



CITY COUNCIL

Standards of Living Committee

Monday, June 15, 2015
Council Office
5:00 pm

The Standards of Living Committee's responsibilities and topics include but are not limited to Housing Planning strategies, Building, Trades and Property Maintenance Inspection and Enforcement, Public Safety, Public Works, Police, Fire, Neighborhood Parks, Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Development, Customer Service, Graffiti Abatement, Community Group Organization and Support

Committee Members: Mr. Sterner, Mr. Daubert (Co Chairs) and Mr. Marmarou

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the Committee Chair.

All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012

I. Update re Implementation of New Zoning Backlog Process

II. Agreements with Organizations that utilize City facilities

- a. **East Ends**
- b. **Baer Park Fieldhouse** - include use as polling place for Primary and Gen Elections
- c. **Green House**
- d. **Fire Tower**

III. Updates

- **UGI Meter Relocation** - in progress with Law Dept and HARB Chair
- **SALDO Ordinance and Official Map** - currently in Law Department
- **Agreements with Playground Associations & Other Organizations**

Follow Up:

- **July**
 - **Zoning Changes Needed to Implement Comprehensive Plan**
 - **Utility Cuts and Enforcement of Street Cut Ordinance re maintenance of street cuts**



CITY COUNCIL

Standards of Living Committee

Monday, May 18, 2015
Meeting Report

Committee Members Attending: D. Sterner, C. Daubert (Co-Chair), S. Marmarou

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, C. Peiffer, C. Snyder

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm.

I. Wyomissing Park Streetlight Project

Mr. Daubert stated that a lighting ceremony was held. He stated that the light projects into the street and not at the homes. He stated that they also do not shine upward.

Ms. Snyder agreed and stated that the lights do not cause light pollution in the neighborhood. She stated that the project is complete.

Mr. Daubert stated that the residents are very happy. Ms. Snyder stated that the Villa St. Elizabeth held a small celebration with music and refreshments.

II. Update on Zoning Backlog

Ms. Snyder stated that she has discussed the draft resolution with Mr. Agudo. She stated that he had two small concerns. She stated that he was to discuss them directly with Ms. Kelleher. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Agudo has not discussed them with Ms. Kelleher.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo is wondering if there is a way to arrange hearings to have them process smoothly. He suggested grouping them by Council district.

Mr. Peiffer stated that the backlog will be cleared by the end of 2016.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo is also wondering what information Council would like to receive if the Zoning Administrator and Hearing Officer recommend denial.

Ms. Katzenmoyer distributed the handout showing the information template to be used during the hearing process. She stated that the information is taken directly from the legislation and will ensure that information is presented consistently.

Mr. Peiffer questioned why the Business Privilege License (BPL) information is requested. He stated that the BPL is not unit or parcel specific. He stated that the payment history of rental units and inspections will be included.

Ms. Snyder stated that Mr. Agudo has stated that zoning decisions cannot be made based on BPL information. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Council staff understands this. She explained that this is necessary to operate a business in the City and that rental ownership is a business. She suggested that this is why this information is requested and that these business owners should be obtaining their BPL and paying their business taxes.

Mr. Peiffer stated that he cannot determine this information but that he could request it from the Customer Service Center.

Mr. Sterner stated that it would be for Council's information. He noted the need for a process to track the BPL if this is removed from the information template. He noted the need for all to pay their fair share to the City.

Mr. Peiffer recommended removing the BPL from the template.

Mr. Peiffer stated that a Health and Safety Inspection may not have been completed on every property. He stated that if one was completed, it will be part of the inspection history provided.

Mr. Marmarou described problems with student rentals in the Albright area.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned if issues with the number of units could be found during Health and Safety inspections before permits are issued. Mr. Peiffer suggested combining Health and Safety inspections with Property Maintenance inspections as the full inspection history will be provided and both will be included.

Mr. Sterner suggested that this topic be discussed at the next Committee of the Whole meeting. Ms. Snyder agreed.

Mr. Peiffer suggested rewording of the resolution regarding who will conduct hearings based on zoning districts and number of units. Ms. Katzenmoyer suggested that Mr. Peiffer send the language directly to Ms. Kelleher.

Mr. Peiffer stated that zoning staff is addressing 80 properties in the backlog per month.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Albright students are moving in and out at this time. He noted the difficulty determining how many students live in a property. Mr. Peiffer agreed that it is very difficult. Ms. Snyder stated that it will remain difficult unless Albright cooperates.

Ms. Snyder left the meeting at this time.

III. Zoning Changes needed to implement Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Peiffer stated that the Comprehensive Plan was delivered to the Council office today. He stated that Councilors should be receiving them shortly. He stated that Council will have a presentation by URDC at the June 8 Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Lloyd arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the suggestions made by stakeholders were included. Mr. Peiffer stated that he can provide summary information to Council that is not included in the final draft. He stated that the summary will include suggestions made by stakeholders, public input and survey results.

Mr. Sterner questioned what zoning changes would be needed. Mr. Peiffer stated that some will be needed but that has not yet been finalized. He stated that once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the zoning review will begin phase 2. He stated that this is a completely separate process.

Mr. Peiffer stated that two formal reviews of the Comprehensive Plan are required. He stated that the Planning Commission will begin their review at their June meeting and that it should be before Council in July. He explained that the billing must be concluded by the end of June but that the adoption of the Plan can extend beyond that deadline.

Mr. Peiffer left the meeting at this time.

IV. Complete Streets Update

Mr. Lloyd distributed information about Complete Streets. He stated that safety is a large component in Complete Streets.

Mr. Sterner stated that a photo in a handout looks similar to Penn St. Mr. Lloyd stated that Reading has great bones to get this project started.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the US Department of Transportation has issued a challenge to all Mayors to integrate Complete Streets into their policies. He expressed the belief that a formal policy will be needed in the future to obtain project funding.

Mr. Lloyd distributed a draft of Reading's Complete Streets policy. He stated that this policy will be in the Administrative Manual and thanked Ms. Katzenmoyer for her comments. He described the mission and vision of Complete Streets.

There was a discussion of unlicensed vehicles (dirt bikes, ATVs, etc) that have become problematic on City streets and the recent casualty on Cotton St. Mr. Lloyd stated that speeding is also an issue.

Mr. Daubert stated that he is anxious to see the economic development that will follow as more and more people walk and bike the City.

Mr. Lloyd stated that Complete Streets items are being considered for the Penn St Bridge during construction. He stated that Lancaster Ave should also be addressed.

Mr. Sterner questioned if there were any physical designs pending. Mr. Lloyd stated that the City has been working with Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships to add a bike lane to Skyline Dr. He stated that this will be a good pilot project and will provide connectivity to the bike trails on the mountain.

Mr. Marmarou stated that projects should not include a change of property ownership. Mr. Lloyd agreed. He stated that this will be paving and adding markings to the roadway.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for road repairs. Mr. Lloyd agreed.

Mr. Lloyd stated that projects along the Schuylkill River trail are also being studied. He stated that the trail can connect to downtown. He suggested that Penn St between 2nd and 6th also be a future project and that the network continue to expand. He stated that Complete Streets will also address safe routes to school and that the City has been speaking with the School District. He stated that Complete Streets will help guide decisions and project design.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the Complete Streets policy will be completed within a few weeks and that projects will then be studied further. He stated that Reading received a three star rating and that Complete Streets is an additional STAR initiative that will be complete.

V. Bike Hub Update

Mr. Lloyd stated that the bike hub is thriving and that August will be one year of operation. He stated that group rides occur on Wednesdays and that the City will begin a bike share program.

Mr. Daubert stated that more people will bike when some Complete Streets projects are completed.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the bike share program is for City employees and that bikes will be available at City Hall, the Public Works Building and the WWTP. He stated that the program is to encourage City employees to use bikes instead of cars to attend meetings and go to lunch. He stated that the City's wellness funding was used to purchase the bikes.

Mr. Daubert noted the need for Councilors to support the biking community. He stated that bike events bring tourists.

Mr. Sterner noted his understanding that Reading is a biking destination. Mr. Lloyd stated that the City has been working towards that and that he believes they will receive designation this year.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to get bikes to kids. Mr. Lloyd stated that they do when they are able. He explained the program to build a bike and learn to maintain it.

Mr. Daubert stated that bikes can also be donated.

Mr. Lloyd stated that a biking documentary was just filmed in Reading. He stated that the documentary will be shown when the Complete Streets policy is released.

Mr. Daubert suggested that Reading model its transportation after Portland, OR. He stated that it is very easy to travel there.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by	City Clerk
Sponsored by/Referred by	City Council
Introduced on	
Advertised on	N/A

RESOLUTION NO. _____ 2015

WHEREAS, the City of Reading City Council enacted an amendment to the City’s Zoning and Housing Permit Ordinances in December 2011, which will necessitate Conditional Use Hearings for the rental properties that are bound in a “backlog” due to incomplete applications or other administrative problems; and

WHEREAS, City Council and City staff developed a change in the process that will alter the process originally defined by Resolution 28-2012 to alleviate the backlog and allow the Conditional Use applications bound in the backlog to be handled in a reasonable and expedient manner.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by Council of the City of Reading, as follows:

Repealing Resolution 28-2012 and setting out the following process to handle Conditional Use Hearings for the properties currently bound in the zoning backlog:

1. **Independent Hearing Officer** shall conduct hearings for properties in the high density residential zones with 6 units and less (*hearings for all properties in low density R1, R1A and R2 zoning districts and seeking 7 or more units or rooms will be referred to a Full Council Conditional Use Hearing*). Recommendations to approve or deny the applications shall each be forwarded for City Council approval no later than the first or third Monday of the month. Each recommendation of the Independent Hearing Officer shall contain the following information to support the recommendation:
 - a. The square footage of the units(s)
 - b. The year the property was purchased and the number of units the property had when it was purchased
 - c. How the property was purchased; through a realtor or by private sale
 - d. The year the property was registered with Property Maintenance and Zoning as a rental property
 - e. The history of paid housing permits issued by Property Maintenance

- f. The number of off-street parking spaces provided or the executed lease agreement for off street parking in the vicinity of the rental unit
 - g. The number of electric meters provided
 - h. The building/trades permits pulled when the additional unit(s) were added
 - i. The year the efficiency unit was created, as applicable (the 2010 zoning ordinance prohibits efficiency units)
 - j. The year the rooming house was created, as applicable (the 2010 zoning ordinance prohibits rooming/boarding houses)
 - k. A copy of the business license, payment history and the year it was obtained
 - l. The date of the last Property Maintenance inspection at the property, the number of units identified and the year the property was in compliance with the local codes.
 - m. The date the Health and Safety Inspection was performed and the year the property was in compliance with the local codes
2. **Full Council** shall conduct Conditional Use Hearings for properties for all properties located within low density zoning districts – R1, R1A and R2 and those seeking 7 or more rental units (including rooms)
 3. With the adoption of this Resolution City Council also authorizes the Administration to retain the services of an Attorney who is a member of the Berks County Bar Association selected through the RFP process to conduct the hearings as set forth in Item 1 above and a transcriptionist obtained through the RFP process, to provide transcripts as requested for all hearings set forth herein.
 4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately.
 5. Proper officers of this City are authorized and directed to do such things as may be necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of this Resolution.
 6. In the event any provision, section, sentence, clause or part of this Resolution shall be held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect or impair any remaining provision, section, sentence, clause or part of this Resolution, it being the intent of this City that such remainder shall be and shall remain in full force and effect.

DULY ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, this ___ day of _____, 2015.

CITY OF READING,
Berks County, Pennsylvania

By _____
Francis Acosta, President of Council

Attest: _____
Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk