



CITY COUNCIL

Strategic Planning Committee

Monday, March 7, 2015
Meeting Report

Attending: C. Daubert (Chair), D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, B. Twyman, J. Slifko, S. Marmarou, J. Waltman

Others Attending: L. Kelleher, T. Butler, T. Coleman

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Daubert at approximately 5:04 pm.

Mr. Waltman stated that he met with Mr. Scott to discuss the Strategic Planning meetings noting that these meetings provide the administration with the ability to vet various initiatives. He noted that historically the City Clerk has worked with the administration to define the Strategic Planning agendas.

Mr. Daubert announced that the Committee will be going into executive session to discuss litigation. Mr. Spatz, reporter from the Reading Eagle, inquired if the executive session will include a discussion on the forensic audit report recently prepared by Baker Tilly. Mr. Waltman stated that any discussion on that topic will be held in a public setting.

Council entered an executive session at 5:08 pm and the executive session concluded at 6:11 pm.

Mr. Coleman left the meeting and Mr. Scott and Mr. Johnson arrived at the meeting.

1. Forensic Audit Report

Mr. Waltman stated that copies of the report were distributed to Council. Mr. Scott asked Council to review the report and make recommendations for follow up.

Mr. Waltman inquired if the report contains a menu of options.

Mr. Scott expressed the belief that the report shows that the administrative employees clearly ignored the recommendations made by Herbein & Co. in each annual external audit for many years.

The need for an RFP prior to any further work was noted.

2. East Ends Social Club

Mr. Scott stated that East Ends has not made a lease payment to the City for seven (7) years. He stated that he has discussed potential new uses for the building with CDC Executive Director Brian Kelly who suggested turning the building into a bike hub. Mr. Scott stated that he agrees with this suggestion as this new use will benefit youth and stop the sale of alcohol.

Mr. Scott stated that he met with representatives from East Ends who expressed the belief that as they have been making capital repairs to the building they did not need to make lease payments. The representatives stated that former mayor Spencer agreed with this approach.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to avoid leaving this building vacant as it will be quickly destroyed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Ms. Reed suggested that the City take an inventory of the City owned property and records in the upper floors of the property before notice is given to East Ends. They suggested that the inventory should be taken tomorrow as East Ends will see the story appearing in the Reading Eagle on this issue.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed that the building should not be left in a vacant state and that the new user needs to also maintain Mineral Spring Park.

Mr. Scott agreed that Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Mr. Marmarou can accompany Public Works tomorrow when Public Works conducts their inventory of the contents of the building. He stated that a notice to terminate the lease agreement at the end of April 2016 will be issued to East Ends.

3. Baer Park

Mr. Scott expressed the belief that the boxing program should not be operating in the Baer Park fieldhouse.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Mr. Daubert stated that this fieldhouse should be managed by the Rec Commission.

Ms. Reed stated that the neighborhood surrounding Baer Park has complained for years that they are no longer permitted to access the fieldhouse due to the boxing program. She noted that the field house was formerly used by many parties.

Mr. Marmarou and Mr. Daubert noted that Baseball Town did a major rehab of the ballfields and they stated that the fields are no longer available for public use.

Council agreed with Mr. Scott's plan to terminate the MoU allowing the boxing program at the fieldhouse. Mr. Scott stated that he plans to end this use within the next 30 days.

4. Angelica DCNR Complaint

Mr. Scott stated that he is currently working with various parties to identify swap land for recreation purposes to satisfy the DCNR's complaint about the projects that were completed at Angelica Park over the past years.

5. Cleanliness of Streets and Gateways

Mr. Scott stated that he is working to develop a better approach to addressing the cleanliness of the City's streets, beginning with Perkiomen Avenue.

Mr. Slifko stated that historically the streets always appear dirtier in March/April after the leftover snow melts and the warmer weather begins.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that the cleanliness of the streets is relative to the location of convenience stores.

Mr. Johnson noted that citizens must act more responsibly by cleaning up litter rather than pushing it into the street. He stated that street sweeper trucks are not designed to remove litter. He suggested educating the public.

Mr. Scott suggested stricter enforcement of the trash and recycling set out as he believes that some of the problem is caused by trash coming from improper set out. He suggested holding an education session with groups such as REIA (Real Estate Investors Association) to inform them of the proper set out of trash and recycling.

1. Other Matters

The remaining topics were deferred until the April meeting.

As no other issues were brought forward, the Strategic Planning Committee meeting concluded at approximately 7 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk