



CITY COUNCIL

Public Works Committee

Monday, March 17, 2008

Agenda

5:00p.m.

Committee Members: D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, S. Fuhs

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| I. Orange & Cherry Street Lot - St James Church | 5:00 p.m. |
| II. Street Light Update | 5:50 p.m. |
| - East Bank Development | |
| - Parks and Playgrounds | |
| III. Set Committee Goals for 2008-09 | 6:10 p.m. |
| IV. Consent Decree Update | 6:20 p.m. |
| a. Review Project Timeline | |

REVIEW CONDITIONAL USE REQUEST AND PRELIMINARY DESIGN FOR ORANGE AND CHERRY STREETS PARK

Karl Graybill explained that the DPW has requested PC review of the preliminary plan for a proposed open space on the southeast corner of Orange and Cherry Streets. New parks and municipal recreational facilities are Conditional Uses under the City's Zoning Ordinance; therefore, the PC is required to make a recommendation to City Council.

Terry Knox Ramseur explained that the proposed open space is within an area know as the South Reading Neighborhood. This area was designated as an outreach neighborhood in a partnership of the United Way of Berks County and the City. When the Community Development Department decided to raze 7 dilapidated residential buildings at the site, the UW was asked to hold meetings to see what the area residents wanted at the site. The residents were concerned with the lack of open green space and parking, as well as housing density in their neighborhood. The 10th & South Playground is nearly one half mile from this location so many children play on the lawns of the Eisenhower and Rhodes apartment buildings. Ms. Ramseur remarked that through neighborhood interviews and surveys, it was determined that a small parklet and several off-street parking spaces would most benefit the area. The Reading Parking Authority has agreed to manage and maintain the parking area. A private donation of \$25,000, a CDBG grant of \$2,500 and a Fulton Bank donation of \$500 are available for improving the site. Alvernia College has made a \$200 donation. The \$25,000 donor has requested a small piece of play equipment be included in the design. Mr. Ramseur noted that area businesses and residents are supportive of the proposal.

Bill Vitale described the 140 by 110 foot lot as being bounded on the north by Cherry Street, on the west by Orange Street, on the south by a 10 foot wide alley and on the east by 10 foot wide alley and a parking lot owned by WIN Outlet. Mr. Vitale observed that Cherry Street is narrower in this block than the blocks of Cherry Street to the west. He noted that although the open space design has been kept simple because of the isolation of the site and the potential for heavy use, it will still be an inviting place. The majority of the lot will be grass with trees along the streets, which will soften and define the border. A fence, with openings but no gates, is also proposed for the perimeter, however, the amount of fencing will be determined by final cost estimates. A collapsible bollard will be placed within a 10 foot wide opening in the fence on the Orange and Cherry corner in order to permit access for maintenance vehicles.

Mr. Vitale remarked that a paved sitting area with a couple of benches will be located on the Orange and Cherry Streets corner. A small piece of play equipment, the exact size and style has not yet been determined, will be installed in the southeast corner of the parklet. The main grass area would be graded to create a low berm on the northern edge for children to play, as well as a place to sit for performances. A walking path surrounding the lawn area could be paved if funds permit. Mr. Vitale stated that a hose bib and drinking fountain would be desirable. Flowers planted in small planters as well as in the 8 square foot tree pits will need watering. The 11 parking spaces along the 10 foot alley to the south will be for neighborhood residents. Karl Graybill noted that the RPA leases a lot from the Reading Redevelopment Authority in the southwest area of the City and operates a similar parking area for neighborhood residents.

On questions from Donna Reed and Mike Lauter regarding lighting, Mr. Vitale explained that there is an existing street light on the north side of Cherry Streets at the intersection with Orange Street as well as a light in the alley intersection. There is a utility pole at the intersection of Orange Street and the alley that could accommodate a light. Mr. Vitale noted that by the time the trees block the street lights there could be other sources of illumination at the parklet. Charles Fairchild asked who would do lawn maintenance. Mr. Vitale noted that the Parks Division would cut the grass and perform other maintenance at the site. He added that discussions with DPW indicated it could be possible for the City to install new curbing where needed.

Ed Palka asked if there was currently a fence along the WIN Outlet parking lot to the east. Ms. Ramseur replied that there is a low retaining wall but no fence. Mr. Vitale added that if the budget permits, a four to six foot high fence would be constructed around the entire perimeter, but along the two streets at a minimum. Fritz Rothermel noted that a four foot high fence should be sufficient since gates would not be installed.

Mr. Rothermel observed that the play equipment is in a location that fits as far as site design. He inquired as to what thought was given to placing the equipment closer to the homes along Orange Street. Mr. Vitale replied that the play equipment would be designed for small children who would be under the supervision of a parent or adult. The location was chosen to maximize open space.

Donna Reed noted that two structures are to be razed on the 900 block of Penn Street and asked if there would be a connection to the park. Mr. Vitale responded that there was some discussion but nothing conclusive.

On a motion by Charles Fairchild and a second by Ed Palka, Resolution No. 18-01 was unanimously passed (7-0), recommending to City Council that a public hearing be held to receive comment regarding the Conditional Use request by the Department of Public Works for the small park and open space to be created on the southeast corner of Orange and Cherry Streets. City Council may also authorize the Zoning Administrator to issue a Conditional Use permit.

On a motion by Mike Lauter and a second by Charles Fairchild, Resolution No. 19-01 was unanimously passed (7-0), approving the preliminary design plan as presented, but could be modified as the final budget demands.

Public Works Committee
FY 2008
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: REVIEW AND RECOMMEND FOR ADOPTION A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE TO COMPLY WITH PADEP REGULATIONS.

GOAL 2: EVALUATE CONTRACTS FOR LINE PAINTING AND TRAFFIC SIGNAL AND STREETLIGHT MAINTENANCE.

- Ensure the Public Works Department prepares specifications and awards contracts to the lowest responsible bidders, for the maintenance of essential operations.
- Develop areas, based on concerns related to individual Council Districts, requiring streetlight maintenance.

GOAL 3: REPAVE/RECONSTRUCT CITY STREETS/MAINTAIN CURBING AND SIDEWALKS

- Determine the most effective method of developing and implementing a citywide street reconstruction and repaving program.
- Develop priorities for street repaving and reconstruction.
- Identify, based on Council Districts, in need of infrastructure improvements.

GOAL 4: COMPLETE ENGINEERING PLAN REVIEWS FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES.

- Ensure the Public Works Committee receives regular updates regarding development projects.

GOAL 5: ADDRESS THE CLEANLINESS OF CITY STREETS

- Evaluate current sweeping program procedures in an attempt to improve operations.

GOAL 6: BEAUTIFICATION/MAINTENANCE/EXPANSION OF THE PARKS SYSTEM

- Identify necessary, amongst the existing park system, necessary aesthetic improvements and prioritize improvements.
- Receive regular updates on the implementation of the City Park Master Plan and improvements to the Pagoda.

GOAL 7: RENOVATIONS TO CITY FACILITIES.

- Ensure improvements to City facilities are completed in a timely manner.

GOAL 8: ENSURE TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN PROJECTS

- Monitor CIP projects and receive regular status report from Public Works Director and Managing Director.

GOAL 9: STRENGTHEN RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS AS A WHOLE.

- Improve, through amendment, the existing Park and Recreation Advisory Council ordinance.
- Discuss opportunities of expanding recreation opportunities through partnering with other organizations and the community.
- Work with other external recreation providers to coordinate programs and activities
- Identify more effective methods of providing recreation opportunities to a larger segment of the community.
- Consider expanding the Park Security Program.

GOAL 10: RECEIVE REGULAR UPDATES ON COMPLIANCE WITH ALL WASTE WATER PERMIT REQUIREMENTS (NPDES AND Air Quality) AND WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONS.

GOAL 11: REVIEW CONSENT ORDER AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN SCHEDULE

- Begin and continue reviewing the implementation of the wastewater treatment plant design and schedule including periodic updating of financial estimates.
- Approve Consent Decree timeline.
- Receive regular and complete financial updates

GOAL 12: CREATE STORMWATER UTILITY

- Review financial impact analysis.
- Develop legislation for review and adoption by City Council.

GOAL 13: MONITOR SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING OPERATIONS

- Determine if improvements to the existing ordinance are necessary.
- Assist with the development of an education and enforcement campaign for all city residents on proper set out requirements for all municipal solid waste and recyclables.