



# ***COMMITTEE of the WHOLE***

## ***CITY COUNCIL***

**MINUTES**  
**June 8, 2015**  
**5:00 P.M.**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

S. Marmarou, D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, F. Acosta

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, C. Schmehl, M. Vind, D. Cituk, D. Pottiger, B. Kelly, V. Spencer

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm by Mr. Acosta.

### **I. Refunding the Redevelopment Authority 2006 Lease Revenue Note**

Mr. Vind stated that this is the last refinancing required by the Amended Recovery Plan. He stated that the refinancing will result in a lower interest rate and that it has been approved by PFM. He estimated a savings of \$215,000 in 2015.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested the information in electronic form. Mr. Vind stated that he will provide the information electronically to Ms. Kelleher.

Mr. Vind left the meeting at this time.

### **II. Comprehensive Plan Preview**

Mr. Waltman arrived at this time.

Mr. Schmehl, consultant from URDC, stated that the Comprehensive Plan is used to set policy regulations. He stated that a separate Open Space Plan is being compiled. He explained that he performed interviews with key people, worked closely with the steering committee, held four public meetings and compiled a survey. He stated that public hearings will be scheduled with the Planning Commission and City Council.

Mr. Schmehl noted the need for the City to attract economic development and streamline the process for desirable development and redevelopment. He noted the need to reduce non-

conformities and update the land use map to have the right mix of uses. He noted the need to make the City more walkable and to promote the conversion of old industrial buildings to residential. He stated that commercial buildings should have residential use on the upper floors. He described two locations where converting industrial buildings to residential would make sense – 13<sup>th</sup> & Rockland for student housing and Centre Ave near the First Energy Stadium.

Mr. Schmehl suggested that CDBG funding be used to make major system repairs rather than for total rehab of properties. He suggested that the funding be used for low income owner occupied properties. He stated that this would get the City more return on its investment and would prevent people from abandoning their homes rather than perform costly repairs.

Mr. Schmehl stated that the lack of parking in neighborhoods is detrimental and suggested that neighborhood parking lots be added where parking is most problematic. He suggested the parking lots be in the center of blocks and target the removal of blighted properties. He stated that use of the lot would have a monthly fee and that the lots would be managed by the Parking Authority. He suggested that adding parking would make the City more livable.

Ms. Reed arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned where the lots would be located. Mr. Schmehl suggested using the Redevelopment Authority map to determine the locations.

Ms. Reed questioned the former Glidden site. Mr. Schmehl suggested that it remain industrial.

Ms. Reed suggested that it become a sports complex. Mr. Schmehl stated that he was informed that a local non-profit would be purchasing the site to use for a recycling program.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned having auto repair garages in residential neighborhoods. Mr. Schmehl stated that this use will not be allowed in residential areas.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that the proposed land use map be shared with surrounding municipalities. Mr. Schmehl stated that it has been shared.

Mr. Marmarou noted that he continues to get complaint calls about the condition of the road on Oak Lane beyond the City border. Council suggested that Mr. Marmarou continue to tell the complainant that this is not the City's responsibility.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the proposed new zoning designation for the former Caum Home property (1700 Hampden Blvd) does not comply with the property's deed restriction. Mr. Schmehl expressed the belief that the property is too large for residential use. Council disagreed stating that many properties in the area are the same size.

Ms. Kelleher questioned if agricultural uses are addressed. Mr. Schmehl stated that gardens are allowed but that agricultural uses are not a primary concern in a City.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Denbowski arrived at this time.

Ms. Kelleher stated that agricultural uses must be considered as there is a proposal for a live poultry market.

Mr. Schmehl suggested that Council contact him with further questions or comments. He left the meeting at this time.

### **III. UGI Meter Relocation in Historic Districts**

Mr. Waltman stated that work is occurring in the 300 block of N 5<sup>th</sup> St. He noted the need to stop work in the historic districts so that any work honors the historic district requirements. He noted the need for a committee to work on this issue and recommended that UGI get HARB approval for the location of meters in historic districts.

Mr. Acosta questioned the use of a legal injunction. Mr. Waltman stated that intervention is needed.

Mr. Acosta stated that property owners must get HARB approvals before making improvements to their homes. He suggested that UGI do the same. Mr. Younger stated that the City does not oversee UGI.

Mr. Waltman questioned the options available to address this before it's too late. Mr. Younger suggested that this issue be discussed in executive session.

Council entered executive session to discuss pending legal action at 5:29 pm and exited at 5:48 pm.

### **IV. Parking Authority**

Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Boland joined the meeting at this time. They distributed an updated draft amendment.

Mr. Mulligan stated that the Parking Authority considered Council's comments and have made adjustments to the amendment. He stated that the Parking Authority did not intend to expand its boundaries.

Mr. Boland explained that the Parking Authority thought the description of the boundaries would help clarify. He explained that a fourth zone was added downtown but that the zones are not expanded. He stated that under this amendment Council would set the maximum meter rate and the Parking Authority could adjust the rate up to the maximum based on usage.

Mr. Waltman questioned the addition of the fourth zone. Mr. Mulligan stated that a study will be conducted to determine the demand rates for the zones. He stated that this area is already overseen by the Parking Authority. It is adjusting zones for rates and maximum time allowed.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the maximum rates are defined. Mr. Mulligan stated that they are not at this time.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the Parking Authority had studied the rates and could provide a pro forma. Mr. Mulligan stated that the Parking Authority is still collecting data and would provide the pro forma in the future. Mr. Boland stated that Council would set the maximum rate and the Parking Authority would set the zone rates by resolution. He explained that the rates would not fluctuate often as it would require meter maintenance each time. He noted the need for a thorough study first.

Mr. Mulligan stated that it would be unfair to users to constantly change the rates.

Mr. Waltman requested Mr. Mulligan's top three objectives of this amendment. Mr. Mulligan stated that they would be to make the Parking Authority friendlier overall, to increase revenue, and to create more foot traffic to downtown businesses. He noted the Parking Authority's overall goal of improving relationships.

Mr. Acosta questioned when the City would receive the additional funding promised by the Parking Authority. Mr. Mulligan stated that this issue must be addressed by the Board.

Mr. Acosta stated that he will not move this amendment forward until this issue is resolved. He stated that it is probable that the Parking Authority board will have new members in six months.

Mr. Waltman questioned when the City expects the additional payments to begin. Mr. Spencer stated that he is unsure. He suggested that this be discussed in executive session. Mr. Cituk stated that the Parking Authority is currently making its 2014 monthly payments. He stated that the supplemental funding has not been received.

Mr. Waltman questioned how this would affect cash flow. Mr. Cituk stated that this is addressed in Mr. Zale's May financial report. He recalled an \$800,000 - \$900,000 projected shortfall.

Ms. Reed stated that this is why she had concerns about passing a budget with conditions. Mr. Acosta reminded all that the Parking Authority suggested obtaining additional funding from towing and increased meter rates.

Mr. Waltman stated that he was unaware that these were conditions. He stated that Council was told by the Authority chairman that the funds were available. He stated that Council cannot make a decision on this amendment without suggested rates by the Parking Authority. Mr. Mulligan agreed but reminded Council that under the current regulations, the Parking Authority may collect parking fees by coin only. He stated that the kiosks are very popular and many people are using credit cards.

Mr. Acosta stated that he has many concerns with the Parking Authority and no trust in its Board. He requested that the Board put its intentions in writing. He stated that this has large budgetary implications.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the City create an invoice and include a due date. Mr. Acosta expressed the belief that this cannot be done.

Mr. Waltman suggested that the Administration meet with the Parking Authority. He stated that a firm date is needed.

Ms. Reed stated that she did not support the budget based on these issues.

Mr. Waltman noted that the issue will be addressed.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the issue needs to be addressed with the Authority Board. Mr. Mulligan stated that he will discuss this with the Board Chair tomorrow.

Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Boland left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Waltman expressed the belief that these issues are not related.

Mr. Acosta stated that Council has discussed this issue with Ms. Snyder. He expressed the belief that it is irresponsible of the Board not to attend the meeting today.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that it is best to move this amendment forward to implement the parking app and the kiosks.

Mr. Acosta stated that he supports the use of kiosks but noted his concerns with the financial issue.

## **V. Agenda Review**

Council will be adding a resolution naming Mr. Waltman and Mr. Acosta as alternates to the Recreation Commission to ensure Council attendance at meetings.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this will ensure Council attendance at all Rec Commission meetings. She stated that this is important as the City works out the next agreement.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Award of Contract for the ADA compliance project

Mr. Johnson stated that the City must move this project forward. He stated that the first phase is to perform an engineering study. He stated that \$100,000 of the project will be funded through the Berks County Planning Commission. He explained that the Temple Group was the most qualified and the lowest cost. He stated that this study will identify where no ramps have been installed and where ramps that have been installed no longer meet ADA requirements.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the City would be addressed in sections. Mr. Johnson stated that it would, beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> ward.

Mr. Waltman suggested that Mr. Johnson cost out the entire project as it may be better to borrow to complete the project more quickly than to take a long time and pay as you go. Mr. Johnson stated that he will perform a cost study.

Mr. Johnson explained that depending on the type of ramps needed, each intersection will cost between \$20,000 and \$32,000.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if ramps would be placed at alleys as well. Mr. Johnson stated that alleys will be included.

## **VI. Other Matters**

Mr. Acosta requested an update of Council actions on the proposed poultry market. Ms. Reed stated that Council requested that this project go through the regular review process. She stated that the Administration and Law was to review the proposal and Mr. Agudo was to meet with the individual making the proposal. She stated that it would then move to Committee for review.

Mr. Acosta explained the review process to Mr. Tejada, the project proposer. He stated that the Administration will review the plan as the plan sets a new precedent. He stated that the legal review is needed because of the exclusive agreement requested and that Mr. Agudo will discuss the zoning, codes, and trades implications. He explained that Mr. Agudo will be out of the office for the next two weeks.

Mr. Tejada explained that he has met with Mr. Agudo. He stated that Mr. Agudo advised him to bring his proposal to City Council.

Mr. Acosta stated that many issues need to be addressed. He stated that Council cannot address the proposal until it receives reports from others. He stated that Council is not ignoring the proposal but that it will take time.

Mr. Tejada stated that his follow up was to ensure that Council had the information.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that complex issues go through a lengthy process.

Mr. Tejada noted his understanding that the poultry farm must be located where there will be no residential complaints.

Ms. Kelleher advised Mr. Tejada not to buy property until all the issues have been worked out. Mr. Tejada noted his understanding and stated that he will not buy property unless the proposal has been accepted.

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

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