

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
November 13, 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:

Kevin Troup, City Treasurer
Brianna Apfelbaum Kula, City Solicitor
Timothy Miller, Chief of Police
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

Visitors present: 58

A moment of silent reflection was held prior to the beginning of the meeting.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

The Minutes of 10/9/17 and 10/23/17 and 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 Reichner. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

CARING AWARD PRESENTATION

Mayor Persing presented Mr. Jeremy Lauer with a Caring Award. Jeremy's passion is skate boarding and has been instrumental in the upkeep at the skateboard park. He has held 3 skate jams as fundraisers for the skate park. He presented a plan for a new, concrete park and is willing to fund raise for the funding to build it. Jeremy is very deserving of the Caring Award.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Lori Garman: Opposes the Woodlawn Ave. railroad closure because it would cut-off their business from the municipal parking lot and use of Woodlawn Ave. They are considering expanding but would close their business if this railroad closure would happen. Her young daughters came back to Sunbury to run the business and she would not want to see them have to move away to pursue their passion.

Gordon Lamb: If the public works report is lost on the computer, why did council vote to approve it? It was a typographical error on the City Clerk's part.

Regina Russell, Community Activist: Do the departments have a back-up on their computer? The stand-alone laptops are not connected to a server.

CHESTNUT ST. PROJECT UPDATE

Councilman Eister explained the contractor is in the process of relocating the water main to the high rise and the gas line will be relocated Wednesday. Councilman Eister moved to pay Pay App #5 to G & R Charles in the amount of \$90,564.55. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

SMERLICK LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN/SUB-DIVISION PLAN

Councilman Reichner moved to pass the Smerlick Land Development Plan extension because through the Municipal Planning Code there is 90 days for the plan to be approved, after that if an extension is not granted they must begin the process again. The 90 day extension will end January 9, 2018. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

Councilman Reichner moved to pass the Sub-division Plan extension as requested by John & Jennifer Smerlick. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

1ST READING CODE REVISION/CHAPTERS 107/130/134/175

Ms. Kula explained the changes to the above Code Chapters are mostly housekeeping items to mirror the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) and deals with the housing rental permits. Chapter 107 will be repealed in its entirety. Chapter 130 deals with property maintenance. Many definitions were updated to the IPMC. Section 130-2 makes the IPMC more specific to Sunbury codes. Violations and penalties were updated to reflect similar language in other sections and the violation is not less than \$100 nor more than \$1000, or the maximum allowable under applicable law or imprisonment not to exceed 30 days or both. Chapter 134 is the permit process. A definition of “person” was added. A rental property application must be submitted and all occupants must be recorded and given to the code administration office. Also, a housing permit will not be issued if the applicant is not in good standing with all applicable property taxes, sewer fees and Code Administration Office violations and fees. If an emergency situation exists and the violation is not remedied by the property owner, all fees plus 10% will be imposed upon the owner. If not paid, a lien will be placed against the property. Chapter 175-90 indicates any fees associated with the section will be published as part of the annual City Fee Schedule Resolution. Councilman Henry asked if the City can deny a permit if a sewer/water bill is not paid. Ms. Kula said yes as long as it is beyond the final declaration and is beyond all appeal processes. Proof of compliance can be required. Councilman Reichner moved to pass on a 1st reading the updated Chapters of The Code of the City of Sunbury Chapters 107/130/134/175-90. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION/POLICE TO SERVE CRIMINAL WARRANTS

Mayor Persing moved to pass a Resolution (see attached) allowing Sunbury police officers to serve criminal warrants and the payment would go to the city. The 3rd Class City Code already shows that it is authorized to do so. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

POLICE SOP/REGULATIONS

Mayor Persing presented a binder titled Sunbury Police Department Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). To date, any time changes are made to SOPs by a Chief of Police, the change is posted for 10 days and if someone has a problem with it they discuss it with the Chief and then they go into effect. Several years ago it was decided city council should approve changes. The Sunbury Police Officers Association has been asked many times to let the city know what they do not agree with so they could work on them and they have not done that. Mayor Persing moved to pass the adoption of the Standard Operating Procedures as written by Chief Miller from the PA Chiefs of Police Association guidelines. This is the document that protects the police officers and the city from lawsuits. Second – Kremer. Unanimous vote.

1ST READING 2018 BUDGET ORD. # 1283

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pass on a 1st reading the 2018 budget ordinance with a 3 mil tax increase. Council has until the 2nd reading to make changes and hopefully they will be able to reduce the tax millage increase. Mr. Troup said he included a chart showing what a 3 mil tax increase would be for different properties (city council members). Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

1ST READING 2018 TAX LEVY ORD. # 1284

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pass the 2018 Tax Levy Ordinance. It must be passed showing the 3 mil tax increase but as stated earlier, it is city council’s hopes the millage increase can be reduced before the 2nd reading. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

2018 TAX ANTICIPATION BIDS

Councilwoman Kremer opened the following bids for the 2018 Tax Anticipation Note in the amount of \$250,000:

Swineford Bank	2.63% to 5% adjustable rate
Northumberland National Bank	1/15% fixed rate
West Milton Bank	2.26% fixed with \$500 fee

Councilwoman Kremer moved to accept the apparent low bid from Northumberland National Bank after review by the city solicitor and authorize the mayor to sign all documents. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

FREE PARKING

Mayor Persing moved to allow free parking at all metered streets (parking lots are not included) from November 24, 2017 to January 1, 2018. Second – Henry. Unanimous vote.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILROAD CROSSING CLOSURES

Mayor Persing explained the city has been working with other companies to gain an opportunity for growth for many years. He has worked with this project for about a year. The project is to address safety concerns and eliminate blighted areas while having the opportunity to improve property values by acquiring new properties for future development. The crossings in question are Linden St. & 3rd St., Church St. and 3rd St. and Woodlawn Ave & N. 3rd St. Mayor Persing explained each closure. There is no expense to the city, it will be paid by Penn DOT. Penn DOT will build all new roads as needed. The closure at 3rd St & Church St would give the city land that at this time is blighted. They will also give the property they own at 3rd & Chestnut St. to the city where the city pays an annual lease. The goal for the 3rd & Woodlawn Ave area would be to improve traffic flow and increase future economic development. The city’s parking lot in that area must be upgraded. Future investment could be nurtured in that area. The area where the parking lot is could be where the new police department could be relocated. Mayor Persing moved to accept this project as presented with Norfolk Southern and Penn DOT as partners. The City would receive \$200,000 with no strings attached and that money could be used toward the new police station or upgrade the current station. There was no second to the motion. Councilman Eister said he would like more time to look over the information presented and he would also like to look at some of the areas discussed.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilwoman Kremer moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher’s payable report in the amount of \$142,618.35 from the General Fund and \$3,113.18 from Liquid Fuels. Second - Henry. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mark Walberg: Is the city appealing the decision allowing the owner of the property at 202 Arch St. to put multi-unit apartments in without required parking. At the time of the sale, it was advertised that it could not be multi-unit apartments. He feels since the ordinance was overturned anyone can put multi-units in without parking. Mayor Persing answered that the decision was based on appealing the decision would cost \$8,000-\$15,000 so it was decided they would not appeal. He will check with council members to see if they want to appeal or not. Also, Mr. Walberg said the same

owner has a property listed as one apartment but it has 28 residents in it. It was leased to Furmanos. The guidelines state the occupants must be related as family. This does not help bring Market St. back. Ms. Kula said that is something being addressed in the ordinance changes. Every occupant must be listed.

Becky Enders: The upper end of Court St. has not been street cleaned for a long time because there are certain vehicles parked that do not move and do not receive tickets. In the beginning of the street sweeping they received tickets but not anymore.

David Whipple: Bimbo is using Julia St. to run their tractor/trailers. It is not wide enough for them. Councilman Eister said the Packer St. side is being paved and that could be the reason.

Meghan Beck: Wants to discuss Mr. Walberg's concerns. She is the property owner of 202 Arch St. She explained that building was apartments for decades. There was no parking available but since the fire at the jail there is ample parking. Minimally 27 stalls at any given time. They tried for 10 years to come up with a use for that property but have not been successful. She would appreciate if the city did not appeal the judge's decision. The apartment downtown that is rented to Furmanos does have multiple people in it that are not related but it does not violate code. She said generally 2nd floor uses in the downtown is a huge issue in that it is limited what they can be used for. Councilman Henry said they put their trash out front where the city picks up and it was filthy. Ms. Beck said when she was informed that was an issue she made sure it was taken care of.

Dale Henry: Can code officers go to these properties nights and weekends? During the day many people are at work and they would not be caught. Councilman Reichner said there are photos and id's of everyone living there. Councilman Henry said the property he is talking about is on 12th St. Chief Miller said that issue is one of the things he wants to address with the Nuisance Property Task Force.

DISCUSSION

Mr. John Shipman presented a print that SPARC/SRI is selling for \$249 as a fundraiser. It is a Peter Lerro print titled "Patiently Waiting, Hometown Edition." It is a snapshot of 1934. There will only be 150 numbered and signed prints sold.

Councilman Reichner said he will be starting a Nuisance Property Task Force after the first of the year. This committee will work on blighted property and tackle the problem from different angles. Chief Miller said the code office and police department are not working together as well as they should and a better public safety service could be developed if information is passed along between the 2 departments. The idea is to have eyes and ears in the neighborhood.

Mayor Persing announced that everyone should watch what UPMC will be doing with the Sunbury Hospital. They have a lot of great ideas and he feels they will bring it back to a busy hospital that the community can be proud of very soon and will be a huge impact on the area.

Mayor Persing thanked Cheryl Delsite, Kathaleen Persing, Terry Specht, the Dept. of Public Works and anyone else that had anything to do with the Christmas decorations. Without the inmates from SCI-Coal Township the decorating would not go as smoothly. The YMCA administrative employees were a big help in the gazebo and want to take that project on every year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Street Sweeper season is complete.

Late Night Shoppers is Dec. 7th from 7 – 9 pm

Santa parade Friday November 24th at 6:30 pm.

Santa House hours:

Wednesdays 6:30-8:30

Saturdays 6:00 – 8:00

Sundays 1:00 – 3:00 pm

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht, City Clerk