

CITY COUNCIL
Sunbury PA 17801
June 10, 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
Lisa Martina, City Controller
Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
John Bakowicz, City Engineer
Stephen Mazzeo, Chief of Police
Michael Bordner, Public Works Supervisor
Michael Rhoads, Zoning Officer
Joseph Swope, Code Officer
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were fifty-nine (59) visitors present.

Mayor Persing announced city council held an executive session on May 22nd to discuss the police contract. Immediately following this meeting city council members will hold an executive session to discuss personnel.

PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS

MINUTES AND REPORTS

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. Second – Snyder. Unanimous vote. Minutes will be posted at cityofsunbury.com.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Ms. Jamie Shrawder explained there were 14 projects discussed to use 2013 CDBG funding. To date there is still not a time frame or allocation date for these funds so she is moving forward knowing cities receive at least \$300,000. Ms. Shrawder suggested that council fund 4 large projects that were discussed to include demolition of blight properties (30% of funds after admin), OPG basketball court improvements, Sunbury fire department toward purchase of a ladder truck and Chestnut St. reconstruction (see attached). Mayor Persing said everyone has had the opportunity to discuss the projects. The final public hearing will be held at the June 24th meeting. Councilman Eister moved to accept the 4 projects mentioned above for 2013 funding. Second- Troup. Unanimous vote. Ms. Shrawder said there will also be public comment at the June 24th meeting.

SRI UPDATE

Ms. Jess Runkle announced the Sunbury Concert Series continues with the Ann Kerstetter Band on June 29th and Nate Myers and the Aces on July 20 and in August the River Festival. All these events will be held at Riverfront. They have 5 new members join in the last month. They will still take orders for Veteran's banners but they need at least 10 to place an order. Ms. Runkle will be attending a rain barrel workshop. Mayor Persing asked how many banners are up now and Ms. Runkle replied 74. He said everything looked amazing for the Memorial Day Parade with the Avenue of Flags and Veteran's banners hung on Market St. and Cameron Park.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Mayor Persing said there are 2 properties that will be advertised for sale – a vacant lot on Miller St. and a house on 7th St. Proposals will be accepted for both properties and the Redevelopment Authority Board will decide which proposal fits their plan. This should help the neighborhood know what is

going on and will provide a timeline for improvements to occur. Councilman Eister is working to have the property on Julia St. and the old Weis warehouse on Raspberry Ave razed.

POLICE CONTRACT

Mayor Persing said everyone has had an opportunity to see the police contract as presented. The first year of the contract has no salary increase but it does show an increase for longevity. In 2014 and 2015 the salary increases will be 2.5%. Mr. Apfelbaum said council has studied it and asked questions as have the negotiating team for the police department. Councilman Bartello asked if council votes on it and then send it to the members of the SPOA and will they approve it or is what council is voting on the end of it. Mayor Persing said the police will have to vote to approve it as well. Mayor Persing moved to pass the police contract for 2013-2015 as presented. Councilman Eister thanked Councilman Snyder for spending time with the financials so a contract could be passed. Councilman Snyder said he thought the contract was fair for everyone and he is happy with the results. Second Eister. Unanimous vote.

RESOLUTION/PURCHASE NEW POLICE VEHICLE

Mayor Persing moved to pass a Resolution (see attached) to purchase a new police vehicle from Sunbury Motors through a Costars contract with a total amount of \$36,950. payable in 3 lease payments and authorize Terry Specht to sign all documents. Councilman Troup asked what model was being purchased and Mayor Persing answered a Ford Interceptor. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

HARB APPROVAL

Councilman Bartello moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for façade renovation at 425 Market St. owned by Greg Nodich. Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. Mayor Persing mentioned that there is a vacancy on HARB.

APPOINT VACANCY ZONING HEARING BOARD

Mayor Persing moved to appoint Jesse Woodring to the Zoning Hearing Board (he was alternate). Second – Eister. Unanimous vote. An alternate is needed for 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 \$71,044.12 from the General Fund. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

TAX EXONERATION

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

REQUEST FROM EDISON HOTEL OWNER

Mr. Brad Niemic explained that Edison Enterprises would like to put outside seating in front of the former Window World building (adjacent to Edison Hotel) on Market St. and on S. 4th St. adjacent to the Edison Hotel. To apply for an extension of the liquor license they first need permission from the municipal body to allow the outside seating. They will be serving food and alcohol at the outdoor seating. Councilman Eister told Mr. Niemic he had people there from Bellefonte and they were impressed with the restaurant. Councilman Eister moved to allow tables on Market St. and S. 4th St. at the Edison Enterprises property. Second – Troup. Unanimous vote.

618 REAGAN ST/CONVERT TO EFFICIENCY APARTMENT

Ms. Elizabeth Barcarda, owner of 618 Reagan St., asked council to approve converting a beauty salon she owns to an efficiency apartment. There is another apartment in the same building. The property does meet the fast-track procedures for a new rental property. Mayor Persing moved to allow the efficiency apartment at 618 Reagan St. Second – Bartello. Unanimous vote.

STREET SWEEPER ON N. 3RD ST.

Ms. Laurie Johnson asked if the street sweeper sign could be changed from 1 am to 3 am on 3rd St. at Market St. Her business is open until 2:00 am and patrons can be there until 2:30 am. The bar tender is a female and does not want to walk to the parking lot at Woodlawn Ave at 3 am when she is finished cleaning. The street sweeper has not gone past that area before 4:11 am. Councilman Troup said it was changed to 2:00 am on Market St. Councilman Troup said he does not see a problem with changing 3rd St. to 3:00 am. Officer Steve Bennick said when the police department enforces the no parking

ordinance on street sweeper night they start at 1:00 am and do all the side streets and then come back and do Market St. The parking lots are only cleaned on Fridays twice a month. The lots and Market St. are available for parking. He does not think switching one block to another time would be favorable work for the officers. He thinks patrons should park in the lots because they are only cleaned twice a month on Friday. Councilman Eister said the bar tender parks on 3rd St for safety reasons. Officer Bennick said when they do the enforcement, the way the police do it they can get it all done in a timely manner. If the times are changed they are going to have to stop and come back later to do it. Councilman Troup said there are 2 businesses this would affect, McGuigan's and the Eagles. Officer Bennick said the area around the Eagles is always cleared. Councilman Eister said the club can be open until 2:30 – Officer Bennick said they can serve until 2 am but everyone has to be out by 2:30 am. Officer Bennick said they can park on Market St. until 3:00 am. Councilman Snyder said the area was designated as an entertainment district a few years ago. Mayor Persing said they would take 2 weeks to talk about what should be done.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Ms. Meghan Beck asked if there could be bike racks installed in the downtown area because the Old Towne Committee is promoting safe biking in the City. The Runner's Roost said they would provide them at cost. Mayor Persing said each intersection is marked with signs that say no bikes and skateboards on Market St. Several years ago they were trying to get more people to walk in the downtown area so bikes were not permitted for safety reasons. Skateboards have never been allowed. There are problems with people coming out of storefronts into bike riders on the sidewalks. Ms. Beck said that is another question to consider. Ms. Beck also said there is a community bike ride scheduled for June 12th at 6:30 and it will start at the swimming pool parking lot. Everyone is invited to participate. Mr. Dennis Markette said it will go around town. The Squeeze In and Hurr's are offering discounts that night for anyone arriving on a bike.

Mr. Preston Ross said he wanted to speak about the article in the newspaper about the code office and officers. He said he was here when the first code officer was hired in Sunbury and he has done work for the code office. He has worked for many code offices in his career and he has worked with Mike Rhoads and Joe Swope many times as a consultant for them and he has gone to court with them, he said they do a good job for the City and he is proud to call them friends. Code enforcement is rules and regulations and administering codes takes commonsense and Mike and Joe have it. He supports them and will back them and they do a fantastic job for the City.

Mr. Bob Miller said he has had a lot of involvement with both code officers and he echoes Mr. Ross's statements and he calls them friends also.

Ms. Wendy Groce asked why there were no bathrooms put in at riverfront. She said there were no bathrooms or porta-potties at the music event that anyone could find. Councilman Eister said there were 4 porta-potties – 2 at the north end and 2 at the south end.

Ms. Jan Dockey asked for an update on the cameras. Mayor Persing said the wiring was just run near Ft. Discovery so they will be in shortly and the next phase is the riverfront. Councilman Snyder said Mike Bordner's guys did a good job with the wiring and put it in when asked to do it.

Ms. Carmen Campbell asked if any of the old pictures had been taken to Schindler's yet to see if they can be refurbished. Ms. Specht answered no but they could get together to decide which ones should go there first.

Mr. David Whipple said during the city-wide yard sales the speeding on Susquehanna Ave was horrible and he wondered if they could be slowed down somehow. He said they also don't stop at stop signs. Chief Mazzeo asked if Mr. Whipple or anyone else called about it. Mr. Whipple answered no they did not. He said there were 2 on duty and they were busy. If there is an issue Mr. Whipple should call and when they are free they will deal with it.

Mr. Drake Saxton said a letter was sent from North'd County Conservation District that he read from and he said it puts the onus on Sunbury: These are Land Development and Subdivision Codes of the City of Sunbury, not the County of Northumberland. As such, the duty to enforce the same lies with the City. The County of Northumberland has a Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance which the County enforces, where a municipal ordinance is not in effect. Mr. Drake said again the onus is on Sunbury and the City cannot and has not ceded its power or authority to enforce the code. Because of the discussion at the last council meeting about the Memorandum of Understanding, the May 31, 2013 letter should serve for The Daily Item to correct that. He said the City does need to enforce the code 175.15.20 dealing with development, 175.13 violation and penalties and 143.7. It is still his position and contention that the City is responsible for enforcing the codes.

Ms. Regina Russell asked if the council would consider putting up signs regarding the noise ordinance. She feels there are residents that are not aware of the ordinance. She said she lives at Walnut St & S.

4th St. across from KND's Pizza and she is hearing a lot of noise and partying after 12:00 and their lights are still on until 2:00 am. Ms. Russell also asked what the name of the company is that council issued the contract to for installation of cameras. Mayor Persing answered the City is installing the cameras. Councilman Snyder said there was only a contract to purchase cameras, not install. She also said regarding the civil servants for the City, she will agree with most of the people that spoke up for the code officers – and that should include the administrator of that office, Linda Danley. She has never been disrespected and she appreciates that. Most of the complaints get taken care of but she still has to come back to Councilman Eister's property and the tenant that is there and is allowed to park trucks there with trash. There are 5 wood panels stacked up against the garage door. She has complained and has a 3 page report from January through April 17th where there were more than 15 calls regarding that property with the same complaint. She said there is something wrong that the gentleman is still allowed to do that, either he is not getting fined or something happening that allows him to ignore the inspectors. She has asked her neighbors and they have witnessed Joe speaking to the gentleman about leaving his trash parked on the sidewalk. She said she is addressing it again and hopes someone more than Councilman Bartello can help with that situation.

Ms. Julie Brosious asked how the City is responding to the threat made to the police officers last week. Mayor Persing said the police department is on top of that and Ms. Brosious asked what that means. Mayor Persing said the police department is aware of it and Chief Mazzeo has the situation under control and they are doing the best they can with what they have. Ms. Brosious asked if a detective or drug enforcement officer should be hired. Mayor Persing answered they need more officers on the street and the 3 that are off will come back as soon as they can. Ms. Brosious asked if that will be full-time and Mayor Persing said they are full-time. She asked if additional officers would be hired and Mayor Persing said that would not happen until next budget year to see if new officers could be hired.

Mr. Gene Swanger said he wanted to address an issue again – the tenant next door has an outdoor wood burner they say is legal. He burns wood. He said when he installed a wood burner in his house he had to go so high with the chimney. The burning receptacle the neighbor is burning is only 8' tall. Windows are open and the smoke and smell goes into the homes. He has an article that says burning outdoor wood burning furnaces are not allowed because they create noxious, hazardous, smoke, soot, fumes, odors and air pollution that is a detriment to a citizen's health. It goes on to say there is a restriction on outdoor wood burning furnaces. Mr. Swanger said the wood burner the neighbor has still gives off the same things described above, even though it isn't a wood burning furnace. He asked why would it be allowed and not the other. Councilman Bartello said he is getting a lot of complaints from different areas of the city about the same thing. He said you try and be nice in the beginning and tell them as long as they don't build a big fire in it and then they take it too far. He said now it will have to be clamped down on. Councilman Bartello said the fire department gets false alarms because people detect the odor of smoke in the neighborhood. Mr. Swanger said sparks come out of it. He said they light the fire, turn on music and then sometimes leave and the fire is unattended. Councilman Bartello said the way the ordinance reads it is not legal and they are bending it but they should put it right back to following it to the letter. Mayor Persing said not too long ago they passed a no burning amendment to the ordinance for the Municipal Authority and maybe it should be revisited. No one is heating anything in the house with these burners. Mr. Swope said they cannot have a big, open flame outside. Ms. Ann Hollenbach said she lives across the street and her house stinks from the burner Mr. Swanger is talking about. She said she does not think he is burning wood and it is something else.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1st Annual Kickball Tournament will be held at the David L. Persing Complex on July 6th.

The Hall of Fame Softball Tournament will be held over the weekend.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk