

CITY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

Monday, April 22, 2013

Council Office

5:00 pm

Agenda

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee of the Whole meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the President of Council.

All electronic recording devices must be located behind the podium area in Council Chambers and located at the entry door in all other meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No.27-2012

- I. WWTP Design Project – Award of Contract**
- II. Council Discussion re Strategic Planning**
- III. Agenda Review**



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
April 2, 2013
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, R. Corcoran, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, F. Acosta, J. Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, C. Younger, C. Snyder, V. Spencer, L. Murin, E. Lloyd

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:17 pm by Council President Acosta. He stated that the main purpose of this meeting is to discuss the process used to set the Committee agendas through communication between the Administration and Council. He stated that for this discussion to be productive, personal issues must be checked at the door. He expressed the belief that poor communication between Council and the Administration has resulted in poor decision making. He stated that improvement is required.

Mr. Acosta suggested moving to a strategic planning model where committee issues and progress can be discussed. He stated that he has asked Mr. Waltman to chair this effort to work with the Administration to drive committee agendas. He suggested that these planning sessions occur during the leadership meetings that are conducted bi-monthly with Ms. Snyder, Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, Mr. Spencer and himself.

Mr. Waltman instead suggested that Council hold monthly strategic planning meetings with the Administration.

Ms. Reed agreed with the strategic planning model and suggested the inclusion of timelines and triaging to create efficiency.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz also agreed with the use of strategic planning and she noted the need for Councilors to deal with district issues separately and not in committee sessions. Mr. Acosta agreed and noted that district issues should be addressed through the Managing Director and through Council staff.

Ms. Snyder also agreed with the strategic planning approach and the need to separate district issues out from committee discussions. She noted her discussion with the Business Analyst about the creation of a tool to address property specific issues.

Mr. Spencer noted the lack of trust between the Mayor's office and Council and he expressed the belief that Council has been avoiding the Mayor's office by going through the Managing Director.

Mr. Spencer noted that he was unhappy that Mr. Ruchlewicz was not appointed to the Charter Review Board. He stated that his question in the Committee of the Whole meeting pertaining to opposition to this appointment went unanswered. He also stated that he was displeased with the comment to the Reading Eagle pertaining to his desire to take over City Council, when there is nothing further from the truth.

Mr. Spencer stated that past Administrations did not have the staffing to undertake some activities and Council stepped in to pick up the slack. He stated that as this administration has proper staffing, the Mayor's Office can now take back some of the work that Council previously assisted with. As an example he cited the meeting Councilor Reed coordinated with the Administration last year in response to parking issues brought forward by downtown merchants through DID. He stated that he cancelled the follow up meeting with the merchants as his staff had developed a solution.

Mr. Acosta suggested that the strategic planning process can assist with these issues.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to stop fighting and start working together.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that differences of opinion are part of the democratic process. She noted the need for all to learn to use debate productively and disagree respectfully.

Mr. Sterner agreed, noting that everyone is not always going to agree. While he stated that he understands Mr. Spencer's desires to have the ability to do certain things, expecting all Council members to always agree with Mr. Spencer's wishes is unrealistic. He also stated that working together on issues usually provides a successful outcome.

He noted that everyone should learn to disregard the “he said-she said” rumors rather than reacting to them.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Administration can work on issues then come to Council for approval when need be.

Mr. Corcoran questioned the outcome recommended by the Administration for the parking problem noted by Mr. Spencer. He stated that working jointly with Council would have provided a successful resolution to the parking issue presented by the downtown merchants.

Mr. Corcoran also agreed with the use of the strategic planning process and with the lack of trust between the Council Office and the Mayor’s Office. He noted that as the Mayor’s staff has not always been honest with him personally, lack of trust would naturally occur.

Mr. Acosta agreed with the need for the two bodies to build a sense of trust. He suggested that talking directly with one another about issues would help to rebuild trust.

Mr. Waltman stated that the strategic planning process can provide synchronization of efforts and work to reduce organizational frustration and increase a sense of team between the two offices.

Mr. Acosta stressed the need to revise the Act 47 Plan.

Mr. Spencer suggested that Council and the Administration work to understand their respective roles. He stated that prior Administrations allowed Council to assist in various endeavors when the endeavors should have been handled by the Mayor’s Office.

Mr. Acosta stated that the strategic planning process will begin this Thursday morning at the leadership meeting. He expressed the belief that the transition will take two to three months. He stated that work will begin on the April 15th agendas. Information will be provided to the City Clerk and staff.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested the use of a grid containing action steps to go along with the meeting minutes.

II. Charter Board Ordinance Amendment

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for discussion on the ordinance that was tabled at the March 25th meeting. She stated that the ordinance was tabled when the Mayor's Office said they wanted to offer additional amendments. She inquired about the status of the amendments.

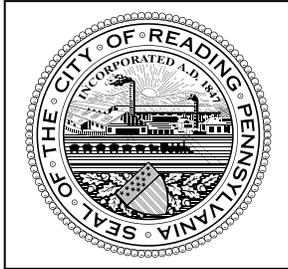
Mr. Spencer stated that the suggestions are not in ordinance form and he distributed copies.

Mr. Spencer expressed the belief that the entire complaint process should be open to the public and that the complainant should not receive anonymity. He stated that his recommendations were not reviewed with the Solicitor.

Discussion will continue at the April 8th Committee of the Whole.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:50 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
April 8, 2013
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, R. Corcoran, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, F. Acosta

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, D. Cituk, M. Bembenick, C. Jones, R. Johnson

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm by Council President Acosta.

I. Executive Session

Mr. Acosta announced the need for an executive session in accordance with PA Sunshine Act Section 708 (a) number 1 regarding a personnel issue. Council entered executive session at 5:07 pm.

Mr. Waltman arrived at this time.

Mr. Spencer and Ms. Snyder arrived at this time.

Council exited executive session at 6:21 pm.

Mr. Murin and Mr. Lloyd arrived at this time.

II. Agenda Review

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Override of Veto of Bill 18-2013

Mr. Acosta stated that he received a call from Mr. Spencer to let him know that he would be vetoing this bill.

Mr. Spencer stated that the City created the CORE program to increase the number of single family owner occupied homes. He stated that there is currently only one property in the CORE program and that the program is being changed to suit this one property. He stated that Ms. Snyder agrees with this stance.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this bill was on the table for two weeks. She stated that she would have appreciated having dialog before the vote was taken to avoid the veto. She stated that she is always open to amending legislation.

Mr. Acosta questioned if there was anything illegal about the amendment. Mr. Spencer stated that there was not. He expressed the belief that this amendment moved CORE away from its main intent. He stated that he has been told that the selling price has proved problematic.

Mr. Corcoran stated that Council passed and the Mayor signed an amendment allowing an owner occupied multi-unit. He stated that the mixed use would be an additional option and all could be considered depending on the size of the property. He explained that to determine the selling price, an estimate was obtained and then the cost of the rehab was deducted. He stated that there is someone interested in the property for a business on the first floor and living above. He stated that the Centre Park Historic District supports this mixed use.

Mr. Waltman suggested that Council let the veto ride and address the issue in the near future. He suggested that leadership discuss the issue and bring new recommendations to Committee.

Mr. Spencer questioned if there were other options.

Ms. Reed stated that there are many owner occupied businesses in the Centre Park area. She stated that there is already a precedent for this use in this neighborhood. She stated that good urban planning includes mixed uses for their residents and stated that this property would still be owner occupied.

Mr. Corcoran explained that the two main goals of the CORE program are increasing the number of owner occupied properties and getting properties back to an active status.

Ms. Snyder suggested that leadership determine if it makes sense to modify the entire program for one property. She suggested lowering the acquisition costs to reduce the asking price. She noted her agreement with Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz that these discussions should have taken place before the original Council vote.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that in the future she will question the Administration on their stance on every piece of legislation on the table so that issues can be addressed before votes are taken.

Ms. Reed stated that these types of issues on legislation dealing with the City's partners send a bad message.

Mr. Spencer suggested that the process for CORE properties be looked at. He stated that the original ordinance states that the use will be for single family owner occupied. He suggested that reducing the acquisition costs will reduce the asking price and make the property more marketable. He questioned how the property was acquired.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the property was blighted, vacant and foreclosed. She stated that Ms. Butler negotiated with Bank of America. She stated that the City acquired the property for \$30,000 but that there were two mortgages on the property totaling \$200,000.

Mr. Waltman suggested that this issue be brought back to the table in two weeks.

Mr. Acosta stated that with the state of the economy many people are purchasing properties to live and work. He stated that 80% of his current lending is owner occupied business. He stated that this is the reality of the City.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for several options. Ms. Kelleher stated that this would be one of many options.

Mr. Acosta stated that there will be problems for the potential buyer if there is a sales agreement and the veto is not overridden. Ms. Kelleher stated that there is a sales agreement but that the potential buyer has not yet submitted a rehab plan.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that not overriding the veto and beginning to work on the issue again in two weeks would be a month-long delay at minimum.

Mr. Spencer cautioned against amending the program this early in the process.

Mr. Corcoran stated that not all properties are the same and that several options are needed.

Mr. Waltman questioned if zoning approval is still required. Mr. Younger stated that it is.

Mr. Waltman again suggested that the issue be discussed in two weeks. He stated that this property needs to be addressed as it has already sat vacant for a long time.

Mr. Acosta noted the need for better communication. He stated that process was followed and the item discussed several times without objection from the Administration.

Mr. Spencer noted his hope that the agreement would not be amended for each individual property. He questioned who negotiated the acquisition cost. Mr. Younger stated that Ms. Butler negotiated the acquisition. He stated that this issue arose after it was determined that the property was not marketable as a single family owner occupied.

Ms. Snyder suggested that the City did not understand the full rehab needs of the property when it was acquired. Ms. Kelleher stated that there were City representatives in the property before acquisition.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for several options but not to amend the program based on each property.

Mr. Waltman stated that this delay will not kill the program.

Mr. Spencer noted that the program should not be changed for each property.

Mr. Acosta noted his hope that continued strategic planning will help the overall process for legislation.

Ms. Reed stated that the City is sending mixed messages. She stated that the neighborhood around the Goggleworks is being developed for mixed use. Mr. Spencer stated that this is because of the federal funding accepted by the City for this area.

Mr. Waltman suggested that Council let the veto ride and address the issue. He stated that the issue should be discussed further and then re-introduced.

Mr. Sterner expressed the belief that this amendment is not only for this one property but that there should be several options available to any property.

Mr. Younger stated that the amendment was proposed to expand those options.

Mr. Corcoran stated that Reading is the first municipality to begin the CORE program and that this is ground-breaking and setting the path. He stated that there is no map while the City learns through the process.

- Ordinance amending the Charter Board ordinance regarding confidentiality

Mr. Acosta allowed Mr. Spatz to address Council. Mr. Spatz distributed a letter to Council from Mr. Mowery at the Reading Eagle about this legislation.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Mayor's staff has proposed additional amendments. She stated that those amendments have not been brought forward. She suggested that Council take action on this amendment this evening and address the other items in the future when they have been prepared.

Mr. Waltman stated that he was not present when this was discussed. He requested background information.

Mr. Spencer stated that his staff proposes a new investigation process.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the objective of this amendment is to make the information public when the Board makes a ruling and not wait for the end of the appeal process. She stated that this only amends when information becomes public.

Mr. Waltman thanked Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz for the explanation and suggested that this amendment be addressed now and other amendments addressed in the future.

- Ordinance executing the Lease Agreement for Egelman's Park baseball field

Ms. Snyder stated that the lease agreement has been amended based on Council recommendations. She stated that the need for official notification of officers and monthly financial reports has been added.

- Resolutions making appointments and reappointments to Boards, Authorities, Commissions

Mr. Marmarou suggested that they be addressed as a block.

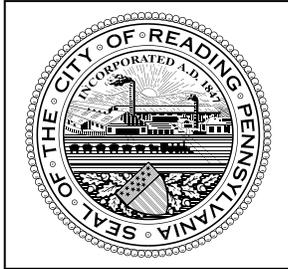
Ms. Kelleher distributed two resolutions – hiring 19 firefighters and 2 paramedics under the SAFER grant and approving the placement of benches in the Veterans Grove area of City Park – and an ordinance – regarding a lease agreement for the tower for WEEU/WFMZ – for introduction which the Administration has requested be added to this evening’s agenda.

Mr. Spencer requested that the ordinance not be introduced as he and Ms. Snyder have not been able to review the lease agreement.

Mr. Younger stated that he will follow up with Mr. Lachat.

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at approximately 6:59 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
April 15, 2013
7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, R. Corcoran, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, F. Acosta. J
Waltman

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, C. Snyder, C. Younger, M. Bembenick, V. Spencer

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Council President Acosta.

I. Strategic Planning

Mr. Acosta stated that the leadership meetings with the Administration continue and are going well.

Mr. Waltman stated that at these meetings the group discusses and defines priority issues and decides how other lower rated issues should be addressed. He stated that the group also discusses the need to improve communication between all parties.

Mr. Acosta stated that the group discusses a wide variety of issues than collectively sets a priority rating for each issue. He stated that the group will agree to move 3-5 of the priority issues down through the committee system.

Mr. Waltman stated that the group defined the current priority issues as follows:

- Finance
- Act 47

- Act 73
- Economic Development
- Standard of Living (previously called Quality of Life)

Mr. Acosta and Mr. Waltman stated that they decided to move away from the phrase “Quality of Life” due to the name of the program used within the Property Maintenance Division.

Mr. Acosta explained that this process will assist Committee Chairs to help define their monthly agendas. He stated that Ms. Reed recently met with Ms. Snyder, Mr. Bembenick, Mr. Lloyd and Ms. Kelleher to set the April Finance Agenda. Ms. Reed stated that this meeting helped to make the Finance meeting more productive. Mr. Acosta suggested that all Committee Chairs use this format to establish their monthly Committee agendas.

Mr. Waltman stated that the leadership group also discussed redefining the Committee’s and the issues they address. He noted that the group is also considering moving Committee meetings away from Monday evenings to other evenings during the work week, which will allow all Councilors to attend all Committee sessions.

There was discussion on the Committee agendas and the need to shift some issues such as Economic Development. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to handle unfinished issues that can sometimes languish in the follow up area of the Committee agendas.

Mr. Waltman suggested creating an intranet to handle follow up issues and issues that are assigned a low priority rating. Using an intranet application, Council members, the Administration and Council staff can work on lower priority and follow up issues.

Mr. Waltman noted the need to improve channels of communication between the Administration and the Managing Director. Mr. Acosta stated that the leadership group decided that the Managing Director should be copied when emails concerning District issues are sent to Department Directors.

There was discussion about the main mission of the Open Government Committee. Mr. Acosta read the Committee description as follows. He noted that the Committees were restructured to mirror the Mayor’s Five Point Plan.

The Open Government, Rules and Intergovernmental Relations Committee’s responsibilities includes Permanent Rules of Council, City Charter, Administrative Code, Intergovernmental Relations, Act 47,

Accuracy of Government Information and Communications, Efficiency and Effectiveness of Government Services

Ms. Reed noted the need to amend the Act 47 Recovery Plan. She noted that the Recovery Plan has initiatives that involve all the City's operational departments. She suggested that the Committee Chairs use the Committee settings to work with the various departments to propose Plan amendments that can be considered by PFM.

Mr. Acosta stated that Council also needs to define their communication with the Managing Director specifically as the Managing Director receives around 100 emails per day, which can be unmanageable. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz also noted the need to define the mechanism to address District issues with the Managing Director.

Ms. Kelleher inquired if Council wished to schedule a joint meeting with the School Board on the 5th Monday in April, April 29th. Mr. Acosta, Ms. Reed and Mr. Corcoran stated that the BCTV debates are scheduled for that evening. Mr. Acosta and Ms. Snyder suggested that the Administration define the list of services already provided to the District before the meeting is scheduled.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the meeting was requested by Mr. Washington and the 29th was suggested as it is a 5th Monday evening for both bodies and there are no regularly scheduled meetings.

The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at approximately 7:50 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*