

CITY COUNCIL  
Sunbury PA 17801  
March 08, 2021  
6:15 pm

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the City of Sunbury was called to order by video/teleconference with the Honorable Mayor Karlovich, presiding. There was a quorum with the following in attendance:

Richard L. Reichner, Director of Accounts and Finance  
Christopher Reis, Director of Public Safety  
Joshua Brosious, Director of Public Works  
James R. Eister, Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Buildings

Other City officials in attendance:

Derrick Backer, City Administrator  
Joel Wiest, City Solicitor  
Bradley Hare, Chief of Police  
Jolinn Barner, City Clerk  
John Bakowicz, City Engineer  
Steve Welker, Public Works Supervisor  
Jerome Alex, City Controller

Visitors present: Zoom (15)

A moment of silent reflection was held prior to the beginning of the meeting.

### **MINUTES AND REPORTS**

The Minutes of February 08, 22, 2021 and reports of the Fire Dept., Police Dept., Treasurer, Engineer, and Code Office. Reports are in the City Clerk's office for review. Minutes will be posted at [sunburypa.org](http://sunburypa.org). – Mayor Karlovich moved to accept the minutes and reports. Second- Reichner. Unanimous vote.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT/AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Karlovich asked for public comment on agenda items.

Andres Manresa: Mr. Manresa wanted to speak about the connection with the city and the diverse people within the community. A lot of people from different races and background feel they have a disconnect from the city and them. They don't have enough information as to what is going on within the city. City administrator asked Mr. Manresa is this a problem with translating information? Mr. Manresa responded that the translation is one issue. Mr. Manresa also mentioned that another issue is when they come in to get assistance from someone that they don't have the proper communication due to translation issues.

Meghan Beck: Ms. Beck had some comments on the square footage issue that is up for discussion. Ms. Beck mentioned that the downtown has a higher square footage requirement for new rental permits than anywhere else in the city. It is 900 square feet in the central business district, and it is different everywhere else, and Ms. Beck feels that it is arbitrary, is not fair, and does not make sense for the health of the downtown. Other communities such as Lewisburg, Danville, Selinsgrove, Bloomsburg all do not have these guidelines and all follow the international property maintenance code. The international property maintenance code is actually reducing or somewhat eliminating the square footage requirement because they have determined that square footage is not a safety issue so therefore that it is not a code issue. Code is meant to ensure public safety so they are trying to get out of square footage requirement to allow for tiny homes and not try to dictate how people should live. The problem for us is in the Sunbury downtown this policy is a huge negative to investors, and part of the reason our downtown doesn't seem vibrant. There are upper stories that could be renovated, but they just sit vacant, and nothing invested in them. An investor has hundreds of codes that they have to be in compliance with and the square footage requirement just creates another barrier of entry that is not necessary. Councilman Reis asked if Ms. Beck would mind answering a question and stated she didn't have to answer it. Councilman Reis's question was if the square footage requirement was lowered or completely eliminated how many estimated additional units will she be able to add. Ms. Beck responded that she will be able to add 12 units. Councilman Eister asked another question regarding the average square footage of the 12 additional units. Ms. Beck responded that it would be hard to determine the average but mentioned that they would range from 400 square foot to 900 square foot, but they don't meet the current guidelines. Ms. Beck mentioned that she has floor plans for apartments that are 200, 300, and 400 square feet, and feels that a 900 square foot room may be more than necessary for an individual. She would be fine with what is used in the rest of the city in terms of square feet. Ms. Beck mentioned that it is 600 square feet for an

independent building, 400 square feet for multiple people occupancy, and 300 square feet for an individual. Ms. Beck mentioned that is how is written for the rest of the city and doesn't know why we wouldn't just eliminate it from the fast track and let it default to how it is for the rest of the city or follow the international code. Ms. Beck then mentioned other citizens that could benefit from this since they have vacant spots. Ms. Beck feel that the 900 square feet on top of all the other codes makes it very challenging to get more than one unit per floor.

Victoria Rosancrans: Ms. Rosancrans wanted to make a comment on the open container and outdoor seating resolutions. This a occurred in the city last year due to covid-19 and Ms. Rosancrans has concerns that she wants to bring to the attention of council again. Ms. Rosancrans mentioned that the 5 feet thoroughfare for the passage of pedestrians on the sidewalks in regard to the parking. Ms. Rosancrans feels that if this going to allowed again that it should be enforced, because it was not happening at times and then it becomes a liability on the city if somebody would pull and hits someone sitting there. The other concern Ms. Rosancrans has is the 5-foot thoroughfare is not there due to sidewalks being blocked, and watched citizens have to walk out onto the street, and this doesn't allow for safety for wheelchairs, Jazzy chairs, etc. to get through. Ms. Rosancrans gave the example of last year a band was playing and pedestrians could not get through. She was told the last time she brought this topic up was to contact the police. Ms. Rosancrans feels that the City police should not have to use their time to tell business owners that a band can't play in the middle of the pavement. Ms. Rosancrans is all about our downtown and our businesses and understands we are in a pandemic, but the citizens of the city should be able to walk, roll with their wheelchair or jazzy onto the sidewalk and be safe. Ms. Rosancrans is all for what we did in the past with this resolution but feels that these things need to be enforced. Ms. Rosancrans also addressed that we have many businesses in our city that are restaurants that are under the constraints of the Covid-19 guidelines and wants council to be mindful about closing streets because not every business if they apply for that will they be able to close a street for dinning.

### **Discussion**

There was discussion regarding the following topics between council and public officials.

- Letter of Support for SRI to apply for FCFP Grant in the amount of \$10,000
- Extend the normal rate period for rental permit renewals
- Outdoor Dining and Open Container Resolutions
- Street Sweeping/Resolution Chapter-26 Parking Prohibited During Certain Hours
- Grant Writer
- Grants for PD Building
- Current Square Footage for Rental Property
- Community Diversity
- PD Construction Bid Talley
- Meeting Policy

### **Proclamation Woman's History Month**

Mayor Karlovich made the motion to make the month of March woman's history month. Second Reis. Yes – Karlovich, Reichner, Reis, Eister. No – Brosious.

### **Accept Resignation Police Officer Terry Ketchem**

Mayor Karlovich made the motion to accept the resignation of Terry Ketchem as full-time police officer. Second Eister. Unanimous vote. Chief Hare wanted to note that Terry Ketchem will still be with the city as a part-time officer.

### **Opening City Hall Doors for Citizens to Pay Taxes**

Councilman Reichner made the motion to open the doors on March 9<sup>th</sup> for all citizens to conduct city business. Second Karlovich. Unanimous vote.

### **Amendment to 2018 Flood Mitigation Program Grant/Extension for Regan Street Project**

Mayor Karlovich made the motion to sign an amendment to extend the grant from June 30, 2021 to June 31, 2022. Second Eister. Unanimous vote.

### **PennDOT Financial Participation Agreement for Reagan Street**

Councilman Eister made the motion to have the PennDOT agreement that ensures that PennDOT will allocate \$250,000 toward the Regan St. Project signed by the Mayor pending full review by the city solicitor. Second Reis. Unanimous vote.

## **APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICES**

Councilman Reichner moved to approve to Pay Invoices/Vouchers General Fund - \$67,769.47 and Liquid Fuels Fund - \$32,612.44. Second Karlovich. Unanimous vote.

## **Tax Exoneration**

Councilman Reichner moved to accept the tax exoneration of \$311.61. Second Karlovich. Unanimous vote.

## **Announcements**

Mayor Karlovich announced the following during the meeting:

Accepting letters of interest for Planning Commission Appointment due in City Clerk's Office by March 19<sup>th</sup> by 12:00pm.

## **Pre-Submitted Audience Comment**

There were no Pre-Submitted Audience Comments

## **Zoom**

Victoria Rosancrans: Ms. Rosancrans asked the question when are we officially starting the street sweeping schedule. Mr. Welker responded that they will be street sweeping tomorrow, but only in the areas where there are no cars. Cars being required to move won't be in affect for at least another two weeks. Ms. Rosancrans had another concern is alerting citizens of the city about things that are happening. Ms. Rosancrans knows that the city has a website, Facebook, and places ads in the newspaper. Ms. Rosancrans feels that there is a disconnect with the Facebook and the website, because sometimes things are put on the website and sometimes they are not, and same with Facebook. Ms. Rosancrans visits the website daily to make sure she up to date with what is happening. Ms. Rosancrans gave the example with snow removal it was in the newspaper on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, but was not on the website or Facebook page to alert citizens. Ms. Rosancrans feels that there needs to be consistency with what is posted on Facebook, the website, and the paper, because somewhere along the line it fell apart. Ms. Rosancrans had another concern and that was with the agenda. She understands that it only needs to be posted 24 hrs. of the meeting, and the agenda for this meeting was posted on Saturday afternoon. Ms. Rosancrans feels that we should have a consistency of when things are posted on the website and Facebook, and posted earlier especially if the city wants people to pre submit to make comments on agenda items. Ms. Rosancrans also mentioned that there are people out there that don't have internet, Facebook, or get the newspaper. Ms. Rosancrans also made the suggestion to post the agenda out in the Foyer. Ms. Rosancrans also thanked the city for putting a city council button to make it easier to find the zoom link and the agenda, but feels the city should have consistency when posting.

Earl Alex: He has 2 important announcements for the citizens of our area. He mentioned the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP), which is a relief grant eligible for-profit hospitality industry businesses. The grants will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to help hotels, restaurants, eateries, etc. to help alleviate revenue losses and pay eligible operating expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications to apply start March 15, 2021 until the funds are exhausted or June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The second announcement he had was the county just received 5.9 million dollars for emergency rent assistance program. Central Susquehanna Opportunities (CSO) is administrating this, and it is designed to help residents pay past due rent and utilities. He encourages everyone who qualifies to apply, and to contact CSO if they need help applying. He mentioned that the emergency rental assistance program does not cover mortgages.

Lindie Lloyd: Ms. Lloyd wanted to know what time will street sweeping be done on market street? Ms. Lloyd was concerned about lunch time and things of that nature. Mr. Welker respond 6:30 to 7:00. Ms. Lloyd mentioned that it would be a good for the city to create a list of services available to the community. Ms. Lloyd then asked when will we know about the SEDA-COG grant, and City administrator responded by next council meeting.

The next city council meeting will be held on March 22, 2021 at 6:15 pm Via Zoom/Facebook Live.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Rissinger,  
Administrative Assistant