

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
May 11, 2015
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
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts & Finance
Richard L. Reichner, Director of Public Safety
Dale L. Henry, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Kevin E. Troup, City Treasurer
Lisa J. Martina, City Controller
Michael Kula, City Solicitor
Brad Hare, Police Chief
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Kenneth Long, Workforce Assistant Supervisor
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-seven (27) visitors present.

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

An executive session was held prior to this meeting at 5:00 pm to discuss personnel issues.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The minutes of 4/13/15 and 4/27/15 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 and Police Pension Board (quarterly) are in the City Clerk's office for review. Motion to accept was made by Councilman Eister. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Persing asked audience members if there were any comments on agenda items and there were none.

BICYCLE PATH PLAN FOR CITY

Mr. Bob Lagerman said the City's Comprehensive Plan has a Bikeway Proposal included in it. SPARC has been working on a bike path (see attached) that will run from the Shikellamy high school to the David L. Persing Recreation Complex on N. 4th St. Finding a safe route through the City was not easy. Mr. Dennis Marquette was instrumental in helping plan the proposed path. Mr. Lagerman said they wanted to connect schools to schools and neighborhood to neighborhood ending at recreation complexes. There is funding available through Safe Routes to School grants. Mr. Seiple is planning to deed a lot to the City between Race & Line Sts. which will be important to this project. There are several obstacles that will need to be resolved. Mayor Persing said he would like to know what the costs will be for this project. Bike racks will be needed at different locations. A staircase or pathway to the Chief Shikellamy elementary school could be carved out. Ms. Julie Broschious asked if the area along 6th & Race St. is a wetland area and Mr. Lagerman answered yes. Councilman Henry said he and Mr. Bordner met Mr. Lagerman and the wetlands are not included in the pathway and would not interfere with the project. The area on the railroad bank would be cleared of brush. Mr. Lagerman said they are hoping to be able to pave that and a bikeway is required to be 8'. The Shikellamy director of maintenance was concerned because the walkway near the Beck

School is only 4' and Mr. Lagerman assured him if money is received for this project it will be widened. There are other safety issues that must be addressed. A representative from the school district and the city must work together on the grant. This is for people of all ages because it is walkable as well. The idea is to use a corridor by all ages and the disabled for many purposes. Mayor Persing said Councilman Henry and Eister can make a list per section to see what needs to be done and a dollar value can be applied to it. Signage will be needed. Councilman Shipman said the key is getting a grant to do the work. He wanted to personally thank Mr. Lagerman and Mr. Marquette for all the hard work they have put into this project. It will be good for the City. Councilman Eister said he will work on acquiring the land from Mr. Seiple and if Mr. Lagerman would give him a list of the catch basins that need repaired he will see that the Municipal Authority receives it. Mr. Lagerman said some stop signs may need to be relocated or added and also he is requesting that the speed limit be reduced in the area as well. The roadway will be shared with motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and others and safety needs to be the main concern.

SRI UPDATE

Mr. Slade Schreck announced the Business & Economic Development committee presented the Market Assets finding at a general membership meeting held on April 28th. Promotions committee is working on rack cards to promote city-wide events. The membership committee received 92 new or renewed memberships. Riverfront planning: June 6th Wake the Lake and they have also planned a concert series for the 4th Sunday June through September from 2 pm to 5 pm. The Renaissance Festival to be held June 20th from 12 noon to 6 pm received a grant in the amount of \$3,000. River Festival's theme this year is "50 Years of Excellence" celebrating the merger of Sunbury and Northumberland into the Shikellamy School District. Mr. Lagerman is working on a boat parade for River Festival. The flower baskets will be hung soon. The Albright Council is still looking for tax credit partners and they are coordinating a capital campaign. The Hometown Veteran's banners will be hung by the city and the unveiling is scheduled for May 16th in Cameron Park. Ms. Ruth Riehl said the black lights on the river front could be turned to shine on the river side instead of the city side. Mayor Persing said there must be a way to cross people on Front St. A pedestrian crosswalk sign, blinking lights and a white line crossing are ideas. Ms. Aimee Buehner said near the Weis offices they have signs in the roadway allowing pedestrian crossing. Chief Hare said that is a city street and Front St. is Penn DOT. Mr. Schreck said the Elks concert on Friday night went well. There was a small crowd and the weather was beautiful. The Riverfront clean-up concert on Saturday was also well attended. Mayor Persing said the sunset Friday night was amazing.

CDBG UPDATE

Councilman Eister moved to award G & R Charles Excavating the OPG repaving project in the amount of \$34,500. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Reichner moved to approve the Resolution to apply for the CDBG Competitive Grant for utility work on Chestnut St. from 3rd St to 10th St. and authorizing the mayor to sign all documents. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

Ms. Shrawder said in order to cover the engineering costs for Chestnut St. Phase 2, if it is broken up into several pieces, an RFP will go out for engineering costs. The firm that has the most knowledge of the job can be awarded the engineering, it does not have to go to the low bidder. This is needed to pay additional engineering from grant funds and not local funds. Councilman Reichner moved to approve Ms. Shrawder to solicit quotes for the final design and construction inspection for Chestnut St. Phase 2. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

Ms. Shrawder said there are 2 budget revisions for approval. Councilman Eister moved to move \$5,744.61 from the code enforcement target plan and administrative funds from 2012 to the OPG repaving project. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Eister moved to move \$6,840.39 from the fire department ladder truck purchase into the OPG repaving project. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. Councilman Eister asked if a bill was received from Mr. Bakowicz for engineering for the repaving project and Ms. Shrawder said yes, that is included in the amount of \$8,085.

Councilman Reichner moved to solicit quotes for demolition of 1062 Miller St. which will be done through the county Keystone Community funds which were granted to the city. Second – Henry.

Unanimous vote. Councilman Reichner asked if funds are still available and Ms. Shrawder said yes, for this project and probably one more.

Ms. Shrawder gave everyone the preparation schedule for 2015 CDBG (see attached). The estimated allocation will be \$300,000 because that is required by law for cities.

Ms. Shrawder said Ms. Betsy Lockwood told her DCED and the Appalachian Regional Commission are willing to accept the application for the Local Access funding for Chestnut St. Enough support letters have been received. She reiterated that it is not approved yet. Councilman Henry moved to allow Ms. Lockwood to submit the grant application on the City's behalf. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Mr. Michael Kula said there are Resolutions to declare 2 properties a public nuisance to be presented to council as the Board of Health to vote on. Councilman Eister moved to adopt the Resolution to declare 225 S. 4th St. as a public nuisance and allow the code enforcement office to abate the nuisances. Second – Reichner. Councilman Eister moved to adopt the Resolution to declare 526-528 Pennsylvania Ave. as a public nuisance and allow the code enforcement office to abate the nuisances. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

The properties scheduled for auction on Saturday May 16th are:

9:00 449 Race St.

9:30 414-416 N. 2nd St.

9:45 144 South St.

10:00 139-141 Church St.

10:30 601 Edison Ave.

Councilman Henry asked if 144 South St. and 414-416 N. 2nd St. could be pulled from the auction. He has asked for a legal opinion regarding councilmen being able to bid on properties through a public auction. He feels since it is a public auction, if a councilman or family member wants to bid on it they should be allowed to. Mr. Kula said he would recommend against pulling the properties because the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has been designated by council to be responsible for handling blighted properties. The conflict of interest passed by the RDA and corresponding to the State Ethics Act clearly states a councilman is prohibited from entering into contracts with the city. It is for the protection of all councilmen. Mr. Kula recommends not interfering with the RDA on a property by property basis. Councilman Henry asked why did council have to vote on these properties and Mr. Kula answered they are voting as the Board of Health to rid the area of blight. Councilman Henry said he just wants to see it in writing. Mr. Kula stated that the RDA established a policy based on the State Ethics Board and the Public Official Ethics Act which prohibits entering into a contract between a councilman and the city. It avoids any appearance of impropriety between councilmen and the city. Councilman Henry said he was told he could bid on properties until the day of the last auction and then he was told he could not. Councilman Henry asked to have it sent to the Attorney General and if they say the same he would be satisfied. The conflict of interest policy was found to be sufficient by the State Ethics Board. Councilman Henry has attended RDA meetings where that property was discussed and there is an appearance of impropriety if you are involved of the process and then showing up to bid. Mr. Kula said he can get copies for Councilman Henry. Councilman Henry moved to pull the 2 properties mentioned from the auction on May 16th. Mayor Persing said he is in no way voting to allow council members to do something that is unlawful. The vote is only to pull the 2 properties from the auction. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

OPEN CONTAINER WAIVER/ELKS CONCERTS AT RIVERFRONT

Councilman Eister moved to waive the open container law for the Elks concerts on the riverfront for June 12, July 10 and August 15, 2015 Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

2nd READING/CHANGES TO NON-UNIFORM PENSION PLAN ORD. #1276

Councilman Shipman moved to pass the amended Non-uniform pension plan as requested by PMRS on a 2nd reading. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

CHANGES TO ARTICLE IX NB NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

Councilman Reichner moved to make changes and additions to Section 175-49 of Article IX NB Neighborhood Business (see attached). Mr. Rhoads followed up saying the zoning is being changed in the area of the former Celotex site in the hopes of building it up and making the site more attractive coming in to the north end of town. Councilman Reichner said at this time only the ordinance definition is being changed. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$532,237.97 from the General Fund, of which over \$400,000 is the city's police pension contribution for 2015 and \$150.97 from the Liquid Fuels Fund. Second -Henry. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Justin Strawser: Is there an update into the police investigation? Mayor Persing said there is nothing new at this time.

Mr. Gordon Lamb: How is the city planning to use the former Celotex site when it has never been brought up at a meeting for a public vote? Mayor Persing said the county commissioners are purchasing the land with grant money. The city hopes to be involved, if funding is available from the governor's office, with the infrastructure. A large part of the facility will hold the prison and perhaps a court house. There would be room for the city to develop some of the land if funding is available that will allow an opportunity to put something in there like a hotel, retail facility or homes. The prison will be in the rear and not readily seen. Mr. Lamb said there is also talk about moving the police department to that area and it will be bare downtown with no court house or police department. Councilman Eister explained the reason the police department will be moved is because Sunbury has a holding cell and when someone is arrested someone has to man that area until the person goes to the county jail. With new plans the person would be taken to a holding cell at the prison where guards are on duty 24/7. The hearings will be more convenient because prisoners will be walked from the prison to the court rooms. The county has not even purchased the land yet because more soil testing is being done. Chief Hare said the Sunbury police department has 2 machines that can be used to create a central booking center by everyone in the county.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A public forum will be held at the Degenstein Community Library on Wednesday May 13th from 7 pm to 9 pm. Authorities and boards will be represented as well as the Sunbury Community Hospital and Shikellamy School District.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk