

Newtown Borough Council – Council Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2026

Video time: 0:00

The Council Meeting of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at the Chancellor Center – 30 North Chancellor Street in Newtown Borough, PA. [This meeting was recorded.](#)

Present: Councilors Tognini, Bauman, Foley, Phillips, Woldorf; Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin
Solicitors Heleniak & Dorfschneider; Chief Sabath
Absent: President Heinz

Vice-President Tognini asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Vice-President announced that an additional opportunity for public comment will follow the Liberty Centre presentation.

Public to be Heard *Video time: 1:04*

Anne Bucher, President of Countryside Gardeners, proposed to maintain the landscaped island at the entrance to the municipal parking lot where an Edward Hicks stone monument had been neglected; they proposed planting deer and drought resistant native pollinator perennials and mulching next month and will tend to it again next Spring.

Jon Guy, Resident, stated that a PECO contractor patched a hole with asphalt a year ago and asked that it be corrected; he noted that asphalt is not an approved sidewalk material and added that this occurred on other properties as well.

Nicole Rodowicz, Resident and Newtown Experience Group Member, announced the PorchStock music event scheduled for Saturday. Ms. Rodowicz stated her support of the Liberty Centre subcommittee and the developer, noting that walkability, beautification, and vibrancy of the town center are community priorities.

Kim Cummings, Resident, stated that there has been a lack of consistency in paving and line painting on S. State Street, as well as dumping into a culvert that is a tributary to Newtown Creek; Ms. Cummings requested a greater budgetary allotment for street work.

Mayoral Proclamation Honoring Jonathan C. Guy, Retired Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army Reserve – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin read a proclamation to Jon Guy which was met with a standing ovation. The Mayor introduced State Representative Warren and State Senator Santarsiero's Deputy Chief of State, Rosemary Wuenschel, who presented Citations from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senate, respectively.

Liberty Centre Development – Presentation

Vice-President Tognini shared background information regarding this development project, noting that a subcommittee was formed a few months ago, assisted by a professional planner, to collaborate with the developer.

David Minno, Resident and Liberty Centre Architect, announced the teamwork that has taken place in this private/public partnership, noting the proposed changes to the Liberty Centre Development plans.

Michael Lawson and David Minno, Architects, presented the project vision and design goals that included a place to gather, enhanced greenway trail, walking patrons, a series of buildings, building design, public parking and access; they demonstrated the existing site and site analysis plan.

David Lustberg, Landscape Architect, demonstrated the public space framework that includes Gateway Park, The Green, The Mews, Liberty Centre Common, Trailhead Plaza and the Newtown Creek Walk. Michael Lawson provided details regarding the ground floor plan, architectural precedents, and the concept master plan.

Vice-President Tognini expressed her appreciation to the presenters, the professional planner, and all who have worked together to move the project forward to this point.

Councilor Woldorf stated that it is early in the development process and a lot of work remains to be done, including the adoption of an ordinance.

Public to be Heard *Video time: 45:30*

Dave Marcolla, Newtown Business Association President, shared support for this proposed development and its ability to attract patrons.

Judy Ritter, Resident, requested that the developer preserve and plant trees and install more lighting on State Street, south from this development; she expressed concerns regarding the creek walk.

Ashara Shapiro, Business Owner, stated her support for the many aspects of the development that will enhance the business district and was encouraged by the collaboration of public and private interests.

Scott Williams, Resident and Steeple View Homeowners Association President, expressed his support for the project, noting that it provides housing for those who might otherwise not find residency in the Borough, will remove eyesores that the community has long endured, and more.

Lucinda Sanders, Resident, shared her appreciation for the project and perspective as a landscape architect. Ms. Sanders expressed concerns regarding parking design, the section of the development along the creek, and needs for creek restoration and durable construction materials; she offered to collaborate with the design team.

Kim Cummings, Resident, noted that the land being developed has been neglected and appreciates the proposal, however, she believed that the buildings are beyond the scope and scale for the location.

Charles Swartz, Resident, applauded the Borough Council for working together with the developer, noting that developing this property has been a discussion topic for over 30 years.

John Mack, non-resident, expressed concern over fire safety given the height of the buildings.

Jennifer Abraham, Resident and Business Owner, supported the project and requested that the developer be cognizant of traffic and parking on State Street during construction.

Seth Deiner, non-resident and Borough Business Owner, noted the eyesore behind his business on South State Street. He added that his 15 employees are interested in living in the proposed apartments and is in favor of the project moving forward.

Dan McCloskey, non-resident and Borough property owner, acknowledged and appreciated the collaboration on this project and encouraged Borough Council to move ahead.

Dave Leiber, non-resident and Borough Business Owner, stated his preference for this proposal over prior ones and felt that it needs to come to completion.

Peter Korda, Resident, requested a traffic and parking study.

Solicitor Heleniak reported that several steps will need to occur as part of the approval process which include Zoning Ordinance evaluations, Planning Commission review, HARB, and Shade Tree Commission reviews, and much more.

Randall Flager, Resident, noted the shabby building outside his Steeple View condominium. Mr. Flager commended everyone for this well-thought out and beautiful project and urged Borough Council to approve it.

Joe Lovi, Resident, thanked the developer for purchasing this land and moving the project forward, noting that remote parking is no longer needed to meet requirements and mixed use has been reintroduced.

Councilor Bauman thanked everyone for their involvement with this project, stating that details of this project will be further discussed in upcoming public meetings and encouraged ongoing public participation.

Certificates of Appropriateness – Kris Bauman *Video time: 1:22:04*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Bauman, seconded by Councilor Foley, 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.

COA 2026-045, 207 Penn Street —Window Replacement , Applicant: Linda Wolfenson

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace existing vinyl windows.

HARB recommended approving the application to replace all windows with vinyl except for three kitchen windows which will be upgraded to wood.

In response to Councilor Bauman, Solicitor Heleniak reported that in-kind replacement means replacement of existing materials and not restoration to the original condition per guidelines of the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

Linda Wolfenson, Resident, noted her substantial investment in renovating this home; she voluntarily installed wood windows in her addition as she is doing so again with three kitchen windows. Ms. Wolfenson added that none of the windows being replaced face the front of her house.

Bill Mahler, Newtown Township HARB and Joint Historic Commission Chair, stated, per guidelines of the Secretary of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation, that once something is changed on a historic property it cannot be made to look historic again.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Bauman, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed with Councilors Bauman and Woldorf opposing, 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.

**COA 2026-028, 113 Penn Street—Addition and Alterations to House, Addition to Carriage House
Applicant: Phillips & Donovan Architects, LLC**

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for additions and alterations to the House and Carriage House.

HARB recommended to approve the application as submitted conditioned upon: the siding on the dormers be changed to horizontal rather than diagonal, that the 17-18" dimension be added at the new addition, confirming that its roofline is well-below the original and that Permacast be allowed for the columns of the new reconstructed porch.

Councilors Woldorf and Bauman expressed concerns regarding the Permacast columns.

Anna Kate Payha, Architect, defined the porch reconstruction as rehabilitation and confirmed compliance with historic standards.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Bauman, 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 2026-042, 194 N. Chancellor Street—Window Replacement, Applicant: Ian Kelly

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to correct unapproved window replacements.

HARB recommended accepting the application as presented conditioned upon the need for the siding and window trim to match what was there originally.

COA 2026-048, 125 N. Lincoln Avenue—Porch, Applicant: Robert and Edith Celeste

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to repair a fallen pent roof and replace the front porch roof and decking.

HARB recommended to approve the application as presented with the recommendation that the porch deck be replaced with mahogany rather than Douglas fir, that the standing seams of the new metal roof will not exceed 1" and will be installed with a receptor channel at the walls of the house and that a slip piece will be added at the connection of the roof hip which will be the same profile and height as the standing seams.

COA 2026-049, 101 S. State Street—Signs, Applicant: Derek Little

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new signage.

HARB recommended approving the application as presented.

COA 2026-050, 110 Jefferson Street—Addition, Applicant: Joel Petty

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct an addition at the rear of the house.

HARB recommended approving the application as presented.

COA 2026-051, 10 S. State Street—Sign, Applicant: Barbara Brucker

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to install new signage.

HARB recommended approving the application as presented.

COA 2026-053, 313 Washington Avenue—Addition, Applicant: Joel Petty

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness to add a second floor to the existing mudroom.

HARB recommended approving the application noting that the band between the sections can be eliminated because the addition will be differentiated as new because the new siding will always look different from the old because of its age and patina. They also added that because of the deterioration of the porch decking, HARB will allow it to be replaced in kind from mahogany to mahogany.

Police Report – Chief Sabath Video time: 1:45:23

Chief Sabath reported 220 service calls in August. The Police Department focused on traffic enforcement with 110 traffic stops resulting in 83 citations. The Chief reported texting while driving, 5 traffic accidents, a drunk driving incident, ongoing fraud, and more.

Mayor's Report – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin *Video time: 1:47:17*

In response to the Mayor, Solicitor Heleniak suggested tabling the Turkey Trot 5K approval due to concerns regarding an indemnification agreement and pending construction at the Chancellor Center.

Carly Bovell, Turkey Trot 5K Organizer, clarified the status of the indemnification agreement and confirmed that construction will not begin until December. Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin, realizing that the indemnification agreement has been pending since July, requested that Council vote on this event at the next Work Session. Councilor Woldorf expressed additional concerns regarding construction fencing.

Special Event Requests:

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Bauman, and passed unanimously, to table the to approve the Turkey Trot 5K in honor of Brian S. Gregg, sponsored by Boss Events, on Thanksgiving Thursday, November 26th along a designated race route, 9:00-10:00am, followed by a festival at the end. No rain date.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed unanimously, to approve the Children's Fun Fest immediately following the Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 24th, sponsored by the Newtown Rotary Club, at Brian S. Gregg Memorial Park. No rain date.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed unanimously, to approve Cupid's Chase 5K, sponsored by Community Options, Inc. on Saturday, February 13, 2027, 9:00-11:00am, along a designated race route. No rain date.

The Mayor announced the following special event reminders as well as those scheduled for later in October:

- PorchStock, sponsored by the Newtown Experience Group, on Saturday, September 26th, 1-4pm, on properties throughout the Borough. No rain date.
- Market Day, sponsored by the Newtown Historic Association on Saturday, October 3rd, 8:00am-4:00pm, on Centre Avenue and Court, Mercer, and Congress Streets. Rain date is October 4th.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak *Video time: 1:57:10*

The Solicitor had nothing further to report.

Vice-President's Report – Gina Tognini *Video time: 1:57:18*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to extend Chief Sabath's current employment agreement through January 31, 2028.

Vice-President Tognini stated that the Bucks County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program will be discussed at the next Work Session.

Topics advanced from prior meetings: *Video time: 1:58:37*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to adopt Ordinance #810, Amending Chapter 501 Taxation.

The Solicitor reported that this Ordinance regulates the collection of delinquent real estate taxes.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously to adopt Resolution #9-22-2026, adopting the Bucks County 2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve the 2027 Pension Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) in the amount of \$4,940 for the Non-Uniform Pension Plan.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve the 2027 Pension Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) in the amount of \$68,733 for the Police Pension Plan.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve the pre-season purchase of 120 tons of bulk road salt for a total price of \$12,600.

Approval of Minutes *Video time: 2:01:41*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed unanimously, to approve August 5, 2026 Work Session minutes.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed unanimously, to approve August 19, 2026 Council Meeting minutes.

Budget & Finance – Gail Foley, & Julia Woldorf *Video time: 2:02:24*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Foley, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to accept, subject to audit, the Consolidated Expenditure Report for the month of August totaling \$352,227.93.

Streets, Lights, & Properties – Julia Woldorf *Video time: 2:02:56*

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Foley, and passed unanimously, to accept TCA Proposal #2 dated September 3, 2026, for Ongoing Planning Consultant Services for the Liberty Centre Proposed Development, for an amount not to exceed \$15,000.

Councilor Woldorf stated that TCA is Tom Committa's Planning firm and his assistance has been invaluable.

Councilor Woldorf announced that the Newtown Township Board of Supervisors accepted a bid for the Pedestrian Bridge Project from Road-Con on September 9th through the assistance of State Government Officials Warren and Santarsiero who obtained an additional \$100K.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to approve an addendum to the Realty Landscaping Contract to add mowing of the Pickering Field rights-of-way.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to accept the proposal by Realty Landscaping to remove dead shrubbery at Brian Gregg Park for an amount not to exceed \$748.24.
- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to accept Countryside Gardeners' Proposal to plant and mulch the Edward Hicks Memorial Garden in the Municipal Parking Lot.

Old Business

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin thanked Chief Sabath and Borough Council for extending the Police Chief's contract with Newtown Borough; she shared her great appreciation for his leadership.

Announcements – none

Public to be Heard *Video time: 2:07:09*

Joe Lovi, Resident, stated that he participated in the Borough's Sustainable Landscape Survey last year which addressed gas-powered leaf blowers. Mr. Lovi suggested churches, homeowners' associations, apartment buildings, assisted living homes, and other groups be approached for feedback regarding the ban of gas-powered leaf blowers as opposed to circulating a petition. He stated that Lower Merion is banning their ban on gas-powered leaf blowers since electric blowers don't have the same capacity; he added that there is a high volume of commercial landscapers in the Borough and cautioned against property maintenance problems that can rise because of the proposed ban. Mr. Lovi announced that Newtown Township residents rejected an ordinance to ban gas-powered leaf blowers in 2024.

Vice-President Tognini called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:13 P.M. Councilor Phillips so moved, Councilor Foley seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Mary Lutz
Mike & Heidi Adams

John Mack
Mary Gonzalez

Jane Scopelite
Sean Barry
Linda Wolfenson
Peter & Kim Korda
Bill Mahler
Derek Little
Jeff Werner
Bernie Sauer
Charles & Jane Swartz
Barbara Simmons
Rose Wuenschel
Caroline Bennett
Bob Abrahamson
Bob Musto
Pat Foster
Laura Shepherd
Joe Michelin
Penny Ettinger
Randi Lawrie
Matt Neuman
Tammy Blancato
Tom Camitta
Mollie Mitchell
Mark & Paula Craig
Joel Eckert
Dave Lusberg
Kevin & Karen Buckthorpe
Robert & Rona Remstein
Scott & Claudie Williams
Carly Bovell
Anne Bucher
Sue DeHaven
Ivan Winegar
Gregg Bonstein
TJ Butler
Melissa Wilson
Audrey Bernheimer
Anna Kate Payha
Lawrence Dubin
Sam Breen
Daryl Ezzo

Judy Ritter
Kim Cunmmings
Dan Griffin
Seth Diener
Linda Mitchell
Dan McCloskey
Jim Worthington
Jeff Menard
Ashara Shapiro
Steve Nolan
Perry Warren
Joe Lovi
Jim Waitkus
Nicole Rodowicz
Lorraine Pentz
Mike Sellers
Paul Blancato
Evan & Denise Lambros
Bob King
Randy & Sherry Flager
David Minno
Peg Levin
Michael Lawson
Chris Brill
Ken Disken
Jennifer Abraham
Karen White
Dave Marcolla
Jean Bohr
Chris Culleton
Charlie Feuer
Rich Spadaccino
Ed & Peggy Adgie
Jon Guy
Lou & PJ Millard
Gina Guorino
Erin Tate
Samantha Covington
Vanessa Hernandez
Dan Breen