



CITY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

Monday, July 27, 2015

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. DID Renewal – C. Broad and J. London, Esq.

II. Reenactment of Local Firearm Regs – Chief Hiem

III. Clean Power Plan – C. Curran-Myers

IV. Presentation on Grant Applications – R. Johnson

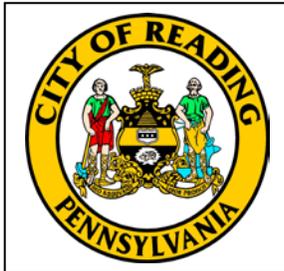
B. Resolution 64-2015 – authorizing the Mayor to sign and submit a Commonwealth Financing Authority Multimodal Transportation Fund Program Grant application to request funding (\$910,099.00) of the total project cost (\$1,820,197.00) for improvements to be made at the Schuylkill River Trail ***Tabled at July 13th regular meeting***

C. Resolution 66-2015– authorizing the submission of a Commonwealth Financing Authority Multimodal Transportation Fund Program Grant application to request funding (\$1,051,500.00) of the total project cost (\$1,500,000.00) for improvements to be made at Skyline Drive. ***Tabled at July 13th regular meeting***

V. Agenda Review

VI. Other Matters

VI. Other Matters



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

July 13, 2015

5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, J. Waltman, D. Reed, C. Daubert

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, D. Cituk, F. Denbowski, R. Johnson

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm by Mr. Waltman.

I. Streets Update

Mr. Johnson gave the follow updates:

- the Buttonwood Street bridge closes on Tuesday, July 21.
- the PennDOT 2015 ADA and street reconstruction projects include the full lengths of Walnut St, Washington St, and Franklin Sts.

He stated that the curb ramps will be addressed and then the streets resurfaced.

- the PennDOT 2016 ADA and street reconstruction projects include Bingaman St, Chestnut St, and Perkiomen Ave.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that many heavy trucks use Perkiomen Ave especially around the area of S 19th St. She stated that a private trucking company is located nearby and that these trucks are destroying the streets. She questioned if this was a legal issue with the proximity of this business to Pendora Park and the future site of the Olivet clubhouse.

Mr. Johnson suggested examining the weight limit for Perkiomen Ave and posting signs prohibiting trucks over that weight limit.

- problems with the poles and traffic signals at 6th & Laurel Sts

He stated that he is investigating temporary lights until the intersection is upgraded (ADA crosswalks, crossing signals, etc). He estimated that a full update will cost approximately \$140,000. He suggested that a study of the intersection be performed to determine if there is a continued need for a traffic signal at this intersection. He suggested holding a neighborhood meeting.

Ms. Snyder arrived at this time.

- a joint grant application is being completed with Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships to address Skyline Dr. The project will begin at the Pagoda and go to McKnight's Gap Rd.

Mr. Spencer arrived at this time.

Mr. Johnson explained that the project will address road repairs, drainage issues, and will provide new traffic and bike lanes. He stated that Lower Alsace is taking the lead on the project.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that the rumble strip between the bike lane and the traffic lanes will be a safety hazard. Mr. Johnson explained that the traffic lanes will measure 10.5 feet each (the minimum requirement is 10 feet) and this is intended to slow traffic down, be more user friendly and comply with the complete streets concept.

Mr. Waltman stated that there are many blind spots on this road and that the narrow traffic lanes will be problematic.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this construction will also undermine the Hill Climb events currently held.

Mr. Waltman questioned the grant application deadline. Mr. Johnson stated that it was the end of July.

Mr. Waltman questioned the current lane width. Mr. Johnson stated that the traffic lanes are currently 14-15 feet wide.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that the bike lane is too wide. Mr. Johnson stated that he will submit Council's comments to Lower Alsace.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she would support one bike lane instead of two. She stated that the bike lanes are next to the stone wall and portions of the wall are collapsing.

Mr. Marmarou agreed and stated that some portions of the mountain are eroding along the wall.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the current plan has 1/3 of the road designated for biking.

Mr. Waltman expressed the belief that nine feet (two lanes of 4.5 feet each) is a lot of room for bikes. He stated that the current plan has nine feet for the bike lane, two feet of rumble strip and 10.5 feet for each of the two driving lanes. He expressed the belief that the narrow traffic lanes along with the hills and curves in the road will make conditions dangerous.

Mr. Johnson stated that he will share Council's concerns with the project team.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the other townships approved this plan. Mr. Johnson stated that the plans are still conceptual.

Mr. Waltman stated that this configuration will cause risk for bikers when drivers miscue with their cars.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the design of the bike lanes. Mr. Johnson stated that they are based on the complete streets concept.

Mr. Waltman stated that he would agree with a bike lane but that this is too wide.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how often the walls were hit by vehicles. Mr. Johnson expressed the belief that they are hit often and not reported.

- a grant application is being completed to address a portion of the Schuylkill River Trail

Mr. Johnson explained that RACC does not like the trail at its current location behind the Yocum Library. He stated that the plan proposes to bring the trail onto N Front St and includes a tree lined divider on N Front St between the bike lane and the traffic lanes. He explained that the trail is currently using railroad property. He stated that the movement of the trail to N Front St will require the loss of parking spaces.

Mr. Waltman questioned if RACC has had problems because of the current location of the trail. Mr. Johnson stated that he was unsure. He stated that he is currently working with RACC to place a bike trail across campus to 2nd and Penn to connect the trail to the downtown area.

Ms. Reed questioned the timeframe of this application. Mr. Johnson stated that it must be submitted by the end of July.

- there are several projects impacting the 2nd and Penn area

Mr. Johnson explained that there are 6-7 projects impacting this area and the City has hired a project coordinator and that the projects now comply with complete streets – relocation of the islands, treescaping, speed tables, etc. He stated that this comprehensive project plan has been shared with PennDOT, RACC and the Community Foundation.

Mr. Johnson stated that the plan includes bump outs for parking, green space, and speed tables at the pedestrian crosswalks.

Mr. Waltman questioned the timeline for projects to begin. Mr. Johnson stated that this is a conceptual design and that the entities will continue working on the projects.

Mr. Waltman questioned if Council would have approval of the final plan. He stated that there are many places in the City where raised pedestrian crossings would be helpful but that they are not always necessary. Mr. Johnson stated that Council will have final plan approval.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the brick crosswalks. Mr. Johnson stated that the brick crosswalks will be removed. He stated that stamped, painted asphalt will be used for crosswalks. He stated that the brick crosswalks create problems for plows and pedestrians.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned when the railing in front of Panevino would be replaced. Mr. Johnson stated that the railing is special order. He stated that as soon as it is delivered it will be installed.

Mr. Johnson stated that he has spoken with PennDOT about the aesthetic lighting proposed by Ms. Reed. He stated that they are currently not supportive as they have concerns that it will interfere with safety lighting.

- agreement with PennDOT for the City to perform winter maintenance on State roads

Mr. Johnson stated that this is a five year contract for the City to plow and salt State roads and bridges in and around the City.

II. Discharging Firearms

Ms. Snyder expressed the belief that Chief Heim would be present for this presentation. She explained that the City repealed its local firearms regulations under threat of legal action. She stated that there has been a successful challenge to the State firearms regulations and the Chief is proposing to reinstate portions of the City's firearms regulations.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the City's regulations would be in conflict with State law.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Chief does not recommend reinstating the regulation regarding the reporting of lost or stolen firearms.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested that Council have direct conversation with Chief Heim.

Mr. Younger explained that reckless endangerment charges can also be filed when discharging a firearm.

Mr. Waltman suggested that Council speak directly with Chief Heim. Ms. Kelleher read an email from the Chief with his comments.

Mr. Younger stated that this is on Council's agenda for introduction. Ms. Snyder suggested that Chief Heim attend the next Committee of the Whole meeting to address any concerns.

Mr. Marmarou stated that many times people are unaware that their firearm has been stolen.

III. Agenda Review

Ms. Kelleher stated that there are six people registered to speak on agenda matters and one registered to speak on non-agenda matters. She explained that most are registered to speak on the UGI issue. She stated that the amendment to the Street Cut Ordinance is being introduced this evening and that it may need to remain pending until it is complete.

Ms. Reed and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested that the resolutions for the grant applications for the Schuylkill River Trail and Skyline Dr projects be removed from the consent agenda for action at the July 27 meeting.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including:

- Ordinance authorizing the transfer of fringe benefit accounts to delineate between active and retired employee benefits

Ms. Snyder stated that currently department budget fringe benefit line items include both active and retired employees. She stated that this transfer would separate them for better analysis.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the City's pursuit of reducing benefits for retirees who have access to healthcare at another employer. Ms. Snyder stated that it is still being pursued. She stated that the issue will probably end up in court.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he has reviewed the collective bargaining agreements and cannot find evidence of why retirees continue to be covered by the City when they have access to insurance through their current employer. Ms. Snyder stated that she will provide the language. She stated that the issue has gone to arbitration and that the arbiter found in favor of the retirees.

Mr. Marmarou took issue with retirees taking bonuses for not using their current employer's benefits and remaining on the City's insurance.

- Amending the Duties of the Health Officer

Ms. Snyder reviewed the amendment. She stated that it updates the job description of the Health Officer.

- Amending Street Cuts

Ms. Snyder stated that this amendment is the result of the work group.

Ms. Kelleher stated that further revisions will be needed but that it will be introduced this evening. She noted the need for residents to see that the City is taking action.

Mr. Spencer stated that this amendment was not reviewed by the Administration. Mr. Waltman stated that he hoped to meet with the Mayor this morning but that a meeting was not possible due to the Mayor's schedule.

Mr. Spencer stated that Mr. Coleman should not have submitted this amendment without reviewing it with the Administration first. Ms. Snyder stated that she did not receive the amendment before it was added to the Council agenda.

Mr. Waltman stated that there is focus on the issue now and it should continue to move forward.

Mr. Spencer noted the need for staff to follow protocol. He stated that this was not reviewed with the Managing Director.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that protocol has not been followed on many occasions. She stated that introducing this now shows good faith to residents that the issue is moving forward. She stated that work will continue.

Mr. Waltman stated that he worked with Mr. Coleman to bring this forward.

Mr. Spencer stated that the protocol issue is within the Administration and not a Council misstep.

Mr. Waltman stated that the group is making great strides and he commended the work of Mr. Coleman.

Mr. Acosta arrived at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for close review of this amendment. She questioned disrupted sidewalks that are not restored by UGI. Mr. Johnson stated that if the sidewalk is disrupted because of the relocation of the meter, it must be restored by UGI. If it is disrupted because of a new service, it is the responsibility of the property owner.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if there is a timeframe for repairs to be made. Mr. Johnson stated that he must review the regulations. Mr. Spencer stated that this is also a property maintenance issue.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that some residents recently did extensive and expensive repairs to their sidewalks only to have UGI disrupt them and not restore them.

There was a discussion about the bad manners and behaviors of the subcontractors.

IV. Executive Session

Mr. Acosta announced that Council would be entering executive session to discuss personnel matters. Council entered executive session at 6:08 pm and exited at 6:43 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

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

Drafted by	Deputy City Clerk
Sponsored by/Referred by	Environmental Advisory Council
Introduced on	N/A
Advertised on	N/A

Resolution _____-2015

WHEREAS, the National Climate Assessment has identified extreme precipitation, flooding, declining air quality, extreme temperature changes which deviate from historical norms, and more as observed impacts of climate change in Pennsylvania and in Reading; and

WHEREAS, the City of Reading Environmental Advisory Council has been working toward sustainability in the City of Reading by encouraging residents’ use of rain barrels and by creating steep slope and riparian buffer regulations; and by encouraging and removing barriers to the installation of alternative energy systems; and

WHEREAS, numerous authoritative scientific bodies, including the US Global Change Research Program, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have recognized that carbon pollution created by the burning of fossil fuels is contributing to global warming; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania’s power plants are its largest source of carbon pollution, contributing to 44% of its total according to PennEnvironment Research and Policy Center’s 2012 report “America’s Dirtiest Power Plants”; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Massachusetts v. EPA* (2007) that greenhouse gases are “air pollutants” as defined by the Clean Air Act and the Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to regulate them; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed Clean Power Plan sets a target of reducing the carbon emissions rate from Pennsylvania’s power plants for the commonwealth of Pennsylvania 32% by 2030; and

WHEREAS, the Clean Power Plan gives Pennsylvania the opportunity to design its own plan to meet its carbon reduction targets by investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency; and

WHEREAS, energy efficiency and renewable energy like wind and solar are proven, cost-effective alternatives to burning fossil fuels; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Reading respectfully requests that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection work with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials to develop a plan to reduce carbon pollution from Pennsylvania’s power plants to exceed its Clean Power Plan target, and that maximizes the potential for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Adopted by Council _____, 2015

Francis G. Acosta
President of Council

Attest:

Linda A. Kelleher
City Clerk