

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
May 24, 2010
6:15 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with 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
Kevin E. Troup, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Stewart Graybill, City Administrator
Stephen A. Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were thirteen (13) visitors present.

RIVERFRONT PROJECT

Councilman Snyder moved to pay 3 contractor invoices in the amount of \$195,688.93 which will be reimbursed from PA DOT grants and multiple invoices totaling \$145,000 to the engineers which will be reimbursed by 2010 CDBG funds to be paid now from the line of credit. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

HIRE WILLIAM J ROLL, CPA/PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR AND AUDITOR FOR RIVERFRONT PROJECT

Councilman Snyder moved to hire Mr. William Roll, CPA, as professional advisor and auditor for the Riverfront Project. The funding is very complicated and if done incorrectly, might result in funds not being reimbursed. Mr. Roll is willing to charge \$100 per hour for his services and \$30 per hour for his support staff. He will make sure the drawdown requests are being handled properly, work with the project management team and that all contract accountability is being taken care of. Councilman Troup said it looks like an open ended proposal because there are no specific hours noted. It is not a budgeted expense for the project. Councilman Snyder said he will be paid from items in the budget that will be cut. After general discussion the motion included hiring Mr. Roll for 20 hours to review Phase I and provide audit and reporting procedures to the project team and at that time he can make his recommendation to the City. Council will decide if his services would be needed moving forward. Mayor Persing said he is concerned because no one is versed in any of the contracts and grants involved. He would like to see Delta Development get involved because that is specifically what they do. Councilman Eister said he is more comfortable with a firm in Sunbury doing the work. Councilman Snyder said Delta is not a team of CPA's and financial advisors, rather they do understand the grants, the process to attain them and work well with government services. Ms. Diane Petryk asked if professional services had to be bid as an RFP and the answer is no, professional services do not have to be bid. Second – Bartello. Vote – yes – Troup, Eister, Snyder, Bartello. No – Persing. Motion carried.

SEDA-COG PROPOSAL/RAILROAD CORRIDOR

Councilman Snyder asked SEDA-COG to prepare a proposal for the 25 acre area that Knight-Celotex and Jeld-Wen abandoned when their respective plants closed. He wanted to be pro-active looking at the under utilized real estate within the City and take steps necessary to become job producing properties. Mr. Tom Grbenick of SEDA-COG explained that there is a lot of potential for this area and the question that should be asked is what might be in the City's best interest for the future development of that corridor. Zoning, sub-division and land development ordinances are very important in the process. The City's ordinances are out of date and should be changed. The proposal (see attached) includes objectives, the overall approach, and the tasks that need to be completed for the proposed scope of services, including changing ordinances. The proposal amount is up to \$48,000. It isn't a decision city council members have to make at this time. The study would be done in collaboration with Thomas Comitta Associates, who is also working with the City on the Comprehensive/Strategic Plan. He has extensive planning and zoning experience. Mayor Persing said he sits on the SIDCO Board and they have had 10 empty lots in a site that is on Route 522 for several years that is developed and ready-to-go, that can't be filled. He has no idea what it would cost to purchase these properties and the Knight-Celotex property is privately owned right now. Councilman Eister said he thought the Redevelopment Authority should be re-activated and 2 new members (vacancies) appointed. They

could seek funds to develop the land, where the City would not be a qualified recipient. Councilman Snyder reiterated that the City has to try to ensure as much diversity to employment opportunities and reduced turn around time for this property. Chief Mazzeo asked if ordinance changes would not be included in the Comprehensive Plan and Mr. Grbenick answered it would in a general context but the Plan would look at land use throughout the City, not a specific area such as has been discussed. Mr. Graybill agreed that the Redevelopment Authority should be reactivated to look for funds for this project because with state budget cuts, there isn't a lot of money for municipalities.

1ST READING ORD. 1264 HOME RULE QUESTION FOR BALLOT

Mayor Persing explained that Home Rule has been discussed for many years in Sunbury. Several years ago, the voters were asked to change the form of government. Mayor Persing wanted to be clear that this asks only if the form of government should be changed to a Home Rule Charter. Also, 9 members would have to be elected at the same time to serve on the study commission. There can be 7, 9 or 11 members, dependent on the number council chooses. If a voter votes no for the change, they can and should vote for members of the study commission. It is an 18 month process. Many of the cities that have changed to Home Rule are doing much better today by establishing Home Rule. By changing, there are opportunities to govern which a Third Class City does not have today. The commission would decide what form of government would be best, which would include strong mayor, city manager or the same as it is now. The study commissioners could also decide the current form of government is what works best for the City. Mr. Graybill said that under Home Rule a new type of government could also be formed, not just one that already exists. The commission writes a Constitution for the City containing how it operates. A benefit of Home Rule allows you to govern and not go to the state for everything that happens. It allows the City to chart its own future. The new government must still abide by certain rules of the state. There are approximately 82 Home Rule charters in PA at this time, which include Harrisburg, Sharon, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. Councilman Eister asked for a shorter version of the Home Rule information that can be given to anyone that is interested. Anyone can go to the DCED website and download the information. Mayor Persing moved to pass on a first reading (see attached) the ordinance that would place the question on the November ballot "Shall a government study commission of nine (9) members be elected to study the existing form of government of the municipality; to consider the advisability of the adoption of a home rule charter; and if advisable, to draft and to recommend a home rule charter?" Second - Eister. Unanimous vote.

HARB APPROVAL

Councilman Bartello moved to approve the request by HARB for John Jones at 356-358 Market St. to add windows. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

MAY ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Councilman Snyder moved to approve \$483,979.65 from the general fund for expenditures pending. \$100,000 of that is to pay-back the tax anticipation note and \$264,967 to pay the City share of the police pension fund for 2010. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

HIRE SNACK BAR EMPLOYEES

Councilman Eister moved to hire 14 people to work at the snack bar at the pool for the summer season. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

SCRAPTRADE LLC

Councilman Bartello said that Scraptrade LLC wanted to start demolition and get their permit but the bond issue is holding up demolition. The size of the bond for the total project is the problem. Councilman Bartello recommended that they break the project up into 10 phases and bond each phase separately. They would have to notify the code office when each phase begins.

LAKE AUGUSTA GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Mr. Tom Grbenick explained that Lake Augusta has a lot to do with the beauty of the City. A regional task force has been set up to look at the future direction of the Lake Augusta corridor to aid the municipalities with economic development through the use of the Susquehanna River. A bike corridor is proposed to unite as many municipalities along the corridor as possible. Funding could be available through PA DOT because it fits with their Smart Transportation Plan. The Task Force will be comprised of members of each municipality that wants to discuss the improvements and future direction of the Rivertowns. Members are needed that will be committed to the project. A decision should be made soon for anyone that wants to serve. Meetings will be bi-monthly and will begin in June and continue for one year.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk