



CITY COUNCIL

Standards of Living Committee

Monday, April 18, 2016
Meeting Report

Committee Members Attending: C. Daubert (Chair), S. Marmarou, D. Reed

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, R. Johnson, T. Coleman

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Mr. Daubert.

I. Reading Risk Reduction

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Ms. Pagan was not feeling well and this presentation was rescheduled.

II. Lease Agreement Updates

- East Ends

Mr. Coleman stated that there still has been no response from the club's attorney.

Ms. Reed questioned what happens if they do not vacate the building at the end of April. Mr. Coleman stated that the City will take legal action to access the building since the locks have been changed.

Mr. Daubert questioned the amount of time this may take. Mr. Coleman explained that the lease agreement waives their appeal rights. He stated that a writ will be filed for the City to take possession. He stated that he will have to show the deed and explain that the lease has lapsed. He stated that he will work with the acting Police Chief to gain access.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if this would be done before the Magisterial District Justice. Mr. Coleman stated that it will be in the Court of Common Pleas.

- Baer Park

Mr. Coleman stated that the boxing club will vacate the building in mid-May after their tournament concludes.

- Fire Tower

Ms. Reed stated that Pagoda Skyline does good work but that a written agreement is needed. She suggested that Mike Reinert be invited to the May meeting for further discussion.

Mr. Johnson stated that he has had preliminary conversations with Mr. Reinert.

Ms. Reed noted her discomfort with liability issues without a written agreement.

Mr. Coleman questioned if other groups use the fire tower. Mr. Johnson stated that they do not.

Mr. Marmarou stated that a barbershop quartet performed at the Pagoda this past weekend.

Mr. Coleman questioned if the City performed any maintenance at the facility. Mr. Johnson stated that they may collect the trash but that would be the only item.

Mr. Coleman questioned if there should be a financial component to the agreement. Ms. Reed suggested that there not be as Pagoda Skyline funds all the improvements.

Ms. Reed stated that this agreement should be in place before further work is done on the Mountain Preserve.

Mr. Marmarou complemented the condition of Egelman's baseball field.

III. Rental Housing Regulations Requirement for local property manager

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed the current requirements and noted that a local property manager is not required at this time. She stated that she was unsure why this requirement was removed. She stated that the ordinance would need to be amended to add this requirement back into the process.

Mr. Daubert voiced his support of having a local property manager. Ms. Reed agreed and expressed the belief that this is crucial.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how this would affect property owners. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that rental property owners who live outside Berks County would need to hire a local property manager to more promptly handle maintenance and other issues with the property.

Mr. Marmarou stated that properties owned by those outside Berks County should be researched to ensure they have a local property manager. Mr. Daubert stated that the requirement must be reinstated first.

Ms. Reed questioned if the provision would be grandfathered for permits issued without this requirement. Mr. Coleman opined that it would not be grandfathered and that the requirement must be met moving forward.

The Committee recommended amending the regulations and bringing the amendment forward to the full body of Council.

IV. Outdoor Display and Sale of Mattresses

Ms. Reed stated that this is becoming problematic again.

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed the prohibition section of the sidewalk sale regulations. She questioned if enforcement would be pursued. Mr. Coleman stated that the prohibition is clear and that enforcement should occur.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the situation on Nicolls St has been addressed.

Mr. Coleman questioned how retail establishments are informed about the prohibition. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she does not know how they are informed. Ms. Reed suggested sending a letter (in both English and Spanish) and to request that DID address the establishments that are located downtown. She expressed the belief that if the Administration isn't willing to enforce the provision there is no need to pursue it.

V. Graffiti

Mr. Johnson stated that abatement has begun now that the weather has gotten warmer.

VI. Quality of Life Ticketing Program Update

Mr. Daubert stated that he requested that this topic be added to the agenda. He stated that for two weeks in a row there have been no property maintenance cases before the MDJ's. He stated that if this program has stopped there are budgetary impacts. He specifically requested this financial information be presented at the Committee's May meeting.

Ms. Reed stated that the overall quality of life in the City suffers if tickets are not issued.

VII. Street Lighting

Ms. Reed noted her understanding that Hirneisen is no longer performing street lighting maintenance. Mr. Daubert questioned how street lights would be replaced/repaired. Mr. Johnson stated that there is an emergency contractor in place but that the routine work is out for bid.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that City operations are more and more at risk with the decisions that have been made in the past few months.

VIII. Other Matters

- Joan Terrace

Mr. Marmarou stated that a tractor trailer has been parked on Joan Terrace for two weeks. Mr. Johnson stated that he will follow up.

- Glenside Elementary School Parking Lot

Ms. Reed stated that the School District has been parking their garbage trucks on this lot in the evenings and over the weekends. She stated that she has contacted the District but has not had any cooperation.

Mr. Coleman stated that he will research this issue as the trucks are parked on private property.

Mr. Johnson stated that he will contact the District to discuss this issue with them.

- Trap, Neuter, Release Program

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned when this should be an agenda topic. Mr. Daubert suggested that Ms. Katzenmoyer add it when there is time for full discussion.

Mr. Marmarou noted that many pets are released into the College Heights neighborhood when Albright students move home for the summer.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:42 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC
Deputy City Clerk