



# *CITY COUNCIL*

## *Public Safety, Public Works and Neighborhood Services Committee*

***Monday, April 15, 2013  
Meeting Report***

**Committee Members Attending:** S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, J. Waltman

**Others Attending:** S. Katzenmoyer, C. Snyder

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, Chair, called the Public Safety, Public Works and Neighborhood Services Committee meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that City leadership meetings continue to shape Committee meetings and Council discussion. She noted the need for Committee meetings to focus on agenda topics and not District issues.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to continue to use the Follow Up lists for pending issues until they are resolved.

Mr. Lloyd arrived at this time.

### **Review Monthly Reports**

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz reviewed the suggested report schedule.

Ms. Snyder stated that Fire and EMS will report together. She distributed a spreadsheet showing the Committee when specific reports would be received. She asked the Committee to consider quarterly reports versus bi-monthly reports versus monthly reports depending on the current issues. She stated that Property Maintenance also provides reports to the Housing and Economic Development Committee.

Chief Heim arrived at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that leadership meetings may result in a change of the Committee structure.

Ms. Snyder stated that she will be explaining to Department Directors that they should provide a cover memo explaining the highlights of the report and to put the data into context. She stated that the cover memo should also discuss trends, concerns and future actions which are needed.

Mr. Waltman explained that with a former employer, each rep submitted weekly highlights which moved up the chain of command to ensure issues were communicated and addressed by upper level management. He stated that management would provide an executive summary of the issues to the upper levels. He stated that numbers do not always mean the same thing to each person reviewing the report. Council needs to have more than raw data.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that her experience with reporting is by project. She stated that reports should also include performance indicators and not only raw data.

The Committee suggested that all reports be given on a quarterly basis. Ms. Snyder stated that she will provide them based on when the Department's quarterly reports are submitted to her.

Mr. Waltman suggested that these reports should not be an additional task but a sharing of information that is already being compiled.

Ms. Snyder stated that the EMS report which will be provided this evening is not yet in the discussed format. She distributed the EMS report.

Mr. Waltman suggested that Department Directors discuss five to six key items in their cover memo of what Council needs to know and understand.

Mr. Marmarou stated that when the City in-sourced EMS, a guarantee of revenue was made.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested the Committee review the information and send any questions to Ms. Kelleher who will compile a list to be sent to Ms. Snyder.

Mr. Acosta arrived at this time.

Ms. Snyder stated that Departments will also begin compiling performance metrics which will be included in reports.

### **Police Force Manning Levels and Crime Trends**

Chief Heim distributed a report of performance indicators. He stated that the 2013 data is compared to past years. He stated that current indicators show that there is significantly less crime than the 2006 – 2009 period. He explained that the decrease in larceny may be attributed to the fact that citizens submit their own report and that not all citizens follow through with the paperwork.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he often explains this to residents and that many do not file the report.

Chief Heim stated that there have also been gains made in addressing assaults.

Mr. Waltman praised Chief Heim for the work of the force, especially in light of the significant increase in new officers and a 20% reduction to the force. He stated that the force is making many gains.

Chief Heim called the Committee's attention to the clearance stats. He stated that the force clears more serious cases but that there is still an overall increase in crimes that are solved.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if technology was assisting the force. Chief Heim stated that it is and that the officers are receiving better training in the academy.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if disorderly stats included noise complaints. Chief Heim stated that they do not.

Ms. Snyder questioned if domestic assault was categorized separately and if this is rising. Chief Heim stated that it is not kept separately but that the number appears to be stable. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Berks Women in Crisis would have this information.

Chief Heim stated that burglary is increasing and that a new two-person unit has been assigned to this area. He stated that many incidents are at vacant residential properties where there is easy access. He stated that this leads to crack houses, squatters, etc. He stated that the properties are reported to Property Maintenance to be secured but that they are often broken into repeatedly.

Mr. Waltman stated that this feeds into other housing issues. He stated that vacant properties lead to police activity and noted the need for these properties to be rehabbed or demolished.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz described the situation at 1459 Fairview St which went through the Blighted Property process. She stated that it has taken three years for the Redevelopment Authority to take possession so that rehab can begin. She noted the need to develop policy around this process.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the Land Bank legislation will be introduced as soon as it is ready.

Chief Heim left the meeting at this time.

### **Status of City-owned Property List**

Ms. Snyder stated that she now has a list of properties with current leases. She noted her surprise at the number that have expired and have had no follow up. She stated that she has requested all City and Redevelopment owned properties on a GIS map. She stated that Law has developed standard lease language which will be used and modified as needed for each situation.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Mr. Gaston has stated that his group will be out of Egelman's by May. Ms. Snyder stated that he has not yet signed the new lease agreement.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for the Managing Director to have this type of information.

Mr. Acosta requested that a City representative verify this information with Mr. Gaston and ensure that he does not remove City equipment from the park. Ms. Snyder stated that Ms. Klahr has verified the equipment ownership.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the City cannot do its due diligence if it does not know what equipment it owns.

Ms. Snyder stated that during a conversation with Mr. Gaston he explained that he has lost several coaches and players have withdrawn because of the lease issue. She stated that he may not be able to run a program this spring but that Berkshire Baseball has scheduled tournaments.

Mr. Waltman requested that Mr. Gaston be reassured about this season. Ms. Snyder stated that she has tried but that Mr. Gaston has a volatile personality.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for a Plan B if Mr. Gaston cannot manage a league this spring. She stated that he also brings in teams that are not local. She stated that the Recreation Commission has passed a resolution requesting consideration by the City to run a program at Egelman's. She noted the need for the Commission to become financially sustainable.

Ms. Snyder questioned if the Commission would need to cover the same expenses as Mr. Gaston.

Mr. Marmarou stated that there are also other groups which are interested in using this field.

Ms. Snyder stated that the Administration's priorities are East Ends, the Pagoda and the Fire Museum. She stated that the City has also gotten a proposal from Reading City Church regarding Heritage Park. She noted that there must be a process to review proposals and proceed. She suggested that in this instance the agreement will be for one year. She stated that the City must decide which group gets to use facilities – on a first come first served basis or determine another way. Mr. Lloyd stated that this needs consideration.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned when the fire tower would be addressed. She stated that Pagoda Skyline has been operating the fire tower for many years. She noted her liability concerns when the tower is open and the public is allowed to climb to the top. Ms. Snyder stated that perhaps this could be considered at the same time as the Pagoda.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the asset inventory listed on the agenda. Ms. Snyder stated that it would inventory furniture, artwork, etc. She stated that Mr. Ruyak is inventorying vehicles to

determine if there are excess to auction in May.

Mr. Marmarou stated that care must be taken with Police evidence.

### **Providing EMS Service to Outlying Municipalities**

Ms. Snyder stated that City calls are covered but that contracting with outlying municipalities is not a priority at this time. She stated that she would like to consider this option after the 4<sup>th</sup> EMS team is functional.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that this topic be discussed at a later date.

### **Capital Repairs to Library**

Ms. Snyder stated that capital repairs to the library are being managed through combined meetings between the City and the Library Board. She stated that repairs to the three branches, the main library and the fire museum have been bid but that they came back too high for the budget. She stated that they have been re-bid and responses are due tomorrow.

Ms. Snyder explained that the repairs to the main library have been complicated by the roof leak, asbestos and mold. She stated that there is discussion to repair or replace the roof. She stated that it is still not clear if the roof is leaking or another part of the building is causing the leak. She stated that asbestos is a hazardous material and that increases costs.

Ms. Snyder stated that the main library will need to be closed for approximately two months during renovation. She stated that it will not be closed during the summer months. She stated that discussions are occurring about re-deploying staff and the need for a temporary facility as many items must be removed from the building to protect them.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that employees be deployed to the branches to expand the times that the branches can remain open.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz offered her place of employment as a temporary space for items.

Ms. Snyder stated that a special meeting has been scheduled to discuss what needs to be moved and where it will be stored.

Mr. Waltman questioned the costs. Ms. Snyder stated that the City's budget was to repair the roof, not replace it. She stated that there is an agreement that if the roof is replaced the library will pay the amount beyond the City's budget. She stated that bids are due tomorrow and that the library is willing to spend \$140,000 of their reserves for this project.

Mr. Waltman stated that the Library Tax is critical to this issue. He stated that if the library has this additional revenue it could better plan for capital repairs.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this same issue arose during the renovations to the Museum. She suggested that the Library Board reach out to specific benefactors. Ms. Snyder agreed and stated that the Library President knows how to fundraise.

### **Street Light Assessment**

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Younger has completed his research. She stated that this assessment can begin in 2013 and is not a tax. She stated that all those being served by street lighting would be assessed. She stated that this assessment is not included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class City Code but Mr. Younger opines that since Reading is a Home Rule Charter City it may use the assessment. She noted the need for the legislation to hold up to appeal and that the funds must be earmarked for lighting and not used for other expenses.

Mr. Waltman questioned how the City will determine who is assessed and the amount of the assessment. Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Kersley is working on the issue of determining who is assessed. She stated that there is already a contract for the WWTP project for street/sewer mapping and that street lights can be added to this project to determine the location of all street lights.

Mr. Waltman stated that street lighting is not for residents only but is enjoyed by anyone using a particular street. Ms. Snyder stated that all properties will be assessed, including non-profits. She stated that the assessment revenue would be used to cover the cost of electric and replacement. She stated that the City has estimated that \$1 per front foot of each property would bring in \$1.5 million. She suggested that some areas be excluded as exceptions such as Charles Evans Cemetery. She stated that the assessment would free up \$700,000 of liquid fuels funds which could be used for street repairs.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there are also down sides to new fees. She questioned if a rear assessment would occur for properties with lights in their rear alleys and corner properties with lighting in the front and on the side.

Mr. Marmarou stated that when this issue was being discussed in the past, many constituents told him that they did not like the assessment.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for public discussion and to relay the facts.

Ms. Snyder expressed the belief that this cost is reasonable.

Mr. Waltman questioned if this assessment was levied elsewhere. Ms. Snyder and Mr. Lloyd stated that this assessment is very common.

Mr. Lloyd stated that many municipalities also have a street assessment that covers the cost of paving, plowing, etc.

Mr. Waltman noted that these assessments are work-arounds because many City properties are non-profits and do not pay property taxes.

### **Fleet Management**

Ms. Snyder stated that she has met with representatives of Penske about the efficiency of the City garage. She stated that the City maintains its own fleet and that of the District Attorney's office. She stated that there is an opportunity to maintain other County vehicles as they are looking to outsource this expense.

Ms. Snyder stated that the Penske Green Hills facility is the corporate headquarters for all Penske fleet maintenance. She stated that they performed this review for the City of Detroit twice and that staff is available for the review. She stated that Penske staff will evaluate the garage as if they were taking it over to determine its strengths and weaknesses. She stated that she has been clear with garage employees that this is NOT a take-over.

Ms. Snyder stated that Penske will have a full report to her in 2 – 3 weeks. She stated that the report will not state that the garage has the capacity for more work but will tell the number of employees needed per the number of vehicles serviced. She stated that Penske has recommended the City increase the cost for parts and believes it can increase the labor charge.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the Reading School District was involved. He stated that the City performing their fleet maintenance was discussed with them in the past. Ms. Snyder stated that this is a possibility. She stated that maintaining the County and District vehicles is a perfect situation. She stated that she also discussed performing warranty work and noted that this can also increase revenue. She stated that certification is necessary for warranty work.

Ms. Snyder stated that the Mayor has a team which has already begun addressing labor issues at the garage.

Mr. Waltman questioned if this was being considered for budget relief or to increase revenue. Ms. Snyder stated that it is both. She stated that the garage facility is large enough to handle more vehicles.

Mr. Marmarou stated that it may also increase jobs.

Ms. Snyder stated that she is excited about this project.

### **Street Lighting in Wyomissing Park Area**

Ms. Snyder stated that discussions with Met Ed continue. She stated that Met Ed is 99% sure that they will donate the current standards to the City. She stated that the community wants to keep the standards and have the wiring underground. She stated that the City must consider if it is willing to pay more for one community's lighting than for others. She stated that Met Ed would replace the lighting in this area with overhead lights and wires at no cost. She suggested that if

neighbors wish to keep the lighting as is they should contribute to the cost.

Ms. Snyder stated that she will coordinate another town meeting with Mr. Corcoran to update the neighborhood. She stated that this neighborhood would pay more for the street light assessment due to the size of the properties.

### **Yard Waste Collection**

Mr. Lloyd stated that the peak collection season is approaching. He stated that this issue was brought forward initially due to the lack of pickup of grass clippings. He stated that the City has performed a full evaluation of the program. He stated that they have also had discussions with Lower Alsace who is in need of a drop-off location. He stated that other municipalities may also participate in the City's collection program.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the drop-off location would remain the same. Mr. Lloyd stated that the City currently has two locations – near Egelman's Park and the WWTP.

Mr. Lloyd explained that a consultant was brought in to evaluate the City's program. He stated that the consultant believes that neither of those locations is best logistically but that they are functional. He stated that the consultant recommends the maximum use of both facilities and with this in mind the City is capable of increasing collection. He noted the need to invest in additional equipment operators.

Mr. Lloyd explained that all items collected with the vacuums is sold to Giorgio Mushrooms. He stated that other items are currently piled up. He stated that if these other items are properly processed and composted the City has several options – use for City parks, allow residents to pick up and use at their residence, or sell to landscapers. He stated that he hopes to eventually address food waste. He stated that 30-35% of trash is organic and can be composted.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what happened to food waste in the past when it was separated. Mr. Lloyd stated that it was given to pig farms.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Albright composts on their property and uses it for their campus.

Ms. Snyder questioned if this operation would be people intensive. Mr. Lloyd stated that equipment can do much of the labor.

Mr. Waltman requested a pro forma on the project. Mr. Lloyd stated that the consultant believes that the City can move forward with minimal investment. He stated that the consultant would begin the program and hand it over to the City in the future.

Mr. Acosta questioned if grass clippings would be collected. Mr. Lloyd stated that the clippings would be taken and can be taken now but only on a limited basis which makes it difficult. Some residents would be have pick up but others would not so none is collected at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that people need to realize that they do not need grass. Mr. Lloyd noted the need to lead by example.

Mr. Waltman stated that other wildlife in the City does need grass.

Mr. Lloyd explained that there are other ground covers that look like grass but do not need to be mowed. He stated that these are the materials used on green roofs. He stated that the Mayor's Sustainability Committee will be making a report and recommendation on this issue next month. He stated that this Committee is also looking at expanding composting and recycling for businesses in the downtown area.

### **Follow-up Items**

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested a meeting with Ms. Snyder to discuss the follow-up items and to pare down the list.

Mr. Acosta stated that some items can be removed if a written report is received from the Administration.

- Egelman's Dam

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the road in front of the dam has still not been repaired. She noted the need to address this situation. Ms. Snyder stated that the City will be receiving a report from PA DEP about all its dams and the needed repairs.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the dam was at risk. He questioned the issue with the road. Ms. Snyder stated that there are erosion issues.

Mr. Acosta stated that people complain about the stop signs due to the road being only one lane at this point. He stated, however, that if the stop signs are removed they will forget about the erosion issue and damage their vehicles.

Mr. Waltman stated that PA DEP is working to remove all dams. He stated that this park overall is neglected. He suggested finding a partner for this beautiful park that should be a gem. (*Note: Ms. Katzenmoyer completed a Six Sigma project regarding possible partners for City parks.*)

Mr. Acosta stated that the park has become very marshy.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that nature is taking this park back. She stated that it is loaded with mountain springs.

Ms. Snyder stated that the road project has been identified as a priority on the list given to Rep. Caltagirone.

Mr. Waltman noted the need to address the dam issue when the road is addressed or the same erosion issue will recur. He expressed the belief that the pond should not be drained. He stated that Mineral Spring Park also needs to be addressed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Egelman's Park was the site of a vineyard in the past.

Mr. Waltman suggested that a report of the top three options for Egelman's Park be prepared.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Egelman's had a full-time caretaker in the past and that there was a caretaker's residence.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 pm.

Respectfully submitted by  
*Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk*