



# CITY COUNCIL

## Strategic Planning Committee

**Monday, May 4, 2015**  
**Meeting Report**

**Attending:** J. Waltman (Co Chair), D. Reed, D. Sterner, S. Marmarou, F. Acosta, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

**Others Attending:** L. Kelleher, T. Coleman, C. Snyder, E. Stock, S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Waltman at approximately 5:35 pm.

### **1. Ethics Code Campaign Reporting Requirement**

Mr. Stock explained that the current Campaign Reporting and Awarding Contracts sections of the Ethics Code originated as “Integrity in Government” or “Pay to Play” legislation that was based on an ordinance adopted by the Philadelphia City Council. He stated that the Reading legislation was originally adopted as a part of the City’s Purchasing Policies; however, the legislation was ineffective in the Purchasing Policies and it lacked an enforcement component. He stated that work to include these regulations in the Code of Ethics began several years ago. After review with the Board of Ethics and the City, the Ethics Code amendment to include these provisions was enacted in May 2013.

Mr. Stock explained the work performed to move these regulations successfully into the Code of Ethics. This is the first election cycle where the regulations are in effect. He questioned if the City should apply campaign contribution limits and he noted the duplicity as the Elections Code already requires the same forms to be filed with the Elections Office.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Ms. Katzenmoyer for providing the historical piece taken from the Ethics Board and Council meeting minutes on the consideration of these campaign regulations. She stated that the historical piece provides a look at the prior discussion, review, purpose and approvals by various officials prior to the enactment of the ordinance.

Mr. Waltman recalled that both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh both have similar regulations but he questioned if Third Class Cities have the ability to have these requirements.

Mr. Coleman inquired if declared candidates can receive contributions in excess of the limits listed in the Code during non-election years. Mr. Stock stated that issue is not covered by the ordinance.

Mr. Waltman inquired if the Ethics Code applies to those who are not candidates or public officials. Mr. Stock stated that the Code applies to employees, elected officials and declared candidates.

Mr. Marmarou noted that filing the reports with Elections and the City Clerk is duplicative. Mr. Stock questioned if the duplicative reporting serves the greater good or creates a problem.

Ms. Kelleher stated that other Counties post campaign reports and Statements of Financial Interest on their websites. She suggested that the Ethics Board approach the Elections Board about posting campaign records on their website, which could eliminate the need for candidates to file the reports with the City Clerk's Office. She stated that while working to implement the ordinance several areas requiring modification were identified.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that changes to the campaign reporting regulations should not be considered during an election cycle, as uneven playing field would be created. She suggested considering changes after the General Elections election. Ms. Kelleher suggested that staff begin working on revisions to the ordinance now which will allow Council to review the issue after the General Election concludes. Council agreed.

Mr. Stock left the meeting and Mr. Agudo arrived.

### **Update - Penn Square Properties**

Mr. Agudo distributed a document outlining the concept plan for the Penn Square properties. He stated that funding from HUD, BEDI, Section 108 Loan, Historic Tax Credits, EGA Grant, Keystone Anchor Grant totaling \$4.8M.

Mr. Agudo stated that a restaurant for the former bank area and an office seeking 15,000 sq. ft. are potential tenants for the properties. He reported that OCR (Our City Reading) is currently paying the overhead expenses for the property. He described the various agreements under consideration such as the Limited Party Agreement and Master Lease between the City, Penn Square MT LP and a Management Agreement between the City, Penn Square MT LP and OCR. He stated that currently OCR receives a 3% management fee per year.

Mr. Agudo stated that construction is expected to begin in June 2015.

Mr. Sterner questioned the deadlines for the use of the money from the various financial sources. Ms. Snyder stated that there is a deadline of September 2015 for the BEDI funding.

Ms. Reed questioned if the announcement planned for the Thursday groundbreaking will be similar to the information being provided to Council this evening. Mr. Agudo stated that the announcement on Thursday will cover the information relayed to Council at this meeting.

Ms. Reed inquired about the tenants for the restaurant and the office space. Mr. Agudo stated that the restaurant currently has two (2) other locations, one in Philadelphia, and the tenant seeking office space currently has existing office space both inside and outside Reading. He stated that the tenant for the office space will make a decision by September when their current lease expires.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz inquired about the organization applying for the grants and loans. Ms. Snyder stated that the applicant is OCR. In response to a question to Ms. Kelleher, Ms. Snyder stated that the grants and loans will not be "passed through" the City but will go directly to OCR. She noted that the City will be responsible for the 108 Loan payment if OCR defaults.

Mr. Agudo reminded Council that a default occurred on the 108 Loan for the Lincoln Hotel and that the City made the final loan payment this year.

Mr. Agudo left the meeting and Mr. Broad and Mr. Natale arrived.

### **Main Street Update**

Mr. Broad distributed a report on the activities of the Main Street Committees. He stated that the Business Opportunity Committee (formerly the Economic Restructuring Committee) is currently holding Scoop Sessions to inform people about various undertakings.

Mr. Broad stated that the Design Committee has been very active and is creating a Design Guideline Handbook to guide the rehabilitation of the exterior of the properties. He stated that Ms. Kelleher participates on this committee.

Mr. Broad stated that the Design Committee asked the Main Street Board to arrange a planning session so that cross communication between committees can occur. That session is being arranged.

Mr. Broad described the guide maps that will be located at strategic locations such as the parking garages and various intersections. The maps are interactive and can be accessed by smart phones in the downtown area, along with an online walking tour. He stated that there are plans to obtain a narrated description of the downtown historical buildings and areas from Tutoria.

Mr. Broad stated that the Midday Cafés will begin on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Reed noted that the planters were originally purchased by the City then maintained by the business owners; however, the planters have now become the responsibility of Public Works and DID.

Mr. Broad distributed the DID annual report.

### **Vending Licenses**

Mr. Natale and Mr. Broad stated that this year 18 vendor applications were submitted. Mr. Broad stated that the DID Board recommends allowing all 18 to operate and asks Council to increase the number of vendor permits by five (5) to 20.

Mr. Natale stated that the vendor licenses are for the downtown area only.

Mr. Waltman expressed concern with the unseemly appearance of some of the carts. He also questioned the use of card tables.

Ms. Kelleher agreed, noting that the intent of the ordinance was to require all sales from inside a cart.

Mr. Acosta expressed concern with the disparity created by the cart vendor with the brick and mortar businesses. He also noted that in some communities, street vendors are a cultural issue. He also questioned if food vendors must meet health guidelines.

Mr. Natale explained that all food vendors are required to have a current State Serve Safe permit.

Mr. Acosta suggested that Council provide three (3) temporary or provisional licenses for this season that would allow the 18 vendors to participate. He stated that doing that will provide Council with time to consider the issue as a whole.

Ms. Kelleher stated that Ms. Butler is currently working on an amendment to the Sidewalk Vendor Ordinance.

**As no other issues were brought forward, the Strategic Planning Committee meeting concluded at approximately 6:55 pm.**

*Respectfully Submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk*