

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
December 9, 2013
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
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Bordner, Workforce Supervisor
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer and Fire Chief
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-nine (29) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Minutes of 11/11/13 and the 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 – Troup. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Persing asked if anyone has a comment in regard to agenda items. There were none.

SRI UPDATE

Mr. Slade Shreck said the tax credit program has been approved for use at the Albright Church location. New Year's Eve planning is just about complete. A Bon Jovi tribute band "Bad Medicine" will be playing on Market St. Children's entertainment in the park includes Magician Brent Kessler and there will be free hot chocolate, cookies and carriage rides. An additional stage will have music by participants in The Valley's Got Talent. A live webcast will take place all evening with Drew and Ali and Francis Scarcella on The Daily Item and Sunbury Broadcasting websites. Late Nite Shoppers was successful.

CDBG UPDATE

Ms. Jamie Shrawder told council that DCED has approved the targeted code enforcement project. The amount had to be reduced to approximately \$8,400 from \$10,000 because that put it over the 18% that could be allotted to the project. She will schedule a meeting with the Municipal Authority to discuss the mapping information.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Redevelopment Authority did not meet in December.

PARTNERSHIP WITH SUNBURY

Mayor Persing explained in the future you will hear more about this project. He said the Albright Church plan is coming together with the help of the SPARC board. The players in the Albright Church project are Northumberland National Bank, Zimmerman Motors, Sunbury Motors and PPL. They are looking for another sponsor. Mayor Persing said this project will move the city forward into the future. There are upgrades to the Burger King and Sunoco gas station being planned for 2014.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$75,545.15 from the General Fund and \$200,721.70 from the Wolverton St. Project and \$6,855.50 from Liquid Fuels Fund. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

TROUP RESIGNATION

Mayor Persing read a letter from Councilman Troup stating he will be resigning from his council position to become the city treasurer effective January 6, 2014. Mayor Persing explained an advertisement will be sent out for his replacement through December 31, 2015. Mr. Apfelbaum said the position can be advertised with the effective date. Mayor Persing would like to have someone ready to be appointed on January 13, 2014. Letters of intent will be received for a stated period of time. Interviews will be held between January 6th and 11th. Ms. Regina Russell asked if it is an appointed position. Mayor Persing explained it is and council has 30 days to appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Drake Saxton read from a statement for 5 minutes and 50 second in regard to subjects that have been discussed before.

FERAL CAT DISCUSSION

Councilman Bartello asked if anything has been done with the information regarding feral cats he gave the Mayor to give to Mr. Apfelbaum to look at. Mr. Scott Schwartz said at the last meeting council said something would be done in December. Councilman Troup said Ms. Specht and he went to the meeting in Northumberland and were the only 2 participants from Northumberland County that attended. He said Northumberland's plan is very comprehensive and at this time they do not have the funding or a veterinarian on board. Mr. Schwartz said Mayor Persing said at least they would look at enacting something that would forbid outside feeding, licensing and a leash law for cats. Mayor Persing said he thought feeding is the only item they can control. Mayor Persing said his personal opinion is that these items are unenforceable and that is why he does not have anything to bring up about it. Councilman Eister agreed with no outside feeding being enforceable but not licensing. Mr. Schwartz said he didn't understand laws and enforcement but does not understand not putting an ordinance in place because it is not enforceable. Mayor Persing said if it isn't enforceable why would you enact it. He said there is no animal control officer in the county. Mr. Schwartz said if someone is seen with food out you would contact the code office or the police and they would enforce it. Councilman Troup said there are other municipalities trying to come up with an ordinance. Northumberland is spearheading it. He would rather have an ordinance they can set their teeth into instead of coming up with something too quickly. Shamokin and Mt. Carmel are getting together to discuss the same issue. He just wants whatever is done to be good. Councilman Snyder said an effective solution is required. It is not as simple as just drafting an ordinance. Council, the code office and the police, while cats are an important issue, it is not at the top of the list. He said they should turn to citizens such as Mr. Schwartz and get involved in an effective solution. They should contact the SPCA, spay and neuter programs and get a citizen committee together to address the issue. No matter what ordinance council enacts the cats will end up at the SPCA. Most of the time they are euthanized there. A spay/neuter program in place spearheaded by citizens may end up solving the problem. With just an ordinance there is nothing other than cats wandering the streets and the problem is not managed effectively. Councilman Snyder said if it is such an important issue to Mr. Schwartz he suggests he helps address it by getting a citizens group together and getting involved in the solution. Council is not the group to fix the problem. Councilman Bartello said they could at least fine if there are dishes out for feeding. He said the dog ordinance could be changed to dogs and cats. Mr. Schwartz said he is puzzled because he is hearing something completely different this evening from other discussions. Mayor Persing again said he thinks outside feeding is the only enforceable issue. The police dept is not going to go to a cat call when they are being called to other important issues. Ms. Julie Broscious said Northumberland does have an extensive proposal for the feral cat issue and she spoke to them and they said they don't think there is a way to enforce it. They do not have the manpower to enforce it. She said she has heard quite a few people that are upset about not being able to feed the cats. They did not ask to be on the street. An irresponsible owner turned them out onto the streets and they started having litter after litter. She said if the potential is to starve the cats, PETA will probably step in. Councilman Eister said if PETA says the city can't do that they should be told to take the cats with them. Councilman Bartello said they are not saying you can't feed stray cats, you just can't feed them outside. You can't leave a food dish out for any skunk, cat or anything to eat. It doesn't have anything to do with feeding a poor stray cat. If you want to feed the cat you take it in, feed it and treat it nicely.

Ms. Broschius said you usually can't get near a feral cat. Ms. Carol Mazzeo asked if there wasn't a program several years ago where cats were neutered. Councilman Eister said people brought cats to be neutered but the veterinarian that did that was killed in a car accident. Ms. Mazzeo said she knows contact people at the University of PA Veterinary School and she would contact them if council wanted her to do that. She was told to go ahead and get information. Councilman Eister said perhaps at the next council meeting the issue of outside feeding could be brought up. Councilman Troup asked why they just didn't do that now. Mr. Ric Reichner asked how council would stop people from throwing scraps out in their back yard to feed birds? Cats and other animals will eat that just as the birds will. Councilman Bartello said it is more if you have a dish out in the open. Mr. Dale Henry said this is so open-ended he doesn't see how an ordinance could be in place. Mr. Henry said there are bigger things to worry about. Mayor Persing said council does recognize that feral cats are a problem not just in Sunbury but everywhere. He said someone has to find a way to make it enforceable. Councilman Eister said the problem is some places have multiple dishes sitting out and dozens of cats go to the house. That is an issue. He said he feeds the birds and squirrels himself. Ms. Beth Kremer said Mostly Mutts and Haven to Home and other places will take cats and help to spay and neuter. The problem is there is never enough money to do them all. Mayor Persing said it will remain on the agenda and as Councilman Eister is the biggest supporter of the issue he should bring something to the next meeting. Mr. Schwartz said there will be problems and every municipality is attempting to do something about the problem. He said it isn't that people don't like the looks of the cats, it's that they defecate in the yard, in the garden, it smells like urine, the produce fleas and disease. Ms. Regina Russell said she is not familiar with how dogs are licensed or the ordinances. Mayor Persing said the county licenses dogs. Ms. Russell said if you cannot enforce this, is council saying dogs no longer have to be licensed? Mr. Apfelbaum reiterated that the county issues dog licenses. Ms. Russell asked if there was any way they could work with the county so the problem could be eliminated. Mayor Persing explained that is what the meeting in Northumberland was to accomplish but no other municipality showed up besides Sunbury. Mr. Brad Hare said the state governs dog laws and there are no cat laws. The county handles the dog licenses for the state. Mr. Fegley is a state dog officer. Cats are not domesticated and that's why they are not regulated like dogs. Councilman Bartello said there is an ordinance on dogs that says they cannot run at large. It is a \$25 to \$300 fine. Removal of fecal matter is an issue all the time. Ms. Broschius asked who would get fined when a skunk, squirrel, mouse or rabbit defecates in someone's yard.

Mr. David Whipple said Moran put the fence up to keep people off the former Celotex property but the gate has been propped open for 3 weeks. He also said they put up the fabric on the fence but a lot of it is down. The whole property does not look nice. Mr. Moran should take care of his property. Mr. Rhoads said he would look into that.

Councilman Snyder said the next meeting for the 2014 budget is December 16th for final passage on December 23rd. Mayor Persing wished everyone a Merry Christmas in case they do not attend the next meeting. The meeting on December 23rd will be to pass the budget and tax levy and not much else.

Councilman Troup congratulated the police department on the work they put in to the homicide investigation and subsequent arrest.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk