

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
September 23, 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
Joseph J. Bartello, III, Director of Public Safety
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
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer and Fire Chief
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-five (25) visitors present.

AUDIENCE COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

1050-1052 MILLER ST SUB-DIVISION

Mr. Rhoads explained final approval is due for the minor sub-division at the above named address. It is a 2-family attached dwelling and is being changed to 2-single family attached dwellings. It has been approved by Northumberland County Planning, City Engineer, Sunbury Municipal Authority and City Planning Commission. Councilman Troup moved to accept the sub-division as presented. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

PA DOT ROAD CLOSURE/SHIKELLAMY SCHOOL DISTRICT 5K-10K

Ms. Tara Michaels explained she coordinates road races and triathlons. She is asking for city permission to use city roads for the Shikellamy soccer team to have a 5k/10k run/walk. The race will start and finish at the high school. She developed the route with Chief Mazzeo. She has provided insurance for the event. Councilman Troup asked if the route was to be closed during the run. Ms. Michaels said that would be great but she thinks there will be 100-150 participants. For a brief time traffic on Market St. will be held but she doesn't feel there will be a need to stop traffic. There will be volunteers working the course. Councilman Bartello said they would be holding up traffic like a poker run. Councilman Eister said it is a state highway and would she have all PA DOT permits. Ms. Michaels answered yes. Councilman Troup asked Chief Mazzeo if he saw a problem with holding traffic on Market St. Chief Mazzeo answered he spoke to Cheryl Reitz from the fire police and if approved, she will coordinate with Ms. Michaels. There may be an issue with PA DOT because their approval process is involved. Ms. Michaels said she thought traffic would only have to be held for about 10 minutes. Councilman Eister asked if extra police would be brought in and Chief Mazzeo answered no that typically for events like this he will come out but usually the fire police deal with it. Councilman Troup moved to approve the use of city streets for the 5k/10k run/walk on October 19th. Second – Persing. Unanimous vote.

HOME GRANT CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Mr. Mike Fisher from SEDA-COG said he was offering the professional services agreement for council to consider to administer another round of HOME grants for owner-occupied homes. The grant is \$500,000. Since SEDA-COG became involved with this program the City has done over \$800,000 in rehab to 25 homes. He hopes to be able to do another 12-15 homes with the current grant. Mr. Tim Brickley explained the grant will be used in wards 2, 4, 6 and 9. Previous grants targeted wards 3, 5 and 9. It is a lengthy process to select wards because demographic studies must be done to see how many home-owners are in the area, how many are income eligible and also what else is the city doing in the wards. The feds like to focus in a narrow target area but they were fortunate they didn't cut any of the requested wards off for this grant round. There is a process to go through to see if the home-owner is eligible. The administrative fee is about 16% of the total grant based upon how many units are rehabbed. Mayor Persing said no one on council saw the proposal but since SEDA-COG has been administering it for several years it will be run the same way. Mayor Persing moved to accept the professional services agreement as presented. Second – Eister. Yes – Eister, Persing, Troup. No – Bartello. Motion carried.

RFP FOR LINE OF CREDIT/REPAIR TO WPA WALL

Councilman Eister said they have been in touch with Northumberland National Bank. There is a line of credit that has not been used for the Riverfront Project. The WPA wall repairs are Phase 3 of the project. The blow-out occurred during the flooding in 2011. The line of credit would be used to pay the bills and then the line of credit would be paid back with the funding being secured for the project. He said Councilman Snyder spoke with Tom Crissinger at North'd National Bank and in order not to mix up the projects, the loan will be used. Councilman Bartello asked which direction they were going with this. Would it be the money they already have - \$30,000. He said he is not sold on the Redi-rock. He was looking at it and it looked like it was pushing at the tree, coming away from the ground. Councilman Eister said the Redi-rock does not move. Councilman Bartello said it would take 100 years of blow-outs to pay for the \$400,000 project. Councilman Eister said the estimate is not \$400,000. The lineal foot for the project has been changed to 420 so the estimate is closer to \$275,000. Councilman Bartello said that is 10X more than the other way of fixing it. Councilman Eister said it blew out in 1997 and was repaired. He doesn't think it should be fixed every few years. Councilman Bartello said rather than finance \$300,000 – they already financed \$100,000 to buy empty lots last year. Councilman Eister said that in the spring it was so critical to get it fixed according to Ms. Julie Broschious that the city would flood. Councilman Bartello said yes to fix it he said the Army Corps of Engineers recommended that. Councilman Eister moved to use the line of credit at the Northumberland National Bank for the repairs to the WPA wall. Second – Troup. Yes – Persing, Troup, Eister. No – Bartello. Motion carried.

ALCOHOL WAIVER FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE/AMERICUS HOSE COMPANY

Councilman Troup said the Americus Hose Company needs permission to use their beer cart at the New Year's Eve celebration. The PLCB needs the municipal ok before they will issue the permit. Councilman Troup moved to issue a letter to the PLCB giving permission for the Americus Hose Company to use their beer cart at the New Year's Eve Celebration on December 31st. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Mayor Persing made a motion to pay the invoices on the vouchers payable report totaling \$116,521.29 from the general fund and \$755.01 from the liquid fuels fund. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

PUBLIC NUISANCE/BOARD OF HEALTH

Mayor Persing said there is a list of 7 properties that Mr. Apfelbaum asked the council to designate as public nuisance. Councilman Bartello said he was not familiar with these properties (see attached). He asked if 1031 Packer St. was Harry Hunter's property. Mayor Persing answered no that was purchased by someone in Philadelphia. Councilman Bartello said council does not want that on the nuisance list if he just bought it. Mayor Persing said they would cross 1031 Packer St. off the list. Councilman Eister asked if 152 Bainbridge was one they had discussed and Mr. Rhoads answered yes. No one wants the property and it has been abandoned for many years. Mayor Persing explained that by establishing the list, the Redevelopment Authority can start to move on the properties. If someone is working on any of them they will be removed from the list. Councilman Bartello asked if 1036-1038 Line St was the one with the big tree in the back yard and he thought someone just purchased it. Mr. Rhoads answered yes it is but he is not aware that it was sold. Mayor Persing moved to pass the Resolution declaring the 6 properties a public nuisance as listed. Second – Eister. Yes – Eister, Persing, Troup. No – Bartello. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Meghan Beck said the Old Town Committee asked her to bring before council 2 requests. 1 is to change the street sweeping time in the business district so patrons and employees did not receive tickets. Councilman Troup said the businesses are only a few feet from a parking lot and all the signs and the street sweeper route and the police dept. would have to be changed for a few businesses. Councilman Bartello asked what time the street sweeper goes by and Councilman Troup answered around 2 am. Mr. Drew Bingaman said at the last meeting Councilman Troup said it was not a street sweeping ordinance but a parking ordinance. Councilman Troup said a few years ago Market St street sweeping was changed to a later time to accommodate the businesses. Councilman Troup said the street sweeping season is almost over and he would think about it before April when it starts again. Ms. Beck said some of the people being ticketed are employees because they want to park within eyesight of the door. Councilman Eister said he agrees and the parking ordinance should be looked at to help the businesses.

Ms. Becky Newberry said she lives between Raspberry Ave and the railroad track on S. 4th St. The gas company put new gas lines in and the fill they put in the street is sinking in about 4". Her neighbor fell on the street because of it. They have contacted the gas company to add more fill. Councilman Troup said he would call the gas company. He said he knows they are going to pave that whole street when the project is complete.

Ms. Regina Russell brought some concerns to council that she has. She asked Councilman Bartello how long he has been in office. He answered since 2010. Ms. Russell said this is about the 3rd time she asked why Bartello and Snyder's pictures are not on the website. She said on each page there is a picture of the supervisor and staff and she

feels it is discrimination. Ms. Specht answered they were told to have their picture taken and they didn't do it. They can have a picture taken and it will be put on the website. Ms. Russell said she had questions for Mr. Snyder about the camera grant but she would wait until he is at a meeting to ask him about that. She asked what the achievements of the Redevelopment Authority Board are. Mayor Persing answered they are the ones that are selling the homes at auction and tearing down blight properties. They meet every month and the public is welcome to attend. Mayor Persing said this is the most active board they have had in a while. She asked how much money to date was made from the auctions. Mayor Persing said if he had that information in front of him he could tell her. He said the last auction made about \$33,000. Ms. Russell said it is her understanding that each councilman is to write a written report in respect of the affairs of their department and she asked if they have done that. Mayor Persing asked who the written report was to go to. Ms. Russell said to the mayor. She said they have responsibilities and they are to write a report, it's a law. Councilman Bartello said there are monthly reports turned in by each department. Ms. Russell asked if there is an assessment fee for licenses and dealers or collectors of junk in the city. Ms. Beth Kremer said the Municipal Authority collects it. Councilman Bartello asked Ms. Kremer if the Municipal Authority collects a business license? Ms. Kremer said her office does nothing with trash haulers. Ms. Russell said if someone has a truck that says they are a disposal company, the city does not collect any license fee or mercantile fee. Ms. Kremer said no. Ms. Russell said she read the ordinance for 5 hours. Ms. Russell asked the mayor if Councilman Bartello has committed a crime or been accused of corruption in his position as overseer of the code office. Mayor Persing said he has no idea what she is talking about and he is not answering. She said he had his responsibilities that the voters elected him to office taken away. Mayor Persing said he still has his vote. Ms. Russell said Councilman Troup was in charge of the code office and Councilman Bartello's access to the department was taken away. Councilman Troup said Councilman Bartello has access to the department, he does not to the employees. Ms. Russell said he does not have a key like Councilman Troup and he said he does not have a key to any of the offices. Mayor Persing said his responsibilities to the code office employees were taken away due to personnel issues. Ms. Russell said no one gets fired for that. She said if he did not commit a crime or caught in any act of corruption his responsibility should not have been taken away from him and it was a violation of his civil rights. She said he was not accused of any gross misconduct and what council did was unconstitutional and she still wants to address that and the voters put him in office and they should not have done that. If it was personnel issues, it was another ploy orchestrated to get him out of the way so other council members can do what they want to do as far as issuing permits within the city. Ms. Russell passed out pictures of a property that Councilman Eister owns. Ms. Russell said she has been talking about this property for a long time and complaining that the tenant is allowed to park anything he wants to on this property in front of the garage. She said she has been given excuses as to why he is permitted to do it. Ms. Russell said she has been told he can park it 5' from the curb. She said council members are using 1 ordinance for their benefit. She said there are other ordinances that address that issue. Councilman Eister asked Chief Mazzeo if anything in the photo is illegal. Ms. Russell asked if that (pictures she passed around) enhances anyone's neighborhood. Would they like to live across the street from it? Ms. Russell went on to say in the ordinance for ice and snow removal it addresses the area that is paved or unpaved between the curb line for the lateral lines of a street, highway or roadway and the adjacent properties intended for use of pedestrians. In the pictures it shows the curb and sidewalk and the area where the truck is parked is on public sidewalk and he should not be permitted to park there. Another ordinance (990) that says at any place where signs prohibit parking, parking prohibited in specified places. Ordinance 990 under 2 says that the vehicle cannot stand or park a vehicle in front of a public or private driveway or garage entrance. Councilman Bartello asked what that area is zoned –neighborhood business or R-2? Mr. Rhoads said he does not know off hand.

Mr. Gordon Lamb asked how many lifeguards work at the pool at any given time. Mayor Persing said he does not know. Councilman Eister said it depends how many people are there. He told Mr. Lamb if he wants to have a meeting and go over the numbers he would be more than happy to meet with him. There are lifeguards there when the public is there. As the public goes home, the staff gets decreased. Mr. Lamb said there are lifeguards on duty all the time for 49 hours. Councilman Eister said you have to have lifeguards when you have a swimming pool. Mr. Lamb asked 8 all the time? Councilman Eister explained there are slides, a wading pool and the climbing wall that also require lifeguards. Mr. Lamb said lifeguard wages seems very high to him. Mr. Brad Hare said his son is a lifeguard and there must be so many lifeguards for the kids in the pool and the size of the pool. He said he would rather have more than enough lifeguards for all the kids that swim there than have an accident. Councilman Eister said when staff is not needed they are sent home due to labor costs. Ms. Laurie Johnson said most of the kids go to college and the money is paid back if they have student loans. She said she takes her grandchildren to the pool and would rather have more than enough lifeguards. Councilman Eister said Mr. Ron Pratt runs the program and he is very safety conscious because you don't want to lose a child because of saving a few dollars.

Ms. Beth Kremer explained she is on the board of the Tax Collectors Committee for earned income tax. Last year Berkheimer Associates took over all the earned income tax collections in the county. They are meeting again to see if they can get a better price and customer service. There are several offers from different tax collection agencies they are looking at. After the end of the year someone from the City will have to replace her on the committee. She said Berkheimer Associates does a terrible job and there are no good public relations.

Ms. Regina Russell said the pictures she showed are the least of the worst and she does have more pictures and videos.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Persing said the Wine and Brew Fest was a huge success. A woman from Bloomsburg called him and said it was wonderful. SRI received a note from Selinsgrove about how well organized it was. The committee members should be commended: Chairperson Tonya Ditty, Zach Stotter, Dan Welker, Levi Strouse, Chris Wertman, Natalie Marshalek, Meghan Beck, Cody Moyer and Emily Robinson.

Wolverton St. will be closed for paving from September 30th to October 4th from 7 am to 5 pm. A detour will be in place and the road will open around 5 pm each day.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk