

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Sunbury, PA
March 25, 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** **by telephone at 6:25 pm**
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Lisa Martina, City Controller
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were twenty-three (23) members of the public present.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Mayor Persing said the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) will meet next week to get an updated blight property list together. There are 6 new properties at this time. Mayor Persing explained he wanted to go to a Phase 2 for the RDA. His idea of working with the code office was unsuccessful. The RDA does not want to keep tearing down buildings. They do want to take care of the properties that people just walk away from and leave to deteriorate. Some of the properties could be sold and fixed up because they aren't as bad as others. Phase 2 would include this type of property. He would like to see a more proactive effort in addressing properties and trying to save them from reaching the blight guidelines which leads to demolition and City acquisition. This will be enforced through the RDA and will be under the regulations within the code office. Mayor explained the general outline of cooperation which is:

1. The City's Redevelopment Authority, through the help of the Mayor's office, will create a listing of every property within the City of Sunbury and maintain that listing
2. There will be a walk-by inspection of every property on the list
3. Documentation of all major blight issues only will be noted. This will be a city-wide listing and a city-wide enforcement effort
4. Will correspond with property owners through letters, written deadlines and fines if needed
5. The issues noted will be as follows but not limited to:
 - a. Bad sidewalks
 - b. Unsafe structures on the property (garage or shed)
 - c. Outside maintenance issues (i.e. homes with painted façade peeling away)
 - d. Abandoned properties that are not on the Redevelopment Authority Blight List
 - e. Need of major clean-up and removal of rubbish, garbage, used tires, etc.
 - f. Enforcement of Chapter 130 Property Maintenance of *The Code of the City of Sunbury*

Mayor Persing said the goal is to enlarge what the RDA has been able to do. He feels that 100 homes fixed up by 2022 is possible. Someone applied to build a new home on Walnut St so that makes 2 new homes in a year. He took some photos of a few places in Sunbury that can be addressed easily. Cheryl Delsite will be doing documentation. He said it is important to understand that the City wants to work with anyone that needs help but we have to be firm and move forward. Councilman Bartello asked when the Redevelopment Authority meeting is and Mayor Persing answered on Thursday at 4:00 pm. Councilman Bartello said most of this is what the code office does now. Mayor Persing said that is what they are supposed to do.

HIRE METER ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Mayor Persing moved to hire Mr. Todd Harvey for the open meter enforcement officer position at \$9.00/hour for 60 days probation and then \$10.00/hour after that. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

At this time Councilman Troup was contacted by telephone.

HIRE PART-TIME CODE OFFICER

Councilman Bartello moved to hire Ms. Heather Kelly as a code compliance officer. He said she has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. It will be a part-time position and she will be working with Linda to do data entry with the new program at first. She will also be working with complaints and helping Joe Swope with complaints. She will also be investigating vacant homes and following up with that. Councilman Eister asked if this was the hire that they were supposed to be reviewing applications together. Councilman Bartello said yes it has been 2 months and he needs someone in the office now. He said he can hire more later. Councilman Eister said they were supposed to review the top 6 applications. Councilman Bartello said the meeting ended with no final say. Councilman Eister reminded Councilman Bartello they discussed applicants that have an Associate's degree in construction code. Councilman Bartello said he knows because he did interviews. Ms. Specht asked when interviews were conducted and Councilman Bartello said he told her about one and no one came to it. He held the other ones himself. Councilman Eister asked why he never received the names. Councilman Bartello said he didn't know he had to improve what he did in his department. Councilman Bartello said Kevin did not show up for the meeting and Councilman Eister was the only one there and they did not agree on anything. General discussion was held. Councilman Troup asked if this applicant has any code background. Councilman Bartello said she did her externship at the probation office in the court house. She is familiar with the filing system. Councilman Troup asked again if she had any background in code. Councilman Bartello said she has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. Councilman Troup asked what that has to do with code. Councilman Bartello said he doesn't know, what do the guys have now that qualifies for code and he does not understand the question. Mayor Persing explained he wanted to know if other applicants had any code background. Councilman Bartello answered yes but none of them wanted a part-time job for \$10.00/hour. General conversation was held regarding this issue. Councilman Bartello said he has a motion on the floor and he is trying to get help for the code office which he has been trying to do for 3 years. Councilman Snyder said this person is qualified because she has a Bachelor's degree and it is \$10.00/hour job for 20 hours per week. There is a probation period. Typically council does not get into the nuts and bolts of hires in each department. Mayor Persing asked if this hire could do anything with the RDA and Councilman Bartello answered she will help coordinate vacant property investigations and will be coordinated with the RDA. Councilman Snyder seconded the motion and the vote was: Yes – Bartello, Persing, Snyder, Troup. No – Eister. Motion carried. Councilman Snyder also explained that there is a 60 day probation period for both new hires and at the end of the 60 days the positions will be re-evaluated. Councilman Bartello said this position would be 10-15 hours/week to start and would be data entry and training. He wants to get the problem properties entered into the system so they can see where the clusters are and can work with the RDA on where the problem places are. Without that kind of data and the mapping system it is hard to use the new system to its full potential. There is no one for data entry that can work with a computer right now.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher's payable report in the amount of \$141,246.60 from the general fund and \$471.90 from Liquid Fuels. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

CAMERA UPDATE

Mayor Persing explained he met with Councilman Snyder and Jeff Lewis from the Municipal Authority to discuss the Front St. camera project. They also met at the Ft. Discovery area where there have been a lot of problems. They will be the first few areas cameras will be installed.

Councilman Snyder announced that it would be a good opportunity to do the experiment with Phillips at the location where a light standard was damaged. Phillips is willing to do a trial which would include up to 12 standards. Councilman Snyder would like suggestions regarding where the light standards should be placed for the trial period. Councilman Eister said he would like to see them retro-fit with the LED lights and Councilman Snyder said that is their plan. Councilman Snyder asked for a list of 12 sites from Councilman Eister for the trial period.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Persing announced the Spring Clean-up will be April 23, 25, 30 and May 2 from 8 am to 7 pm at the Transfer Station. Proof of residency is required.

KIZ Open House is Tuesday March 26th from 4 pm to 7 pm at Seiple's building on Chestnut St. Senator Gordner, Rep. Culver and Congressman Barletta will be attending.

Congressman Barletta has an Open House at 5 pm to 7 pm at his office at 106 Arch St on the same day.

Councilman Troup reminded everyone that street sweeping begins April 1st. Warning cards will be put on vehicles for 1 week prior to that.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Becky Newberry asked if the Seiple's building was still going to be used for a Veteran's Affair. Mayor Persing said that is where the KIZ Open House is and she can ask them at that time if she'd like.

Ms. Newberry also asked if patch could be put in the 1 block alley between Fairmount Ave and 11th St. and Line St and Reagan St. It is full of potholes and hard on tires.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk