

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
October 8, 2018
6:15 pm

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

Kurt Karlovich, Mayor
Elizabeth R. Kremer, Director of Accounts and Finance
Richard L. Reichner, Director of Public Safety
Christopher Reis, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Kevin Troup, City Treasurer
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

Visitors present: 38

A moment of silent reflection was held prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Executive sessions held Oct 1st, 5th and 8th to discuss personnel matters.

PROCLAMATION

Mayor Karlovich presented a Proclamation (see attached) naming October Breast Cancer Awareness Month in Sunbury and moved to accept same for the minutes. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Karlovich administered the Oath of Office to Earl Johnson, as a new police officer in the city. Officer in Charge Brad Hare explained Officer Johnson has worked with the Capital Police and has held part-time positions in other areas. The process to hire began in August and OIC Hare wanted the public to see that it is not a fast process.

Mayor Karlovich administered the Oath of Office to 3rd Assistant Fire Chief Malcolm O. Stephens, Jr.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The Minutes of 9/10/18 and available departmental reports of the Police Dept., Treasurer's Office, Controller, Health Dept. (quarterly), Fire Dept., City Engineer, Code Office, Park and Recreation Department, Park and Recreation Board, Public Works Dept., Planning Commission, Redevelopment Authority (bi-monthly) and Police Pension Board (quarterly) are in the City Clerk's office for review. Motion to accept - Karlovich. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at sunburypa.org.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Karlovich asked for public comment on agenda items and there were none.

REPEAL AND REPLACE CHAPTER 28 ARTICLE VIII/CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Mayor Karlovich moved to repeal and replace Chapter 28 Article VIII/City Administrator of *The Code of the City of Sunbury*. This makes the city in compliance with the *PA Third Class City Code*. 2nd – Reis. Unanimous vote.

CHESTNUT ST. PROJECT

Councilman Eister said they are on the last 2 blocks of Chestnut St. doing the curbs and sidewalks. Street lights will be set during this week. The project should be complete by the end of the month if the weather holds out.

VACANT PROPERTY ORDINANCE

Mayor Karlovich explained the 2nd reading of this ordinance would not take place today. There are some changes he would like council members to accept that he has made to the proposed ordinance after the discussion at the previous council meeting (see changes attached). Mayor Karlovich moved to accept the changes as discussed. There was no second to the motion.

CES ENGINEERING INVOICE #180315 WPA Wall \$3,896.21

Councilman Eister moved to pay Invoice #180315 from the WPA wall grant. Second – Reis. Unanimous vote.

HIRE PART-TIME POLICE OFFICER

Mayor Karlovich moved to hire Mr. Doug Vanderpool as a part-time police officer on an as needed basis. Second – Reis. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$16,030.91 from the General Fund and \$2,648.08 from Liquid Fuels. Second – Reis. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pass the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Recovery. Second – Reis. Unanimous vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 1st floor of city hall will be open to trick-or-treaters from 8 am to 4:30 pm Wednesday October 31st. Children can trick-or-treat in the mayor's office, code office and treasurer's office.

Sunbury Fire Police Halloween Parade is Thursday October 18th at 7:00 pm.

Trick-or-Treat in Sunbury is Wednesday October 31st from 6 – 9 pm

Public meetings for the sole purpose for council members to discuss the 2019 budget are scheduled on the following dates: October 15th and 29th at 2:00 pm in the 1st floor conference room.

Mayor Karlovich is still accepting volunteers to serve on the Shade Tree Commission.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

John Shipman: Is the \$16,030.91 all the expenses for the 2 week period or was it all the city could afford to pay? Mr. Troup answered it was everything that had to be paid before interest was charged.

Aimee Buehner: Suggested working with the Redevelopment Authority regarding the blight they have already identified in the city and including the Chamber of Commerce and other communities in the area. She feels identifying unsafe blight is a better option than having the perception of being across the board with vacancies. Ms. Buehner said signage is not required for selling or leasing properties. She feels there would be a lot of signs and that would create a poor public perception for outsiders coming into the city. She said she feels investors should be sought to purchase and repair the buildings and then they could find potential small business to lease to.

Debra Betz: Views signs as positive, not negative. Ms. Betz also said the poor perception comes from the dilapidated condition of the buildings, not of the sign that would be in a window. She is shocked there was no 2nd to the mayor's motion and wants to know what the council members excuses are for holding the city back instead of moving forward. Councilman Reis said he agrees with the idea of the proposed vacant property registration ordinance but for him there are still a few things he wants to address with the mayor and he doesn't want to do another first reading, addressing changes, and doing another first reading. He would like to get it correct before any more readings take place. Mayor Karlovich said the 1st reading was his idea. The solicitor said the changes were not significant enough to require another first reading. Ms. Betz said Mr. Wiest's opinion is valued in the community. Councilman Eister said he has been talking to other property owners and his concerns are that they have concerns. He agrees they should discuss it more before any more votes are taken. Ms. Betz asked council members to promise they will continue to work on this so the city can move forward. Councilman Reichner said a landlord has to pay \$50/annually for their rental inspection and if the unit is empty, they would have to pay another \$50. Ms. Betz said if she is making an effort to improve the property she can apply for a waiver and there will be no fee. Mayor Karlovich clarified that the unit would have to be vacant for 1 year before a safety inspection would be triggered. Councilman Reichner said they cannot double charge fees. Ms. Betz said there is no double charge as long as the property owner is taking care of the property. Mayor Karlovich stated it isn't double dipping because the rental property inspection comes from the rental permit, the property that is vacant would probably not have a rental permit. Councilman Reichner also said he wanted to check with the District Magistrate because he believe the fees listed in the proposed ordinance are incorrect. Ms. Betz said that's good that he wants to check on things but, do it, don't just talk about it.

Mark Walberg: Thanked council members for not moving the proposed vacant registration ordinance forward because there are other ways already established to take care of vacant properties. He said after the last meeting he received a call from the code office about 2 cracked windows on the school. Another property owner was singled out about their property. Mayor Karlovich said he does not single people out but treats everyone to the same standards. Mr. Walberg said down the alley behind city hall there are buildings with many broken windows that he hopes are taken care of also.

Nathan Savidge: Feels the underlying problem is that there are so many vacant buildings. At a previous meeting he asked what the council was doing to further develop the city economically. Since then, a nationally recognized economist came to the area and echoed what had been previously discussed. Sunbury is a perfect logistical hub in the proximity of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and New York. He thinks Sunbury is a perfect shipping zone with access to the highways. There are empty buildings that could be filled. Mr. Savidge wants to see more business attracted to Sunbury. He feels the image of Sunbury is being hurt by council's interaction at public meetings and council should work with the mayor. Snyder County has a lot of multi-hundred employers. He would like to see more being done with economic development rather than vacant property registration. Many citizens are willing to work on committees and help council members with issues and to see what can be done about attracting business to Sunbury.

The next city council meeting will be held on October 22, 2018 at 6:15 pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk