CITY COUNCIL
Standards of Living Committee

Monday, June 16, 2014
Meeting Report

Committee Members Attending: D. Sterner (Co-Chair), S. Marmarou

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, J. Varghese

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 pm by Mr. Sterner.

I. Review Administrative Reports

No reports were received or reviewed.

II. BPRC Acquisition and Demolition

Mr. Varghese stated that he is a Philadelphia native and is very civic minded. He stated that he attended the University of Pennsylvania and has a passion for community development.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Varghese was working on any issues with colleges. Mr. Varghese stated that he is willing to outreach to the local colleges and universities. He noted the need for background on this topic and that it is important for the colleges and universities and the City to know what college students want and need.

Mr. Marmarou stated that there had been a group of residents meeting with Albright College but that Albright continually cancels the meetings. He questioned how to move forward. Mr. Varghese stated that he would be willing to coordinate the meetings.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that Mr. Varghese meet with Ms. Kelleher about this issue. He stated that College Heights Community Council had been meeting with the Dean of

Students. He stated that Albright recently lost its Director of Security. He stated that parking is becoming a big problem. He stated that Albright announced it had increased enrollment for the next school year and that many are commuters. He stated that the neighborhood recently heard a presentation from Mr. Mulligan but that he does not feel his approach will be successful. Mr. Varghese stated that he is open to learning about the issues and helping as he can. He suggested that Council call him directly if there are issues that he can assist with. He stated that he has been working on housing issues but not in relation to the campuses. He noted his willingness to meet with Ms. Kelleher and that she has been very helpful.

Mr. Sterner questioned Mr. Varghese's opinion on the Penn St project. Mr. Varghese stated that he cannot relay his choice as he signed a confidentiality agreement but that he feels it is always best to have people of all ages out and about in the community.

Mr. Sterner stated that the Administration brought the Our City Reading proposal to Council for approval but some Council members feel the Shuman proposal is better. Mr. Varghese stated that both proposals have pros and cons. He stated that this was a difficult choice.

Mr. Varghese stated that he is ready to begin some acquisition projects. He stated that he is choosing properties based on his feeling that progress will be quick.

Mr. Sterner questioned Mr. Varghese's work with the Blighted Property Review Committee. Mr. Varghese stated that his transition to the City is complete. He stated that he is ready to start working. He stated that he is choosing sample properties to try each acquisition tool. He expressed the belief that proceeds made through acquisition should be used to address future projects and necessary demolition.

Mr. Varghese stated that he recently held a meeting with representatives from Habitat for Humanity, National Housing Services, and Our City Reading. He stated that they are working on a strategy to move projects forward. He noted the need to cluster projects so that there is a larger impact to neighborhoods. He noted the need to find better ways to coordinate and communicate with the County.

There was a discussion of fear of crime in the City.

Mr. Johnson and Ms. Hoag arrived at this time.

Mr. Sterner thanked Mr. Varghese for attending and noted that it was a pleasure to meet him.

III. Update City of Reading Guidebook

Ms. Katzenmoyer distributed the memo from Ms. Loaiza.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how the guidebooks would be distributed. Mr. Sterner requested that Ms. Katzenmoyer find out from Ms. Snyder.

Mr. Marmarou expressed the belief that 6,000 copies will not last long.

Mr. Sterner stated that this project has taken two years and he is glad it is almost complete.

Mr. Marmarou expressed the belief that a professional should have been used for advertising and printing.

IV. Installation of Natural Gas Regulating Station at 14th & Green Sts

Ms. Hoag stated that the City was approached by UGI. She noted the need for UGI to regulate the gas pressure throughout the City now that they have changed the pressure in the mains. The proposed location of the first station is at 14th & Green Sts in Hillside Playground. She stated that it would be in the right of way of the unfinished road and would be located near the field house. She noted the need for fencing/screening for security purposes.

Mr. Sterner questioned how the station would look. Ms. Hoag stated that it would be piping above grade.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the area of the City that this station would regulate. Ms. Hoag stated that she did not have this information.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how much they would be paying the City to locate the station within the park. Ms. Hoag stated that this is still being examined along with the grading, drainage, and other issues.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for additional information before this moves forward. Ms. Hoag agreed.

Mr. Sterner stated that there is not much room at this location. Ms. Hoag stated that it would be 8 feet by 10 feet or 8 feet by 12 feet and would be fenced in. She explained that the main replacement projects have increased the pressures. She noted the need to see UGI's five year plan to know the big picture before agreeing to anything. She stated that UGI is trying to fast track the project.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the Hillside Playground Assn does much work at Hillside and holds many events. He suggested that any payment made by UGI for this station be used at Hillside Playground. Mr. Johnson stated that the City would receive payment as the property owner and that the funds would need to be earmarked.

Mr. Sterner questioned if public hearings would be necessary. Ms. Hoag stated that she is unsure but that she has spoken with zoning to determine the process.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that Mr. Sterner and Ms. Hoag meet at Hillside to review the placement. Ms. Hoag and Mr. Sterner will meet on Thursday, June 19 at 9 am at Hillside.

Mr. Sterner requested additional information at the next meeting.

V. Installation of New Stop Signs

Mr. Johnson distributed a memo outlining the locations:

- Crestmont St & Fern Ave – currently stop signs located on Crestmont St but not Fern Ave. Recommendation to make four way stop.
- Greenwich & N 2nd Sts – currently stop signs located on N 2nd St but not Greenwich St. Recommendation to make four way stop.
- W Green St & McKnight St – currently stop sign located on McKnight St but not W Green St. Recommendation to add stop sign on W Green St.
- W Green St & Weiser St – currently stop sign located on Weiser St but not W Green St. Recommendation to add stop sign on W Green St.

Mr. Sterner questioned why these four were chosen. Mr. Johnson stated that he is unsure as he is finishing this project for Mr. Jones. He complemented the work of Mr. Jones.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that the other Councilors be informed of these changes. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she will provide copies of the memo to all of Council.

Mr. Sterner questioned if stop signs were there now. Mr. Johnson stated they are at some corners but not as recommended. He stated that he currently has 360 pending projects.

Ms. Katzenmoyer noted the need for these stop signs to be approved by ordinance. She suggested that the memo be attached for clarification.

Mr. Sterner questioned how these intersections were chosen. Mr. Johnson stated that he is unsure but will check with Mr. Jones. Mr. Sterner suggested that he also check with Chief Heim.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that in the past Council approved changing the directionality of streets. She stated that this did not occur for the recent change on N 2nd St. Mr. Johnson stated that he will follow up and provide the necessary ordinance.

VI. Electronics Disposal

Mr. Johnson stated that the City will be entering an agreement with the County Solid Waste to dispose of electronics.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the cost of disposal. Mr. Johnson stated that he is unsure but that he will provide this information. He stated that an approved electronics handler is needed and the County is approved. He stated that this ordinance is scheduled to be introduced at Council's meeting on June 23.

VII. Wyomissing Park Street Lighting

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Jones will continue working on this project. He stated that the project is moving forward.

VIII. Snow Emergency Plan and Snow Removal

Mr. Johnson stated that he has not yet begun working on this project.

IX. Truck Parking

Mr. Marmarou explained that this is problematic on Richmond St between 11th & 13th. He stated that the trucks cannot be limited due to the zoning district but that perhaps the parking on one side could be eliminated. Mr. Johnson will follow up.

Ms. Katzenmoyer was asked to forward the information about truck parking from Mr. Daubert to Mr. Johnson for follow up.

No further issues were discussed and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk