

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
August 26, 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
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings
Kevin Troup, Director of Public Works
Joseph J. Bartello, III, Director of Public Safety

Other City officials in attendance:

Brad Hare, Police Officer
Gary Heckman, Police Officer
Chris Blasé, Police Officer
Cheryl Delsite, Adm. Asst.

There were thirty (30) visitors present.

Audience Comments on Agenda Items

There were no comments from the audience.

Mayor Persing thanked the River Festival committee for their work on the event. He said it was a great event and brought a lot of people into the city.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Redevelopment Authority Update

Mayor Persing reported Julia Street and North River Avenue will be coming up for auction in a couple of weeks. Wolverton Street will also be auctioned off at a later date. The auctions will be advertised in the paper. A list of interested parties has been developed and they will be contacted as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Wolverton Street Project

Councilman Eister informed council of a change order for the inspection fees for the Wolverton Street project. The reason for this change is the engineers missed several items when they designed the project and there is a problem with some cracks that will be cut out. The change amounts to \$2,966.39. There will be additional engineering costs in the next phase of the project. This change order is only for the extra inspection work that has to be done because of the engineering errors.

This should take care of these issues. There will be some additional changes that will need to be addressed at a future council meeting. He will be getting a break out of these changes and the costs associated with them. Some of the costs will be paid by the city and some will be paid by the Municipal Authority.

Councilman Eister made a motion to accept the change order. Kevin Troup seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval to pay Invoices

Councilman Todd Snyder made a motion to pay the invoices totaling \$115,374.77 from the general fund and \$112.05 from the liquid fuels fund. Councilman Eister seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

Eugene Heller has heard there is going to be a project done on Chestnut Street and asked what was being proposed. His concern is any changes to the street may contribute to the existing water issues. Councilman Troup said currently the project is to replace all the catch basins from Front Street to 10th Street on Chestnut Street. The street will be milled down and using an overlay that is rolled and becomes like cement or using asphalt. Right now the city is reviewing the reports from different state agencies. Councilman Troup said this project may take some of the water problems away because of the new catch basins. This project will not take place until April or May of next year. Councilman Troup said the Municipal Authority is working on the storm water issues in the city.

Councilman Eister asked Mr. Heller as a property owner would he be willing to pay some of the costs associated with the improvements. Mr. Heller said he wouldn't mind paying a portion of the cost but not the whole thing. But he is concerned that if the water issue isn't addressed, it will cause problems with his foundation.

Bob Werline complemented the crew that demolished 1027 Keller Street. He said they did a great job.

Gordon Lamb had questions on an August 4th article in The Daily Item and would like to know how much a few dollars is. He said he has figures that show it is \$39,000 over three years and asked if it was acceptable. He said the figures were taken from the city's revenue and expenditure report. Councilman Eister said no, it wasn't acceptable but it also wasn't accurate. There were man hours counted that should not have been counted. Councilman Snyder said that could be the case but the figures were accurate over the 3 year period.

Mr. Lamb stated that in the proposed budget by Mr. Snyder it showed the snack bar being phased out. But that budget was not passed. The budget that was passed had the snack bar back in it with a projected loss of \$15,000. Mr. Lamb wants to know why it was put back if it is losing money. Councilman Snyder said that was correct and that was the reason he did not vote for that budget. Councilman Eister stated the report is not accurate and the city advertised for someone to take the snack bar over and no one including Mr. Lamb came forward. Councilman Eister said they have the option of shutting the snack bar down as well as the pool which he feels Mr. Lamb wants. Mr. Lamb stated he didn't want the pool shut down, just the snack bar since it was losing so much money. Councilman Eister stated Mr. Lamb could volunteer his time to work in the snack bar to help reduce the labor costs. Mr. Lamb declined to volunteer.

Mayor Persing said the city was not successful in getting an outside vendor to run it. Councilman Snyder if the city actually advertised it and Councilman Eister responded yes. Councilman Bartello said he doesn't recall any discussion and asked Councilman Eister to get him the minutes on it. Councilman Eister responded Mr. Bartello was there and there was a discussion about raising the price of the candy bars after Mr. Bartello and Mr. Lamb were at the snack bar and Mr. Bartello requested the prices be raised. Mr. Bartello said no one informed him of that action. Councilman Eister invited Mr. Bartello to volunteer his time at the snack bar as well. Councilman Bartello declined and said to close it down because there are vending machines there. Mayor Persing said it would be discussed at budget time again.

Regina Russell asked if the council would consider making an ordinance that the tenants would have to abide by in the city. She feels that the home owners have a lot of responsibility that they must do for their properties and tenants if they have any. She feels the properties that look bad to her are rental properties. She said a lot of these properties have baby carriages, plants, trash, furniture and other items setting around that make the area look bad. She said there are tenants near her that she has to clean up after as well as some of the high school students. She would like to have the tenants held responsible for the appearance of the property.

Mr. Bartello responded there is a property maintenance ordinance that holds the landlord responsible for his property and tenants. Ms. Russell feels some landlords don't know

unless the city makes the landlord responsible for inspecting their property. She said Section 8 housing has someone who comes around at least yearly to make sure the house is kept and the children are fed well. Mayor Persing said a lot of that is already covered under the law. She would like to know how to have it enforced. Does she need to keep calling or posting pictures and videos? She is not trying to embarrass or put anyone on the spot but she would like to see some results from her complaints.

Councilman Troup informed Ms. Russell that a new employee was transferred to the Code Office last Thursday and his job will be to handle complaints about trash, garbage, high grass and things of that nature. These complaints will be his main responsibility. He will be working afternoon, evening and weekends on these complaints and to watch for people doing work without permits. His name is T.J. Hertzog.

Mr. Bartello questioned if this position was advertised and if council voted on it. Councilman Troup said it was a transfer from one department to another and did not need to be brought before council.

Gene Swanger asked if there wasn't something in the ordinances about properties that receive three or more code complaints that council could declare it a nuisance property. He asked if the property owner loses his rental permits. Mayor Persing said they can. Mr. Swanger said he is having an issue with 120-122 N 12th Street. He said at one point it was condemned then cleaned up, inspected and then rented again. The mayor asked him to check out the Redevelopment Authority list to see if the property is on it. If it is not, please call the City Clerk's office to have it put on the list.

Mr. Swanger feels if council was made aware of these problem properties and voted to place them on the nuisance list; it would keep the pressure on the landlords. Mayor Persing stated some times the property owner walks away and the Redevelopment Authority works on acquiring those properties.

Mayor Persing will ask the Code Office for an updated list of what properties are being fined.

Mr. Swanger asked if there is a double house and the owner lives on one side and rents the other but the owner moves out. If they move a family member in are they required to get a rental permit for that side? Does the property have to be re inspected? Mayor Persing said it depends if they are renting it. If they are not charging the family member rent then no and no inspection because it is owner occupied. But if the family member is paying rent then yes they have to get a permit. Councilman Troup said he has the same situation next to him. He said it is a loophole. The Code Office can inspect the outside of the home but cannot enter the home because it is considered owner occupied. Councilman Troup said a lot of places have a one strike ordinance and the problem tenants will move to the places that do not have an ordinance like that. He said the city has to keep up with it.

Julie Brosius asked if 844-846 Edison Avenue was added to the list. She said they have no idea on how to cut or trim the grass. She said they cut around the toys in the yard. She also said they do not remove their trash. When they do take it out, it is in the contractor size bags. She said there are no garbage cans around the property.

Ms. Brosius asked Councilman Troup about a property on Amy Street. She said there have not been any changes to the property. Councilman Troup said to get the information from the Code Office and they will call her with the information.

Regina Russell said she knows there is an ordinance that states if you collect \$1 in rent you need a permit for occupancy and that the city can't prove if family members are paying the landlord rent but she would like to know if there is any way the taxes can be checked to see if they are claiming that they are paying rent. Councilman Snyder said no because that would be a federal filing.

Outdoor Burning

Mayor Persing asked if there was any discussion regarding the burning ordinance. The vote on the ordinance would not take place until the September 9th meeting. There were no comments from the audience. However Mr. Bartello said he received a comment from someone on Face Book. He said this person was in favor of the fire pits until her neighbor got one. Now she is against it because now all her belongs smell like campfire and she doesn't want to live that way. She also believes 10 feet is way too close. Her neighbor's pit is 36 feet away from her house. Mr. Bartello did not offer this person's name for the record and the person did not attend the meeting.

Music in Cameron Park

Mayor Persing mentioned Past Country will be playing in Cameron Park on August 27th from 6 to 8 pm. Timothy's Burden will be playing on September 3rd. They will be hosting Bike Night then as well.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl E. Delsite