



# *COMMITTEE of the WHOLE*

## *CITY COUNCIL*

**MINUTES**  
**September 14, 2015**  
**5:30 P.M.**

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

S. Marmarou, D. Sterner, D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, C Daubert, J. Slifko

### **OTHERS PRESENT:**

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, D. Cituk, R. Johnson, C. Snyder, V. Spencer, J. Kromer

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:50 pm by Ms. Reed.

### **I. United Way**

This presentation has been rescheduled to a later date.

### **II. Land Bank Briefing**

Mr. Kromer provided a briefing to Council on the progress made. He stated that Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have created land bank agencies with staff and budgets. He stated that he does not recommend this approach for Reading. He stated that this is the wrong direction for Reading to take.

Mr. Kromer stated that Reading should focus on acquiring properties at tax sale. He stated that the County has had to increase the space available at tax sales and that many properties are purchased by out of state speculators and end up returning to tax sale in a few years. He explained that the County does not have the means to pre-qualify purchasers at tax sale but that they have been cooperative with the City in the past.

Mr. Kromer explained that a land bank agency would allow pre-qualification of purchasers and would encourage these purchasers to obtain the properties outside the tax sale process. He stated that the land bank would be authorized by Council ordinance and would also set the parameters for membership of the board.

Mr. Kromer suggested that the board membership be mostly comprised of City staff and other housing partners that are already involved in redevelopment initiatives. He stated that

Council would need to approve each transaction. He stated that this would give Reading a very focused mission and would bring the right kind of investment to the City.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the process is entirely a Council initiative. Mr. Kromer stated that Council would create a new public entity. He stated that Council would enact the ordinance which would require the Mayor's signature.

Mr. Sterner suggested that the land bank board would be similar to the Blighted Property Review Committee. Mr. Kromer stated that they are very related.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the board would be an authority governed by the Authorities Act. Mr. Kromer stated that it would be a public body but not an authority.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that this be further reviewed in Council committee.

Ms. Reed suggested that it be discussed by Finance and then before the entire body at a Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Slifko questioned if there was sample legislation. Mr. Kromer stated that there is sample legislation along with sample bylaws and procedures.

Ms. Snyder questioned how the new board would interact with the Administration. Mr. Kromer stated that there is no Administrative role but that it would operate consistently with current Redevelopment Authority procedures.

Ms. Reed stated that it would allow the City to do strategic urban planning. She noted her support of the initiative.

Mr. Sterner stated that there are already many entities focused in this area. Ms. Reed stated that if this is well coordinated this will not be an issue.

Mr. Daubert, Mr. Marmarou, Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Mr. Slifko noted their support to move this initiative forward.

Mr. Slifko suggested that the work be performed in-house.

Mr. Cituk questioned the funding stream for the board's work. Mr. Kromer explained that the pre-qualified developers would pay a development fee which would cover the costs of the board's operating expenses. He stated that most of the costs will be incurred during start up.

Ms. Kelleher expressed the belief that Mr. Kromer's proposal would work well for Reading. She described the problems Our City Reading and Habitat for Humanity have when trying to

obtain properties at tax sales. She stated that the board's work will be manageable at low cost with in-house staff. She suggested that the realtor's association may also be willing to assist.

Mr. Sterner suggested that there be assurances in the agreements with the developers to ensure that the projects move forward. Mr. Kromer stated that the agreements can include timelines and deposits. Ms. Kelleher suggested that there also be a reversion clause.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested including land and property.

Ms. Kelleher stated that draft legislation can be before Council for review in 2-4 weeks.

Ms. Reed thanked Mr. Kromer and Ms. Kelleher for their work on this initiative.

Mr. Kromer left the meeting at this time.

### **III. Committee Reorganization**

Council reviewed the current committee assignments. The new assignments are as follows:

1. Finance Committee – Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed, Slifko
2. Standards of Living – Marmarou, Sterner, Daubert
3. Nominations & Appointments – Marmarou, Sterner, Goodman-Hinnershitz
4. Act 47 Implementation Work Group – Council Pres & Chairs of Finance
5. Code and License Appeals Board – Councilor in affected District
6. Strategic Planning – body of Council, Councilor Daubert will chair
7. EAC – Slifko
8. Diversity Board – Waltman
9. LRA – Daubert, Marmarou, Waltman
10. BPRC – Slifko
11. Rec Commission – Goodman-Hinnershitz, Daubert
12. Audit Committee– Reed, Goodman-Hinnershitz (Finance Chair)
13. Capital Planning Committee – Reed, Goodman-Hinnershitz (Finance Chair)
14. Revenue Committee – Reed, Goodman-Hinnershitz (Finance Chair)
15. RATS – Waltman-Reed
16. BCAP – Goodman-Hinnershitz
17. Main St – liaison – Reed
18. BCCJAB – Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed
19. School District Work Group – Waltman, Reed (Pres and VP), Goodman-Hinnershitz
20. Reading Eagle Public Safety Group – Goodman-Hinnershitz, Reed

Ms. Reed explained that committees will be reviewed again in January.

### **IV. Agenda Review**

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including:

- Conditional use 549 N 10<sup>th</sup> St

Mr. Spencer questioned the number of onsite parking spaces. Ms. Reed stated that there are three spaces onsite and two more spaces two blocks away.

Mr. Spencer questioned the ingress and egress of the onsite parking area. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she believes that this information is included in the case report provided by the Zoning Administrator.

- Resolution synchronizing the traffic signal at 2<sup>nd</sup> & Washington Sts

Mr. Johnson stated that there will be changes made to the area which require PennDOT approval. He stated that the changes will be more compatible with the complete streets initiative and more pedestrian friendly.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if the time for pedestrians to cross the street would be increasing. Mr. Johnson stated that it would not but that the lane reduction and the bump outs would increase safety and give pedestrians more time.

- Ordinance aligning the police pension plan

Ms. Snyder stated that these changes bring the latest pension items from the Police Collective Bargaining Agreement into the Code of Ordinances.

- Ordinance amending street cuts

Mr. Johnson stated that the City has stated that there will be no street cuts during the cold weather months. He stated that this is due to restoration work during the bad weather but that there may need to be exceptions for emergencies. He stated that all exceptions will be reviewed by the City Engineer. He stated that any street cuts during the cold months will need to use flowable fill to prevent street degradation.

Mr. Marmarou noted the horrendous condition of N. 13<sup>th</sup> St from UGI. Mr. Johnson stated that he will check on the situation and report back.

Mr. Marmarou stated that large trucks parking on S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street are still problematic. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this issue is being addressed at the Standards of Living Committee meetings.

Ms. Reed suggested that all Councilors look at their districts to determine where this is problematic City-wide.

Ms. Kelleher stated that all efforts to reduce this issue seems to simply relocate the problem. She noted the need to prohibit large trucks from parking on streets City-wide. She stated that she has sample legislation.

Mr. Johnson stated that he will also do some research on the issue.

Ms. Reed suggested that a work group be formed.

- Ordinance amending the Diversity Board

Ms. Snyder stated that this amends the possibility for removal to missing two consecutive unexcused meetings and also removes the reference to the PSLC which is no longer functional.

Ms. Snyder noted the need to add an ordinance for introduction for the Hillside lease agreement. She stated that Mr. Coleman has been working on this project but that the "Christmas on the Mountain" group has not responded to him. She stated that further delays will cause problems when set up needs to begin. She stated that there will be changes before final passage.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz cautioned that the group should not be called "Christmas on the Mountain" as that has religious connotations. Mr. Daubert stated that the group established their own name.

Ms. Reed stated that the agenda will be amended to introduce the lease agreement with the understanding that the terms of the lease will change before final passage. She suggested that the lease be reviewed at the next Standards of Living Committee meeting.

## **V. Executive Session**

Ms. Reed announced the need for an executive session to discuss litigation. Council entered executive session at 6:40 pm and exited at 7 pm.

## **VI. Meeting with RAWA on Curbside Waste Billing**

Ms. Kelleher stated that Mr. Waltman requested that Council choose a day to schedule the meeting. The group suggested Wednesday, September 23 at 4:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

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