guys sitting here and then the younger one over here. Thank you all and be home safely. Stay warm. And we're thinking about changing our meetings to start earlier in the winter months because it's so dark and cold, just to let you guys know. Thank you.

President Lavender Norris said so, she says we heard those other two people in her [crosstalk]. We are leaving, but there are many [inaudible]. Jesus help us. I want to say thank you to our staff. And just to highlight our budget, we had several meetings scheduled to work on our budget, but they weren't necessary because it was so well put together. And for that, I want to say thank you to you all for all the work you put in. It certainly paid off and made our job easier. Yeah, I just want to acknowledge you and thank you for that. It's Tuesday night. I can't use Monday night football for an excuse. However, the Eagles did do it last, oh my, my, my. They did it Sunday. So needless to say, I'm grateful. I'm thankful. I love you all. God bless you all. Have a blessed night.

Adjournment

Ms. Scamuffa motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mrs. Hunt seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Vice President Green was not present for the vote.

President Lavender Norris asked to keep Councilwoman Green in your prayers. She was just notified of a death in her family. So, keep her in your prayers. Just love up on her. Thank you. And continue to keep Councilwoman Hunt as well in your prayers, please. So, we have a motion. Call council, please.