

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
January 27, 2014
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:

Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer and Fire Chief
Ken Long, Asst. Public Works Supervisor
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-six (26) visitors present.

PUBLIC HEARING/2011 CDBG PROGRAM INCOME

Ms. Jamie Shrawder explained the City receives program income from the Housing Revolving loan fund and that money must be allocated for future use through a public hearing. There is \$4,147.50 and she is suggesting that be reallocated to the demolition/clearance project. There was no public comment regarding the allocation.

AUDIENCE COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Persing asked for audience comment on agenda items and there were no comments.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT ACT 90/COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY GRANT PROGRAM

Mayor Persing explained he checked *The Code of the City of Sunbury* and he feels there are already ordinances in place to address the blight property problems. Instead of passing a new ordinance he feels a Resolution addressing the sections of the Code should suffice to allow the City to participate in the County Housing Authority Grant Program. Councilman Eister moved to pass Resolution 2014-02 (see attached) to address blight properties in the City and to update the current ordinances to meet state statutes as they change. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

PAY RAISE/ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CLERK

Councilman Shipman said the treasurer's office has requested a pay raise for the Accounts Payable Clerk. She has done a good job and is working part-time. Mayor Persing asked if the money is budgeted and Councilman Shipman answered yes. Councilman Shipman moved to grant the pay increase. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

CDBG ALLOCATION

Councilman Eister moved to approve the allocation of program income in the amount of \$4,147.50 and allocate it to demolition/clearance. Second- Henry. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Shipman made a motion to pay the invoices on the vouchers payable report totaling \$99,342.72 from the general fund and \$4,267.98 from Liquid Fuels. Second – Reichner. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Jan Dockey said she reviews the meeting minutes and as of last week there is nothing posted on the website since April 2013. Ms. Specht said they just have not been posted yet and will be posted as soon as possible. Mayor Persing told Ms. Dockey that anyone can pick up a copy at the city clerk's office.

Mr. Ron Krieger said any time he has something done to his property he gets the required permits. He said 1277-1279 Highland Ave. was purchased by Ideal Housing. He said the last administration voted that you must have 1 1/2 parking spaces per unit. He said on the other side at 1273 Highland Ave. there is a Keystone Human Services residential home that has 3 off-street parking spaces that no one uses. He said the city made 1 additional parking space on Highland Ave. by moving the yellow line a little. The Keystone employees have a van for patient transport that is being parked on Highland Ave. There is a business office on Arch St. they should be able to keep their van at. The employee's vehicles can be parked in the off-street parking but they do not. Mr. Andrewlevich would have been at the meeting but he is away and he has complained about the same thing. The parking in that area is limited and with the residence there it is worse. He is not complaining about the residents living there because they are good neighbors. When the residence was purchased for Keystone they agreed to use the off-street parking for employees. Mr. Krieger would like them to be forced to use the off-street parking. Their neighborhood is being inundated with rental properties. One rental unit was rented to 1 person and now 3 others moved in with her and they all have vehicles there, including friends that visit. The properties are not grandfathered so they should be forced to have the 1 1/2 parking spaces per unit. He was told that when a property changes hands it is no longer grandfathered. He is asking for some relief for him and his neighbors in that area. Mayor Persing said licensed vehicles parked on public streets cannot be forced to park elsewhere. Mr. Krieger said none of the residents drive a vehicle and it is employee vehicles parking on the streets. It is a business in a residential area. Councilman Shipman asked where the Keystone property is located and Mr. Krieger answered it is at the top of the hill – the only single house there besides his and Mr. Andrewlevich. Ms. Julie Broschious said there is a Keystone Home in the 800 block of Edison Ave. and they do the same thing – they have off-street parking and they don't use it. Mr. Krieger said he has lived there 26 years and it was never an issue until recently because the employees did park in the off-street area. Mayor Persing said they would look into it. Chief Mazzeo said he doesn't think any ordinance the City has would force someone to park in off-street parking. Councilman Reichner said he thinks they should ask the employees to use the off-street parking. Mr. Krieger said when Keystone purchased the property they made it clear parking would not be an issue.

Mr. Scott Schwartz said he has been attending the council meetings for about 3 months in regard to the feral cat issue. He said he sees other municipalities attempting to do something about feral cats but he doesn't see any progress in Sunbury. He said if there is something he can do to move it forward he would be glad to. Mayor Persing said they told Mr. Schwartz's daughter at the last meeting it is being looked into but Mayor Persing does not have anything to put forward because of the enforcement issue. Northumberland Borough tried to get other municipalities in Northumberland County involved and no one but Sunbury came to their meeting. He said he knows it is an issue in all parts of the City but does not know what to do to regulate it. Mr. Schwartz said he feels that is a cop out. There are many ordinances difficult to enforce but the presence of an ordinance would put teeth behind situations that need to be enforced. He said no outdoor feeding of cats could be enforced. Someone could call when they see dishes outside with food in them. He feels special situations could be improved in that way. Mr. Drew Bingaman said he thinks Mr. Schwartz is passionate about this situation and when he asked if there is anything he can do on the issue he and others should take action. It isn't a council issue. If the citizens want to live trap the cats and spay/neuter them they should and that will help the problem. Mr. Schwartz asked why it is different than the issue with parking. It negatively impacts the neighborhoods. He said it is a council issue if it negatively impacts the citizens that live in Sunbury and affects their daily lives. Mayor Persing asked council members if any council member wanted to present legislation in regard to this issue. No one replied. Mr. Ron Krieger said there is an organization that will come to pick up cats. He does not remember the name but will get it. They pick them up and spay/neuter them at no cost. Ms. Julie Broschious said there is a mobile spay/neuter veterinarian out of the Wilkes-Barre area that goes as far as Bloomsburg. They have literature that says if you want to host the mobile unit you should get in touch with them. Ms. Broschious said the other municipalities could get them to come this far. She said she would provide the information. Councilman Eister said not this evening but he knows enforcement would be a hassle. The code office did talk to Mr. Schwartz's daughter's neighbor.

Mr. Terry Marshall had pictures of a property at 2nd & Spruce St. that Mr. Marshall asked to have someone look at because it is an eyesore. Mayor Persing said he would give he pictures to the Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Marshall also said he received a letter from the mayor in regard to 239 Spruce St. He said the lawyers can handle it and his lawyers are Best and Bower.

Ms. Julie Broschious said the location of the podium for speakers seems rude because they have their backs to the audience. Mayor Persing agreed and said they would try it somewhere else.

Ms. Meghan Beck said the SPARC committee of SRI is refurbishing the flower baskets on Market St. They are looking for sponsors for the new baskets. They will be \$200 each and include the basket, a 2.5 gallon water reservoir and the bracket to attach it to the pole. The reservoir will hold water for 3 or 4 days. At this time there are 27 on Market St. Councilman Shipman said the planters that are up now do not have the ability to hold water which means they must be watered every day or 2. Mr. David Whipple said Williamsport has planters and they water them with a golf cart with a water tank on the back.

Mr. Brad Niemiec asked if council would pass a Resolution to allow him to bring a liquor license in from Mt. Carmel to be used at 318 Market St. He will be opening a café/wine bar with live entertainment and dancing. He is also requesting outdoor seating and he does understand 5' has to be left for pedestrians. Mayor Persing asked about the timeline – Mr. Niemiec said he hopes to be open by spring. Councilman Reichner asked what the PLCB regulations are for footage from one tavern to another. Mr. Niemiec said if you are within so many feet of another tavern they could file a complaint with the PLCB. In this case that does not pertain. Mr. Niemiec explained that Sunbury council passes a Resolution to say it is ok to bring the liquor license in to the City and the PLCB then does their own investigation. Councilman Eister asked about parking and Mr. Niemiec said it is on Market St. Councilman Shipman asked if the building goes all the way to the alley and Mr. Niemiec answered yes. Councilman Henry said he is not prepared to do anything tonight and would like to have time to research it before he votes. Councilman Reichner said he does not have a problem with it but he said when he owned his bar he had to go through a variance for parking. Mr. Niemiec said since it is on Market St. a parking variance is not required. Mayor Persing said the council wants to support new business. Mr. Niemiec said he is on a timeline because of transferring the liquor license. Councilman Henry asked how long Mr. Niemiec knew about the transfer and Mr. Niemiec answered he just got the contract last week. He said he could not bring it before council until he received the contract for the liquor license. The Resolution has to have the LID and the PLCB license number on it. He said the building is in deplorable condition and he will have to remodel the entire building to bring it to code and improving an eyesore on Market St. Councilman Eister asked if the live music will include hip-hop. After general discussion Mr. Niemiec said he will not have hip hop music. Councilman Reichner moved to pass the Resolution to transfer a liquor license from Mt. Carmel to Sunbury with license # R-7949 and LID# 51821 for 318 Market St. and to include outdoor seating if it meets the PLCB requirements. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Persing announced Burger King and SUNOCO will be expanding their businesses and there will be some neighborhood improvements to the area of 5th & Arch Sts.

January 31st will be the last day for Christmas tree pick-up.

Ms. Julie Brosicous asked when Kowabungas will open. Councilman Reichner said they have everything they need from the code office. The last he heard it is supposed to open in March. Ms. Brosicous asked what the difficulty was and Councilman Reichner said he doesn't know – everything with NEIC is in order. Councilman Reichner said they had problems with the plans and had to change architects several times so that could have held them up.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk