

CITY COUNCIL  
Sunbury PA 17801  
July 26, 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  
Lisa Persing, City Controller  
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor  
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer  
Stephen A. Mazzeo, Chief of Police  
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were thirteen (13) visitors present.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

Mr. Graybill reported that the city hall renovation project is approximately 80% complete. It is not known when the roof will be started. It was decided not to replace the toilets since removing them from the wall would damage the tile.

He would like to start working on getting the Redevelopment Authority reactivated.

### **REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Mr. Apfelbaum advised council that the Redevelopment Authority is an organization that exists as an arm of the City, although it is a separate operating Authority, not unlike the Municipal Authority. At this time, 1 of the vacancies on the Board will be filled. Once the Redevelopment Authority is reactivated they will begin working with blighted properties, the goal being putting some of them into a “rehab” program where they can then be put to good use, instead of tearing them down. The blighted property task force has a list of properties to add to the blight property list to have them declared a public nuisance. The addresses include:

83-85 N. 8 <sup>th</sup> St.	420-422 Chestnut St.	18-20 Catawissa Ave.	613 Catawissa Ave
313 Packer St.	1106-1108 Miller St.	1031 N. River Ave.	923-925 Reagan St.
852 N. 6 <sup>th</sup> St.	141 N. 6 <sup>th</sup> St.	139-141 Church St.	143 Walnut St.
158-160 Linden St.	737-739 Market St.	246 Pine St.	249 Pine St.
128 South St.	1126-1128 Wolverton St.		

Mayor Persing asked if all these properties are vacant and the answer is yes. Councilman Eister said the Resolution being passed is to put the properties on the nuisance list and address the issues, not to tear them down. The notices to the property owners will be served after the court house records are rechecked. Councilman Snyder asked if there will be future properties added to this list and the answer is yes, it is an ongoing project. Councilman Eister moved to pass the Resolution (see attached) to act as the Board of Health and declare the properties listed above as a public nuisance. Second – Persing. Unanimous vote.

### **RIVERFRONT PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Bill Roll presented a report on his findings with the Riverfront Project funding. He has had conversations with Councilman Snyder, Mr. Kula and Mr. Deans as well as receiving financial information from Ms. Kremer and Ms. Delsite. The project started in 2003 with CDBG funds used to pay for design and engineering services. Mr. Roll captured all the financial information from the many funding sources being used for the project on a Balance Sheet report (see attached) that would be easy to understand. This project is considered an improvement so the money being spent is reimbursable from most of the grants. Mr. Apfelbaum asked Mr. Roll if he has been comfortable with the cooperation he has received from everyone involved at the City and the answer from Mr. Roll was yes. Mr. Apfelbaum also asked if there were any transactions Mr. Roll thought were questionable by

anyone at the City level and the answer from Mr. Roll was no. The RACP funds are an important part of the project – all of the special conditions to use these funds have been met with the exception of 1 item that is being gathered. The state has asked for the reimbursement documentation and as soon as the first cancelled check is received the reimbursement process will start. Councilman Snyder said his biggest concern is the special conditions and Councilman Eister assured him that all the special conditions have been met with the exception of the Schedule of Values which soon should be available. Mr. Roll said the line of credit should be kept at a minimum so interest charges are as low as possible. Councilman Eister said Mr. Deans said there are administration funds with 2 of the grants that can be used to pay Mr. Roll for financial support regarding those grants.

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the Kinsley Construction in the amount of \$54,306.57 from the line of credit. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Snyder moved to pay an invoice received from the City Solicitor in the amount of \$2,880 for services rendered in regard to the Riverfront Project from the line of credit. Second - Eister. Unanimous vote.

### **CDBG UPDATE**

Ms. Jamie Shrawder presented an update of the CDBG projects:

- Cameron Park Project – is complete but final walk through has not occurred yet. There is enough money to pay the final bill.
- Blight Property Project – 4 properties have been selected to be cleared this year. LeFevre Wilk Engineering and Architects will be doing the engineering work for the bid documents. Last year 2 houses were cleared.
- Riverfront Project – ongoing project. Jamie is doing labor standard interviews with HRI.
- Welcome Sign Project – is slowly moving along. Bob Zimmerman is now heading up this project for SRI. Lloyd's Landscaping will be doing consulting work with this project as to what to plant and Triangle Tech will build the planter. CDBG funds will be used to purchase materials and put the landscaping in. There is \$20,000 of 2009 CDBG funds to be used.
- Brown Street Clock – the Environmental Review has been started for this project. When the 2010 funds are available this project will be completed by The Essence of Time.
- Fire Company Rescue Tool – Environmental Review has been completed. When funds are available the tool can be purchased.
- Market St. Streetscape Project – to purchase planters for downtown and Stroh Alley to tie all the landscape projects together. The Environmental Review has not been started because the 2010 funds will not be available until fall so this project will move forward in the spring.
- Keithan's Garden Building Roof – A letter was sent to DCED because they said the project was not eligible, however, they did not offer a valid reason for rejecting the project. As soon as a reply is sent that project can also be started.

There are City Administration funds available for use.

### **“SUNBURY NEW CITY MODEL”/REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Mayor Persing explained that in the past, while the Redevelopment Authority had good people on the board, they did not have projects to keep them busy. In conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan, the Miller St and Keller St properties on the blight list may be rehabbed and sold to start the new model for the City, bringing some income to the City. This would be the focus of the Redevelopment Authority. Mayor Persing also stated that if at some time in the future the City had the funds to hire a Planner, it would be a step in the right direction. There have been many studies done throughout the years, however, they must be followed-up on and have someone dedicated to doing that.

Mayor Persing moved to place John Shipman on the Redevelopment Board to fill one of the 2 vacancies. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Eister mentioned that the code office is critical with this plan and asked Councilman Bartello what he thought about Mr. Graybill working in the code office. Councilman Bartello said he asked Mr. Graybill to do that since he is not in the office all the time. Councilman Eister proposed that Councilmen Snyder and Bartello form a committee to come up with a plan to utilize Mr. Graybill's expertise in the code office. Councilman Troup said he thinks council should discuss this further in executive session since it is a personnel issue. Councilman Eister also said he would like to get Ms. Specht active with the Redevelopment Authority so there is a day-to-day contact. Mayor Persing said once the Board is full they would get together and reorganize as a group. The other members of the Redevelopment Authority Board are: Adam Purdy (Chairman), Sue Morris and Brian Betz. There is still one vacancy.

## **UPDATE ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE**

Councilman Snyder stated that over the last few months Beth and Terry and he were looking at the existing financial software package. The system was implemented in the late '90's and is based on a DOS operating system. It does not give a host of the different items the newer version does. Main Street was recently sold to a company called Harris Software and they will eventually be phasing out Main Street and leading municipalities using it to upgrade to the Harris Spectrum product. It is in the City's best interest to use the Harris system because there are no fees to purchase modules that are already used and the history can be brought over at no additional charge. Councilman Snyder said the new software should be implemented January 1<sup>st</sup> so there is a clean break for the beginning of the next year. There is a 3 month turn around time to get the software and also a training period. A lease in the amount of approximately \$1,600 per month for 36 months would have to be added to the budget and \$1,600 would have to be paid in 2010. Councilman Snyder moved to allow him, Terry and Beth to implement the software solution and move forward with the upgrade and spending no more than \$1,600 per month for the system to be in place over a 36 month period of time. Also, to expend \$1,600 from the 2010 Budget, if necessary, to get the process started and secure the lease. Mayor Persing asked if this was over and above what is being paid now, or would other items be eliminated. Councilman Snyder answered that currently the maintenance support is over \$9,000 per year which would be going down with the new software. The new software is just under \$42,000 – the software being used now was approximately \$12,000 10 years ago. That is why Councilman Snyder wants to go with the lease so \$42,000 does not have to be paid right away as well as operationalizing the costs to stay in time with the newer software. Councilman Eister asked if items like electrical costs could be tracked and the answer is yes, this accounting software has better reporting capabilities. Mayor Persing said at over \$19,000 per year it is more than \$42,000 and the difference is because it's a lease, interest charges would be applied. There would be no penalty to pay the lease off early. The \$1,600 per month figure will never be higher however, it could be lower, depending on the hardware needs. The ultimate cost savings in staff time efficiency and receiving more detailed information justifies the additional costs. Councilman Troup asked if Councilman Snyder could come up with the necessary funds in his budget and the answer is yes. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY/MURAL REPAIR**

Councilman Eister explained that Ms. Cindy Inkrote, Director of the Northumberland County Historical Society, in conjunction with a private board, would like to restore the murals that are stored in the Chestnut St. warehouse, as well as the pictures that are stored on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of city hall. They would be on loan to the NCHS but still owned by the City. Mayor Persing asked that it be in writing that they are on loan only because if the Sunbury museum plan ever comes to fruition they would be displayed there. Councilman Eister moved to allow the NCHS to restore the City's murals and pictures and be on loan-only to them. Second – Troup. Vote – Yes, Eister, Persing, Bartello, Troup. Abstain, Snyder. Motion carried.

## **HARB APPROVAL**

As requested by the Historic Architectural Review Board:

Councilman Bartello moved to approve new exterior doors at the front of 225 Market St. Second – Persing. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Bartello moved to approve new windows and wrap exterior of windows with matching metal at 411 Market St. Second – Troup. Vote – Yes, Bartello, Troup, Persing, Snyder. Abstain – Eister. Motion carried.

Councilman Bartello moved to approve shortening a roof to allow for a 9'X17' parking stall at 109 Chestnut St. Second – Snyder. Vote – Yes, Persing, Snyder, Bartello, Troup. Abstain – Eister. Motion carried.

## **AUDIENCE COMMENT**

Mr. David Whipple asked if the blighted properties that were discussed earlier are secure enough to keep people out of them. Councilman Bartello said they are constantly being broken into and the code office has to close them up. Mr. Whipple said he is concerned that if these new blight property addresses are advertised the City could end up with arson fires. He said according to the paper, there is an arsonist in Sunbury now. 2<sup>nd</sup> Asst. Fire Chief Michael Rhoads explained that there was 1 suspicious fire in Sunbury and that does not mean there is an arsonist in the City.

Mr. David Whipple asked why so many street lights are not working. Councilman Troup explained that sometimes the timers get messed up with storms, branches, etc. He asked that any time lights are out that people call so public works can create a work order to have them repaired.

Mr. David Whipple stated that since the water meters have been put in the water pressure is down and asked why. Mayor Persing answered that is a Municipal Authority question and he should get in touch with them.

Mr. David Whipple asked Councilman Eister how he was coming along with the fountain for Cameron Park. Councilman Eister answered it was coming along excellent. When asked when it would be placed in the park Councilman Eister said most likely in August if everything works out right.

### **PCTI FUNDING**

Mayor Persing explained that SRI/SPARC would like to apply for a Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative funding grant for the area at Chestnut and Wolverton Sts between Front St and Haas Ave. The area would benefit from investment beautification and pedestrian and bicycle access. Residents surveyed are interested in enhancing this area which in turn might help to mitigate the speeding problems on those streets. A conceptual design of the Wolverton St. corridor was presented to SRI/SPARC by PSU students in 2009. It is a perfect tie-in to the Riverfront Project development that has already begun. The local municipality must be the applicant for the grant and SRI/SPARC is asking for council's approval to pursue the funding. Councilman Troup said that he has applied for an earmark in the amount of \$750,000 to repave that same area so it would be good if SRI/SPARC would keep him informed of what they are planning with City streets. Mr. Slade Shreck said that people have complained about the appearance of the area near Sun Re Cheese and Tru-Bilt Lumber on Wolverton St. and this funding would help to clean up the area. The project started as just beautification but since this funding became available, it was decided it would be advantageous to apply for the grant to enhance the entire area. Part of the plan would be to make Chestnut St./Wolverton St. one-way and add a bike trail. Mayor Persing said it would be the northern boundary of the area he is referring to as the New City Model. Mayor Persing moved to allow SRI/SPARC to pursue funding under the PCTI grant. Second Eister. Unanimous vote. Councilman Eister said Sun Re Cheese must be told to start to clean up that area.

Councilman Eister said that bids were opened for the Elm St. Market St. streetscape project. The low bid was G & R Charles. Street lights were promised to the Elm St. project and Councilman Eister said he would talk to Councilman Troup about getting them ready.

### **MARKET HOUSE**

A letter was received from the owners of the Market House (see attached) which has a complaint regarding farm vendors setting up outside the doors of the Market House. While they support the vendors, the owners of the Market House are responsible for insurance on the sidewalks in case someone would fall and the parking spots in front of the Market House are all taken for the farmer's market and should instead be for customers coming downtown. Councilman Eister said he and Councilman Troup already discussed this issue and a lot of money was spent in Stroh Alley and that would be a perfect spot for farm vendor stands, as would the Edison Plaza. Councilman Bartello said that area still needs repairs and Councilman Troup answered that will not take long. Ms. Kremer said the owners of the Market House would like the vendors to be inside the Market House but city council cannot tell them where to set-up their goods for sale. Councilman Snyder suggested seeing how many 10X10 spaces there would be in Stroh Alley. Councilman Eister suggested a promotion be held for the Market House in the fall. Chief Mazzeo said if Stroh Alley is not ready to put the vendors in Edison Plaza – which uses the “plaza” concept. Also, he said that some places have signs directing people toward the farmer's markets, so people passing by might be interested and would stop to see what it is. Mr. Scott Johnson asked what the owners of the Market House, a private business, were doing to promote their own business.

National Night Out is Tuesday August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht  
City Clerk