

CITY COUNCIL  
Sunbury PA 17801  
June 26, 2017  
6:15 pm

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

David L. Persing, Mayor  
Elizabeth R. Kremer, Director of Accounts and 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:

Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, City Solicitor  
Timothy Miller, Police Chief  
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer  
Terry Specht, City Clerk

Visitors: 25

A moment of silent reflection was held after the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Persing asked for comments on agenda items and there were none.

**2017 CDBG PROJECT SELECTION**

Ms. Linda Sterling opened the 2017 CDBG Project Selection Hearing by stating the projects that have been forwarded for 2017 funding were discussed at the last meeting. Tonight she is recommending the following projects for funding (see attached list):

Chestnut St. Utilities Reconstruction Phase III	\$192,660
Redevelopment Authority Clearance/Demolition	\$ 28,110
Sunbury Fire Dept. 5 HCN monitors	\$ 3,000

The estimated 2017 allocation is \$272,900 of which \$49,130 is for administrative purposes leaving project costs of \$223,770. The requested Keithan's Garden project for \$5,000 would need an Environmental Review in the amount of \$3,100 and would not be cost effective through CDBG. The Chestnut St. project is eligible because the street will need to be repaved because of all the utility work done – it is not considered maintenance. The Clearance/Demolition project is replacing the 2013 CDBG funds that was reallocated to the Chestnut St. project because of concerns about spending the funds in time. This is the new funding to replace the funds moved from Clearance/Demo to Chestnut St. project. The city committed to replacing the funding because it is part of a grant match through the county. The Sunbury Fire Dept. fire hydrant retro fit project for \$19,000 is not recommended for funding because there isn't enough to do that and the Chestnut St. project. Their second project request for HCN monitors in the amount of \$3,000 is recommended for funding. There is not a requirement for an ER for this project because it is purchasing equipment. The South Sunbury Neighborhood Safety project is a good project but there is not enough funding for it at this time. Julie Broschious asked if the retro fit for the hydrants shouldn't trump the Chestnut St. project due to safety concerns. Mayor Persing said the blighted properties are also a safety issue. Councilman Henry asked how many houses were torn down the last few years and no one knew the exact number at this time. Councilman Henry also said the RDA has a nest egg and doesn't need this funding. They have approximately \$70,000. He is going to support the fire department project and not the Redevelopment Authority project. Ms. Sterling started to explain the Chestnut St. project is for safety as well. There is nothing wrong with the existing hydrants this project is for the installation of a quick hookup to establish a water supply faster. Councilman Eister moved to fund the projects listed above with the 2017 CDBG funds as recommended by Ms. Sterling. Second –

Reichner. Yes – Kremer, Reichner, Eister, Persing. No – Henry. Motion carried. The CDBG public hearing adjourned at 6:32 pm.

**SUB-DIVISION APPROVAL/J. J. MORAN, LLC**

Mr. Rhoads explained this is the final approval for the add-on sub-division as requested on Packer St. All required entities have approved the sub-division. Councilman Reichner moved to pass the final approval for the add-on sub-division Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

**USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

Mayor Persing announced that the city received a USDA Rural Development Grant in the amount of \$63,525 with a match of \$28,625 from the city for a total grant amount of \$34,900. Councilman Reichner moved to move forward with this grant and authorize the Mayor’s office to sign all documents as needed. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote. The grant is for cameras and in-car computers for police vehicles. Mayor Persing thanked Cheryl Delsite for all the hard work she put into this grant.

**ARLE GRANT**

Councilwoman Kremer moved to authorize Mayor David Persing to sign all paperwork and to move forward with the ARLE (Automated Red Light Enforcement) grant application for replacement of traffic lights and ADA curb cuts for Reagan & 4<sup>th</sup> Sts and Packer & 4<sup>th</sup> Sts. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

**NUISANCE PROPERTY/439 Rear N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.**

Councilman Reichner moved to pass a Resolution (see attached) to declare the property at 439 Rear N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. as a nuisance property. The code office tried to work with the owner but to no avail. It is near a playground and is a health hazard. Summary abatement will be used to clean up the property that is full of garbage, etc. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

**HIRE FULL-TIME POLICE OFFICER**

Mayor Persing moved to hire Keifer Bathgate as a full-time police officer – at this time he works for the Sunbury Police Dept. part-time. Mr. Bathgate was #2 on the Civil Service hire list. The #1 candidate is out of state and must take the PA Act 120 test before he can be hired in Pennsylvania. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote. Chief Timothy Miller said Officer Bathgate has proven to be very aggressive during his time as a part-time officer and the department is excited to have him full-time.

**HIRE PT POLICE OFFICER**

Mayor Persing moved to hire Jacob Brown-Shields as an addition to the part-time police officer list. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

**APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES**

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher’s payable report in the amount of \$132,445.65 from the General Fund and \$170.82 from the Liquid Fuels fund. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

**OPEN CONTAINER WAIVER**

Councilman Eister moved to approve the request by SRI to waive the open container ordinance for the Wine & Brew Fest on September 16<sup>th</sup> and the River Festival After Hours on August 19<sup>th</sup>. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

## **DISCUSSION**

Mayor Persing gave updates on the police department: The Miller investigation is moving forward. At this time there is not a lot to report. Officer Quinn has a hearing scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup>. Sgt. Blasé is scheduled for disability retirement and that is moving forward as well.

## **AUDIENCE COMMENT**

Jennifer Lehman: A man at 345 Race St. parks 3 large vehicles on Race St. and the people living on Speece St. cannot see to pull out of that street. She said the code says commercial vehicles cannot be parked in certain zoned areas. She has young children and is fearful of pulling out on Race St. because of the vehicles they can't see coming. The code office and police chief have looked at the parking but nothing was done. One of the vehicles has a 2014 inspection sticker. Chief Miller said the bucket truck he checked on was not in violation. The vehicles take more than 1 parking space. Ms. Lehman said it is over the stated requirements for commercial vehicles to park on city streets. It was decided that the parking spaces on Race St. on either side of Speece will be painted yellow so there is a line of sight to pull out.

Laurie Johnson: The first Movie on the River will be "Trolls" and it is Tuesday 6-27 – festivities begin at 6 pm and the movie will begin at dark. Wine & Brew Festival tickets are on sale at Brewer's Outlet. Registrations are being accepted for the Valley's Got Talent competition.

Regina Russell, Community Activist: Asked Mayor Persing to explain a letter he sent regarding the HOME grant and her rental property. The letter said all applications for a rental permit from the code office for her property would be on hold for 5 years. Since HOME funding was used for renovations to the property, it cannot be used as a rental unit. Mayor Persing said it means her rental permit is on hold for 5 years and at the end of the 5 years she will not have to reapply for a rental permit. She will not have to pay the \$50/year for 5 years. Ms. Russell said in the last few years she was not able to rent her unit because there are code violations. Mayor Persing said that has nothing to do with the letter he wrote. Ms. Russell said be patient, Mayor Persing said I am out of patience and Ms. Russell stated she is frustrated and if she had a gun she would be shooting people. Ms. Russell also said a group of people are purchasing properties and renting to low income families and changing the face of Sunbury. She said the code office is not enforcing ordinances at their properties because of their influence. The bicycle shop at 355 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St. had the fence removed enabling parking for customers. There is a large shed in the backyard and the alley is so narrow you would need a small vehicle to turn in to park there. Ms. Russell asked who is on the Zoning Board. The answer is Bob Lagerman, Jesse Woodring and Jean Eckrod. She asked who owns the property and no one knew. She asked how long zoning has to notify the tax assessment office of the change to the property. No one knew. Councilman Reichner said there was no change in the property the zoning hearing board voted to allow him to sell bicycles from that property only. She said 1337 Holdings LLC owns the property. Ms. Russell also stated Mayor Persing said he wants to keep the city under the poverty level so they can continue getting financial help and grants. Mayor Persing assured her he never said such a thing.

Julie Broschious: When is infrastructure going to be repaired in the city? Mayor Persing answered infrastructure replacement has been on-going including Market St. and Wolverton St. Councilman Eister said the Chestnut St. project is replacing all the infrastructure under the street. She said what about the flooding on different streets and what is council doing about it. Councilman Eister said Wednesday there is a meeting to discuss grants for the flooding problem in her neighborhood and he told her a year ago they would be looking into it. She is going to put money into her property and she doesn't want to do it if flooding is going to continue to be a problem.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk