

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
August 10, 2009
7:00 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with the Honorable Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts and Finance
Mark W. Walberg, Director of Public Safety
Kevin E. Troup, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

John Bakowicz, City Solicitor
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer
Michael Bordner, Public Works Supervisor
Chad Betts, Fire Chief
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor

There were twenty-two (22) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Minutes of 4/27/09 and 7/27/09 and Reports of the Police Dept., Treasurer's Office, Fire Dept., City Engineer, Code Office, Park & Recreation, Public Works Dept, and Planning Commission were accepted on a motion by Mayor Woodring. Eister – second. Unanimous vote.

CORPORAL PROMOTION

Officer Christopher Blasé was issued the oath of office for his promotion to Corporal. His wife Dorothy pinned his badge on his uniform. Mayor Woodring added that the promotion is well deserved and a long time in coming. Corporal Blasé has been with the Sunbury police department for 12 years and will continue with his detective duties.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Mr. Ed Sickora, R.A. discussed the feasibility study he completed regarding the options for building a new city hall building or renovating the current building. Mayor Woodring explained that this is just a study and step 1 of the process. A study was done through the Early Intervention Plan that showed the physical plants are all in extremely bad condition. The police dept building at 440 Market St is not only unsafe but not secure. This study is an attempt to show city hall and the police department together again. It is imperative that the police move out of that building. There is a potential buyer for the current city hall building. Mr. Sickora told council the studies completed by Mr. Dave Holl and Mr. Denny Swartz listed numerous deficiencies in both the 225 Market St and 440 Market St buildings. Mr. Sickora and Mayor Woodring toured the Derry Township police department building, which is a new, state of the art facility. Mr. Holl gave them many ideas and recommendations of ways the Sunbury police dept could be made to function properly. 225 Market St is under-utilized (8,500 sq.ft. per floor). The basement and third floor are not being used at this time. Security problems at 440 Market St have caused council many concerns and Mr. Sickora feels it would be more appropriate to have the police department and general offices together in one structure and would provide added security. If a new structure were to be built, Mr. Sickora came up with an area bounded by 2nd St and 6th Sts and Arch and Chestnut Sts where it should be to keep the police dept and administrative offices near the center of the City. Mr. Sickora does not feel it is necessary for the facilities to be within the central business district, which should be maintained for retail business and services.

- Current conditions
- Basic problems
- Workable solution
- Preliminary construction costs – Mr. Sickora's study shows that building a new structure would be approximately (prevailing wages if built/renovated with public funds) the same cost as renovating the current building
- Costs illustrated represent a 15% fee for builder's overhead and profit
- Costs do not include professional fees that would be incurred

There are 2 budgets included, one to renovate the current site and one to build a new building. If the current building is renovated, leasing another space during construction time, losing the leases that are currently held in the building and new space lease are all additional fees to be considered (1 year of construction). Mr. Sickora's conclusion includes his recommendation to build a new building. There is not a lot of difference between renovating the current building and the construction of a new structure. Councilman Walberg asked why and Mr. Sickora answered renovation is close to the same construction costs as building new. This is not an addition so there are a lot of additional costs which would be incurred to renovate. A new building can be designed to the City's needs which have probably changed since the old city hall was renovated in 1968. General discussion was held regarding Mr. Sickora's report which is on file in the city clerk's office for review.

RIVERFRONT PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Tom Deans, Project Coordinator for the Riverfront Project presented a report on the progress of the project. The City-side of the project should be ready to let for bid in September, awarded in October and the project could begin as soon as November. The work will include demolition, raise sewer rims, storm vaults, grading, fill and tree removal. The bank stabilization project should be let in September, awarded in October and a project start date of November is possible. This will include putting base rock in place before the fabric dam is installed and adding fill so it is above the high water level. The highlights of Mr. Deans' report are:

- The project was divided into new phases to include the City-side and the riverfront/bank stabilization project
- There won't be a wall opening at this time
- Access to the river and the amphitheater will be at the Chestnut St. boat access area
- Review and approvals are almost complete by Army Corps of Engineers, DEP, US Fish & Wildlife and PA DOT as well as public comment periods

HIRE PART-TIME POLICE OFFICER

Mayor Woodring moved to hire Mr. Andrew Orzechowski as a part-time police officer. Mr. Orzechowski has over 25 years with the PA state police and has served in many capacities with them including as an investigator and undercover investigator. He has been a corrections officer and has served in the US Marine Corps. Mr. Orzechowski has a degree in criminal justice and lives just outside of Sunbury. Chief Mazzeo stated that Mr. Orzechowski's references were all very good and he has been highly recommended by the local District Attorney, District Magistrates and his superiors at PSP Stonington. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX CLAIM SALE

Mr. Bill Seigel alerted council that a judicial sale was being held by Northumberland County. His recommendation is to purchase 3 of the properties on the list in Sunbury. One of the properties is a vacant lot and the other 2 are on the list of blight properties noted by council as one of the 12 worst properties in Sunbury. Mayor Woodring asked if they were the same properties discussed in earlier meetings and Mr. Seigel answered that these are 3 different properties. The other properties are moving forward by the solicitor's office to take control of the property by the City. Councilman Troup asked what the advantage of the City purchasing these properties would be over someone else and doing the same. Mr. Seigel answered that the primary advantage is that at judicial sale the liens have been removed. If the City owned it, the building can be razed and if at a later date, the parcel is sold, that money would go back into program revenue and could be used to take care of other blight properties. A decision will be made at the next meeting if council wants to purchase these properties and to set price caps (which would be done at a closed session).

STROH ALLEY/EDISON PLAZA PROJECT

Councilman Eister explained that council has decided to hire the concrete workers and electricians to complete the concrete and electrical work at Stroh Alley/Edison Plaza. 3 employees and Mr. Robert Lytle will be hired for the concrete work and Mr. Kent Nunamaker and an unknown number of employees will be hired to do the electrical work. Second – Troup. Vote – Yes - Woodring, Walberg Troup, Eister. Abstain - Shipman. Motion Carried. Councilman Eister also moved to give SEDA-COG authorization to advertise for materials for the project which includes electrical supplies and materials, concrete, stone, lighting materials, parking meter machine and other items necessary to complete the project. Second – Troup. Vote – Yes – Eister, Woodring, Troup. Abstain – Shipman, Walberg. Motion carried.

FIBER OPTICS

Councilman Troup has been contacted by a company that wants to lay fiber-optic cable throughout the City. It is 1 ½" high density cable plus conduit. Councilman Troup, Mike Rhoads and Mike Bordner

met with representatives from the company and recommended that instead of laying the cable as they have provided in a drawing, they should lay it along the dyke. Norfolk Southern stopped them from digging on their property. It was recommended that Councilman Troup check with other municipalities to see what they have been doing with this type of request. The cable is going from Cleveland OH to New Jersey. The company will not pay the City do anything unless it becomes a franchise. Councilman Troup met with the Municipal Authority to discuss letting them run along the dyke. They will check with their engineers regarding this request. They will be looking for more information to build a monitoring station on Penn St. More research should be done before making a decision. Councilman Shipman stated that this could be a potential source of revenue for the City but feels there should be a better route, such as using the dyke area, instead of making street cuts throughout the City's streets.

HOG AND GROG/ELKS

Councilman Eister moved to give permission to the Elks Club to participate with the River Festival and use a portion of the alley behind their building to serve food and beer. Second – Troup. Vote – Yes – Troup, Eister, Woodring. No – Shipman, Walberg. Motion carried.

AUGUST EXPENDITURES

Councilman Shipman moved to authorize the expenditure of \$148,400.32 for the 1st AP run in August. Second – Woodring. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

Councilman Shipman moved to pass the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Recovery. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

SALE OF OLD FIRE DEPT. HOSE

Councilman Walberg moved to offer for sale several thousand feet of old fire hose to another fire department. Most of the hose was purchased with CDBG funds so all the proceeds from the sale of the fire hose would go back into program income and would then be allocated to any eligible, fundable project and would include being considered for fire department purchases. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Ken Romberger of the Hill Neighborhood/Elm St. Safety Committee presented council with a list of street lights that are not working properly. Also, there are several areas that are very dark and they are asking for the City to look into putting lights in those areas. Councilman Eister will report the lights that are not working properly to PPL and will look into the request for new lights.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk