

Newtown Borough Council – Council Meeting Minutes
June 17, 2026

Video time: 0:35

The Council Meeting of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 7:06 P.M. on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at the Chancellor Center – 30 North Chancellor Street in Newtown Borough, PA.

[This meeting was recorded.](#)

President Heinz asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Councilors Heinz, Tognini, Phillips, Woldorf; Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin

Solicitors Heleniak & Dorfschneider; Chief Sabath

Absent: Councilors Bauman & Foley

President Heinz announced that an Executive Session preceded the meeting to discuss personnel and that the sidewalk resolution vote was removed from the agenda to allow for further Council consideration.

Public to be Heard *Video time: 5:06*

Terry Kiely, Resident, spoke in opposition to the proposed resolution for sidewalk installation as discussed in the last Work Session, and described the requirements it would impose on property owners. Ms. Kiely, noting the new \$30K grant for Pedestrian Planning, expressed that Council should consider this matter further given that a patchwork of sidewalks would present ADA and other challenges. Ms. Kiely stated that a mandate to install sidewalks should require extensive research and review; she presented Council with a petition of 118 Borough residents, 80 of whom would be impacted by the mandate. Ms. Kiely expressed gratitude that the resolution was removed from the agenda and requested that Council work on a sidewalk plan to promote pedestrian safety for all without imposing financial hardship on some residents.

Tim Jones, Resident, thanked Council for tabling the sidewalk resolution and shared a couple of problematic examples that would result from the mandate on homeowners. Mr. Jones noted that isolated sidewalks installed today could conflict with a future, more comprehensive and strategic long-term solution. Mr. Jones thanked Ms. Kiely for making the community aware of this matter.

Charles Gentile, Resident, acknowledged the age difference of residents on his street, noting the length of time it would take for a patchwork of sidewalks to connect; he added that sidewalk installation can't take place in the winter.

Marta Grothman, Resident, spoke of the challenges and damage that could result from the sidewalk mandate and noted the priorities among her immediate neighbors. Ms. Grothman cautioned that undergoing home renovations doesn't indicate whether residents can afford a sidewalk installation and expressed disappointment that she only learned about this resolution from neighbors; she added her request for more government transparency.

Mike Grothman, Resident, expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of response to a letter he sent some time ago, proposing a suggestion to remedy a problem at the Jefferson and Congress Street intersection.

Andrew Hersh, Resident, thanked Council for their service and acknowledged that they were not unanimous in their decision to move forward with the sidewalk resolution. Mr. Hersh stated his disapproval of the resolution citing damage to properties and unattractive disconnected sidewalks for years to come that would potentially harm property values; he proposed addressing this subject with input from residents on each street who would be most affected. He cautioned that requiring sidewalk installations when people apply for permits may deter them from making home improvements. Mr. Hersh requested that Borough Council note the unanimous feedback from his N. Congress Street neighborhood which is comprised of residents of different age groups. He encouraged Council to allow the community to decide on this matter.

Diane Stanojev, Resident, noted that the piecemeal sidewalk near the northeast corner of N. State and Jefferson Streets has not been used by pedestrians and is odd in appearance.

Jim Waitkus, Resident, remarked on the poor condition of Borough roads due to the ongoing PECO gas line project and the unsightly double utility poles; he requested accountability and whether a plan is in place to complete these projects. President Heinz stated that she's had two recent meetings with PECO which she will report on later in the meeting. Mr. Waitkus also inquired about the time frame for completion of the construction work at 103 S. State Street, noting that a temporary fence has been obstructing that sidewalk for two years. Councilor Tognini stated that Council has requested an update from the Code Enforcement Officer.

Presentation Video time: 30:27

Ashara Shapiro, ARTWRKD, and Gina Tomasello, Resident, shared a Borough Cultural District Proposal which describes a new Pennsylvania Creative District Grant that could provide \$50K annually for five years; they noted the program benefits that include technical assistance, official branding, tourism, and protecting history. Ms. Shapiro stated what is needed for eligibility, including a 10% municipal match, advisory committee, defined geographic boundaries, 5-year action plan, a Borough resolution, and more. Creative assets, community partnerships, potential events, creative projects, the designation process with a timeline, and proposed next steps were described in detail. Ms. Shapiro shared how this initiative aligns with the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2022 and how it can benefit the Borough. Ms. Shapiro responded to questions from Council regarding the competitiveness of the grant and what the funds can be used for; she will share the presentation with Borough Council for future reference.

Certificates of Appropriateness – Gina Tognini Video time: 50:25

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendations of the Historic Architectural Review Board and direct the President of Council to sign the following Certificates of Appropriateness, thereby approving the historical appropriateness of the applications, with final approval by the Code Enforcement Officer.

COA 2025-047, 110 N. Lincoln Avenue—Alterations to the garage, Applicant: Benjamin Phillips

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for changes to the garage including raising the roof and adding dormers.

HARB recommended approving the revised drawings.

COA 2026-021, 202 S. Chancellor Street —Windows, Applicant: Renewal by Andersen

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of vinyl for new fibrex sash to match the existing light patterns.

HARB recommended approving the application as submitted stating that the windows are a replacement in-kind and that because of the age of the house and the fact that it is a non-contributing building to the district, vinyl windows are being approved.

COA 2026-022, 304 Edgeboro Drive—Reroofing, Applicant: D. Scott Miller

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement in-kind of asphalt roofing on the house, garage and shed.

HARB recommended approving the application for Timberline roofing for the house, garage and shed.

COA 2026-023, 107 Mercer Street—Alterations, Applicant: Jenny Current

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the restoration of windows, the replacement of fencing and backyard improvements.

It was noted that HARB does not review landscape improvements.

HARB recommended approving the application as presented.

COA 2026-025, 152 N. State Street—Addition, Applicant: Joel Petty

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of an addition to the rear of this twin.

HARB recommended to approve the application noting the new addition will be clad in 6" Hardie board siding, smooth finish. The windows in the additions will be aluminum clad 2-over-2 Andersen, E series, not the 400 series proposed, and will have the appropriate 5/4x 4 trim with a 2" architectural sill. The new door will be wood, as proposed. Within the existing house, the new windows will be wood, 2-over-2.

COA 2026-026, 34 Liberty Street—Alterations, Applicant: Joel Petty

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for window and door changes.

HARB recommended approving the application with the following changes: the new windows will be wood and the return of roof on the one-story section will be removed.

- A motion was duly made and amended by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendation of the Historic Architectural Review Board to deny the following Certificate of Appropriateness, and recommend that the applicant submit a COA application to HARB for the installation of a proper porch floor.

COA 2026-017, 111 Mercer Street—Porch floor replacement, Applicant: Patricia Pugh

The applicant was seeking a 1-year waiver to fix improperly installed porch floor. A discussion occurred about the role HARB can play in allowing a waiver, it was determined that this is the role of Borough Council.

HARB recommended denying the application with the recommendation to install tongue and groove mahogany flooring.

Following input from Karen White, HARB Member, the Solicitor advised that the applicant apply to HARB for a COA to install the proper porch floor; he added that he is in discussion with the HARB Administrator to avoid improper waiver requests in the future.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendation of the Historic Architectural Review Board and deny the following Certificate of Appropriateness.

COA 2026-018, 33 S. State Street—Siding and fence, Applicant: Daniel Tang

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of new siding over existing stucco and the replacement of an existing fence.

HARB recommended denying the application as vinyl fencing is not appropriate for the historic district and with the recommendation that the stucco should be repaired rather than covered with new siding.

- A motion was duly made and amended by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to follow the recommendation of the Historic Architectural Review Board and direct the President of Council to sign the following Certificate of Appropriateness, thereby approving the historical appropriateness of the application, with final approval by the Code Enforcement Officer, noting that the applicant is to demolish the barn within 6 months.

COA 2026-019, 130 S. State Street—Demolition of a barn, Applicant: Robert Amend

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a barn at rear of property.

HARB recommended concurring with the Newtown Joint Historic Commission decision and approving the application.

Councilor Woldorf noted that demolition was approved in 2019 and requested a deadline be imposed. The Solicitor confirmed that a specified timeline for completion is appropriate and Mr. Amend agreed to demolish the structure within 6 months.

Police Report – Chief Sabath *Video time: 1:08:45*

Chief Sabath reported 248 service calls in May; there were 109 traffic citations which were mostly for moving violations, 5 traffic accidents, 1 arrest, and the Memorial Day parade. The Chief announced that the Paul Miller Law has gone into effect making it illegal to have cell phones in hand while driving a vehicle.

Mayor's Report – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin *Video time: 1:10:44*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to make a conditional offer of employment to Dominick Parker as a part-time Non-Civil Service Police Officer with the condition that he can be certified as a police officer through MPOETC. Dominick Parker is a resident of Montgomery County. He attended Lock Haven University and is a graduate of the Montgomery County Police Academy in 2024. He currently is employed by the County of Bucks in the Emergency Services Department.

President Heinz and Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin spoke favorably of hiring Mr. Parker.

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin announced the following special event requests:

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Heinz, and passed unanimously, to approve the Newtown Holiday Parade, sponsored by the Newtown Business Association along a specified parade route, on Sunday, December 6th, 12:30-4:00pm. No rain date.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve Music on State Street, sponsored by the Opus Outreach Foundation, on Thursday evenings July 9th through September 3rd, in front of 16 S. State Street, 6:00-7:30pm. No rain dates.
- A motion was duly made and amended by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve Market Day, sponsored by the Newtown Historic Association on Saturday, October 3rd, 8:00am-4:00pm; up to 8 mobile food vendors are permitted. Rain date is October 4th.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve the Breast Cancer Fundraiser, sponsored by Main Street, on State Street between Washington and Centre Avenues, Thursday, October 15th, 6:00-9:00pm. No rain date.

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin announced the following special event reminders:

- Movie in the Park, *School of Rock*, sponsored by the Recreation Board at Linton Memorial Park this evening.
- Passeggiata, *Traditional Italian Evening Stroll*, sponsored by the Newtown Experience Group, on Thursday, June 18th, 6:30-8:00pm.

- 2026 Pennsylvania Garden Party, hosted by the Countryside Gardeners Club, on Saturdays, June 20th and 27th, 9:30am-4:00pm.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak *Video time: 1:18:45*

Solicitor Heleniak presented his report at the Work Session and had nothing further to add.

President's Report – Emily Heinz *Video time: 1:19:00*

President Heinz announced that the final step in the PECO gas line project is scheduled to begin this Friday and will take approximately 7-10 business days; they will avoid working on weekends and will notify those affected by the work once the start date is confirmed. Road restoration is scheduled to begin the week of July 6th. President Heinz stated that updates will be shared on the Borough website.

President Heinz reported that the Lightpath fiber optic project was paused; representatives from the Borough and state elected officials met with Lightpath who proposed two alternative routes outside the Borough; the President stated more information will be available by the end of June and be posted on the Borough website.

Grant Updates: *Video time: 1:22:00*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to adopt Resolution 6-17-2026, authorizing the Council President to serve as signatory for the Brian S. Gregg Park Grant.

Topics Advanced from previous meetings: *Video time: 1:22:30*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to approve the alternate stone material for the 239 Court Street retaining wall cap, as presented.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to extend the current lease agreement with the NFA through December 31, 2026.

Caroline Bennett, Resident, was informed that Borough Council has entered into a 5-year lease agreement with the NFA for the Newtown Borough Police headquarters beginning in January 2027.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to hire Thomas Comitta & Associates, Inc., to provide planning consultation services to the Borough for fees and expenses not to exceed \$20,000.

Laura Shepherd, Resident, requested what the consultant is being hired for. Councilor Woldorf explained that they are seeking a planner's advice regarding the Liberty Centre project; the developer will be paying the fees and expenses as agreed upon in a Professional Services Agreement.

Brett Barry, Resident, requested that Council consider hiring the consultant to advise the Borough on the 600 block of Penn Street land development project in Newtown Township noting the proximity to, and effect it would have on, the Borough.

Jeff Menard, Resident, asked what services the consultant will provide that the Newtown Planning Commission cannot. Solicitor Heleniak stated that the planner will advise the Borough in their conversations with the developer.

Approval of Minutes *Video time: 1:30:05*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve May 6, 2026 Work Session minutes.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve May 20, 2026 Council Meeting minutes.

Budget & Finance – Emily Heinz, Gail Foley, & Julia Woldorf

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to accept, subject to audit, the Consolidated Expenditure Report for the month of May totaling \$312,366.46.

Old Business - none

Announcements - none

Public to be Heard *Video time: 1:31:22*

Mary Lutz, Resident, requested that the construction project be addressed and expedited, if possible, at 103 S. State Street. Ms. Lutz commented on road conditions, parks, and the development pending on the 600 block of Penn Street.

Jim Waitkus, Resident, commented on the PECO trench restoration; the Council President will confirm whether the milling and paving will be from curb to curb. Mr. Waitkus requested that the Borough pursue resolution on the double pole project and asked that the PA One Call paint markings be cleaned up. Councilor Woldorf noted paint on metal decorative light fixtures and suggested that Lightpath scrub the paint away. The Solicitor stated he would add paint removal on his list for Lightpath's restoration.

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43P.M. Councilor Phillips so moved, Councilor Woldorf seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

David & Heidi Bryk
Terry Kiely
Mary Lutz
Bob Abrahamson
Ashara Shapiro
Gina Tomasello
Karen White
Andy Rich
Bob Musto
Dave Callahan
Caroline Bennett
Richard Japchen
Steve & Romyne Wooldridge
Fred & Cherie Peters
Ed & Diane Stanojev
Jeannine Mortimer
Don & Marilyn Hayden
Laura Shepherd
Tim Jones
Sean & Devyn Barry
Michael & Marta Grothman
Mary Gonzalez

Jeff Menard
Charles Gentile
Barbara Miller
Barbara Hilton
David & Karen Jones
Robert Amend
Dave Marcolla
Brett Barry
Joe & Sharon Hulihan
Laure Biron
Eileen Dutton
Cindy Hadden-Furst
Maureen Connelly
Dian He
Cindy Stephenson
Kirk Jones
Alexa Sabate
Allan & Eileen Slezak
Michelle Ruth
Jim Waitkus
Warren Dallas
Jane Scopelite