

STATED MEETING - CITY COUNCIL – JULY 28, 2015

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 in Council Chambers, 120 North Duke Street, (Rear Annex) Lancaster, PA, at 7:30 p.m., with President Graupera presiding.

The Council led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present – Mr. Reichenbach, Mr. Roschel, Ms. Sorace, Mr. Soto, Ms. Williams, Ms. Wilson and President Graupera - 7

The minutes of the meeting of Council for July 14, 2015 were approved by a roll-call vote. Mr. Soto, Ms. Wilson and President Graupera abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Michael Ervin, 37 North Plum Street, noted that Lancaster County was recently ranked as having the 27th worst roads in the nation. He noted that never in his lifetime did he expect to see the amount of utility work being done on the city's streets. He noted that much of the city's infrastructure has outlived its useful life and acknowledged that it must be replaced. Yet, he said utility cuts into the streets and potholes generally have left City streets in poor condition. Some potholes have not been repaired since last winter. Courses of pavement have separated in some place, which will lead to greater damage once the freeze-thaw cycle begins in the coming winter.

He asked when utility work is expected to be completed and what is the city's plan was for fixing streets?

President Graupera said that public comment is not a question and answer period, but that if he stays until the end of the meeting, he could talk to him about his concerns.

Councilwoman Sorace responded that the city has undertaken a comprehensive study of streets which is used to prioritize streets for repairs. A list of streets to be repaved and reconstructed this year was announced by the mayor at the last City Council meeting.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

City Council considered the following applications and recommendations from the Historical Commission for improvements to properties within the Heritage Conservation District:

- a. Lancaster General Health, owner of 555 North Duke Street, proposes demolition of egress stairs and two, one-story structures and constructing an expansion to an existing modern hospital building facing North Lime Street. (Recommended for approval by the Historical Commission)

Mr. Reichenbach made a motion to approve the recommendation. Mr. Soto seconded the motion.

Council approved the recommendation by a unanimous roll-call vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE –

Councilwoman Williams moved to appoint Randal Horst to the Suburban Lancaster Sewer Authority, for a term from August 1, 2015 until May 31, 2019. Mr. Soto seconded the motion.

Council approved the appointment by a unanimous roll-call vote.

Councilwoman Williams then moved to reappoint Mr. Reichenbach to the Property Reinvestment Board. Mr. Soto seconded the motion.

Mr. Reichenbach said he was happy to continue to serve on that board, noting that he had learned a great deal about the process.

Council approved the reappointment by a roll-call vote, with Mr. Reichenbach abstaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Council Resolution No. 40-2015, (the title) was read by the City Clerk as follows:

A resolution of the Council of the City of Lancaster requesting a multimodal transportation fund grant of \$2,954,168 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for citywide transportation enhancements.

Mr. Roschel made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Reichenbach seconded the motion.

Mr. Roschel said the city is committing \$1,266,072 in matching funds for the grant. Grant proceeds will be used for: conversion of Charlotte Street from one-way traffic to two-way; development of the Engleside recreational trail; a trail connecting the city's northeast area to the unused "Goat Path" roadbed, which extends east to Bareville. It will also pay for boulevard lighting on 11 blocks of Manor and West King streets and bike lanes on several streets. It will also pay for design of placement of the former Armstrong World Industries pedestrian bridge over the Conestoga River near Walnut Street and the Conestoga Pines Park. It will also be used to implement recommendations made in the recent walking study conducted by Jeff Speck and the recent economic development study of the Lancaster City Alliance.

Public Works Director Charlotte Katzenmoyer said the initiatives are largely being taken from Speck's walkability study. She particularly cited the pedestrian lighting on Manor and West King streets, which she said will improve safety and she hopes will spur economic development.

She said the total budget for all the projects mentioned is \$4.97 million. The City is also applying to the County Transportation Enhancements program for \$750,000 for the Charlotte Street conversion.

She said the grant also includes a short pilot to test a cycletrack on Chestnut Street, in which a bicycle lane will be placed between the curb and parked cars. The travel lane for motor vehicles will be on the opposite side of the line of parked cars. It is being tested because motorists in this region are unfamiliar with the parking lane away from the curb.

She said a Department of Conservation and Natural Resources grant has been received which will help pay for development of the northeast trail, in the area of the McCaskey High School campus.

She said matching funds for the grant are coming from state Liquid Fuels funds, future capital bond proceeds and stormwater funds, since stormwater management projects such as rain gardens will be included in the enhancements.

Councilwoman Wilson asked if the addition of bike lanes to the streets will also allow for the streets to be repaved.

Ms. Katzenmoyer responded that many of the streets for which bike lanes are planned are already slated for repaving. Bike lanes will be incorporated as that work is done.

Ms. Wilson asked if the information about repaving and other transportation projects could be more broadly disseminated. She does not wish to hear residents' complaints that these projects are being done but the condition their street is not being addressed.

Mayor Gray responded that Lancaster's streets are no worse than those in most Pennsylvania cities. He said the situation is an ongoing, statewide problem.

West James, Chestnut and Liberty Street are being reconstructed this year in conjunction with utility line replacements, Ms. Katzenmoyer said.

Mayor Gray noted that Council passed a right-of-way ordinance to limit and manage the cutting through of city streets by utility companies. That ordinance is now being challenged in Commonwealth Court.

Ms. Katzenmoyer said that if the ordinance is upheld and fees are paid by utility companies under that ordinance, it will bring \$400,000-\$500,000 annually to the street repair budget.

In response to a question from Ms. Sorace, Ms. Katzenmoyer said she feels the City has good chance of securing the state grant. The City has done preliminary studies, such as the walkability study, and the City's application is truly multimodal, which is what the Commonwealth Financing Authority is seeking.

City Council approved Resolution No. 40-2015 by a unanimous roll-call vote.

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Gray read the following prepared statement:

Legislation recently introduced in the State House would eliminate our ability to regulate the number of unrelated individuals living in a house, no matter where that housing is situated. House Bill 809 would restrict the City's ability to exercise local control over zoning as it relates to occupancy and land use. While this legislation purports to be aimed at providing more student housing, HB 809 could also increase density to unacceptable levels by inviting more boarding houses and group homes into residential neighborhoods.

We are opposed to this legislation because the City's most recent update of the City's Zoning Ordinance raised the limit on the number of unrelated persons allowed to live in a dwelling unit to 3 individuals. The City also has a designated Campus Overlay District that permits 4 unrelated individuals to reside in a dwelling unit. Thus, our current Zoning Ordinance already adequately balances the demand for student housing with the needs of residential property owners. HB 809 fails to recognize that allowing an unlimited number of unrelated individuals to occupy a dwelling unit can impact the quality of life in a residential neighborhood. Lancaster has 7 educational institutions within its 7.5 square mile borders. Our relationships with these institutions has been excellent and they are all valued partners in the City's on-going revitalization. That said, how many other communities with 60,000 people living primarily within the 4.5 square miles of the City borders has this number of institutions?

The General Assembly should recognize that this is a local issue that does not lend itself to 'one-size-fits-all' legislation that fails to consider the concerns and opinions of neighborhood residents. This legislation has only recently been introduced and is still in the early stages of consideration. We will be notifying Representative Sturla and Senator Smucker of our opposition to the legislation.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

President Graupera said he had the pleasure of standing-in for the mayor at last Wednesday's dedication of the "Silent Symphony" sculpture, outside Lancaster's Amtrak station. He thanked Ms. Katzenmoyer and Tracy Beyl for arranging the ceremony. When reading the invitation, President Graupera said he was struck by the phrasing. It said to come celebrate Lancaster's largest public art installation "to date."

He commended the administration for its support of public art and is looking forward to great things to come.

President Graupera also noted that another letter had been received in support of Council's position on House Bill 71, which would allow municipal police to use radar for vehicle speed enforcement. Rep. David Zimmerman's letter was the third received by Council. There have also been two email responses from legislators in support of the bill.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Sorace noted that National Night Out is Tuesday, August 4. Last year, she and Councilwoman Wilson joined the mayor in visiting the various block parties. She invited any Council member who is interested to join her in doing that again this year.

Mayor Gray noted that the Himalaya restaurant on Wednesday, August 5, is having a fixed-price, six-course meal. The proceeds of the \$50 per person meal will go to relatives and friends of the restaurant operators in Nepal, who are still living deplorable conditions following the devastating earthquake in that region.

Councilwoman Wilson noted that beginning Wednesday, August 5, the Unstoppables Drill Team will be hosting a drill team festival in conjunction with the Crisp Attacks

Community Center. The events will culminate with a parade on Saturday, August 8. She encouraged everyone to support the efforts of the youth drill team.

Councilman Reichenbach noted that state Rep. Mike Sturla is hosting his annual backpack give-away for returning school students on Saturday, August 22, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Lancaster Rec Center. He will be there helping and encouraged others to do so.

He also commented that multiple people have told him they have slowed their vehicles while driving on North Prince Street after seeing an electronic sign posted there recently that tells them their speed of travel. He thanked the officials responsible to placing the speed-indicator sign there. Initiatives such as that help neighborhoods and improve the quality of life for residents, he said.

Mayor Gray, responding to a question from Councilman Soto, reported that the National Rifle Association's lawsuit against the City is on hold. The Commonwealth Court ruled that the manner in which the state law was passed that allowed the lawsuits against Lancaster and other Pennsylvania cities was unconstitutional. That ruling is being appealed to the state Supreme Court. If the Commonwealth Court ruling is upheld, those lawsuits will be dismissed for lack of standing.

He said there are moves in the state legislature to pass a new version of the law to allow the NRA to sue municipalities with gun ordinances. Yet, with a new governor, that bill is less likely to succeed, the mayor said.

Ms. Vanessa Summer, representing Lancaster Unity, invited Council members to her organization's next potluck event, on Saturday, August 8, at Tellus360. On August 5, the group will be participating in Unity Day at Martin Luther King Elementary School and on August 22, Lancaster Unity is sponsoring a community clean-up day, beginning at Tellus360.

President Graupera adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

John E. Graupera, president

Attest:

Bernard W. Harris Jr., City Clerk