

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Sunbury, PA
July 22, 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 & 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
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were thirty-three (33) members of the public present.

AUDIENCE COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

MUNITIONS TO MT. CARMEL POLICE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Persing explained that the Mt. Carmel police chief sent a Hold Harmless Agreement in regard to the old munitions the police department would like to get rid of. Mt. Carmel still has a SWAT team who will use it for training. Mayor Persing moved to donate the munitions to the Mt. Carmel police department upon the solicitor's review and the proper Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives paperwork is completed. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

OUTDOOR BURNING

Mayor Persing said there was a public meeting held on Wednesday with 38 people attending. They listed the pros and cons. Jerome Alex and Dale Henry put some information together. Council will think about this until the next meeting and put something together.

SALE OF 2005 POLICE INTERCEPTOR

The following bids were opened:

Asia Motors	\$1,581.00
Bay Ridge Motors	\$ 555.00
Ashley Motors	\$1,100.00
J. Griscavage	\$1,220.00
Grace Quality Used Cars	\$1,004.00
Georgia Cole	\$2,800.00

A discussion was held as to whether the vehicle should be kept for the code office. Mayor Persing moved to accept the apparent high bid of \$2,800 and sell it after the solicitor's review. Second – Bartello. Unanimous vote.

BID FOR SALE OF POLICE WEAPONS

Mayor Persing explained that the police department has some pistols and ammunition that could be sold. He will ask the solicitor to review the process before anything is sold. Mayor Persing moved to bid the available pistols and ammunition (see attached) at the reserve bid as listed. Chief Mazzeo said the amount listed was what was paid for the ammunition but it would be good to see if anything would sell for higher than the reserve. Mayor Persing said there is a revenue line item in the amount of \$4,500 which must be received before other items can be purchased. Councilman Snyder said he thinks the ad should say that

the bids should only come from other police departments. Chief Mazzeo stated that as long as the proper paperwork is done, anyone can make the purchase. When the bids come in and are awarded there should be an “all sales final, no liability” once the purchase has been completed. Background checks must be conducted before final sale. Chief Mazzeo said with the ammunition issues today, it should not be hard to get the reserve price or more for the sale of the ammunition. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

WETLANDS AREA/ 6TH ST

Councilman Eister explained several years ago several old homes were torn down on N 6th St. that were bordering the wetlands. The Wetlands group has asked if the City would donate the parcels to them so they can redesign the area and open it up for schools to go there and explore the wetlands. He had a picture map showing the parcels and the wetlands area. Councilman Bartello said he thought most of that was privately owned. Councilman Eister answered the Wetlands group does, except the parcels. He also asked if they are a non-profit group and the answer is yes. Mayor Persing asked what the plans were when the City originally purchased the parcels. Councilman Eister answered it was going to be a science center and they were going to put some homes in that area as well. Councilman Bartello asked if the walkway from Market St to the Beck School continues on to the wetlands. Councilman Eister answered no it stops on this side of Race St but it could be extended. It will follow the trail of the railroad bed. Councilman Eister moved to relay the parcels to the Wetlands Group with review by the Solicitor and also with deed restrictions that if the intended work does not happen the parcels revert back to the City. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

HARB MEETING DAY CHANGE

Mayor Persing moved to accept the day change for HARB so their recommendations could come to council on the 1st meeting of the month. Also, one of the new members cannot meet on their original day. Mr. Bruce Whipple said all the members agreed to the day change. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

COURT ST. PARKING LOT USE BY ELKS

Councilman Eister moved to allow the Elks to use the Court St. parking lot on Saturday August 17th at 3:00 pm to host a band as they have done annually for many years. They only want to use a portion of the lot to set up the stage until after River Festival is over and then they will use most of the parking lot. Proof of insurance has been submitted. The event will be over by 11:00 pm. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

ALCOHOL WAIVER/ELKS

Councilman Eister moved to allow the Elks to serve alcohol on the Court St. parking lot. The area will be roped off and no one can take alcohol from that area. They will be serving beer only. They have submitted the needed proof of insurance. They also have security people that will card anyone asking for beer. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES

Councilman Snyder moved to pay the invoices reported on the voucher’s payable report in the amount of \$325,721.11 from the general fund and \$366.82 from Liquid Fuels. Councilman Snyder said there are some large bills paid from the PCTI Wolverton St project as well as \$100,000 paid back to the tax anticipation line of credit. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote.

SRI/KEYSTONE COMMUNITIES GRANT

Ms. Meghan Beck asked council to pass a Resolution in support of the Keystone Communities Grant designation showing proof of funding for a period of 5 years in the amount of \$34,000 annually. Ms. Beck said she does understand that the funding is dependent on the city’s annual budget. The designation would give SRI priority for grants through DCED. Mayor Persing said all of council recognizes how important it is, he is just not sure how to go about it. Councilman Snyder said there are 2 things he thinks are important and they are the importance of SRI’s mission to the City. Proper and adequate staffing is needed to ensure they can meet their objectives and do the necessary work. Now it will be heavily funded through a city line item to support them and he said if council supports the project with tax payer’s funds, there has to be direct involvement with SRI at a leadership level so the money can be properly accounted for. Also, to make sure the responsibilities of the personnel meet the mission and help bring revenue in to cover the costs and have a say in the performance criteria and measuring the success of the positions to

justify it in the budget. He thinks there should be conversations regarding those issues before the budget cycle begins. Councilman Eister said Councilman Snyder did an excellent job of explaining the issue and he wanted to add that a monthly financial report should be submitted to council. That way council members will know where the money is being spent. Councilman Troup said this council has not raised taxes in 4 years and \$34,000 is over ½ mill tax. He is afraid if, when they are trying to balance the budget, this might be one of the first things to come out. He said council does need to have a say in the expenditure of these funds. Ms. Beck said she would be happy to have representation from the City on the SRI board. At this time Chief Mazzeo is on the board but if someone from council wanted to be on the board when there is a vacancy that would be welcomed. She said they do hope to have greater collaboration and also they are looking for other sources of revenue which included the Wine and Beer Festival. They are hoping to create revenue streams so they are not relying on the city making a contribution. Councilman Snyder said it is hard to jump start an organization such as SRI. Everything they do has dividends down the road. No one else will do it so council really needs to seriously consider it. Councilman Bartello said the City does not have a Community Development person and this will be close to that position and he feels they should be supported. Mr. Slade Shreck said SRI has struggled in the past but they have been doing better lately and the River Festival is an example of how they have put a lot more into it to reap the benefit of increased revenue. They are always looking for more events to bring people into the City. Councilman Bartello said especially with the Riverfront this is something needed and it would not be the first thing he would cut out of the budget. Councilman Eister said the possibilities are endless on the Riverfront and the group that is working on things now will show that. The Wine Festival long term will be very successful. Mr. Shreck asked if there would be permanent boat docks at Riverfront. Councilman Eister said there have been a lot of phone calls regarding that but if boats want to dock and come to events and they are all rented, they will have no way to get to the events. It was designed for short term boat docking. Councilman Snyder said it is at a pivotal point. There is a good team going forward and if change is going to happen it will be in the next 24-36 months. Councilman Troup moved to pass the Resolution as presented. Second - Bartello. Unanimous vote.

COMMUNITY ART CENTER/ALBRIGHT CHURCH

Mr. Jerome Alex from the Planning Commission said the Planning Commission recessed their meeting that began on Thursday so they could discuss with council the plans for the Albright Church. SRI wants to procure the Albright Church and turn it into a Community Arts Center. The Planning Commission thinks that is a good idea and they found several areas in the City's Comprehensive Plan that this project would fit into. Mr. Alex asked council to pass a tentative Resolution to accept the Planning Commission's approval so they can get the information into the grant. Mr. Paul Yucha, Chairman of the Planning Commission said there are many parts of the Comprehensive Plan that were "pie in the sky" things but this proposal for the Albright Church fits the Plan perfectly. He said there are several pages he would like council members to know about so they can see how perfectly this fits in: Page 36 recommends that the Albright Church should be renovated, Page 96 emphasizes the role of SRI and Page 114 calls for the re-evaluation of current core requirements. At the Planning meeting Mr. Yucha pointed out that the church was grandfathered as to parking spaces. If this plan is going to work there must be a way to work around the parking issue. Mr. Yucha said there were many evaluations of the draft of the Plan, the best being from Jamie Shrawder who pointed out a number of things, many of them brought changes in the opening pages. She suggested prospective funding for each item which Mr. Yucha thought the Plan did not take seriously. The Albright Church proposal has a timeline for what is to be done, what is to be spent and proposed funding. He said he doesn't think any City or SRI money will be spent on this project and Ms. Beck said that is correct. It will come from private funds and will have SRI management. Mr. Alex said they are looking for in-kind money, either through tax credits or donations. Also, the grant they are seeking is through DCED for the project. Financially they put together a good plan and if it meets DCED requirements and goes through it will be very positive for the City. Mr. Yucha said on pages 163 & 164 Ms. Shrawder called for specifics on the project action and plan appropriateness. She also called for specific plans that are doable right now. She also suggested focusing more on attainable goals and less on dream projects such as the boutique hotel. On page 140 the Plan calls for the creation of business opportunities and jobs, including help with business location assistance, working with SRI, encouraging arts and professional services and enhance the City's image. In conclusion he said the project offers specific timelines, goals, proposed expenses and at no cost to the City. Mr. Yucha said if at all possible he thinks this project should move forward. He invited anyone that is interested to attend the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday at 1:00 pm in the city council chambers. The main issue for zoning approval is the parking in the area. Mayor Persing thanked Mr. Yucha and Mr. Alex and said this project would be huge for the City and is the next biggest thing since the Riverfront Project for the City. The building is unique and there are many opportunities. He does not feel parking will be a huge issue. Mr. Alex said parking in the downtown area could only help businesses. He said the in-kind efforts that

businesses are providing will help to sustain the project for years to come. Mr. Alex said instead of using the high school for summer activities the arts center could be used. Councilman Eister said the old Weis warehouse will be torn down and could be used for parking. They are looking at another parcel to use for parking as well. Mr. Alex said if the Planning Commission approves this project they will need council to pass it to support the project. He asked if council would please pass a motion to support the Planning Commission's support of the project. Councilman Snyder said there is a unique situation with DCED because their Secretary, Allen Walker, is from central PA and is familiar with the issues in the rural markets. He has had conversations with him about things he is looking for and now the key is to find a niche for the art center to have it stand out from other facilities in the area and will make it a regional center that will appeal beyond the City of Sunbury and Northumberland County. It should also be a niche that would differ from Susquehanna and Bucknell Universities. In terms of funding, grants are getting fewer and DCED's available funding is getting harder to tap into. A detailed business plan will help a lot. In terms of what the City can provide, is annually the City receives block grant funds and just like the Riverfront Project got funding for several years, CDBG funds could be allocated to this project. There should be as much legislative support as possible, locally and in surrounding communities. Mr. Alex said a unique part of this project is that a large amount of the funding will be in-kind and SRI already has several in place. Mr. Yucha said it could be an incubator providing educational opportunities to the area. Mayor Persing moved that Sunbury city council supports the Planning Commission's support of the application submitted by SRI for the community arts center development project. Mayor Persing said we just launched the new City project. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Ms. Beck said she wanted to affirm that this project is being funded privately as a tax credit program and she would like to see grants taken out of the terminology. There are 2 organizations that are committed to the project and will donate \$50,000/year for the next 6 years in order to support it. They will then receive a tax credit for a large percentage of the funds donated to the project. As long as grants are not accepted they will not have to follow prevailing wage regulations which will save a lot of costs to the project. She also said DCED wants affirmation that the project is in the comprehensive land use plan which is why the Planning Commission is present. They also have to have approval from the Zoning Hearing Board for the project. At this time it does not meet zoning because of the parking issues.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Chief Mazzeo reminded everyone that National Night Out is scheduled for August 6th beginning at 5 pm in Cameron Park. It should be bigger and better than other years. Councilman Snyder said volunteers are needed to help Mr. & Mrs. Beegle with National Night Out. The Beegles have run National Night Out since it first started.

Mr. Ruell Whipple said when it rains his property gets flooded. Councilman Troup said the Municipal Authority is aware of that situation and is working on it. They are planning to enlarge the storm water drain pipes. It is a costly project so it is on a list of projects they have to do. Mr. Whipple said he thinks the problem starts at Reagan St. and Councilman Eister answered that is correct – the pipes are not big enough.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music in the Park – July 23rd KJ Reimensnyder Wagner July 30th Jim the Singing Mailman and August 6th Ann Kerstetter Band.

Councilman Troup brought to the audience's attention the newly touched-up photo hanging on the wall and thanked Ms. Carmen Campbell for her initiative in starting this project. He also thanked Mr. Mark Mallet of Schindler's Studio for doing the work free-of-charge. Ms. Campbell has taken 6 more pictures to him for touch up and framing.

Councilman Troup said the trailer at 1127 Miller St. should be removed soon.

Councilman Eister thanked everyone that helped with the fireworks and activities from Sunbury Celebration. Mr. Bob Werline said he spoke to people from Elysburg and Berwick and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves and said the fireworks were better than Millville's and they will return next year. He also said the cars in the parking lot were covered with debris from the fireworks and Councilman Eister explained the cloud cover was low and the humidity was high so that is the reason the debris didn't break up as much.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht City Clerk