

City of Reading
City Council
Work Session
Monday, June 16, 2008

Council Members Present

Vaughn Spencer, President
Stephen Fuhs, District 1
Marcia Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Dennis Sterner, District 3
Stratton Marmarou, District 4
Maria Baez, District 5
Jeff Waltman, District 6

Others Present

R. Hottenstein
L. Kelleher
C. Younger
D. Hoag
M. Fiume, W. Vitale, Representatives form Opportunity House

Call to Order

President of Council Vaughn Spencer called the work session to order at 7:18 pm.

Managing Director's Report

Mr. Hottenstein reported that the Mayor's Annual Prayer Breakfast will be held on Tuesday September 23, 2008, at the Sheraton, with Special guest, Anne Beiler, founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels and Author of Twist of Faith. The Centre Park Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday June 21st from 10 am to 4 pm. He noted the new kid's page link on the City's website. www.readingpa.gov He also reminded everyone of the City Day/Mid Day Café scheduled for Friday June 20th from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. This year City day will include a dunking booth and pie throwing activity, by bringing a can pet food to donate to the Animal Rescue League or a new Children's book to donate to Cops N Kids. Citizens will have the opportunity to either dunk or throw a pie at a City Official.

Mr. Hottenstein noted that his report also responds to the list of follow up issues listed on the agenda. Ms. Baez inquired if the list of repairs scheduled for City Libraries cover all buildings. Mr. Hottenstein stated that the repair list does cover the main branch and all other branches of the library. The repairs schedule will be provided to City Council before the July work session.

Opportunity House Street Vacation Request

Mr. Fiume stated that Opportunity House is beginning a capital campaign to fund the expansion of their buildings to provide additional child care, after school programs, etc. He stated that the expansion will allow Opportunity House to serve an additional 200 children and will generate cash flow to assist with the operations of the emergency homeless center.

Mr. Vitale explained that the street vacation request and called Council's attention to the parcel site plan and the diagrammatic plan. He stated that the Opportunity House owns all properties on Pear Street but two. The suggested changes to traffic patterns will create a vehicle free setting and improve day care safety. He said Pear Street would be one way and Beech will be two way, which will allow bus service for children and improve safety.

Mr. Vitale stated that Opportunity House is withdrawing their request for the vacation as all parcels have not been acquired. He inquired if Council has any objections to the proposed traffic changes.

Mr. Waltman expressed his belief in the project and noted the uplifting effect and growth of Opportunity House has had on this entire community.

Mr. Fiume explained that the two remaining parcels are owned by lifelong residents of the neighborhood and Opportunity House is willing to wait to obtain possession rather than to force it.

Ms. Goodman–Hinnershitz questioned if the emergency homeless center is in need of expansion to provide more space for homeless individuals. Mr. Fiume replied that the emergency shelter houses between seventy and one hundred and twenty five individuals per night. Fifteen to twenty of them permanently reside in the shelter due to disabilities. The remainder flow through and are educated and assisted to find permanent lodging elsewhere. He stated that during heavy usage over the cold winter months the emergency shelter uses its day quarters to handle high demand when necessary.

Mr. Fiume and Mr. Vitale stated that after the remaining parcels are acquired Opportunity House will reapply to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Briefing on City owned Dams

Ms. Hoag explained that the DEP is currently focusing on the care and maintenance of dams in Pennsylvania. The City currently owns 4; Ontaulaunee, Egelman's, Bernhart's, Tulpehocken Bushong, City records show that the first three of the dams were constructed in the late 1800's and early 199's. Bernhart's was constructed in the early 1900's. DEP is requiring the City to draw down Bernhart's Lake to allow inspection of the dam by early to mid August. She noted the valves have not been used in some time. She compared the valves on the Bernhart's Dam to those on the previously owned Angelica Dam. She note that the City has not has any issues with Bernhart's dam, which has survived one hundred and fifty year storm.

Egelman's Dam was constructed in the late 1800's; however the City cannot locate any permits for the construction. DEP is requiring to apply for a construction and repair permit and to bring the dam to current code. She stated that the City will be working with the Izaak Walton Group to make the repairs.

The Tulpehocken Bushong Dam near Confluence Park is a run river dam, which creates some safety issues for those who use the river for recreational purposes. She stated that funding is available for the necessary repairs and corrections.

Mr. Marmarou asked Ms. Hoag who will be responsible for the necessary repairs on Route 73 running over, the Ontaulaunee Dam. Ms. Hoag is stated that Reading Area Water Authority will be responsible for these repairs. It was noted that Route 73 runs over part of the dam breast.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for DEP to provide some financial assistance for this aggressive schedule. He also questioned the safety of drawing down Bernhart's Dam without proper lead remediation at the park.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed, noting the drainage of Bernhart's Dam will greatly increase the attractive nuisance factor and expand the public's access to a multitude of lead contaminated areas. She noted

that the drainage will also open access to those areas that the EPA and DEP claims are inaccessible.

Council asked Ms. Hoag to take a strong position requesting that remediation occur first.

Ms, Kelleher, expressed hope that the DEP will be as aggressive with Exide as they are with the City.

Respectfully submitted by,

Linda A. Kelleher, City Clerk

FOLLOW UP ISSUES

- Library repair schedule
- Update on dam inspection
- Update on request to drain Bernhart's lake in August to allow inspection of dam breast
- Update on Antietam Master Plan