

City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, June 10, 2013

Council President Francis G. Acosta called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by Reverend Calvin Kurtz, of the Reading Berks Conference of Churches.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Acosta
Councilor Corcoran, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Solicitor C. Younger
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Mayor V. Spencer

Council President Acosta stated that Councilor Waltman is ill and cannot attend this meeting.

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Acosta announced that ten (10) citizens were registered to address Council on non-agenda matters. He inquired if any Councilor objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the Council meeting. As no one objected, the rule to require non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Acosta reminded the citizens registered to speak about the remaining public speaking rules.

Mike Dugan, of North 12th Street, stated that the difference between a landfill and the City streets is that landfills are contained and tapped. He noted that leaflets placed on cars and on porches makes up a large part of the City's litter problem. He suggested enacting and enforcing legislation to control the distribution of leaflets.

George Stichter, of North 11th Street, expressed the belief that the solutions to the City's problems can be found in the bible. He also expressed the belief that the City's Quality of Life Ticketing program harms citizens and poor people. He stated that the old warning system worked well and he suggested returning to that system. He stated that the Quality of Life ticket is built to benefit the City, not City residents. He also described various problems associated with the City's rental program which includes fees. He stated that the City's approach to managing rental properties harms the economy. He suggested lightening the load on the City's landlords. He noted that City Council was elected to serve City residents and he suggested that Councilors take that responsibility seriously. He expressed the belief that the City's various programs are a violation of the Bill of Rights.

Mary Jane Smith, of Perkiomen Ave, was not present.

Robert Mast, of Maple Street, stated that a large commercial property on Maple Street which has been abandoned for many years. The property was involved in a working fire and it was 30 minutes before the Fire Department arrived, after several neighbors made calls to both 911 and the police. He noted the catastrophe that could have occurred if this fire spread to surrounding homes. He expressed the belief that complaints about quality of life problem in the south side fall on deaf ears. He suggested that the City begin paying attention to the south side.

William Steinsiek, of Hatfield PA, stated that investors are charged unfair fees causing it to be impossible to invest in real estate and turn a profit in Reading. He expressed the belief that investment in properties creates jobs. He distributed an article on this topic before the start of the meeting. He described the various layers of fees associated with owning investment properties in Reading. He stated that copper piping was stolen from a property he owns. When he reinstalled the piping he also installed a security system and was surprised when he learned that there are additional fees associated with the alarm systems. He stated that the City's fees hurt the economy and he suggested leaving the good landlords alone.

Gary Joseph, of North 13th Street, stated that after the Water Authority installed a new water meter at his property, he saw an immediate increase in his water/sewer consumption. He stated that his bills sometimes exceed \$500 and he noted his difficulty in paying these monthly fees to avoid the addition of penalties and collection fees. He requested assistance in correcting this problem.

Council President Acosta told Mr. Joseph that he would need to take this matter to the Mayor's Office and to the Water Authority.

Susan Fegley, of North 17th Street, thanked the City for the services provided and noted her positive experience dealing with the Reading Police Department. She described the

longstanding speeding problem on Hampden Blvd. She stated that cars and motorcycles constantly use excessive speed when traveling on this road and that they also at times illegally pass vehicles that move at the speed limit, which is 35 miles per hour. She also stated that some motorcyclists race back and forth on Hampden Blvd. She noted the dangers of speeding to both pedestrians and to vehicles. She requested a solution to solve this longstanding problem.

James Fegley, of North 17th Street, also spoke about the speeding on Hampden Blvd. He inquired about a potential solution for speeding on a state roadway.

Council President Acosta suggested that the Fegley's also contact their State representative, as a traffic study will be needed.

Sharon Heron, of Hampden Blvd, was not present.

Mary Ann Ciarlone, of North 5th Street, stated that she retained the services of a private property inspection company to inspect all her rental properties. She stated that the service provided was very good and she suggested that more landlords use this method for rental inspections. She stated that she is in the process of correcting the issues identified. She also noted that the City's requirements for licensed contractors to complete some improvement projects and the permit process are very cumbersome and slow the rehab process.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Acosta called Council's attention to the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading, and the minutes for the May 28th Regular Meeting of Council.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to approve the minutes from the May 28th Regular Meeting of Council and the agenda including the legislation under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda

A. Resolution 47A-2013 - promoting Gail S. Knauer from the rank of Paramedic/Firefighter to Lieutenant in the Fire Department, effective immediately (Fire/ Council Staff) Page 11

B. Award of Contract - for Furnishing Bituminous Materials and Asphalt Cements for Pick-up for 2013 to South Reading Blacktop, Division of Reading Materials, 148 Angstadt Lane, Birdsboro, who is the low bidder at the unit prices submitted for an estimated total bid price of \$119,200.00 (Purchasing) Page 12-15

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Mayor Spencer read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering in summary:

- A recap of the tour of Reading conducted by Congressman Pitts
- His meeting with the Chamber and local businesses
- His meeting with City employees
- The start of Citi Stat in Reading
- His availability every Tuesday from 1-2 pm for meetings with citizens

AUDITOR'S REPORT

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

- Herbein & Co. are nearing the completion of the 2012 audit
- Results of the Reading Parking Authority Audit

REPORT FROM DEPT. DIRECTORS, BOARDS, AUTHORITIES, & COMMISSIONS

None.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Acosta stated that this ordinance is pending until the required layover period has been completed. He stated that the ordinance will be eligible for action at the June 24th regular meeting.

A. Ordinance - authorizing the Mayor to execute a Lease Agreement between the City of Reading and WFMZ for the Lease of a Portion of the "WEEU Building" for the installation of a transmitter on the existing Tower (**Law**) *Note: Ineligible for enactment until the June 24th meeting due to the Charter required 14 day lay over period*

RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution 38-2013 - approving the undertaking of a project by the Reading Area Water Authority for the operation and/or acquisition of a certain sewer collection, conveyance and pumping system serving the Berks Park 78 Owners Association in Bethel Township (RAWA) *Reviewed at 5-6 COW*

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, to adopt Resolution 38-2013.

Councilor Corcoran stated that while he was unavailable to attend the meeting with the

RAWA Executive Director, his questions remain unanswered and he stated that he will not support the adoption of this resolution.

Resolution No. 38-2013 was adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Acosta, President - 5

Nays: Corcoran - 1

**B. Resolution 48-2013 – appointing Odelia White to the Housing Authority (Nom & Appts)
PAGE 23**

**C. Resolution 49-2013 – reappointing David Beane to the Environmental Advisory Council
(Nom & Appts) PAGE 24**

**D. Resolution 50-2013 – appointing John Kramer to the Main Street Board (Nom & Appts)
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Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Corcoran, to adopt Resolution Nos. 48-50-2013.

Councilors Marmarou, Corcoran and Reed noted the skills and attributes of those being appointed and reappointed this evening.

Council President Acosta noted that Ms. White chairs one of the resident committees at a Housing Authority development. He described her work within the community and stated that these experiences will make her an excellent member of the Housing Authority.

Resolution Nos. 48-50-2013 were adopted by the following vote:

**Yeas: Corcoran, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Acosta, President
- 6**

Nays: None - 0

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked those who addressed Council during the Public Comment period. She noted her agreement with the need to control the distribution of leaflets and circulars, as they do contribute to the City's litter problem. She also agreed with the dangers associated with the vacant commercial building on Maple Street and with the need to address speeding within the City.

Councilor Marmarou agreed with the need to have ordinances to address various issues

within the City but he noted that without proper enforcement ordinances do not correct anything.

Councilor Corcoran explained that Council has effectively worked to correct many of the problems associated with overlapping fees. He also noted that it is illegal for flyers to be placed in mailboxes at properties.

Councilor Sterner thanked those who provided Public Comment this evening. He also questioned the 30 minute response time to the working fire at the property on Maple Street. He agreed with the need to address the distribution of leaflets and circulars. He stated that the Outlet Neighborhood group is meeting on June 13th at 6 pm at St. Marks, located at North 10th and Windsor Street.

Councilor Reed described the excellent tour conducted by Congressman Pitts and noted the need for more sessions like this where federal, state and local representatives meet to discuss issues. She stated that the Berkshire Greens and Glenside community groups are currently revamping and are considering a merger.

Council President Acosta agreed that the tour with Congressman Pitts was beneficial for all who attended and suggested continuing to meet with federal and state officials in similar sessions. He described the businesses and visits with the business owners.

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

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk