

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
June 22, 2009
7:00 pm

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

Jesse C. Woodring, Mayor
John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts and Finance
Mr. Mark Walberg, Director of Public Safety
Mr. Kevin Troup, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks/Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Lisa Persing, City Controller
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer

There were forty-three (43) visitors present.

An executive session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel and legal issues

EARLY INTERVENTION

Mr. Robert Sabatini was in attendance at this meeting to field questions regarding his presentation at the last meeting dealing with code enforcement and recreation. Mayor Woodring asked Mr. Sabatini to prioritize the corrections needed to be in place for these departments. He also asked if Mr. Sabatini has any suggestions on how to implement the changes needed since the City does not have an administrator/manager to oversee the project. Mr. Sabatini said when the Early Intervention Program is wrapped up he will have bullet points with priorities noted. Some items may take years to implement but there are other items that can be implemented easily. Early intervention is usually a five year period. A city administrator would be a great value. The City has access to Early Intervention Phase II which is an implementation grant (if there are still Early Intervention funds in the PA Budget when passed). The major challenges to the City are facilities, form of governance, understanding finances better, a long-term capital plan for facilities and equipment and finally the ability to think bigger. The City should find something to tie itself to and build from there, whether it's a commercial downtown, an art center, a university or government seat. The Comprehensive/Strategic Plan will help with this endeavor. Councilman Walberg asked if private money was used to put the art center in downtown Norristown. Mr. Sabatini said it has been done both ways – through private funds and through government.

SEXUAL PREDATOR ORDINANCE

The ACLU contacted the City Solicitor and said the sexual predator ordinance was too restrictive for someone that has served their sentence and if it was not changed, they would take the City to court. Upon their wording recommendation, the ordinance will be changed to include only violent sexual predators. Councilman Walberg moved to accept the amendment as read to Article 121-7(J) on a first reading (see attached). Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

EAGLES USE OF SKATING RINK IN 2010

Councilman Eister stated that he has been working with Jeremy Fritz of the Eagles for a pool tournament to be held in 2010. The Eagles must submit proof of liability insurance for this event in the amount of \$2,000,000. Any costs incurred by the City would be reimbursed by the Eagles.

CAMERON PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Mayor Woodring explained that he and Councilman Eister met with representatives of Post 201 and reviewed the plans for Cameron Park again. Commander Anthony Steimling read from a statement:

“Members of Post 201 expressed their opinions as to moving the monuments in Cameron Park. At a post meeting on May 13th members present decided that the post would oppose moving the monuments. Since then although we still cannot approve as an organization of moving the monuments many of the members would like to see this issue resolved and move forward with the project. We feel that prolonging this issue will only further darken the image of the City of Sunbury and the reputation of Post 201. As veterans and community members we will still always have strong opinions but we are also part of this City and very much in favor of renovating the park. We also acknowledge the fact that a lot of effort has gone into this project. We certainly do not feel that the proposed moving of the monuments was done for anything other than good intentions. We appreciate the fact that we are fortunate enough to have elected officials working hard to improve our City. At a meeting on Friday June 12th 3 past commanders of Post 201, myself and our Senior Vice Commander met with Mayor Woodring and Councilman Eister to discuss how we can resolve this issue. We ask that if the monuments must be moved that they first be inspected by a professional and with the professional’s opinion that the monuments would be in no way subject to damage that we will no longer pursue our effort to keep them in their current location, if we are assured that in this professional’s opinion that there were a possibility of damage the monuments would stay in place. Again we would like to reinforce that the 1,014 member strong Post 201 is and will continue to play a vital role in this community and fully supports our elected officials and the people of this City.”

Mayor Woodring thanked Commander Steimling and stated that they had a good meeting and they ironed out what the differences were. The City’s intentions were only to enhance the area and allow easy access for all citizens to pay tribute to the veteran’s in one location. Mayor Woodring thanked Commander Steimling for coming before council and reading the statement in public. He also stated that a lesson was learned from this experience and they should seek out information from the City’s citizens, in this case to Post 201 as well as Mr. Garry Leister.

BIDS FOR DIGITAL IN CAR CAMERAS FOR POLICE VEHICLES

The following bids were opened for the purchase of digital in car cameras for police vehicles (purchased with grant funds through Rep. Merle Phillips office):

- Watch Guard \$4,823. per unit
- Kustom Signals Inc \$5089.50 per unit
- MPH Industries \$4,545. per unit

The bids will be given to a committee consisting of the Chief of Police, Mr. Apfelbaum and Mr. Geise (City’s IT contractor) for review. Mayor Woodring moved to approve the bid as deemed appropriate by the committee after review and authorize him to sign all documents. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

HARB APPROVAL

The following issues were brought forward to council for approval from the HARB:

| | 1 st | 2 nd | Vote |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 349 Market St (Peters Appliance) | Walberg | Eister | Unanimous |
| 265 S. Second St | Walberg | Eister | Unanimous |
| 235 Chestnut St | Walberg | Eister | Unanimous |
| 430 Chestnut St | Walberg | Woodring | Unanimous |

JUNE EXPENDITURES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay the expenditures as reported in the amount of \$52,645.67. Second Troup. Unanimous vote.

PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS LICENSE FEE

Councilman Shipman explained that he has been looking at some different ways to approach restructuring this ordinance. He does not feel it would be legal to charge the tax to different classes of professionals but rather provide exemptions if income is under a certain level. Proof of income would be required to be deemed exempt. Group discussion was held and more details will be available at the next council meeting. Anyone in business that already pays a mercantile tax or license fee would not be included in this tax because they already pay that tax.

COMPREHENSIVE/STRATEGIC PLAN

Mayor Woodring announced that the City, in conjunction with SEDA-COG and DCED, has acquired a grant to fund a Comprehensive/Strategic Plan for the City. It would be a short-term plan, possibly for 5 years providing a blue print of where the City wants to be in 5 years.

LAKE AUGUSTA STUDY

Mayor Woodring met with the county commissioners and representatives from SEDA-COG who want to put together a Task Force to look at the area of Lake Augusta to see what the area has to offer the public. Few people know that in 2008 the Olympic trials for sculling were held on Lake Augusta. It is purported to be the best waters in PA for sculling.

COPS GRANT

The City applied to the COPS Grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for 3 new police officers. It is not known at this time whether the City will be funded for all 3 or a portion thereof, or none. At this time an eligibility list is being formed which will include a written exam, physical agility test and oral exam. The list will be good for 1 year.

Mr. Scott Johnson asked if more officers were hired would they have to live in City limits. Mayor Woodring answered that it is councils hope that they would, however, the police contract is still in negotiations.

BLIGHT PROPERTIES

Mayor Woodring said there was an article in the newspaper that the county requested \$4.45 million in state funds and has been denied that funding for a project to refurbish abandoned properties in Shamokin, Mt. Carmel and Coal Township. Mayor Woodring wondered why other municipalities were not included with this project. He will schedule an appointment with one of the commissioners to discuss this issue.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

None.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk