

CITY COUNCIL  
Sunbury PA 17801  
August 23, 2010  
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 R. Kremer, City Treasurer  
Lisa J. Martina, City Controller  
Michael M. Apfelbaum, City Solicitor  
Michael Rhoads, Property Maintenance Officer  
Stephen A. Mazzeo, Chief of Police  
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-three (23) visitors present.

#### **RIVERFRONT PROJECT UPDATE**

Councilman Eister moved to pay Invoice #4 to Kinsley Construction for Phase I of the Riverfront Project in the amount of \$142,564.27. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

#### **FIREMAN'S MEMORIAL SERVICE AND PARADE**

Councilman Troup moved to approve the Special Event Permit for the Fireman's Memorial Service and Parade scheduled for October 10th, as required by PA DOT. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

#### **EMPLOYEE RAISE/BRENDA FOGELMAN**

Councilman Snyder moved to give a merit increase to Brenda Fogelman, a clerk in the treasurer's office in the amount of \$1. per hour for 40 hours per week. Mayor Persing asked if that was in the budget and Councilman Snyder answered yes. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. A discussion was held regarding the source of pay for the treasurer and employees in that office which includes the City, School District and County.

#### **APPOINTMENT TO REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD**

Councilman Eister moved to fill the final vacancy on the Redevelopment Authority Board by Ryan Unger. Mayor Persing asked if the other council members had any other names to nominate and no one did. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

#### **REVIEW COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mayor Persing explained that he wanted to review the responsibilities of the council members so the public knows who to contact if they have questions regarding day-to-day events or special projects:

Mayor Persing will be responsible for the "City Model" and reactivating the Redevelopment Authority Board

Councilman Eister is responsible for the Riverfront Project and Park & Recreation

Councilman Snyder has been restructuring the finance department

Councilman Bartello is with public safety and the code office

Councilman Troup is public works and paving should begin soon. Councilman Troup added that paving will begin in September. Leaf pick-up will be in November. They have not hot-patched because of other projects occurring in the summer but they will be hot-patching in September as well.

#### **CODE OFFICE RENTAL INSPECTION PROGRAM RESTRUCTURING**

Councilman Bartello explained that he has had discussions with BIU (the City's 3<sup>rd</sup> party inspection firm for commercial buildings) and he feels they can save a substantial amount of money by performing the rental inspections for the City. Councilman Bartello said he calculated it costs \$162 per inspection and BIU can do it for \$30, which would save over \$50,000 per year. Councilman Troup asked how that calculation was made and it was answered that he added all items in the code office budget. BIU will do all 2500 inspections each year. Councilman Troup asked who would take care of the nuisance calls and the answer was he would have to hire \$10 per hour people to check complaints. Councilman Eister asked for a break out of all expenses because if \$10 per hour people were hired vehicle expenses would then have to be figured back in. Councilman Bartello said the main reason he would like to contract with BIU is because they can do all 2500 inspections so he can enforce the ordinances which he cannot do now. Mr. John Hudack from BIU stated that his company does the same type of inspection for the City of Erie. Their fees are different from what Sunbury's would be. Second inspections are no fee and the 3<sup>rd</sup> inspection would be \$35. He said in the areas where they do inspections the "City" sends out notices and billing and create the appointments. Councilman Troup asked how many inspections the City was behind and Mr. Rhoads estimated they have approximately 100 inspections for this year and 550 for re-inspections. They were 1500 inspections behind when the code officers started the program to catch up on inspections. Councilman Bartello feels they are 800 inspections behind. Councilman Bartello said 2500 inspections per year cannot be done by 2 code officers. Councilman Snyder said having the 2500 inspections completed per year would offer consistency but there are 2 valued personnel members that would need assistance in the transition if this plan were adopted. He asked Mr. Hudack if the company hires locally and the answer is yes all their inspectors are local wherever they are located. The office is based in Philadelphia. They cover 11 counties. Mr. Hudack said they take care of hiring inspectors. Councilman Troup said he tried to contract out grass cutting and it did not work because it ended up being more expensive than he anticipated. He would like to see figures broken down in writing to see the savings. Councilman Snyder asked if Mr. Hudack would prepare a proposal for council as to the pros and cons showing why this would be more effective and how the employees would be accounted for. Mr. Hudack answered yes he would. They would still need office space and the clerk would still be employed by the City.

### **AP CHECK RUN APPROVAL**

Councilman Snyder distributed an Open Invoice Report to each council member to review for approval by council in the amount of \$161,311.45 and moved for that approval. He stated that prior to this council members did not have the opportunity to review the detail for the bills they were approving. Councilman Eister asked for the report prior to the council meeting and Councilman Snyder said they are trying to meet that goal. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

### **AUDIENCE COMMENT**

Mr. Robert Miller explained that he has a list of questions from members of the Senior Circle Advisory Committee at the Sunbury Community Hospital:

1. Flooding at Market & Front St – Councilman Troup answered they just put a new catch drain in and that problem should be abated.
2. They do not like the lights in the Riverfront area of Front St. because they do not go with the décor of the City – Councilman Eister asked them to hold their judgment until they see them lit.
3. What is being done with the lights that have been removed from Front St.? Councilman Eister answered they are in storage at this time and will be used as part of the Elm St. Improvement Project.
4. Flooding on new walkway across from Riverfront Apartments on Front St. – Councilman Eister said this situation is being addressed. The grade is wrong and has to be corrected.
5. No handicap access from Church St. to Bainbridge St. in the Riverfront Project area – Councilman Eister answered that the handicap access is where PA DOT required and approved them. PA DOT removed some of them because the grade is wrong in those areas.
6. When events are scheduled for Cameron Park (i.e. music in the park) where are restrooms located? At this time there are no provisions. Councilman Eister explained that when city hall restrooms are left open for events they are usually trashed (as they are now from River Festival).
7. When will the curbs at 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> St. be completed – it is dangerous at those intersections now? Councilman Eister explained that is a PA DOT project and there was an error in some of the parts that were ordered for the new lights so the intersections will remain as they are until the correct parts arrive which will not be until mid-October.
8. The Welcome Sign – does the City owe \$20,000 for the \$50,000 sign? Councilman Eister explained that it is not a \$50,000 sign. This is an SRI/SPARC project and they have received several grants for the project as well as pledged CDBG funds through the City. The City itself does not have any funds in the project. Most of the project is being completed by Triangle Tech on a volunteer basis and the City is donating equipment to be used.

Mr. Gene Swanger of 12<sup>th</sup> St. presented several pictures with addresses of properties in his neighborhood that he feels need to be brought up to code. He finds it depressing with all the

beautification work going on in Front St and Market St. and he feels their area is being neglected. He is not knocking the code enforcement because he doesn't feel 2 people can straighten the problem out. It is not fair for property owners that improve their property then have filthy houses next to them. Mayor Persing said he agrees and has said this is when government should get involved. Most of the items in the pictures can be cleaned-up fairly easy and at little cost. A lot of these properties are owner occupied, not rental units. He agrees that fines should be issued to make them take notice that things are happening in Sunbury and this will not be tolerated. Councilman Snyder said at an earlier meeting it was decided that public meetings should be held to address some of these same issues. Mayor Persing assured Mr. Swanger that Councilman Bartello would address the issues he brought forth today. Ms. Kremer said there are a lot of people out of work and they may not necessarily be able to afford to fix their property. Councilman Eister said there were 2 people in the code office that were to patrol and find this type of ordinance infraction but they were let go and no one was re-hired to do it. A property that Mr. Swanger complained about previously was fixed up by the owner however the tenants that live there now have a padlock on the basement doors and there is garbage in the basement so the code office was unable to inspect that area. Mr. Swanger also asked Chief Mazzeo why people are allowed to loiter at Edison Plaza on Market St. Chief Mazzeo answered that when the police see them, they do chase them away. If the police are busy they cannot take the time to do that if they are rushing to a call. Also, the bus stop is a detriment for many reasons, including loitering at Edison Plaza.

Mr. Norman Gessner asked about the solution for the lighting problems in the Hill area that Mr. Ken Romberger had previously given to Councilman Troup. That has been handled by Mr. Graybill in conjunction with the Elm St. project. He also said one of the properties in the pictures Mr. Swanger gave council is an abandoned property near his home. Mr. Gessner picked up litter near the railroad tracks and filled a bag and there is a lot of litter in every neighborhood. He finds soda bottles and other trash in his yard which should also be addressed. Mr. Gessner spoke about the HOME program but he is sure with some of the properties, it would be too expensive because they are in such bad condition.

Mr. John Supsic said he knows people from the Market House are still complaining about the vendors set-up in front of the Market House. He asked if it was true they could stay where they are for the rest of this year and then next year they would move. He said he had some ideas to bring more people downtown which include a fall flea market on Friday and Saturday. Also, flyers could be sent out to the businesses in downtown so they know the curb market is still there. Mayor Persing said a flea market is one of the events council talked about to get people downtown. The entire curb market will have to move because when the Rte 61 Corridor project is complete, several parking spaces will be removed. Councilman Bartello said that to clarify, the ordinance states that if anything is being sold other than farm produce or vegetables, a transient merchant permit should be obtained. There is an exclusion for farmers to sell their wares. Ms. Kremer said some of the items being sold are made by the vendor that is selling produce and they are not going to ask them not to sell those items. Mayor Persing explained the transient merchant license is \$500 to discourage vendors from bringing in items and parking on Market St and selling the same items the merchants sell in their businesses.

Councilman Eister thanked Fred Sheller and Cheryl Delsite of the River Festival Committee for the successful fair held August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. He announced that the dedication for the new Riverfront area will take place next year during River Festival and that committee will be in charge of the festivities. A discussion was held about the use of Stroh Alley.

Mr. Fred Campbell suggested having a New Year's Eve event in downtown Sunbury.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Persing asked council members to have their departmental article for the newsletter to Terry by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mayor Persing announced that a Resource Fair to inform the youth of the City what activities are available to participate in throughout the year and to promote family values will be held October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am to 12 noon in Cameron Park. Vendors are welcome and needed. A bicycle will be raffled and refreshments will be served. He also said that would be a good time to start a flea market in Stroh Alley for the fall. More will be discussed about this at the next meeting. He does not want to compete with the Market House, but bring people to downtown to enhance the Market House and curb market business.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht  
City Clerk