



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
August 22, 2016
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, C. Daubert, J. Waltman, J. Slifko, B. Twyman, D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, D. Cituk, C. Castner, W. Scott, G. Steckman, B. Murray, A. Palacios, P. Vasquez, R. Johnson, C. Younger, K. Barnhardt, L. Olsen

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm by Mr. Waltman.

I. Mt. Penn Preserve

Mr. Olsen explained that he and Commissioner Barnhardt are here tonight to provide a progress report on this issue. He stated that large number of people were invited to attend a meeting at Stoksey in May to initiate a community discussion about this issue. He stated that attendance was good and a number of ideas were generated. He explained that the next step is obtaining a grant from the National Association of Realtors and the required \$1,500 matching funds. He reported that through various private donations, matching funds were obtained and the application was submitted in late July. A decision is expected over the next few weeks. The funding will be used to hold the first of two (2) charrettes to develop a planning document that will define the best use for this area. Funding for a 2nd charrette will hopefully come through a DCNR (PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources) Grant for a Peer to Peer consultant to help implement the recommendations. The 2nd charrettes will require matching funds of approximately \$3,000.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that Reading, Alsace and Lower Alsace, all three (3) municipalities that are located on Mt. Penn, are being asked to contribute \$1,000 each toward this 2nd charrette.

Mr. Olsen stated that the Pagoda is still open for a limited number of hours but the foundation is working to expand the schedule. He noted that the Pagoda logged 3000 visitors per month on the days they are open.

Mr. Waltman noted the prior description of Reading Mountain Park which included Neversink Mountain, City Park, all of Mt. Penn and Bernhart's Park. He noted that the asset is one-of-a-kind and needs to be properly framed and marketed. He noted that Council would like to be part of the steering committee for the project.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested including organizations that hold events on Mt. Penn such as the Duryea Hill Climb organizers and those who organize the bike events. She thanked Public Works for their extra effort to regularly trim Egleman's Park.

Mr. Olson stated that the consultant can look at the continuum of all assets while preparing the planning document.

Ms. Reed stressed the need for us to collectively learn from past mistakes such as the Penn Corridor and River Place where there was more focus on office space and high salaries, rather than focus on getting the issue accomplished at the ground level.

In response to a question from Mr. Slifko, Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the DCNR Peer to Peer program helped the City and School District develop the Rec Commission agreement. Under Peer to Peer the DCNR assigns a "circuit rider" who is a consultant or mentor experienced in the subject of your project to work with the organization on the proper implementation of the project.

Mr. Waltman noted that the components are in place, a timeframe for completion needs to be established. Mr. Barnhardt and Mr. Olson agreed that the main goal is implementation.

II. PML Conference

Ms. Kelleher distributed the information on the PML conference scheduled for October 4-6 in Lancaster. Mr. Slifko stated that the program offered on Wednesday, October 5th appears to include interesting topics. He suggested that a group of Council members attend the Wednesday session. Everyone was asked to respond to Ms. Kelleher by Friday about their availability.

III. Agenda Review

Ms. Kelleher stated that so far there are three (3) citizens registered to address the Sale of the East Reading Pool.

A. Resolution – authorizing the RAWA Board to approve the collective bargaining unit with AFSCME

Council asked for a change in language; changing "authorizing" to "supporting the approval of the contract".

B. Award of Contract – for Laboratory Services 2016 to M.J. Reider Associates INC., 107 Angelica Street, Reading, PA 19611 who is not the lowest bidder, because this was an RFQ it was based on

qualifications rather than price. The estimated total bid price is \$45,975.00.

C. Award of Contract – authorizing the purchase of a ladder truck for the Fire Department (*to be distributed Monday*)

Mr. Steckman explained that this project was shifted from Capital spending over a three (3) year period to CDBG unprogrammed funds.

D. Award of Contract – for Traffic Signal Maintenance in order that the contract may be awarded to Telco, Inc, 1224 Cross Keys Road Reading, PA 19605 at the cost of \$33,048

E. Award of Contract – for furnishing Bituminous Materials and Asphalt Cements for pick-up to South Reading Blacktop, Division of Reading Materials, Birdsboro, PA at an estimated total bid price of \$106,900.00. This contract is from date of award of contract until May 31, 2018

Mr. Johnson explained that this paving material will be used for minor road and pothole repairs.

F. Award of Contract – for the 2015 PennDOT Repaving Project to H&K Group Contractors, Skippack, PA. The total amount is \$772,304.95 subject to Penn DOT approval

Mr. Johnson explained that PennDOT plans to repave portions of South 9th Street, Hill Road and North 6th Street.

G. Resolution – waiving the financial security on a Municipal Improvement Agreement for Berks Nature at Angelica Park

Ms. Kelleher stated that the administration wishes to withdraw this resolution. Mr. Steckman agreed and stated that the resolution will probably not be repropounded in the future.

H. Award of Contract – for streetlight maintenance to Hirneisen Electric Inc., Reading, at the cost of \$57,254.

Ordinances for Final Passage:

A. Ordinance – amending the City Code, Chapter 5 Administrative Code, Section 5-806 Fiscal Provisions to provide improved clarity by providing a new Section 807 covering the Annual Budget and Capital Program, incorporating the Purchasing Policies currently identified as Section RE3117-005a-Ex A within Section 809, adding reserved sections for future use and renumbering Section 800 in its entirety, as attached in Exhibit A ***Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting***

Mr. Steckman stated that the ordinance was prepared by Ms. Kelleher and Mr. Coleman.

Mr. Slifko stated that Ms. Kelleher explained this amendment at the last Finance Committee meeting. He noted that over the past 20 years, Section 806 Fiscal Provisions became very muddled by various amendments dealing with issues such as transfers, allocations, and a

conglomeration of other issues. He stated that the amendment provides clarity and reorganization that will help those who need to use or review this section.

B. Ordinance – authorizing the purchase of the East Reading Pool site *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

Mr. Steckman stated that the City is in the process of negotiating with the School District and the County to obtain title to the East Reading Pool property. He stated that over the past weekend Mr. Harrity had a group of volunteers cleanup the perimeter of the property.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to take title to the property while finding the balance between the City's current maintenance load. She noted the need to prevent this property from becoming a blight on the neighborhood.

Ms. Reed stated that she agrees with the concept; however, she cannot support taking title to the property as the City is already stretched beyond its capacity to maintain the properties the City already owns. She described various efforts to care for Confluence Park that have started and abruptly stopped. She stated that the City stepped in to aid the East Reading Pool around 2001 with a contribution of approximately \$300K; however, the City did not offer the same assistance to the Northwest and Hillside Swimming Associations that failed a few years later.

Mr. Slifko stated that he will support the acquisition of this property to stabilize the property and neighborhood. He stated that he will consider the potential reuse of the property separately.

Mr. Twyman stated that he agrees that the City should take title to the property but carefully consider a reuse that will benefit the area such as parking.

Mr. Waltman also agreed with the proposal to take title and consider alternatives for the reuse of the property separately.

Mr. Steckman stated that the City is in a unique financial position as a portion of the Commuter Tax revenue is directed into the Capital Budget, which will enable the City to undertake projects such as these

C. Ordinance – amending the 2016 budget by adding the PA DCNR Reimbursement Grant for the Keffer Park Playground *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

D. Ordinance – amending the 2016 budget by adding the PA DCNR Reimbursement Grant for the 11th & Pike Playground Phase II Rehabilitation Project *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

E. Ordinance – amending the 2016 budget by adding the PA DCNR Reimbursement Grant for the Pendorf Park Playground Rehabilitation Project *Introduced at the August 8 regular meeting*

Mr. Steckman explained that these three (3) budget amendments are a continued effort to improve

tracking of the expenditures for grant funded projects by placing them in the USL financial system, which will eliminate one of the repeat external audit findings.

IV. Support Letters for Tax Credit Applications re 645 Penn and Lincoln Hotel

Mr. Waltman stated that Council received requests for letters to support Mr. Shuman's tax credit applications for the continued rehab of the Lincoln Hotel and 645 Penn. He expressed the belief that the administration should have been included too. He expressed the belief that Council and the administration should have a unified front for requests to support redevelopment projects.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the support letters are needed this week, as the tax credit application deadline is approaching.

Ms. Reed noted Mr. Shuman's success rate in redeveloping various areas in Reading, especially the 8th and Oley Street area. She reminded the group about the devastating fire at the Big Mill project when it was nearly completed and Mr. Shuman's willingness to almost start the project over.

Mr. Scott stated that he supports redevelopment projects and developers.

Mr. Waltman asked Ms. Kelleher to confirm when the letters are needed and if possible invite Mr. Shuman in to meet with Council and the Administration on September 6th. If a meeting on September 6th will not work, Mr. Steckman agreed to discuss the request with Mr. Shuman and make a recommendation to Council this week.

V. Executive Session

Mr. Waltman announced the need for Council to enter executive session to discuss a litigation matter. Council entered executive session at 6:23 pm and exited at 6:45 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

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