



# *CITY COUNCIL*

## *Standards of Living Committee*

**Monday, May 18, 2015**  
**Meeting Report**

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

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, C. Peiffer, C. Snyder

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm.

### **I. Wyomissing Park Streetlight Project**

Mr. Daubert stated that a lighting ceremony was held. He stated that the light projects into the street and not at the homes. He stated that they also do not shine upward.

Ms. Snyder agreed and stated that the lights do not cause light pollution in the neighborhood. She stated that the project is complete.

Mr. Daubert stated that the residents are very happy. Ms. Snyder stated that the Villa St. Elizabeth held a small celebration with music and refreshments.

### **II. Update on Zoning Backlog**

Ms. Snyder stated that she has discussed the draft resolution with Mr. Agudo. She stated that he had two small concerns. She stated that he was to discuss them directly with Ms. Kelleher. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Agudo has not discussed them with Ms. Kelleher.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo is wondering if there is a way to arrange hearings to have them process smoothly. He suggested grouping them by Council district.

Mr. Peiffer stated that the backlog will be cleared by the end of 2016.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo is also wondering what information Council would like to receive if the Zoning Administrator and Hearing Officer recommend denial.

Ms. Katzenmoyer distributed the handout showing the information template to be used during the hearing process. She stated that the information is taken directly from the legislation and will ensure that information is presented consistently.

Mr. Peiffer questioned why the Business Privilege License (BPL) information is requested. He stated that the BPL is not unit or parcel specific. He stated that the payment history of rental units and inspections will be included.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo has stated that zoning decisions cannot be made based on BPL information. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Council staff understands this. She explained that this is necessary to operate a business in the City and that rental ownership is a business. She suggested that this is why this information is requested and that these business owners should be obtaining their BPL and paying their business taxes.

Mr. Peiffer stated that he cannot determine this information but that he could request it from the Customer Service Center.

Mr. Sterner stated that it would be for Council's information. He noted the need for a process to track the BPL if this is removed from the information template. He noted the need for all to pay their fair share to the City.

Mr. Peiffer recommended removing the BPL from the template.

Mr. Peiffer stated that a Health and Safety Inspection may not have been completed on every property. He stated that if one was completed, it will be part of the inspection history provided.

Mr. Marmarou described problems with student rentals in the Albright area.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if issues with the number of units could be found during Health and Safety inspections before permits are issued. Mr. Peiffer suggested

combining Health and Safety inspections with Property Maintenance inspections as the full inspection history will be provided and both will be included.

Mr. Sterner suggested that this topic be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. Ms. Snyder agreed.

Mr. Peiffer suggested rewording of the resolution regarding who will conduct hearings based on zoning districts and number of units. Ms. Katzenmoyer suggested that Mr. Peiffer send the language directly to Ms. Kelleher.

Mr. Peiffer stated that zoning staff is addressing 80 properties in the backlog per month.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Albright students are moving in and out at this time. He noted the difficulty determining how many students live in a property. Mr. Peiffer agreed that it is very difficult. Ms. Snyder stated that it will remain difficult unless Albright cooperates.

Ms. Snyder left the meeting at this time.

### **III. Zoning Changes needed to implement Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Peiffer stated that the Comprehensive Plan was delivered to the Council office today. He stated that Councilors should be receiving them shortly. He stated that Council will have a presentation by URDC at the June 8 Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Lloyd arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the suggestions made by stakeholders were included. Mr. Peiffer stated that he can provide summary information to Council that is not included in the final draft. He stated that the summary will include suggestions made by stakeholders, public input and survey results.

Mr. Sterner questioned what zoning changes would be needed. Mr. Peiffer stated that some will be needed but that has not yet been finalized. He stated that once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the zoning review will begin phase 2. He stated that this is a completely separate process.

Mr. Peiffer stated that two formal reviews of the Comprehensive Plan are required. He stated that the Planning Commission will begin their review at their June meeting and

that it should be before Council in July. He explained that the billing must be concluded by the end of June but that the adoption of the Plan can extend beyond that deadline.

Mr. Peiffer left the meeting at this time.

#### **IV. Complete Streets Update**

Mr. Lloyd distributed information about Complete Streets. He stated that safety is a large component in Complete Streets.

Mr. Sterner stated that a photo in a handout looks similar to Penn St. Mr. Lloyd stated that Reading has great bones to get this project started.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the US Department of Transportation has issued a challenge to all Mayors to integrate Complete Streets into their policies. He expressed the belief that a formal policy will be needed in the future to obtain project funding.

Mr. Lloyd distributed a draft of Reading's Complete Streets policy. He stated that this policy will be in the Administrative Manual and thanked Ms. Katzenmoyer for her comments. He described the mission and vision of Complete Streets.

There was a discussion of unlicensed vehicles (dirt bikes, ATVs, etc) that have become problematic on City streets and the recent casualty on Cotton St. Mr. Lloyd stated that speeding is also an issue.

Mr. Daubert stated that he is anxious to see the economic development that will follow as more and more people walk and bike the City.

Mr. Lloyd stated that Complete Streets items are being considered for the Penn St Bridge during construction. He stated that Lancaster Ave should also be addressed.

Mr. Sterner questioned if there were any physical designs pending. Mr. Lloyd stated that the City has been working with Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships to add a bike lane to Skyline Dr. He stated that this will be a good pilot project and will provide connectivity to the bike trails on the mountain.

Mr. Marmarou stated that projects should not include a change of property ownership. Mr. Lloyd agreed. He stated that this will be paving and adding markings to the roadway.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for road repairs. Mr. Lloyd agreed.

Mr. Lloyd stated that projects along the Schuylkill River trail are also being studied. He stated that the trail can connect to downtown. He suggested that Penn St between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> also be a future project and that the network continue to expand. He stated that Complete Streets will also address safe routes to school and that the City has been speaking with the School District. He stated that Complete Streets will help guide decisions and project design.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the Complete Streets policy will be completed within a few weeks and that projects will then be studied further. He stated that Reading received a three star rating and that Complete Streets is an additional STAR initiative that will be complete.

## **V. Bike Hub Update**

Mr. Lloyd stated that the bike hub is thriving and that August will be one year of operation. He stated that group rides occur on Wednesdays and that the City will begin a bike share program.

Mr. Daubert stated that more people will bike when some Complete Streets projects are completed.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the bike share program is for City employees and that bikes will be available at City Hall, the Public Works Building and the WWTP. He stated that the program is to encourage City employees to use bikes instead of cars to attend meetings and go to lunch. He stated that the City's wellness funding was used to purchase the bikes.

Mr. Daubert noted the need for Councilors to support the biking community. He stated that bike events bring tourists.

Mr. Sterner noted his understanding that Reading is a biking destination. Mr. Lloyd stated that the City has been working towards that and that he believes they will receive designation this year.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to get bikes to kids. Mr. Lloyd stated that they do when they are able. He explained the program to build a bike and learn to maintain it.

Mr. Daubert stated that bikes can also be donated.

Mr. Lloyd stated that a biking documentary was just filmed in Reading. He stated that the documentary will be shown when the Complete Streets policy is released.

Mr. Daubert suggested that Reading model its transportation after Portland, OR. He stated that it is very easy to travel there.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Shelly Katzenmoyer*  
Deputy City Clerk