

**MINUTES  
NORTH EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Second Monthly Meeting  
May 19, 2025**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Amber Belson, President  
Ryan McGregor, Vice President  
Nancy Anderson  
Heather Jones  
Bill Beardsley

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Bobbi Jo Morey, Mayor  
Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager  
Dan Miller, Solicitor  
Rebecca Bliss, Administrative Assistant  
Wayne Yokom, Streets Supervisor  
Denise Pekelnicky  
Joseph Schneider  
Nancy Schneider  
Paul Crowe  
Cheryl Burgess  
Betty Truby  
Sherry Reed  
Ray Schaff  
Nader Mousa  
Deb Wurst  
Melissa Galbraith  
Ken Snyder

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Borough Council President A. Belson called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Ordinance No. 935 – Slot Machines**

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that the removal of machines from businesses who have already bought them may be considered regulatory taking under the Constitution, stating the potential for adverse consequences. She stated that this may not be the proper time to implement an ordinance and suggested that Council consider waiting for the State to issue regulations.

**Ordinance No. 936 – Property Maintenance Code**

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that significant work was done on the rental ordinance and asked how the proposed ordinance would impact that. She also stated that the current ordinance should be readvertised with specific wording regarding the impact on rental properties, or state specifically that rental properties would be exempt. D. Miller, solicitor, stated that the proposed ordinance would apply to all properties within the Borough.

N. Mousa, 72 South Lake Street, stated that, in his experience, EMS workers are obligated to report anything that could jeopardize patient safety.

N. Schneider, 64 Eaton Drive, asked Council to seriously consider the code enforcement regulations as many properties in North East are bordering on blight. She stated that paying fines does not fix the problem. She stated her support for the proposed national code that is also being used by other municipalities in the county.

B. Truby, 37 South Pearl Street, asked if the code being presented is just for rental properties. P. Gehrlein stated that it would apply to all properties within the Borough. P. Gehrlein also read the "Right of Entry" section from the International Property Maintenance Code book, specifying that a request for entry is part of the process.

M. Galbraith, 5 North Washington Street, stated that the outside properties are clearly falling apart throughout town and that people are not properly taking care of their property.

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that there are already ordinances in place that are not being enforced to the extent possible. P. Gehrlein stated that a modicum of reasonableness is necessary; that the current ordinances have various windows on implementations, but that ultimately the goal is compliance not the collection of fines.

H. Jones stated that the ordinances allow for fines of up to \$1,000 per day and should be used to that extent. She stated that the more you fine people, the more compliance you will receive. W. Yokom stated that the new ordinance would allow for escalation to a higher court beyond the local district magistrate. D. Pekelnicky said a higher court is already available through the appeals process.

M. Galbraith, 5 North Washington Street, asked if landlords or tenants are responsible for their property maintenance. A. Belson stated that specific terms depend on the lease agreements, but that the ultimate responsibility rests with the property owner. H. Jones stated that private homes are the issue, not rentals.

B. Morey asked D. Miller to clarify the difference between the proposed ordinance and what is already in place. D. Miller stated that the existing ordinances all have different enforcement provisions and that the only option for filing with the Court of Common Pleas is through appeal of the District Court. B. Morey asked why the problem properties aren't repeatedly on the Code Enforcement list. She also stated that a more intrusive ordinance shouldn't be implemented when the current ordinances are not enforced.

The Public Hearing ended at 6:51 p.m.

The second monthly meeting of North East Borough Council will be held Monday, May 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing, Borough Council President A. Belson called the meeting to order at 6:51 p.m., at which time the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A. Belson stated that Todd Luke is excused from the meeting due to an injury. He wished him well and a full recovery.

**INVOCATION:**

B. Morey offered the invocation.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

There were no Citizens to be Heard.

**REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICERS:**

There were no Reports from Elected Officers.

**REPORTS FROM APPOINTED OFFICERS:**

There were no Reports from Appointed Officers.

**REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:**

There were no Reports from Standing Committees.

**REPORTS FROM SPECIAL COMMITTEES:**

There were no Reports from Special Committees.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Ordinance No. 935 – Slot Machines**

R. McGregor motioned to approve Ordinance No. 935 – Slot Machines as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>		
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

**Ordinance No. 936 – Property Maintenance Code**

A. Belson stated that her concerns about the proposed ordinance only apply to the inside inspections, stating that how you live in your own home should be up to you. She stated that our town is declining, but that she is concerned that the proposed ordinance is too specific and could lead to nit-picking.

R. McGregor stated that a preponderance of evidence would be required to request entry to someone’s home or move to a warrant.

D. Pekelnicky, 36 West Main Street, stated that the issue at hand is a selective enforcement issue, not a problem with the current codes.

H. Jones stated that Council should review the International Property Maintenance Code and pull out the pieces they want to select to create their own code ordinance.

N. Mousa, 72 South Lake Street, stated that it is not a crime to be untidy and unorganized. He stated that he believes North East is a beautiful town and that enforcement of outside regulations should continue. He stated his concern for vindictive neighbors making false claims.

C. Burgess, 9205 Station Road, stated that these problems bring everyone's property values down. She expressed her support for outside enforcement, but not inside individual homes.

R. McGregor motioned to approve Ordinance No. 936 – Property Maintenance Code as presented. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried 3-2. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>		
Amber Belson	<u>No</u>	Heather Jones	<u>No</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

B. Morey asked if she could veto. H. Jones asked if Council members read the ordinance and code to make an educated vote.

A. Belson stated that she would like Council to have a majority seat on the Board of Appeals. She stated that she would like three (3) Council members and two (2) community members to make up the board. B. Beardsley motioned to advertise for Letters of Intent for community members interested in serving on the IMPC Ordinance No. 936 – Property Maintenance Code, Board of Appeals. N. Anderson seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>		
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Resolution 05192025-1: Amending Term of North East Borough Water Authority**

P. Gehrlein stated that the current Water Authority is authorized through 2038, but that the proposed resolution will extend its term by fifty (50) years. N. Anderson motioned to approve Resolution 05192025-1: Amending Term of North East Borough Water Authority as presented. B. Beardsley seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>		
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

##### **Resolution 05192025-2: DCED – CFA Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program Grant Application**

P. Gehrlein stated that the proposed resolution allows for the Borough to apply for a grant for the 4NINE/Mellon Heritage/College Woods Trail project. H. Jones motioned to approve Resolution 05192025-2: DCED—CFA Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program Grant Application as presented. R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>		
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>

### **Eaton Reservoir: Drew Sidelinger – Wedding Ceremony (September 20)**

A. Belson asked if the requestor could be contacted for more information about the proposed event, including plans for alcohol use, restroom facilities, garbage collection, updated insurance, etc. B. Beardsley motioned to table the Request for Eaton Reservoir: Drew Sidelinger – Wedding Ceremony (September 20). R. McGregor seconded. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. The vote was as follows:

Nancy Anderson	<u>Yes</u>	Heather Jones	<u>Yes</u>
Amber Belson	<u>Yes</u>	Bill Beardsley	<u>Yes</u>
Ryan McGregor	<u>Yes</u>		

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

There was no Correspondence.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

H. Jones announced the public meeting at the Mellon Heritage Center on May 22 regarding the College Woods Trail project.

A. Belson stated that the Memorial Day ceremony will be held at Gibson Park on Monday, May 26 at 9:30 a.m. with the parade and ceremony at Oak Hill Cemetery to follow.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

S. Reed, 1700 North Pearl Street, asked when restrooms would be available at Eaton Reservoir. H. Jones stated that the PA Fish and Boat Commission is not always the easiest to communicate with, but that T. Simmer has likely already been working on it this season.

C. Burgess, 9205 Station Road, asked for an update on the Senior Center. P. Gehrlein stated that the lease was voted on by Council, signed, and sent to GECAC for signatures. He also stated that a facilities use agreement would be presented soon.

P. Crowe, 8739 Windy Lane, stated that the Code Enforcement list should be published. He stated that the embarrassment would force people into compliance.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

At 7:40 p.m. B. Beardsley motioned to adjourn. H. Jones seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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Rebecca Bliss (May 21, 2025)

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Patrick Gehrlein, Borough Manager