

CITY COUNCIL
225 Market St.
Sunbury PA 17801
May 12, 2008
7:00 pm

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

Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts and Finance
Kevin E. Troup, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Beth Kremer, City Treasurer
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were seven (7) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Reports of the Police Dept., City Treasurer, City Controller, City Engineer, Code Office, Redevelopment Authority, Health Dept., Public Works Dept., Parks and Public Buildings, Park and Recreation Board, Planning Commission and Fire Dept. were accepted on a motion by Woodring, Second-Eister – unanimous vote.

MONTHLY LEGAL SEMINAR

Mr. Apfelbaum explained the Civil Service rules in effect in the City. The 3rd Class City Code has a specific section which deals with Civil Service rules – Sunbury has only ever had a Police Civil Service Board. There are 2 other Boards that should and will be appointed – Electrical and Health Department. The reason for civil service rules is so politics do not enter into hiring and firing employees covered by the boards. Ms. Specht asked Mr. Apfelbaum when council convenes as the Board of Health, is that in place of a Health Civil Service Board – Mr. Apfelbaum stated that yes it is. The Board would actually hire a health officer if Mr. Lee Shaffer would retire. Mr. Brad Hare asked who sits on the police civil service board – Mr. Dale Walters, Mr. Bob Miller and there is one vacancy.

PROPOSAL/CRAIG HARLEY RIVERFRONT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Mr. Craig Harley's proposal includes organizing, facilitating, and managing a capital campaign to seek contributions for the revitalization projects for the City of Sunbury with emphasis on development of the new Sunbury Riverfront Park along Front St. The fee would be paid from the general fund but reimbursed from the capital campaign money as it comes in and can be paid monthly. The amount would not exceed \$43,680. plus \$840. in expenses. Motion by Shipman to accept Mr. Harley's Service Agreement as proposed. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

REAPPOINT CITY CLERK

Mayor Woodring moved to reappoint Terry Specht as City Clerk per the 3rd Class City Code. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

STROH ALLEY ENGINEERING PROPOSAL

Mayor Woodring moved to act on the notice to proceed for the Stroh Alley Engineering Proposal as submitted by Mr. John Bakowicz, in an amount not to exceed \$3938. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

AMEND SEDA-COG AGREEMENT

Mayor Woodring moved to amend the Agreement with SEDA-COG regarding the HOME program to modify to include the additional project charge to provide for the inspection of wood-destroying insects and issue a wood-destroying insect report. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

SEASONAL WORKERS/PUBLIC SAFETY

Councilman Troup moved to hire 4 students to work with public works to mow grass, etc. Second – Woodring. Unanimous vote.

CONDEMN 160 LINDEN ST.

On a motion by Mayor Woodring, per the code office's request, council, acting as Board of Health, voted to condemn 160 Linden St. This property has been an issue with the code office since January 12, 2005. Second- Troup. Vote – Yes Woodring Troup Shipman. Abstain – Eister. Motion carried.

GRASS CUTTING/CODE OFFICE

A question was raised by Mayor Woodring regarding the grass cutters the Code Office uses to cut grass in vacant/condemned properties. Councilman Shipman spoke to Mr. Apfelbaum who said that the banks/mortgage companies that own some of the vacant/condemned properties can and should be issued citations in situations where the grass/weeds are high. They thought it would be appropriate for an Agreement to be signed by anyone hired by the City to cut grass releasing the City from any liability if they would be hurt cutting grass on one of these properties for the City.

OPEN SHREDDER BIDS

One bid was received for the shredder bid being purchased by the Public Works Dept. with a grant procured through the Sunbury Municipal Authority:

Concept Products Corp. \$131,280.03

At this time the bid was tabled because it was higher than anticipated. Solicitor Apfelbaum will look at the bid received.

MAY EXPENDITURES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay the May expenditures in the amount of \$129,134.18. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

FLOODPLAIN/BUILDING ORDINANCE

Mr. Apfelbaum stated that John Bakowicz has been working on the Floodplain Ordinance and what has to be done to stay within the state's regulations. June 30th is the deadline to send the adopted ordinance to DCED. The ordinance covers properties that are considered to be located in the 100 year floodplain. Professional fees will be reimbursed in the amount of 50% for work prepared on this ordinance. Councilman Shipman moved to pass on a first reading the addition to the Floodplain Ordinance. Second-Troup. Unanimous vote.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Councilman Shipman noted that some of the properties the City owns do not have adequate flood insurance coverage: 440 Market St. has no flood insurance; 437 Chestnut St. and 420 S. 10th St. do not have adequate insurance on the contents. Councilman Shipman moved to purchase a flood insurance packages to place the correct amount of insurance on the 3 properties. Second-Eister. Unanimous vote.

STREET GANGS

Mayor Woodring explained that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not have adequate legislation against criminal street gangs and memberships of those gangs. Other states do have laws concerning street gangs. Mayor Woodring drew-up a petition which states "We the undersigned do hereby petition the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Legislators to enact a law against criminal street gangs and membership to the same." The Attorney General stated that a law would only put members in jail for 30 days which Mayor Woodring feels would send a message to anyone involved in or thinking about becoming involved, in gangs.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Cora Campbell asked about landlord background checks. She asked how the privacy act would affect this legislation. Councilman Shipman has been asked by landlords about the council enacting a landlord background check which would be required any time a rental unit would have a new rental. When asked to complete a landlord background check, 75% of those that apply for a rental unit, do not ever come back. It seems like it would be a deterrent to having gangs and undesirables from renting in Sunbury. Ms. Campbell asked who would do the background checks and the answer is the police department. Chief Mazzeo stated that there are companies that do nothing but background checks and it might be a good idea to contract with one of them. At this time Councilman Shipman urged all landlords to ask prospective renters to voluntarily complete a background check form.

Ms. Beverly Funk said that the damage done to the curb by a Celotex truck was fixed. However, she feels if there was a sign the drivers could see they would not miss the turn. Councilman Troup said they are trying to find ways to have better signage so the trucks turn on the proper streets.

Mr. Brad Hare explained that the 2nd Annual Sunbury Celebration Golf Tournament to raise money for the fireworks will be held on June 30th. Weis Markets will be the corporate sponsor.

Mr. Anthony Sannutti, owner of The Brass Key, asked council for permission to have an outdoor event on June 16th. Last year he did not know some of the stipulations the PLCB puts on outside events and was fined. A discussion was held about Mr. Sannutti's event last year in which there were some motorcycle gangs wearing their "colors." Mayor Woodring said he had many complaints about the event last year and hopes this year's event is better planned so there are no problems. He also reminded Mr. Sannutti about the noise ordinance that is in effect after 11:00 pm.

Mr. Shipman explained to council that he is reading a book entitled "Bringing Buildings Back" that deals with vacancy problems in buildings. He recommended that council read it also. Many times owners just walk away from buildings that become vacant because the maintenance costs are too much. Mr. Shipman will work with Mr. Apfelbaum to draft a vacant buildings ordinance.

Mr. Bakowicz stated that the City's Zoning Ordinance must be reviewed to bring it up to date to comply with state law. Mr. Tom Deans may be able to get a model from PLCM and update the ordinance. Mr. Bakowicz said that Mr. Bill Seigel of SEDA-COG said any unused portion of administrative CDBG money could be used as a possible source of funding to revamp the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Bakowicz thinks this should be a priority.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Transfer Station will have a free electronics disposal during the week of June 2nd through 7th.

Clean-up day in Sunbury will be held on June 24th and June 28th from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. There is a restriction on what can be disposed-of. The Clean-up would not include pick-up unless it is for an elderly or handicapped person.

Sunbury Municipal Authority will flush hydrants the week of May 19-23.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk