

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Sunbury, PA 17801

July 23, 2012

6:15 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order by the Honorable David L. Persing, Mayor, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

David L. Persing, Mayor

Todd E. Snyder, Director of Accounts and Finance

Joseph J. Bartello III, Director of Public Safety

James R. Eister, Director of Park and Rec and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer

Lisa Martina, City Controller

Joseph Swope, Code Enforcement Supervisor

Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer

Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-seven (27) visitors present.

CDBG UPDATE

Ms. Jamie Shrawder discussed the following CDBG projects:

- Demolition – The Redevelopment Authority awarded the demolition of 128-130 South St., 608 S. Front St. and 202 Washington Ave. to Steinbacher Enterprises for \$49,790. They will begin the work in September. There should be funds left over to be used in another demolition project. Several of the old properties have to be acquired yet by the Redevelopment Authority.
- Welcome Sign – This project is complete. There is \$1,567.12 that must be used quickly in another project. It is 2010 money than can be spent until May 2013.
- Façade – Still an ongoing battle with DCED. A position paper was sent to DCED last week to give to HUD. DCED is saying that to use the façade money the business must qualify based on the customers of the business. SEDA-COG feels it is ridiculous and should be based on the LMI of the residential neighborhood surrounding the businesses.
- Riverfront Project – Will be wrapping up soon. There is about \$20,000 in engineering bills to pay and there may be \$23,000 left to budget to another project. Councilman Eister said there is more engineering that has been done on site but it should stay under the projected amount of \$150,000.

There is no word on the 2012 contract yet. The county has been working on a task force regarding blight properties in the local communities. They are working on a strategy with a consultant. The CDBG entitlement communities have been the only ones involved at this time because the funding is available for demolition. There is a draft strategy at this time on ways to deal with blight and focuses on code enforcement and using CDBG funds. The county is considering asking entitlement communities to pledge their 30% that can be used for removal of blight to leverage other state or federal funding. Mayor Persing asked if the goal of entitlement communities to put 30% in a county-wide pot is to get a larger share of funding and who would get what funding. Ms. Shrawder said that has not yet been defined. Ms. Shrawder asked council to think about a large project to use 2013 CDBG funds.

CHAPTER 134. RENTAL PROPERTY

Mayor Persing stated the public meeting to discuss the landlord/tenant ordinance changes is scheduled for July 25th at 7:00 pm. This will be the final public meeting and the changes will be on the agenda at the August 13th meeting for a second reading.

RIVERFRONT PROJECT CONTRACT PAYMENT

Councilman Eister moved to approve payment request #17 to HRI, Inc. in the amount of \$231,259.64. Second - Persing. Unanimous vote.

SUB-DIVISION PLANNING APPROVAL/613 N 4TH ST

Mr. Mike Rhoads explained that the Planning Commission is asking for approval on a sub-division at 613 N. 4th St. owned by Kathy Tarasawich. All research and documentation has been completed and the Planning Commission approved it. Councilman Bartello moved to pass the sub-division as requested. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

VOUCHER'S PAYABLE REPORT

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$298,248.25 from the general fund and \$2,362.49 from Liquid Fuels as funds are available. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Carmen Campbell asked who to thank for Aqua Zumba at the Sunbury swimming pool. Councilman Eister said the Pool & Playground Director Mr. Ron Pratt is responsible for bringing water zumba to the pool. Ms. Campbell said she loves it. Ms. Campbell also asked about the old pictures that need restored. Mr. Mark Mallett at Schindler's said he would look at them and refinish them for free. Ms. Campbell said she is interested in saving the history of the pictures.

Mr. Bob Miller asked about the progress at 202 Washington Ave. Mayor Persing explained the house to be built on that site has been picked and after the existing home is torn down in September the new one will be built.

Ms. Ada Newman said 217-219 12th St. is in horrible shape. The weeds and bushes are growing in her yard. There is no rain spout and the rain pours in her basement when it rains.

Ms. Cora Campbell asked if Joseph St. was on the list to be paved in 2012. Councilman Eister said the area around Dempsey is still being looked at because they have applied to rebuild their parking lot but are not able to until the Municipal Authority figures out why the water ponds in that area. No paving will be done on the streets in that area until a solution is found. Ms. Julie Brosious said they were doing surveys in that area last week and are marking different areas so they must be coming up with a plan.

Mr. Gordon Lamb said the 200 block of N. 12th St. between 11th & 12th St. was paved recently but the west side is crumbling. Mayor Persing said he would pass that information on to Councilman Troup.

Ms. Scott Miller said he has rental units in Sunbury. The code office inspected one of his units and the only items wrong were a piece of flashing missing, house numbers not on the house and a piece of siding that is missing. Mr. Miller fixed the flashing and forgot the 2 other violations. Since they had to go back on the 3rd inspection he was charged \$25 and he doesn't feel it is fair since they were not serious issues. Councilman Eister said he thought the council discussion dealt with serious violations that are safety issues when the code officers have to go back for more than 2 inspections. Mr. Miller said there is a property near his that has a lot of siding missing from it at 832 N. 4th St. Mayor Persing said the new ordinance states that there will be a fine after the 2nd re-inspection and Mr. Rhoads said the current ordinance says the same thing. Councilman Snyder said the code officers are trying to enforce the rules consistently and at a prior council meeting it was mentioned that the new ordinance will be fairly enforced. Mr. Rhoads said he was following the ordinance as instructed and the issue with this property has been going on for 1 ½ - 2 years with the same issues. Councilman Snyder said the code violations were a simple problem to be resolved and it wasn't so he feels the fee is reasonable because they had to go 3 times for a simple problem. Mr. Miller said the house numbers are on the mail box but not on the house itself which can't be seen from the street but can be seen from the porch. Councilman Bartello said they have to be able to be seen from the street because of the 911 system.

Ms. Cora Campbell asked why privately owned homes are not cited the same as rental properties. Mr. Swope explained the numbers on the house is an issue for all homes in the City. Mr. Swope explained that they do cite privately owned homes as well as rentals, but it is hard to get in the privately owned homes.

Mr. Dale Henry asked what ordinance is being enforced that says the letters have to 3" high on houses and Mr. Swope said it is the Property Maintenance Code. Mr. Henry said he thinks it would be a good idea if parking is on the left side of PA. He suggested using block grant funding to replace sidewalks and curbs and make all parking on one side which allows fire trucks to operate off the driver's side of the vehicle. There is a utility pole that would have to be relocated. If there is a big fire in that area it will be very difficult for fire vehicles to get into that area.

An unknown audience member said the owner of the lot on PA Ave. charges people \$30 to park there and there is no street cut to get in and out of it so you have to drive over the curb. He also thought the owner should pay a fee and Councilman Eister said there is a fee for parking lots of \$100. The curb is about 4" high.

DISCUSSION

Cameras – Mayor Persing said Councilman Snyder has been working to create a bid for the cameras. He is looking for ways to get the most out of the funding available. Councilman Snyder said the most critical part of a project with surveillance systems is that you don't want to incur significant ongoing expense. He is taking a lot of time to plan out the project to ensure that it can be supported with City staff.

Utility Audit – Councilman Eister said he is getting quotes to do an audit of the City's utility bills. Companies review the utility bills and show ways of saving money and then participate in sharing the savings.

PA Ave. Parking – Councilman Bartello said since the last meeting he talked to people that live at PA Ave. and came up with a solution to the parking problem. He said the parking spots could be shifted 3-4' toward the train tracks. There is an empty lot further up the street that has 2 spots that are painted yellow and that area is used to access the lot so 1 spot should be enough to access the empty lot. The lot is not used and is privately owned. Councilman Bartello said he thought that would alleviate the parking situation. He said everyone in the neighborhood is ok with this plan. The handicap spot would be relocated to the front of the house of the people that use it. Councilman Eister said he would like to discuss this plan with the Chief of Police. Mayor Persing asked if anything was sketched out and Councilman Bartello said the parking lots should just be moved 3-4' and the parking spots need repainted. He also said according to fire code the street should be 20'. That street is only 7'. Councilman Bartello said there should be a fire hydrant in the middle of the block. Mayor Persing said he should attend a Municipal Authority meeting and see if it would be possible to put a fire hydrant in. Councilman Eister said it does need re-measured and it was laid out incorrectly. Mayor Persing said Councilman Eister should discuss this with Mr. Bordner to see what he thinks should be done.

Revoke Housing Permit – Councilman Bartello explained that a property owner has not paid his housing permit fee since 2010 and does not pay the fines. The District Magistrate's office will not send someone to NY to arrest the property owner. Mr. Joe Swope said there is a problem because the units in the building are full and he suggested discussing this with Mr. Apfelbaum. Mayor Persing asked if revoking the permit fee should be done now or under the new provisions of the ordinance when it is passed on a 2nd reading. The home owner does not take calls from the code office and he does not accept certified mail. A discussion was held regarding the tenants in the building. Councilman Bartello moved to begin the process of revoking the rental permits for the property located at 102-104 S. 11th St. Second – Persing. Unanimous vote. Mayor Persing said with the new ordinance that property will have to have a manager living within 25 miles of Sunbury. Councilman Bartello said he would like to find out from Mr. Apfelbaum if it is true that with repeated violations of the property maintenance code, the offenders could be arrested on a misdemeanor charge.

Edison Plaza Parking Lot – Councilman Eister said he was not aware of a problem at the Edison Plaza with the parking machine. He will discuss this with the company.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The organizers of the Bass Masters Tournament that was held at the Shikellamy Marina on July 14th gave the City a plaque for helping them to raise over \$16,000 for the Lymphoma/Leukemia Society. They want to bring the tournament back next year since it was so successful.

Councilman Eister thanked Mr. Francis Scarcella for what he has done for the City with the positive coverage in the newspaper.

Ms. Kristen McLaughlin has accepted a position with SEDA-COG so she will be leaving the Elm St. manager position. She will still manage the Wolverton St. project.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk