

**City of Reading
City Council
Work Session
Tuesday, February 22, 2011**

Councilors Attending: V. Spencer, F. Acosta, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, J. Waltman

Others Attending: C. Younger, F. Denbowski, L. Kelleher, C. Geffken, G. Zolna, L. Murin

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the Work Session to order at approximately 7:04 pm.

Managing Director's Report

Mr. Geffken read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- Update on the Blighted Property Review Committee certification process
- Reminder to report streetlight outages to the Citizen's Service Center
- March 10th press conference on the LERTA with the Reading-Berks Association of Realtors
- April 30th Greater American Clean-up

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that residents in the 1400 blk of Fairview Street are quite anxious to learn the next steps following the certification of 1459 Fairview Avenue.

Ms. Kelleher explained that after the certification process the properties are affirmed by City Council and the City Planning Commission and forwarded to the Reading Redevelopment Authority for eminent domain proceedings. She stated that the Reading Redevelopment Authority is hesitant to begin eminent domain proceedings until a responsible new owner is identified.

Council Staff Report

Mr. Spencer called Council members attention to the Council Staff report attached to the agenda. He noted that Mr. Acosta, a few months ago suggested that the Council Staff Report be included as a regular item on the Work Session agenda. Ms. Kelleher stated

that advertisements seeking Boards, Authorities, and Commissions members were placed in the Reading Eagle over the past two Sundays. She stated that communications were also sent to Alvernia, Albright and RACC, seeking faculty and staff member participation on the City's Boards, Authorities, and Commissions. She stated that response to both outreach approaches have been positive.

Ms. Kelleher stated that early in January, Council President Spencer and she escorted Alvernia representatives through the Navy Marine Center. Alvernia was identified by Mary's Shelter as a potential partner for the reuse of this property. She stated that at this point Alvernia has expressed some interest but would like further information; therefore a meeting has been arranged for Alvernia with representatives from the OEA and the Navy on March 1st.

Ms. Kelleher reported that the Bernhart work group, assisted by City Attorney Tonya Butler, is working to draft the memorandum of understanding that will be attached to the finalized access agreement. She noted that Ms. Butler drafted the access agreement and it has been forwarded to Exide legal counsel for review and comment.

Public Service Agreements (PIO7)

Mr. Denbowski provided background noting the need to explore outsourcing some public services to City agencies that can possibly provide those same services at a reduced cost. Mr. Murin stated that the proposal developed by the United Community Service explores the opportunity to fund some public services through the Reading Parking Authority or the Reading Area Water Authority. He noted the success of the same approach, which developed the recycling program for the Reading School District. He explained that the goal of this organization is to make public services more efficient and to develop a pool qualified City candidates to fill public service positions.

Mr. Murin stated that the United Community Service is seeking a contribution from the City totaling \$190K with matching funds provided by the affected authorities for a specific time period. He noted that this initiative is associated with the Act 47 Recovery Plan.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Mr. Waltman agreed with this approach and noted the benefit of working to explore these options further. Mr. Murin stated that the group is meeting with the Parking Authority and the Reading Area Water Authority in the upcoming weeks. He stated that if both parties are willing, an executive partnership will be formed between the two (2) Authorities and the City. He stated that future efforts may also seek the Reading Housing Authority's cooperation.

Trash & Recycling

Mr. Zolna stated that the City is currently rebidding the trash and recycling. He stated that with this bid, trash and recycling services will be separated and yard waste will also be added as separate bid.

Mr. Denbowski stated that yard waste will include Christmas tree pickup, grass clipping collections, etc. The program will run March 1st through November 30th. There were discussions on the need for improved litter enforcement and the need to provide improved education to the City's residents.

Mr. Murin suggested exploring a Solid Waste Authority. He explained that research projects show that Allied receives approximately \$160K per year for recycling materials collected. He explained that recycling materials yield approximately \$10/ton under the current bid; however he noted that the price for recyclables is considerably higher in other areas. He stated that increasing the revenue for recyclable materials could help to reduce the cost of the recycling and the trash programs and help cover the cost of the yard waste collection service. He added that if the City, under a Authority model, began separating its own recyclable products the revenue generated would be considerably higher.

Ms. Kelleher suggested extending the yard waste program beyond November 30th. She stated that historically, trees in the outlying areas have late leaf fall, which creates problems after City trucks are outfitted for snow events and can no longer remove leaves.

Review of PFM Financial Policies

Mr. Geffken reviewed the revised the draft policy provided by PFM. Mr. Waltman expressed the belief that the aggregate transfer of \$500K seems reasonable and provides the desired controls that accompany the new and improved financial reporting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that the provision requiring the City Auditor to report annually on the Administration's compliance with the new policy should be changed to quarterly, which will increase the accountability of the Administration and provide timely information to the members of Council.

The Work Session adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk