

CITY COUNCIL

Standards of Living Committee

Tuesday, September 3, 2013
5:00 pm
Penn Room

The Standards of Living Committee's responsibilities and topics include but are not limited to Housing Planning strategies, Building, Trades and Property Maintenance Inspection and Enforcement, Public Safety, Public Works, Police, Fire, Neighborhood Parks, Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Development, Customer Service, Graffiti Abatement, Community Group Organization and Support

Committee Members: Marcia Goodman Hinnershitz (Co-Chair), Randy Corcoran (Co-Chair), and Jeffrey Waltman

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee 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 Committee Chair.

All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012

I. Review Administrative Reports

- Administrative Services
 - CSC – Quarterly next report in Nov
 - **CD – Starting in June – Page 9 – Next Report Sept**
 - Property Maintenance (all programs and initiatives)
 - Zoning –
 - HARB
 - Implementation of Housing Strategies
 - Trades

- **Police** – Quarterly next update Oct
- **Public Works** – Quarterly starting in Oct
 - **WWTP – Page 7**
 - Utilities
 - Streets/Parks
 - Property Maintenance
 - Trash & Recycling
- **Fire** - Quarterly next report Nov
 - Fire Suppression –
 - Fire Marshal – investigations and inspections
 - EMS

II. Review Tattoo Regulation Ordinance (Board of Health)

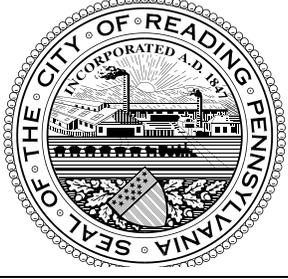
III. Main Street Update (C. Broad)

IV. MVA Action Plan

V. Update Zoning Backlog

Sept Draft Agenda

- Blight Update w/ Acquisition of blighted properties
- MVA Action Plan
- Update Zoning Backlog



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Meeting Report Monday, August 5, 2013

Committee Members Attending: M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Co-Chair)

Others Attending: J. Waltman, D. Sterner, D. Reed, S. Marmarou, C. Younger, C. Snyder, L. Kelleher, M. Kantner, S. Harrity, V. Spencer, G. Bogia, B. Rivera

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the administrative reports would be deferred until the end of the meeting due to more pressing matters on the agenda.

I. SECOND & PENN STREETScape

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Gregg Bogia, a city consultant, will be speaking on how to make Second Street friendlier to pedestrians.

Mr. Bogia stated that he attended a meeting with PennDOT to go over the possibilities regarding this issue and stated that the goal is to have as much parking as possible. The suggestion is to pull the curb in front of the parking garage and Reading Movies 11 further into the street so as to reduce the lanes of traffic to only three. He explained that this would allow for pedestrians to walk through much quicker since it is essentially shortening the distance. He continued stating that on North 2nd at the Court Street intersection a pedestrian island would be created which would allow more visibility for pedestrians to see on-coming traffic.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commented on the importance of visibility in crossing the street at that particular intersection and hopes this will give people adequate time to cross.

Ms. Reed asked about signage.

Mr. Bogia responded that much of the signage will be placed across the median barrier.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he is concerned about possible confusion with some of the signage and Mr. Bogia responded that he would be following state requirements where that is concerned.

Mr. Spencer asked if more time could be added to the Second and Washington areas.

Mr. Bogia stated that he will meet with PennDOT and Public Works to determine if that may be a possibility. He asked Mr. Spencer to prepare a letter outlining why he wants additional time added.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with Mr. Spencer regarding allotting more time at that intersection. She stated that it would be helpful and she supports this effort.

II. GATEWAY INITIATIVES

Ms. Snyder stated that gateways have long been a discussion and it is something that has been studied by Steve Harrity and an internal committee.

Mr. Harrity stated that he is part of a task force created to identify all the gateways into the city. He believes that he has identified most, as there may be more that he hasn't looked at.

- *Penn Street at Cloverleaf*

Ms. Reed stated that the lights in that area are not operating.

Mr. Harrity stated that the sign at this gateway is in relatively good shape; however, the lighting, as mentioned by Ms. Reed, and the landscaping will be improved.

Ms. Reed asked about the natural landscape that was there and Mr. Harrity stated that he did not know what happened to it; he will look into why it's no longer there. He stated that it will be re-landscaped.

- *Second & Penn Streets*

Mr. Harrity stated that this particular gateway was in good shape and minimal work would be done to it.

- Buttonwood Street Bridge

Mr. Harrity stated that more signage is needed there.

Ms. Reed stated that with the bridge being reconstructed in the near future, the signage may be something to do after the construction as it may accidentally be taken down in that process.

Ms Goodman-Hinnershitz asked about a consistent “branding” in the signage throughout all the gateways. Mr. Harrity responded affirmatively.

Mr. Lloyd walked in at this time.

- Lancaster Avenue

Mr. Harrity stated that in respect to this gateway, the current sign may be required by the state but he believes that additional signage is needed as well as a more decorative landscape.

Ms. Reed asked if a design team consisting of a company or agency is working on this project with Mr. Harrity. She suggested contacting Kim Worle.

- Bingaman Street at Triangle

Mr. Harrity stated that this gateway is currently well-maintained but he is planning to do more in the way of signage.

- 5th Street Highway

Mr. Harrity stated that there were no existing signs at this location and because of the properties involved, it may make it more difficult to determine where the signs are to be placed. He will also include some more landscaping to this area.

- Kutztown Road

Mr. Harrity stated that the current sign happens to be on the wrong side of the road; however, he plans on placing them where they should go and improving the landscaping as well.

- Route 183

Mr. Harrity stated that this location has issues similar to that of Kutztown Road where the sign is placed on the wrong side of the road. This, too, will be corrected.

- Warren Street Bypass

Mr. Harrity stated that the sign is placed in the wrong direction and that he will determine where the sign can go to correctly place it.

- Perkiomen Avenue

Mr. Harrity stated that because there is more space to work with at this location, a more detailed landscape plan may be implemented.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed and stated that with making upgrades, we will have to make sure the area is debris free as well.

- Mineral Spring Road

Mr. Harrity stated that he could not find the sign in this area; however, he is sure one did exist at one point. He stated that with this area, an upgrade to the mural can be implemented in addition to placing signage where it belongs.

- Centre Avenue

Mr. Harrity stated that this location, like 5th Street, has no signage and he will need to identify where it belongs.

- Morgantown Road

Mr. Harrity stated that better signs would be needed in this gateway location as well as some landscaping.

- Oak Lane

Mr. Harrity stated that he could not find the sign at this location.

Ms. Kelleher stated that there is definitely a sign there and it is by the first row of houses.

- 11th & Rockland Streets

Mr. Harrity stated that this location is not “technically” a gateway; however, the Wyomissing Foundation has proposed a plan for this area.

Ms. Snyder stated that the original plan they proposed was more elaborate than the slide pictured in the presentation but due to lack of funding, the plan was scaled down. There is a possibility that property owners in that area will assist in contributions as this will benefit their businesses. County funds may also be utilized for this project. This project is moving forward beyond the discussion stage.

Mr. Harrity stated that he will be attending a meeting with PennDOT this week and will follow-up with Ms. Snyder on the developments of that meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz reiterated on the importance of keeping these areas clean as they will look more inviting.

Ms. Reed stated that she would also appreciate being apprised of all the latest developments in the Gateway Initiative as should all members of council as these gateways are in council districts.

Mr. Waltman stated that although he believes all gateways are important, he suggests that more focus be provided to the major gateways. He gave an example of the viaduct and how vastly covered in weeds it is. He suggests that we look at the top three or four major gateways and greatly improve those with perhaps more visuals that draw attention to the beauty that is here in Reading.

III. FLEET MANAGEMENT

Ms. Snyder stated that there has been a discussion on this operation and recently a review was completed of this entire operation. The goal is to create efficiencies. We believe we are efficient enough to serve other municipalities. Our city garages also do maintenance for District Attorney vehicles. The maintenance crew is comprised of seven technicians, two clerks and one manager. Staff training is provided only by different vendors.

Ms. Snyder stated that the facility itself is large enough to handle more vehicles than it does; however, we do not have a preventative maintenance schedule in place. We also do not have an inventory management schedule bringing us to question how truly efficient we are.

Ms. Snyder stated that we have a Fleet Module in the Hansen IT System but unfortunately it is not user friendly which means that the city has to build an interface which will be more conducive. The suggestion was made that we have an inventory system in place.

Ms. Snyder stated that in order to build this interface, training will be needed and a meeting with the Library is scheduled as they have staff that trains in IT. She stated that the hope is to have this completed by the end of the year though that may be a tall order at this point.

Mr. Waltman stated that he believes that the timeline is good and is optimistic it can be completed by year's end.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she is pleased this is moving forward as it is.

IV. CSC REPORT

Ms. Kantner stated that she provided council with her report and asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the report.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated she was pleased with the data regarding clean up and she asked about the possibility of getting smaller containers for the recycling of paper.

Ms. Kantner responded that that is not handled through the CSC department but rather Solid Waste.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz adjourned the meeting at 6:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Bea Rivera, Legislative Aide