

Council Work Session
August 6, 2025
Borough Hall

The regular monthly Work Session of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, August 6, 2025. President Heinz asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Councilors Heinz, Bauman, Foley, Phillips, Tognini, Woldorf; Solicitor Heleniak; Engineer Fountain; Manager Totaro; Chief Sabath
Absent: Mayor Burke

President Heinz announced that an Executive Session preceded the meeting to discuss real estate.

Public to be Heard

Amy Smith, Non-resident, spoke on behalf of the Newtown Historic Association (NHA) 50th Annual Market Day event, noting that the recently adopted Mobile Food Vendor Ordinance has a limitation of four food trucks per special event. Ms. Smith stated their seven food trucks sold out of food last year and they'd hoped to increase the number to ten this year; she asked if the NHA could be grandfathered for this year's event. In response to Ms. Smith, President Heinz requested she email the Borough Manager with the list of additional questions and concerns she expressed to Council.

Tara Grunde-McLaughlin, Resident, shared her support of Amy Smith's request to allow additional food trucks for the NHA's Market Day event.

Engineer's Report – Michele Fountain

Engineer Fountain announced that the Frost Lane sidewalk and bike sharrow construction project won't start until the first or second week of September.

Mayor's Report

President Heinz announced the following special event requests for approval at the next meeting:

- Fall Fest, sponsored by the Newtown Recreation Board, on Saturday, September 13th, 4:00-8:00 P.M., at Linton Memorial Park, includes DJ, food trucks and alcoholic beverages. Rain date is September 20th.
- Newtown Holiday Parade, sponsored by the Newtown Business Association (NBA), on Sunday, December 7th, 8:00 A.M.-5:00P.M., along a designated route. No rain date.

President Heinz noted that the NBA must notify emergency services of the parade prior to approval. Councilor Tognini expressed concern over the advertised magnitude of this year's parade. The NBA will be asked to attend the August 20th meeting to clarify these matters. In

response to Councilor Phillips, Chief Sabath stated that the parade doesn't kick off until approximately 11:30 A.M.

President Heinz announced the following special event reminder:

- Music on the Street, sponsored by the OPUS Outreach Foundation at 16 S. State Street, Thursdays through August 28th, 6:00-7:30 P.M. No rain dates.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak

Solicitor Heleniak summarized all that led to a potential agreement with the Newtown Fire Association (NFA) extending the lease of 22 Liberty Street, at a rental amount of \$3,200/month, through February 16, 2025. The Solicitor stated that the NFA will be obtaining a real estate appraisal. In response to Councilor Woldorf, Solicitor Heleniak said that the Resolution adopted at the last meeting remains in effect while negotiations proceed.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve a 6-month extension for the lease of 22 Liberty Street.

Eileen Molloy, Resident, clarified that the new rent of \$3,200/month is within the appraised range.

Caroline Bennett, Resident, questioned what will change in upcoming negotiations. President Heinz noted that the NFA has now hired legal counsel who the Borough's Fire Committee, comprised of Councilor Phillips, Mayor Burke, and herself, will be negotiating with.

Councilor Woldorf shared the need to adopt a Resolution to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Newtown Township for the Pedestrian Bridge Project to resolve the payment of future project costs not covered in the \$1 million grant. Ms. Woldorf stated that a committee, consisting of one member from the Borough, Township, and Newtown Creek Coalition, will be selected to review additional expenditures. Solicitor Heleniak noted that the Township Solicitor is reviewing the draft agreement.

Manager's Report – Craig Totaro

Manager Totaro announced a Resolution to authorize the electronic pre-payment of routine, monthly recurring Borough expenses, subject to ratification by Borough Council. In response to Council's questions regarding the maximum amount of \$20K, the Solicitor advised removing the dollar amount from the Resolution. Council will vote on this in two weeks.

President's Report – Emily Heinz

President Heinz proposed and discussed the adoption of a staff review policy and performance evaluation form for non-uniform employees. Council discussed the mathematical scoring, goal setting, performance standards, and other specifics of the form and policy. The policy will be voted on at the next meeting.

Review agenda items proposed for August 20, 2025 Council Meeting:

President Heinz announced the Zoning Ordinance requirement for Council to review and approve the requested sidewalk material change from concrete to brick at 348 S. Lincoln Ave.

Cathy and Richard Hodge, Residents, are proposing to repurpose bricks from Philadelphia; they brought a sample brick and described the details of their project. The Hodges provided Council with a detailed history of their home, built in 1875, which originally served as the Trolley Master's House. Mr. Hodge expressed his desire for this property to be recognized for its historic relevance in Newtown Borough.

In response to Councilor Woldorf, Mr. Hodge stated that the entire 50-foot length of the sidewalk would be replaced. Council will vote on this matter at the next Council meeting.

Personnel/Committees of Council Appointments – Gina Tognini

Councilor Tognini announced the following vacancies and pending volunteer applications to be considered for approval at the next Council Meeting:

- Human Relations Commission – 3 members
- Joint Historic Commission – 1 member (1 application received)
- Recreation Board – 1 member (1 application received)
- Zoning Hearing Board – 2 Alternates (2 applications received)

Recreation Board – Josh Phillips

Councilor Phillips announced that the Recreation Board is interested in installing community message boards, primarily in Linton Memorial Park, and shared a handout with Council for review. In response to Councilor Bauman, Councilor Phillips suggested that the Recreation Board would be responsible for placing and removing content. Council questioned the material, size, effectiveness, and maintenance of the boards, and suggested that it could be a scout project.

Old Business

In response to Councilor Woldorf, President Heinz reported that the consensus among Council was to approve the Peace Pole for placement at Linton Memorial Park. The President stated that the Newtown Rotary Club will confirm the location within the park and will submit a special event application for their dedication ceremony.

Announcements - none

Public to be Heard

Caroline Bennett, Resident, received confirmation that the Fire Committee, comprised of Borough officials, is negotiating with the NFA regarding the 22 Liberty Street lease agreement, and that the Resolution permitting eminent domain over that property has no expiration date.

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 P.M. Councilor Phillips so moved, Councilor Foley seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Warren Woldorf
Amy Smith
Caroline Bennett
Tara Grunde-McLaughlin
Jeanne Haeckel-Zoom

Cathy & Richard Hodge
Jeff Werner
Eileen Molloy
Bob Musto-Zoom
Diane LeBas-Zoom