

**Council Meeting
January 21, 2026
7:00 P.M.
Chancellor Center**

Present: Councilors Bauman, Heinz, Phillips, Tognini, Woldorf; Manager Totaro; Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin; Police Chief Sabath; Solicitors Heleniak & Bethala
Absent: Councilor Foley; Fire Chief Forsyth

President Heinz called the regular semi-monthly meeting of Newtown Borough Council to order at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, January 21, 2026. President Heinz asked those in attendance to join her in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Council President announced that an Executive Session took place prior to tonight's meeting to discuss real estate and potential litigation.

Public to be Heard

Mary Gonzalez, Resident, expressed her concerns about community safety and the ability to distinguish between local law enforcement officials and ICE agents. Ms. Gonzalez appreciated the magnet given to her by Chief Sabath that identifies members of the Newtown Borough Police Department (NBPD). Ms. Gonzalez asked Council if there is a plan in place if an ICE agent were to approach a worker or neighbor in town. Council took the suggestion into consideration.

Bill Newell, Resident, shared his dissatisfaction with the four 6-foot-tall HVAC units, and a 12 x 7-foot metal generator enclosure, that had been installed at 50 S. Congress Street across from his home. He questioned the approval of metal enclosures that he feels deface the Friends Home property; he noted that no property owner would receive such approvals in front of their homes within the historic district. Councilor Woldorf stated that the Zoning Ordinance requires screening of this type of equipment and requested that the Borough Manager follow up. Councilor Bauman agreed and stated that HARB doesn't provide guidelines that regulate equipment installations.

Mary Gonzalez, Resident, asked whether the noise generated from this equipment complies with the Borough Code.

Certificates of Appropriateness – Kris Bauman

- 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 2025-037, Applicant: Hiei Rose, 107 Court Street, Rumbelow residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a rear addition to create a new covered porch.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted, noting that the ridge would be the same as each standing seam and not a premanufactured cap, and noting that composite decking had been approved because of its location in the rear.

COA 2025-047, Applicant: Benjamin Phillips, Ralph C. Fey Architects, 110 N. Lincoln Avenue, Deitzel residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for renovations to the house and garage.

HARB recommended approval of the application for the house only, as submitted.

COA 2025-048, Applicants: Kenneth & Elizabeth Griffin, 306 Jefferson Street, residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of windows.

HARB recommended approval of the application for the storm window replacement but to recommend denial of the replacement of the single window, recommending that the window be rehabilitated.

COA 2025-050, Applicants: Marina Sams, 503 E. Washington Avenue, commercial

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for an in-kind roof replacement.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted.

COA 2025-049, Applicant: Robert King, 242 S. Chancellor Street, residence

The applicant was seeking a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a new 12' x 12' Quaker shed.

HARB recommended approval of the application as submitted.

Police Report – Chief Sabath

The Chief reported 152 service calls in December, 4 traffic accidents, and a couple of arrests. Chief Sabath announced upcoming grant funded DUI enforcement over Super Bowl and St. Patrick's Day weekends. He shared additional NBPD activity throughout December which included the Borough's special events and the Shop with a Cop program.

Mayor's Report – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin

Mayor Grunde-McLaughlin stated that it is an honor to serve and looks forward to working with Borough Council, Boards and Commissions, Police and Fire Departments, the Borough business community, and listening to the public.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Woldorf, and passed unanimously, to approve the Shamrock Shuffle 5K, sponsored by Boss Events benefitting charity partner A Love for Life, on Saturday, March 14, 2026, 9:00 – 10:00 A.M. on a designated race route. No rain date.

Presentation -- Local Climate Action Program

Councilor Woldorf, as Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Liaison, announced that Newtown Borough is one of six Pennsylvania communities to be included in a Local Climate Action Program (LCAP) led by Penn State University (PSU) students. The program is free of charge and was applied for by Tim Markey, EAC Chair.

The PSU student presenters who attended remotely were Sanaa Hall-Geiger and Natalie Kitts. The team involved with Newtown Borough's LCAP project includes Chris Nafe from DEP, Brandi Robinson, Peter Buck, and Kelli Volkomer with PSU, Melany Arriola with Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), Tim Markey, Summer Bound, Councilor Woldorf of the EAC, and Craig Totaro, Borough Manager.

The presentation focused on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The presenters stated that GHG accounting includes guiding principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency, and accuracy. Data was shared that demonstrated Newtown Borough's GHG inventory results. Commercial, residential energy, and transportation emissions data were obtained from PECO and PennDOT. Solid waste and wastewater are treated outside the Borough, so data used was from population estimates. A comparison was made between Newtown Borough and two other boroughs, along with the state itself.

The LCAP team's goals for this Spring include using the inventory to identify greatest emissions reduction opportunities in the Borough and develop next steps through weekly meetings with the EAC and Borough staff. The PSU presenters responded to several questions from Council, primarily regarding applying the program to Newtown Borough.

Solicitor's Report – Greg Heleniak

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to enter a lease extension agreement for 22 North Liberty Street Newtown Pa for a period of 6 months.

The Solicitor led a discussion regarding 446 Washington Avenue where a settlement and parking agreement is pending a zoning appeal to the Zoning Hearing Board, followed by approval by Borough Council.

Solicitor Heleniak announced an appeal hearing regarding 239 Court Street. The Solicitor stated that this began as an enforcement action for the construction of a retaining wall which had not received a COA prior to construction; HARB chose not to make a recommendation to Council after the wall had been completed. Code enforcement proceeded with an additional violation notice which resulted in this evening's appeal hearing.

Tim and Christine Deegan, property owners, stated that they were unaware they needed a permit to replace the loose stones with a landscaped wall.

Councilor Bauman, HARB Liaison, stated that HARB's concerns were regarding appearance of materials only and not with dimensions or height. Although they wouldn't have approved the project as presented, it was not highly objectionable. Solicitor Heleniak read the HARB minutes. Mr. Deegan added that the wall they selected was the same as the one at 109 Washington Avenue. Councilor Woldorf noted that the wall at 109 Washington Ave. received HARB approval; it was stated that the property next door to 239 Court Street constructed the same wall.

Following discussion, the consensus of Council was to remand this matter back to HARB for a recommendation. Solicitor Heleniak stated that Council will continue this hearing after HARB's review, possibly at one of the February meetings.

Manager's Report – Craig Totaro

Manager Totaro shared that an LSA Planning Grant, which prioritizes and consolidates existing Borough sidewalk, trail, and walkability plans, was received two and a half years ago and expires in June 2026; a one-year extension has been requested to enlist a qualified planning consultant. The Manager will enlist a subcommittee of Council to interview potential consultants for that work.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to ratify a letter of support for the Newtown Creek Coalition's grant application to the Bucks County Foundation to support expanded programming focused on preservation of environmental and historic resources along Newtown Creek.

Manager Totaro announced the receipt of DCNR Grant funding to apply towards the purchase of new playground equipment, addressing the needs of all children, at Brian S. Gregg Park. In addition, funding will go towards accessible ADA accessible pathways, a new crosswalk, and accessible parking. The Manager stated that the grant is worth \$92K and the Borough match is the same. Councilor Phillips thanked PA state government officials along with the Recreation Board, Borough Manager, and Council for their support of this project.

President's Report – Emily Heinz

President Heinz stated that requests to donate memorial benches within the Borough's parks have been received by the Newtown Rotary Club, Barbara Hains, and others; she expressed concern that there may not be room for all of them and is uncomfortable with Council picking and choosing. President Heinz requested that the Recreation Board take an inventory of the existing benches, assessing their condition, and determining the need for replacement. President Heinz will respond to the Newtown Rotary Club and Manager Totaro will reply to Barbara Hains.

Topics Advanced from previous meetings:

President Heinz continued the discussion of the Food Truck Ordinance, suggesting allowing modifications to allow flexibility for special events sponsored by non-profits. Following discussion, the Solicitor offered to revise the draft for consideration in February.

Approval of Minutes

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve December 3, 2025 Work Session minutes.

- A motion was duly made and amended by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Tognini, and passed unanimously, to approve December 17, 2025 Council Meeting minutes with the addition of a memorial page for former Mayor Glenn Hains.

Budget & Finance – Emily Heinz & 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 December totaling \$235,591.88.

Environmental Advisory Council Update – Julia Woldorf

Councilor Woldorf announced that the EAC reorganized at their meeting this month; Tim Markey will remain Chair and Samantha McGraw was appointed Secretary. Councilor Woldorf stated the EAC's 2026 priorities which include sustainable landscaping, climate action plan, replacement of storm sewer decals, and container gardening workshops.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Woldorf, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to authorize the Newtown Borough EAC to sign onto a letter from local EACs to be sent to the Bucks County Commissioners requesting that the county establish recycling of campaign signs.

Personnel/Committees of Council Appointments – Gina Tognini

Councilor Tognini announced the remaining vacancies on Boards and Commissions:

- Human Relations Commission – 4 Members
 - Recreation Board
 - Vacancy Board
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- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to reappoint Paula Raimondo to the *Human Relations Commission* for the remainder of a three-year term through December 31, 2026.

- A motion was duly made by Councilor Tognini, seconded by Councilor Phillips, and passed unanimously, to table the appointment of Nicole Rodowicz as Chairperson of the *Vacancy Board* for a 1-year term through December 31, 2026.

Old Business - none

Announcements - none

Public to be Heard

Matthew Neuman, Resident and owner of 446 Washington Avenue, expressed his desire to be allowed to charge his hybrid electric vehicle in front of his home. He announced that he had received a violation notice in late November for installing a temporary post and extension cord which extends over the sidewalk; he was later notified that the extension cord is a tripping hazard due to the weather. Mr. Neuman expressed his dissatisfaction that his attempts at lowering CO2 emissions have not been favorably received. Solicitor Heleniak stated that no obstructions can be erected in the right-of-way without an agreement approved by the court.

President Heinz announced that Councilor Woldorf is working on drafting an Electric Vehicle Ordinance to offer recourse for people in Mr. Neuman’s situation.

President Heinz called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 P.M. Councilor Phillips so moved, Councilor Woldorf seconded, and the motion was approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy S. Musto
Borough Secretary

Attendees

Christine & Tim Deegan
Jeff Werner
Carly Bovell
Tim Markey
Karen Buckthorpe

Bill Newell
Matt Neuman
Mary Gonzalez
Jane Scopelite
Jane Rumbelow