

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
August 12, 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
Joseph J. Bartello, III, Director of Public Safety
Kevin E. Troup, Director of Public Works
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Bordner, Public Works Supervisor
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were thirty-three (33) visitors present.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Minutes of 5/13/13, 6/10/13, 6/24/13, 7/8/13 and 7/22/13 and the 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 Eister. Councilman Bartello asked if the minutes could be sent to council members before the next meeting and Ms. Specht answered they usually are but she was behind doing other things the last few months and normally they aren't that late. Second – Troup. Yes – Snyder, Troup, Eister, Persing. No – Bartello. Motion carried. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Jerome Alex said he thought the fire chiefs should be added to paragraph i. and a. because if someone calls the fire department for outdoor burning the police and code personnel may not show up to the call. Mayor Persing said it was discussed but they weren't sure how it should be added – such as the fire department or just the chiefs. There is time between the 2 readings to address that issue.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Jess Runkle announced that this weekend is River Festival, beginning Thursday night with the Valley's Got Talent competition at the Shikellamy High School, Friday at noon the festival begins and runs through Saturday at 6 pm. A new event will be the Lake Augusta Wine and Brew Festival scheduled for Riverfront on September 21st. Tickets are on sale now at Brewer's Outlet for \$25. There are over 200 likes on Facebook for the new event. They have submitted a Baer paint grant which would give them 20 gallons of paint to paint the Custom Metal Coatings building. The NPP Tax Credit Program application has been submitted with 2 committed partners. They are waiting to hear about the streetscape application submitted for the 1200 block of Market St. but the missing piece is a letter to be signed by the mayor that states the council supports shrinking the size of the project to meet the available funding. Ms. Meghan Beck stated that there should be a response from the Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) by the end of the month. A letter of support was received from Senator Gordner's office. The zoning hearing for the parking issue at the Albright Church is scheduled for Tuesday 8-13. They are looking for a 3rd partner for that program. A Resolution to waive the open container ordinance is on the agenda. Mayor Persing asked if everyone was ready for the River Festival and Ms. Beck said they are.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Mayor Persing said they sold 2 vacant properties at the last auction. In the 2nd week of September there will be another auction. There will be updates on the website to show the properties the RDA is working on and if anyone thinks a property should be looked at in their neighborhood they can let Cheryl know. This project has made a big impact on the City in the neighborhoods. There were 13

people at the 7th St. property to bid and in the past no one showed up to bid. This also puts the properties back on the tax roles.

OPEN BIDS FOR POLICE PISTOLS AND AMMUNITION

The following bids were opened:

Lot 1 (pistols) SPOA \$5,000 Officer Store \$4,590
Lot 2 (ammo) Griscavage \$586. Officer Store \$566.
Lot 3 (ammo) Officer Store \$1,140.
Lot 4 no (Simunition/Training) no bid received

The reserve was met for all the bids. There was a clarification on the reserve for Lot 3 but all bids were at reserve or higher. Mayor Persing moved to accept the apparent high bid for all 3 lots based on review by the city solicitor. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

1ST READING/OUTDOOR BURNING

Mayor Persing explained there was an addition to Chapter 53 Air Pollution that will account for burning for cooking and entertainment purposes. Burning of refuse and garbage is already covered and not allowed. This change allows the police department and code office to enforce the ordinance. If there is a way to get the fire department to also enforce it they will be added. Councilman Bartello asked if this is completely replacing the current Chapter 53 or an add on. Mayor Persing said everything in 53 will stay and this change will be renumbered after changes are made. Councilman Bartello said he thinks under Open Burning Regulations paragraph d. “or any combustible materials” should be added. Mr. Fred Campbell asked what an outdoor fire pit is. Mayor Persing said there is a house on Line St. and there is a brick patio with a pit dug in. Councilman Bartello said the outdoor ones made of stone are not made by a manufacturer and should that be added. Councilman Bartello said there are too many gray areas. He said under exceptions the definitions could be added to the old ordinance and a resolution could have been done. Councilman Eister said something should be passed at this meeting and then changes can be made prior to the 2nd reading. Councilman Snyder said stone and brick are accepted materials for fire pits. Councilman Bartello said it doesn’t address homemade pits. Mayor Persing said it doesn’t say you can’t have a homemade pit as long as it is covered with mesh and is not creating a nuisance. Councilman Bartello said then a burn barrel covered with mesh is ok. Mayor Persing said no one would have a burn barrel to burn wood in and no one can burn garbage or refuse. Councilman Bartello said who is going to say what the ashes in it are. Mr. Gene Swanger asked if 10’ is far enough away from combustible materials like a lawn mower or gas can. Mayor Persing answered that the lawn mower may only be there one day a year and it is probably unenforceable unless someone calls in a complaint. He said it is back to commonsense. Mr. Swanger said some yards are small and the one beside him has lawn mowers, garbage cans, dry brush and wood in it. Councilman Snyder said maybe a permit should be issued and a safety list must be checked off so everyone knows what is allowed. Mr. Swanger asked if council is thinking about a permit and Mayor Persing answered it was included in other ordinances but the code office is taxed enough now and he didn’t think it was necessary. Councilman Bartello said all fires should be 10’ away from their neighbor’s property. Councilman Eister said that would exclude half the people in Sunbury. Councilman Bartello said a neighbor might want to put something on their fence but can’t because the neighbor has a fire pit close to the fence. Councilman Snyder said the mayor is right in getting the ball rolling and it is a good start. The items discussed are small and can be added before the next reading. Mr. Jerome Alex said the definition of pits in the sample ordinance he gave is more specific toward pits made of brick and stone. Many of the things they have been discussing are included in the description. Mr. David Whipple said a lot of the homes are built next to one another and most people would not be able to have a fire pit in the yard because they would not be 10’ wide. Mr. Rhoads asked why not use the side yard set backs that are currently in the ordinances. Councilman Snyder said the perimeter must be protected so if someone does not have 10’ in their yard for a fire pit they can’t have one. Anything that is already in would be grandfathered. Mr. Bob Werline asked if the fire pit was going to be for regulation fire pits and not a few cinderblocks put together for someone to start a fire in. Mayor Persing answered yes. Mr. Dale Henry said he also thinks a permit process is needed that specifically explains the dos and don’ts. Right now he doesn’t think this will be enforceable. He also thinks the Fire Chiefs staff should be added, not fire personnel in general. Councilman Eister moved to adopt the amendment to Chapter 53 Air Pollution as shown with changes as necessary before the 2nd reading. Second – Troup. Yes – Eister, Persing, Snyder, Troup. No – Bartello. Motion carried.

POLICE PENSION RESOLUTION

Mayor Persing moved to pass the Resolution in regard to adopting the market value of assets as the actuarial value of assets effective January 1, 2013 (see attached). Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

WAIVE OPEN CONTAINER RESOLUTION

Councilman Eister moved to pass the Resolution to allow open containers during the Wine and Brew Festival on September 21st from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm (see attached). Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

HARB APPROVAL

Councilman Troup moved to approve the request by HARB for 51 S. 4th St to replace front sidewalk, install a handicap ramp and side fire escape. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. This has also passed the Zoning Hearing Board.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$302,445.65 from the General Fund and \$5,062.30 from Liquid Fuels. There are several large invoices paid from the Wolverton St. PCTI project and insurances from the general fund. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

PHASE II MARKET ST

Mayor Persing moved to approve making the project area smaller for the Phase II Market St. Streetscape project and to authorize the Mayor to sign the documents. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Becky Newberry said there are large potholes between 4th St and Front St. in the alleys and asked if it would be possible to get them repaired. Councilman Troup told her to give the list to Mr. Bordner and when they get hot patch he will see that they are repaired. She also said there is a manhole cover that is low at 2nd & Walnut St. If there is another vehicle coming you have to hit it. Councilman Troup said it is either gas or water and it's been like that for years. Councilman Troup said they would check it out.

Mayor Persing thanked Ms. Connie Beegle for a spectacular National Night Out. He said he thinks it is the biggest one yet and a carnival in itself. Ms. Beegle said she wanted to thank everyone with the City that helped her out. The next National Night Out is August 5, 2014. Lawrence Henry beat Mayor Persing in donations for the dunk tank.

Councilman Troup said the neighborhood picnic on the hill was well attended and everyone that attended had a good time. He said he hoped other areas of the city would do the same to meet their neighbors.

Mr. Gordon Lamb asked where the money for the sale of the pistols and ammunition would go. Mayor Persing explained there is a line item in the budget for income in the amount of \$4,500 in the police budget. Mr. Lamb said he has an issue with drug dealers in his neighborhood and he is told the police don't work drugs because there is no overtime available. He said that is not acceptable to him. He asked if the police would get overtime to work it. Mayor Persing explained the police have a budget for overtime. Mr. Lamb said he is told by the police force they are not getting overtime to take care of the problems so they cannot tackle the crime in Sunbury. Mayor Persing asked why Mr. Lamb thinks they have to have overtime to do drug work. Mayor Persing explained there is more to doing drug work than overtime.

Mr. Bob Werline said the trailer on Miller St is still there. Councilman Troup said they have a plan for it but they have been busy with other things. Councilman Eister said some of the manpower is being used to help install surveillance cameras.

Councilman Snyder thanked Mike Bordner for helping Aaron get cameras installed. He further explained in the next 4-6 weeks all the cameras will be deployed.

Mr. Bob Werline asked if Phillips ever got back to the City regarding the lighting they presented at a council meeting. Councilman Eister said they are still working on that and there will be changes in the cobra head lights first.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Snyder announced the Northumberland County Historical Society has a big project underway with the construction of the Ft. Augusta replica to be reinstalled by the end of this year. The Degenstein Foundation has offered a dollar for dollar matching grant to help fund it. Having the fort back will be a great addition to travel and tourism in the City.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk