

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
July 11, 2011
7:00 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
John R. Bakowicz, City Engineer
Michael M. Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Rick Sinko, Battalion Chief
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were ten (10) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The minutes of 5/9, 5/23, 6/13 and 6/27, 2011 and the available departmental reports of the Police Dept., Treasurer's Office, Health Dept., Fire Dept., City Engineer, Code Office, Park and Recreation Department, Public Works Dept, Planning Commission and Police Pension Board are in the City Clerk's office for review. On motion by Eister, second by Troup, the available minutes and reports were approved as presented. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com

SRI UPDATE

No report. Chief Mazzeo said the next quarterly SRI meeting will be in August during the River Festival.

RIVERFRONT PROJECT

Councilman Eister moved to pay HRI for request #10 in the amount of \$348,962.87 as funds are available. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote. Ms. Carol Mazzeo asked if the funds were available. Councilman Eister explained that they are. Extensions for most of the grants have been made through 2012. Councilman Bartello asked if the bill was for the riverside of the project and Councilman Eister said yes, most of it is for the riverside but HRI is also doing gardening work on the City side. Mayor Persing explained that hopefully the project will be complete by the 2012 Sunbury Celebration.

NUISANCE PROPERTIES

Mr. Apfelbaum explained that city council would act as the Board of Health (per the 3rd Class City Code) and vote to declare certain properties a public nuisance. The City then gives notice posted on the property that states that the property owner has 10 days to resolve the public nuisance. Most of the time the owner does nothing. After 10 days, the City has the right to correct the problem and put a lien against the property. Mr. Bob Werline said there is a property at 1027 Keller St. that is in terrible shape. It is a trailer and the code office has visited the property many times. The property owner cannot be found. General discussion was held regarding this property and it was decided to add it to the list. Mr. David Whipple asked if any of these properties could be rehabbed. Mr. Apfelbaum said they have not seen inside any of these properties but the outside is in deplorable shape. The properties are: 121 Julia St, 608 S. Front St., 700 N. 7th St., 716 N. 7th St. and 1027 Keller St. Mayor Persing, acting on behalf of the Board of Health, moved to pass the Resolution to take action to declare the properties listed above as a Public Nuisance. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Mayor Persing stated again that the new Redevelopment Authority Board is going to make a huge impact on the neighborhoods in the City. It has taken a long time to get access to these properties and even if they are torn down, it will be an improvement to the neighborhoods. Councilman Eister complimented the code officers for the work they are doing to help get the City cleaned up.

JAG GRANT

Mayor Persing announced that the City is applying for a JAG grant in the amount of \$10,883 to be used as part of the camera project. There was no public comment.

VOUCHER'S PAYABLE REPORT

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$104,018.44 and \$11,648.81 as funds are available. Second- Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Ruell Whipple asked council why there is a train car blocking the street/walking path at the Moran site near Julia St. He said people are going over the cars or going under the cars to get across that area. Councilman Troup said that is not a city street and if they are crossing through the train cars they are on private property. Councilman Troup also said the public works department has not plowed that street, further showing it is not a city street. Councilman Eister asked Mr. Bakowicz to look at city maps to determine for certain whether it is public or private property.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Persing said he is looking into the matter of the memorial for James Dalious who was born in Sunbury and killed at the Battle of Little Big Horn. He wrote several letters asking for opinions where the best place would be for the memorial. Cameron Park may not be the best location for this type of memorial.

Councilman Bartello said he had someone ask him about putting benches in Stroh Alley and Edison Plaza similar to what is in Cameron Park and Riverfront Park. Councilman Eister explained each bench costs \$1,180 and as soon as there is funding available, the same type of bench will be put in Stroh Alley. Councilman Snyder asked if the benches at Riverfront Park will be available with plaques as they were in Cameron Park. The answer is yes. Councilman Bartello asked if any of those benches could be moved to Stroh Alley and Councilman Eister said no they must remain at Riverfront.

Mayor Persing also explained that he feels the City of Sunbury should be involved in the development of large properties, such as the middle school on Fairmount Ave that will be closed and the Runnerless Knits property. He does not mean that the City wants to purchase the properties, but they would like to be involved in the redevelopment of the property. Councilman Eister agreed and he volunteered to contact the Shikellamy School District to sit on a committee to decide the fate of that building, if they have such a committee. Councilman Eister said there was an article that said a college should go into that building and local residents called Councilman Eister, thinking that was happening, and asking about parking in the area. Councilman Bartello said he heard Sara Lee was showing an interest in that property. The Mayor said he and John Shipman sit on the board of the Economic Development Committee for the Greater Susquehanna Valley Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber knows about all the large vacant properties and when they have inquiries they can recommend buildings in the City.

Councilman Troup said students from McCann School of Business asked him to put crosswalks on N. 4th St. going east to west from McCann to Weis Markets. He is going to check the area to see where the best place would be to put a crosswalk to make it safer to cross.

Councilman Troup announced that paving trucks have been moved in for paving on Front St, 11th St and the south end of town. Paving will be from 6 pm to 6 am.

Mayor Persing complimented Councilman Eister on the Sunbury Celebration weekend activities and the fireworks. The Ta-Ta Trot had over 600 runners and was very successful in raising funds for the PA Breast Cancer Coalition.

An ASA softball state championship tournament will be held over the weekend at the David L. Persing Recreation Complex.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Specht
City Clerk