



CITY COUNCIL

Public Works Committee

***Tuesday, February 16, 2010
Meeting Report***

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

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, C. Jones, D. Hoag

The Public Works Committee meeting was called to order at 5:06 pm by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, chair.

Stormwater Utility Update

Mr. Jones introduced Rob Taylor representing Hazen & Sawyer who is studying this issue.

Mr. Taylor distributed and reviewed information regarding the work to date.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for this issue to be reviewed at a Council work session after additional work is complete.

Mr. Sterner questioned where Hazen & Sawyer was located. Mr. Taylor stated that their office is located in Philadelphia. Mr. Jones added that Hazen & Sawyer is also part of the project management team at the waste water treatment plant.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if any municipalities in PA were using this fee. Mr. Taylor stated that Philadelphia began using the fee in the 1970's. Philadelphia bills customers based on water usage and the size of the water meter, which does not relate to water run-off. He stated that they are currently re-evaluating this billing policy.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if all non-profits would be exempt from paying this fee. Mr. Taylor stated that they will not be exempt. He stated that these facilities also have water run-off. He noted that Council can create a policy making non-profits exempt but that this is not necessary.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned which category the Parking Authority garages were classified in. Mr. Taylor stated that properties with large parking areas will pay the most as most

of the property is paved.

Mr. Sterner requested an explanation of impervious surface. Mr. Taylor explained that it is rooftops, concrete, asphalt, and anything that cannot absorb water.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the government category included schools. Mr. Taylor stated that it did.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the Act 47 coordinator was aware that the City was studying this issue. Mr. Jones responded affirmatively.

Mr. Sterner noted that Reading would be implementing this fee but that the surrounding suburbs would not. Mr. Jones voiced his belief that after this is implemented in Reading that many local suburbs will follow.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the importance of public awareness on this issue and suggested that the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) be involved.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that this topic be discussed at town meetings and to stress its positive aspects. He noted that the amount or per property estimates would be needed to allay resident concerns. Mr. Taylor stated that this information will be given to Council once it has been determined. He stated that the process has not yet proceeded to that point.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the issue will appear in the local newspaper when it is discussed at Council work session. She stated that education should begin at that time. Mr. Taylor stated that education will begin prior to that time. He noted the need to stress the positive aspects. He stated that PA Act 167 treats this fee as a user based commodity.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested a public relations plan before the issue moves forward. Mr. Taylor noted the need for awareness and to build support.

Mr. Sterner noted his agreement with the EAC involvement as many consumers are now supporting "green" issues. Mr. Taylor noted his agreement and stated that this fee would support sustainability.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated her belief that many non-taxable properties will be very unhappy with this new fee. Mr. Taylor suggested that customers who will pay the most should be approached separately to educate them and to garner their support.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she would be holding a town meeting regarding gas and water issues. She suggested that this topic also be discussed at that meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the next steps for this issue. Mr. Jones noted that the rate issue needs to be developed before moving forward.

Mr. Sterner suggested an update for the EAC. Ms. Hoag stated that the EAC received an update in December. She also noted that the DEP will be reviewing this issue when the City's renewal permit gets reviewed. She noted that the County permit review committee will also become involved at that time.

Mr. Sterner questioned who would be leading the effort. Mr. Jones suggested that a stakeholder committee be established. He stated that this effort is included in the Hazen & Sawyer contract. Mr. Taylor stated that he would meet with Mr. Jones and Ms. Hoag regarding this committee.

5th and Bingaman Traffic Signal

Mr. Jones reported that PennDOT has completed their study. He stated that the data shows that the intersection does not meet any warrants. There is not enough traffic.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there were multiple accidents at this intersection. Mr. Jones stated that there were not.

Mr. Jones stated that as PennDOT was aware of the neighborhood concerns, they proposed some improvements. He distributed the improvement plan. He stated that tree trimming will begin so that signs can be seen by motorists. He also noted that sign changes are in the process. An application has been sent to PennDOT to revise the school permit to allow "Slow School" to be painted on 5th St in both directions. This work will commence in the spring.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz voiced her belief that the perception of problems is higher than the actual problems. She suggested that these details be given to Mr. Acosta so he can evaluate the need for a neighborhood meeting and to alleviate constituent concerns. Mr. Jones noted his willingness to attend a meeting to address this issue.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the cost of the signal upgrades. Mr. Jones stated that each signal would be upwards of \$20,000 and that there are no plans for these upgrades.

Installation of Traffic Signal at N 13th & Richmond Sts

Mr. Marmarou stated that he does not support a traffic signal at this location. He stated that it would cause many traffic problems. Mr. Jones stated that the request was for a four-way stop sign.

Mr. Marmarou stated that this will also cause traffic congestion. Mr. Jones stated that the Administration has sent a letter to Albright stating that the problems are caused by Albright students.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she does not support a traffic change at this location. Mr. Jones stated that the letter also indicated that if the City moves forward with the traffic study request that it will be at Albright's expense. He stated that the study may not justify the need and that there has been no response from Albright.

Installation of Street Lights on N 13th St from Rockland to the City Line

Mr. Marmarou questioned if this was both sides of N 13th St. Mr. Jones stated that it was not. He stated that this is a Met Ed project.

Installation of Traffic Signal at 5th & Oley or 5th & Douglass Sts

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested an update on this signal. Mr. Jones stated that a study has been done on these intersections in the past and they do not meet the necessary warrants.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated her belief that problems are caused by distracted and irresponsible drivers.

Parks and Recreation

Ryan Hottenstein and Otis Smith joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Hottenstein explained that a committee has been formed to study the recreation issue. The committee consists of Matt Lubas, Frank Denbowski, Mike Schorn and Otis Smith. He stated that he received an update from the committee today and that their final recommendation is due on March 31.

Mr. Smith stated that the committee met with the YMCA and Olivet. He stated that the committee is looking at the formation of a recreation commission which would include the City, the School District and other recreation partners. He stated that Lancaster has a recreation commission and that they would be used as a template. He stated that recreation costs would be shared and stressed the importance of the participation of the School District. The commission would take 12 – 18 months to establish and that programming could continue through the City, YMCA and Olivet in the interim.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the need for an RFP for this collaboration. Mr. Smith stated that it may be possible to provide site services without the RFP process in the interim. This issue is being researched. He noted the committee's feeling that Olivet would be better suited to provide services in the interim as they have a higher youth involvement. He stated that the YMCA is currently offering mainly adult programs. He noted the committee feels the YMCA and Olivet should be included in the Commission.

Mr. Sterner noted that the YMCA made a presentation at a recent Council work session. He stated that the YMCA offered to help the City with its recreation needs. Mr. Smith noted that the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee (PARC) has reached out to the YMCA many times in

the past with no response. He noted the need for good service to residents and no duplication of services. He stated that the committee is studying the programming currently offered so that there are no lapses during the interim.

Mr. Marmarou questioned who was being contacted at the School District. Mr. Smith stated that Mr. Washington has voiced his support of recreation. He noted the positive effort with the recycling cooperative and his hope that this will create positive momentum for recreation conversations. He noted that the Athletic Director position has stabilized and that Mr. Lubas is active at RHS with the swimming and water polo programs.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that Mr. Suski be approached. Mr. Smith noted his willingness to engage Mr. Suski.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated her belief that this planning fits in well with the City's need for an updated 10 Year Park and Open Space Plan. She stated that the formation of a commission will fit into the plan well and point the City in a new direction. She noted the need to be careful that the RFP for site services (if needed) is very clear and that collaboration does not become collusion.

Mr. Smith stated that it is important for the City to state that they are not asking for handouts but that they are moving in a new direction. He stated that the commission would be a long-term partnership to benefit all residents.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed saying that the key is that it is a benefit to the entire community.

Mr. Sterner voiced his support of the commission.

Mr. Smith stated that the City would still be very involved in recreation. He again stressed the importance of the School District's participation. He noted that the Lancaster School District pays the Lancaster Commission a per student fee.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz voiced her support of the commission. She stated that this is a proactive step as far as Act 47 is concerned.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned who would bring all parties together. Mr. Smith stated that a grant is available to establish a commission and pay a facilitator. The grant requires a \$1000 local match. He stated that the State is very receptive to starting these new relationships.

Mr. Marmarou also suggested that the State legislators be approached in regards to the grant.

Mr. Smith stated that the committee is excited about this long-term plan and the need to keep

recreation programs running.

Mr. Hottenstein stated that the committee process has been working well. He stated that those who know the subject should be the ones who steer programs. He stated that the committee has also been looking at opportunities for recreation that include children, teens, adults and seniors.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the plan would be very helpful during the budget process.

Mr. Smith added that the Act 47 representative assigned to recreation is very receptive to this plan. He noted that the PARC is proceeding with the 10 Year Park and Open Space Plan meetings to garner public input on recreation as well. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 9 at 7:30 pm at 3rd & Spruce Rec Center.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that she is very pleased with this process.

The Public Works Committee adjourned at 6:39 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk*