

CITY COUNCIL
225 Market St.
Sunbury PA 17801
January 14, 2008
7:00 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order with the Honorable John K. Shipman, Vice-Mayor, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

John K. Shipman, Director of Accounts and Finances
Mark W. Walberg, 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:

Michael Apfelbaum, City Solicitor
Elizabeth Kremer, City Treasurer
Lisa Persing, City Controller
Mike Bordner, Public Works Supervisor
Terry Specht, City Clerk

There were thirty (30) visitors present.

FIRE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS

Councilman Shipman administered the Oath of Office to the following from the fire department:

Chad Betts, Fire Chief 2008-2009
Dean Weirick, 1st Assistant Chief
Michael Rhoads, 3rd Assistant Chief
Russell Wertz, Battalion Chief
Mr. Ken Kipple has already been sworn-in as 2nd Assistant Chief.

SOCCER UPDATE

Mr. Kurt Mayer, Mr. T.J. Burke and Mr. Brian Bailey gave council an update in regard to the proposed soccer fields in the former dump area. Councilman Eister stated that the bridge would be the biggest obstacle. Councilman Troup moved to proceed with the study and have the City Solicitor research the legal ramifications in regard to leasing a portion of the area to the soccer organization. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Apfelbaum said he would get a summary together for all parties to look at to see if they approve.

MINUTES AND REPORTS

Minutes of November 12, November 26 and December 10 and December 24, 2007 and Reports of the Police Dept., City Treasurer, City Controller, City Engineer, Code Office, Redevelopment Authority, Health Dept., Public Works Dept., Parks and Public Buildings, Park and Recreation Board, Planning Commission and Fire Dept. were accepted on a motion by Councilman Shipman and seconded by Councilman Eister. The vote was unanimous.

MONTHLY LEGAL SEMINAR

Mr. Apfelbaum explained the Sunshine Act and litigation as it pertains to the Sunshine Act. He said one of the exceptions under the Sunshine Act would be for discussions in regard to litigation, which includes having to discuss tactics and issues of money. In order to have a private session of city council an announcement must be made at the public meeting that a private meeting will occur and give the specific topic of the private session. The litigation exception is specifically to discuss tactics involved with litigation. The court room part of litigation is public so some day the private discussions may become public if a councilman is called as a witness. An exception to this is if the councilman talked to the attorney and was given advice, attorney-client privilege comes into play. One other exception is if council members decide to discuss the issues outside of the executive session. Councilman Walberg asked if during a private session with a majority of council members present and the attorney is present, if later litigation strategy is discussed, would that be protected? Mr. Apfelbaum answered that would probably be protected because the attorney was present and more than likely offered advice.

2008 TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE RESOLUTION

Mr. Apfelbaum explained that the documentation for the 2008 Tax Anticipation Note has been reviewed by Susquehanna Bank (low bidder) and was accepted. Councilman Eister moved to pass the 2008 Tax Anticipation Line of Credit Resolution and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign all documents. Councilman Troup seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

N. 6TH ST. DEMOLITION PROJECT

Councilman Eister explained that the structures have been torn-down and the design work for the area is in the process of being designed by Seiple Architecture. A portion of the project will remain a wetland park. The garage in the back will eventually be torn-down – at this time it will be used for storage and a worksite.

2008 CDBG

Mr. Bill Siegel reviewed the projects that were requested as possible 2008 CDBG projects. They include:

18% Administrative Services	\$ 60,800. (\$49,700. to SEDA-COG)
Sunbury Fire Dept.	\$ 20,265.
Sunbury Fire Police	\$ 3,000.
Sunbury Municipal Authority	\$101,750.
City of Sunbury Riverfront Project	\$145,000.
City of Sunbury Parking Lot Lighting	\$ 53,090.
City of Sunbury Parking Facilities	\$ 13,090.
City of Sunbury Stroh Alley Upgrade	\$ 25,000.
City of Sunbury Demo of Blight Properties	\$ 51,750.
City of Sunbury DLP Recreation Complex	\$112,410.
City of Sunbury Neighborhood Mini-Parks	\$ 13,090.
City of Sunbury Real Estate Improvement	\$ 26,750.
City of Sunbury Community Center	\$ 38,530.
City of Sunbury Market St. Improvements	\$104,410.

All amounts listed include environmental review and/or prevailing wage rates as required. SEDA-COG has alerted other City departments, including non-profit organizations, as to the funding available. Councilman Walberg asked whether the average income of the City of Sunbury is considered low income – Mr. Siegel answered that the City is predominately low to moderate income. Councilman Walberg asked what the service area is and how it is determined. Mr. Siegel said they will look around the City and ask whether it serves the entire City or a neighborhood and if a neighborhood, where are the other facilities. There are no written guidelines to determine boundaries. Mr. Siegel also mentioned that the CDBG program is a “people” program and is focused on who will benefit from the investment in the project. It must improve the quality of life for low/moderate income families. The next CDBG meeting will be January 28, 2008 at 6:15 pm to finalize and select the projects.

PRESENTATION/COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A presentation was made in regard to locating a Community College in Sunbury that would benefit the surrounding communities. Several members of the committee (Mr. Steve Connelly, Mr. Joshua Ripple, Ms. Lanier Ahlum and Ms. Angela Motto) discussed the different aspects of the preliminary plan which include:

- A kick-off summit in February to announce the plans to the community which will include media coverage – the president of HACC will be the guest speaker
- A member(s) of city council to sit on steering committee
- \$1,000. is needed to fund a feasibility and citizen survey
- In the long term, the committee would like the City to “give/lease” them a building to use, lease or rent
- Committee has formed as a 501c3
- Vision includes an innovate community college plan using pre-existing buildings and/or at local school districts
- It will be a multi-county entity to equally distribute costs among the counties and school districts
- The committee has received across the board enthusiasm in regard to the project
- HACC is particularly interested in helping develop curriculum as well as helping financially
- Access to higher education in this area is limited, even though there are 3 universities in the area geographically and due to cost
- Letters of support have been received from many of the school districts, colleges, businesses and governmental entities in the area
- The survey report will be completed by August

FIRE INSURANCE ESCROW FUND

Councilman Shipman explained that the City did not get on the state list for insurance companies to check before any funds are delivered to property owners. That issue has since been remedied. The City will hold part of the money until repairs are completed. A “policy and procedure” should be put in place for this process to be sure the treasurer’s office and the code office follow the same procedure every time this occurs.

JANUARY EXPENDITURES

Councilman Shipman moved to pay \$181,144.21 for bills for January. Councilman Troup seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

TAX EXONERATION

Councilman Shipman moved to accept the tax exoneration as requested by Statewide Tax Recovery. Councilman Eister seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

AUDIENCE COMMENT

Mr. Scott Johnson informed council that he and several other restaurant owners are planning a “Leap Into Sunbury” project which will be the 1st Annual Restaurant Week in Sunbury. They are in the planning stages at this time and the event will run from February 29th through March 8th. Special prices as well as entertainment are part of the planning. They are asking for money to help advertise this project.

Mr. Dale Henry asked how much of the fire escrow money the City holds. Councilman Shipman explained that the City may hold up to 25% which insures the work gets done, or, if the work is not done to bring the structure back to code, there is money to tear it down.

NOVEMBER 2007 BUDGET REVIEW

Councilman Shipman explained that the November 2007 budget is in good shape and the City ended 2007 with a small surplus – which is the first time in many years.

SUNBURY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CONSTRUCTION

This project will go to the Planning Commission on January 17th and then to the council meeting on January 28th for approval.

RECREATION BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Councilman Eister moved to appoint Jenna Eister and Malcolm Derk to fill the vacancies on the Park & Recreation Board. Both terms will expire on December 31, 2008. Councilman Troup seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

STREET SIGNS

Mr. Bordner asked council whether they prefer to get new sign posts for the new street signs and if so, do they want round or square. It was decided that new round poles should be purchased so if any of the old ones can be used they will look the same. Councilman Shipman asked if directional signs could be made to the recreation complex and the answer was yes, as soon as the sign-making materials arrive.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Specht
City Clerk