

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2010**

A regular meeting of City Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Michael Kaucher representing the Reading Berks Conference of Churches.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Spencer
Councilor Acosta, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Mayor T. McMahon
Interim Managing Director C. Geffken
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Clerk L. Kelleher
City Solicitor C. Younger

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

City Council issued the following recognitions to:

- individuals from the Berks Community Action Program
- Judith Lopez, Central Catholic High School for being recognized as Berk's Best in the Vocational/Technical category

Mayoral recognition of:

- The Reading High School football team and Coach Preston McKnight.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Spencer announced that three (3) citizens were registered to address Council. He stated that one (1) citizen was registered to address Council on agenda matters and two (2) on non-agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to

suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. As no one objected, the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Spencer reminded those registered to speak of the remaining public speaking rules.

Bruce Becker, of 1200 North 12th Street, stated that he has been investing in Reading properties for six (6) years and noted that the difficulties the down turn in the economy have created. He expressed his belief in the need for the tax abatement program to provide a good start to investors. He asked Council to amend the tax rebate ordinance to provide a ten (10) year abatement period. Currently, the proposed ordinance lists a ten (10) year abatement for owner occupied properties and a five (5) year abatement for non-owner occupied properties.

Ray Torres, of South 5th Street, was not present.

Dennis Straub, of North 10th Street, noted the need for the de-conversion of rental properties and the successful enforcement of the City's Property Maintenance Codes. He noted the disproportionate amount of rental properties when compared to owner occupied properties in Reading. He stated the lack of proper enforcement of the City's housing and property maintenance codes played a roll in the deadly fire, which occurred on North 10th Street, at a two unit illegal rental property. He also suggested amending the current Codes to increase safety measures.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Spencer called Council's attention to the minutes from the May 24th regular meeting of Council and the agenda for tonight's meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading. Council President Spencer noted the need to amend tonight's agenda as follows:

1. Add an ordinance for introduction which will set the salary for the Director for Administrative Services.
2. Amend Resolution 64-2010 under the Consent Agenda which provides CDBG funding for street paving projects.
3. Remove Resolution 63-2010 from the Consent Agenda in regard to the DCNR Grant

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to approve the agenda, as amended including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading, for tonight's meeting and the minutes from the May 24th regular meeting of Council. The motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution 65-2010 to permit the City of Reading to apply for HUD Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grant and HUD Section 108 guaranteed loan funds for renovations in the neighborhood around the Goggleworks (**Community Development**)

Resolution 63-2010 authorizing the City of Reading to apply for a Regional Peer-to-Peer Feasibility Study Assistance Grant on cooperation for municipal parks and community recreation programs and to create a joint study committee at a cost not to exceed \$1,000.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to adopt Resolution 63-2010.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this resolution represents a positive move forward and a positive partnership with the Reading School District. She stated that this study supports proper planning for Recreation services. She noted the hard work to move this initiative forward by members of the Reading School District and the City.

Resolution No. 63-2010 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Spencer, President - 5.

Nay: None- 0.

Resolution 64-2010 - authorizing the Mayor to execute a FFY2010 (36th CD year - January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010) Action Plan amendment to add the Street Paving Project and allow the Community Development Department to extend a float loan to the project.

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Marmarou, to adopt Resolution 64-2010.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to amend Resolution 64-2010 by removing all language pertaining to the float loan.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the resolution was amended to allow separate consideration of the float loan.

Resolution 64-2010 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Spencer, President - 5.

Nay: None- 0.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mayor McMahon highlighted the report prepared for the members of Council as follows:

1. His thanks to Council for adopting the proposed Recovery Plan
2. Retirement of Dr. Hassel, who has served for approximately 30 years as the City's Health Officer
3. Update on the 8th and Penn Street Farmer's Market
4. The need for all property owners to install smoke detectors to increase Public Safety

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

1. 2009 External Audit Update
2. 2010 Real Estate Transfer Tax Collection Update

Councilor Sterner stated that the report informs Council that the prior Luden's property located at 8th and Walnut Street recently sold. He inquired about the new owner and their plans for redevelopment. Mayor McMahon stated that plans for redevelopment are unknown at this time.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Bill No. 25-2010 –amending the process for denials of requests and appeals regarding access for public records of the City of Reading (**Law**)

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to enact Bill 25-2010.

Bill 25-2010 was enacted by the following vote:

Yea: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Spencer, President - 5.

Nay: None- 0.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Spencer read the following ordinances into the record:

A. Ordinance - re-enacting Local Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) Program for the City of Reading as Codified in Part 7 Subpart B of Chapter 24 of the City of Reading Codified Ordinances and amending the same (**Law/Community**)

Development)

B. Ordinance - re-enacting Residential Tax Abatements for the City of Reading as Codified In Part 7 Subpart A of Chapter 24 of the City of Reading Codified Ordinances and amending the same (**Law/Community Development**)

C. Ordinance - establishing a quality of life violation ticket process for violation of specifically identified City Code provisions by amending Chapter 5 – Code Enforcement of the City of Reading Codified Ordinances by adding a Part 14 (**Police**) *Introduced at the June 11 Special Meeting*

D. Ordinance - authorizing the Mayor to execute any and all documents required to effectuate the transfer of ownership of certain premises situate in Ontelaunee Township, Berks County, PA from the City of Reading to Ontelaunee Township (**Law**)

E. Ordinance – setting the salary for the Director of the Administrative Services Department.

RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution 49-2010 - authorizing the filing of a proposal for funds with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to access Early Intervention Program funds

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution No. 49-2010.

Mr. Geffken explained the Council President's request to obtain the City's funding through the DCED. He stated that he followed up with Secretary Cornelius as requested, but needed to check back for approval potential.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed her belief in this collaborative effort which could result in cost savings for the City.

Resolution No. 49-2010 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Spencer, President - 5.

Nay: None- 0.

B. Resolution 66–2010 - authorizing the introduction of an Ordinance amending the City of Reading Zoning Map to change the zoning designation of parcels known as 512,

513 and 525 Crestmont Street and 512, 514, 520, 522 and 524 Arlington Street from R2 (Low Density Residential) to MC (Manufacturing Commercial). It is further resolved by City Council, for the City Clerk to undertake the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and City of Reading Zoning Ordinance including but not limited to preparation of an ordinance, advertising, posting, mailing and scheduling a hearing on the proposed City of Reading Zoning Map amendment.

Councilor Sterner moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution No. 66-2010.

Council President Spencer stated that this resolution will allow the process to amend the zoning ordinance to move forward.

Resolution No. 66-2010 was adopted by the following vote:

Yea: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Sterner, Spencer, President - 5.

Nay: None- 0.

C. Resolution - appointing Carl E. Geffken as Acting Director of Administrative Services for a period of no more than 180 days as required by Section 1-183, Part A of the Administrative Code

City Solicitor Younger noted the Administration's desire to withdraw this resolution and replace it at an upcoming meeting.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Marmarou noted his agreement with the need for improved enforcement of Property Maintenance Codes to protect the safety and well-being of the City's residents.

Councilor Marmarou noted the success of the June 5th College Heights Community Council Community Garage Sale. He stated that in addition to recycling property owner's treasures, people were also introduced to the College Heights neighborhood.

Councilor Sterner congratulated Coach Preston McKnight and the Reading High football team for their successful year. He stated that the number of football players going on for post-high school education is a testament to the relationship Coach McKnight has with young adults on the football team.

Councilor Sterner also noted his agreement with the need for the City to continue to make strong improvements in the housing area.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed with the need to increase leadership and accountability to improve the City's housing safety.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz invited all to visit the Pagoda's Facebook page and noted that the Pagoda currently has approximately 2,300 friends on Facebook.

Council President Spencer stated that the resolution passed this evening will provide approximately \$320K in CDBG funding to repave City streets.

Council President Spencer noted the dangers caused by the undercurrent in the Schuylkill River that has caused so many tragedies over so many years. He advised all not to swim in the Schuylkill River.

Council President Spencer stressed the need for residents to have a fire evacuation plan and meeting place, in addition to smoke detectors.

Council President Spencer highlighted the Council meeting schedule.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Linda Kelleher CMC, City Clerk