

**CITY OF MCKEESPORT**  
**WORKSHOP MEETING**

**TUESDAY**

**6:30 P.M.**

**JUNE 4, 2019**

The Work Session portion of the Council Meeting was called to order on the above-stated date by President of Council Richard Dellapenna.

**Secretary James read the following proposed Bills:**

**Bill #30** - Introduced by Keith Soles – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving a Reverse Subdivision Request From Tammy & Carnell Johnson to Combine Two Lots Into One. The property exists in a R-4 Zoning District.

Mayor Cherepko said this is on a reservoir site. They own the corner house so they did acquire the property and they are doing everything right. They want to do a reverse subdivision, I believe one of the reasons is so they can fence the entire property in. President Dellapenna asked for any other questions or comments and there were none.

**Bill #31** –Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving a Reverse Subdivision Request from Pattie & Russell A. Williams to Combine Two Lots Into One. The property exists in a R-1 Zoning District.

Solicitor Elash said this is another one where they acquired an adjoining lot and are adjoining it to the same parcel that their house is on. I would assume for fencing issues. Mayor Cherepko said I think the big thing for the public to understand is when you, we do have people purchasing lots. I think our last round of VPRC that is going through right now, the next round, I want to say 45. Mr. Soles said 48 I think. Mayor Cherepko said 47, 48 so people are purchasing the parcels, putting them back on the tax rolls and that's good. There's no need for a reverse subdivision if you purchase a property next to you unless you go to build on it. That's when you have to do a reverse subdivision and take two separate lots and convert into one. So, these people are, these particular cases or individuals were looking to do that, whether it was a fence or whatever they may do. But, I think it's very encouraging that you have about 47, 48 people that are

purchasing so many vacant lots. President Dellapenna asked for any other questions or comments and there were none.

**Bill #32** – Introduced by Timothy Brown - A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing and Directing its Appropriate Officers and Officials to Execute a Special Warranty Deed and to Deliver Same for the Donation and Conveyance of Real Estate at 612 Atlantic Avenue, McKeesport, Allegheny County, PA, and Designated in the Deed Registry Office of Allegheny County as Block/Lot Number 308-J-99 from the City of McKeesport, Party of the First Party, to the Redevelopment Authority of the City of McKeesport, Party of the Second Part, for the Consideration of One Dollar and Other Good and Valuable Consideration Including, but not limited to, the Promotion of Economic Development in the City of McKeesport; and Ratifying and Confirming all Prior Action of the City of McKeesport, and its Officials, Officers and Employees, with Regard to Said Donation and Conveyance and Acceptance of Same.

Mayor Cherepko said this particular lot is one that the Housing Authority gave to the City of McKeesport. What they do is, they've done this numerous times. They do a tremendous job, I can't applaud them enough for holding Mortgage Companies and Banks accountable for their property. So, what typically happens is they convince the Bank to give us a sum of money, \$10,000, whatever it may be, so they give it to the City of McKeesport, it has to go to the City. We then tear the building down. So, they give us the money to demolish a property, but they don't want ownership after that so it comes to the City and all we are doing now with this particular Bill is transferring that property over to the Redevelopment Authority who owns all of our vacant properties for the most part.

President Dellapenna asked for any other questions or comments and there were none.

**Bill #33** – Introduced by Jamie Brewster-Filotei – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Requiring the Payment of Any and all Fees and Taxes Currently Outstanding for More than Ninety (90) Days Prior to the Issuance of Any Building Permits or Occupancy Certificates on Any Parcel in the City, and Forbidding the Issuance of Any Such Permits or Certificates to Any Entity or Person Who Has Outstanding Code Violations or Any Delinquent Fees or Taxes in Excess of Ninety (90) Days on Any Parcel in the City.

Mayor Cherepko said what we are looking for this is once again it's addressing issues that we have in the City. Sometimes with "slum-lords", and I hate to use that word, but these are individuals that own property and are absolutely taking advantage of the City and not keeping them up to Code and not paying taxes, renting them out as long as they can until they are in deplorable condition. Whatever the case may be. What this particular Bill does is we also have an issue of individuals, of some of those 400 homes, 300 to 400 homes that are coming down, approved by this Council, some of these owners of these properties are now purchasing other properties in the City of McKeesport. I know its crazy but whatever the case may be. We are just trying to really get a grasp of this and get this under control and to prevent that from happening. So, basically this is saying if you owe money on another parcel or you have another parcel, a property that is not up to Code, then you cannot, you will not receive an Occupancy Permit for the new property you are purchasing. So, its just another way to try to get control of these neighborhoods, to try to preserve our neighborhoods, to try to stabilize these neighborhoods, whatever word that you may choose to use in this particular situation. The bottom line is we are doing this demo, as we are continuing our policing efforts and everything else, we have to prevent these things from occurring. So, that's pretty much it in a nutshell. I think it's so sad that they can even do this and then when we go after these other entities when we put a lien on the property whatever it may be, at that point it becomes Court, it becomes well they had it in another name, whatever the case may be, but we are going to take these on in any way, shape or form. I don't know, legally, as our attorney sits here, what we can do when someone changes to an LLC and everything, but I can assure you this Administration is going to try to battle anything. So, there's no change in LLC and we know you are the same one, legally there might be only so much we could do, but we are going to try to battle this in any way we can. Bottom line is if we know there's individuals out there. Solicitor Elash said don't give them any more ideas. Mayor Cherepko said well, whatever it might be, it's an issue that we face here each and every day so I think this is something we've come up with and it will help us with our ultimate goal of preserving these neighborhoods.

President Dellapenna asked for questions and there were none so he called for Bill 34.

Solicitor Elash said we are going to ask to amend the Agenda to add Bill 34. I didn't have this in time. It was my fault, it's the CD Budget for next year.

**Bill #34** – Introduced by Luethel Nesbit – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving and Authorizing the Filing of the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Action Plan for Funding Known as B-19-MC-42-0106 Under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-383) As Amended.

Mr. Tedesco said this is our yearly action plan we submit to HUD. Once you guys approve it, it will go to HUD for their final approval. Some of the highlights for this year we have our fourth payment on the Firefighter Equipment, the ladder track and pumper truck, this is the fourth and fifth payment, we also have \$100,000 dedicated to the Boys & Girls Club for improvements to their outside lighting in the parking lot and rehabilitation of some of the restrooms in their facility. We also set aside \$257,000, roughly, for demolition and this year we actually have some paving in the Budget. We have \$208,000 in paving for the Budget.

Mayor Cherepko said so we will continue, as far as the total number goes I think we were slightly up from last year. Mr. Tedesco said we are right about the same. Mayor Cherepko said basically the same number which was up from the prior year. We actually went on this side of a million which I could say in all my years as Mayor I don't think anything has gone in the right direction for us but it was nice for last year to come up on this side because we were \$900,000 prior to that and we went up over a million, seven seventy last year and we are about the same this year. So, I think you know we can continue to try to tackle the paving issues we have. Obviously as he said there's some demolition in this Grant, Non-Profit entity for the Boys & Girls Club, I think once we do this they should be pretty solid down there for their main facilities and operations as they continue to do what they do down there to try to have an impact on the youth in our community, but it's nice to start seeing some leeway more for us, some paving as well, because we use Liquid Fuels money and we use, in addition to McKeesport Rising, and going forward we are probably going to have to depend on this a little more as we continue to tighten the spending a little bit. Mr. Tedesco said and then the zipper we purchased actually led us to be able to do that because when you do paving

with HUD money you have to mill to a certain amount of inches so the zipper has allowed us to be able to. Mayor Cherepko said yes, prior to that we were never able to mill, we would have to contract out milling and now with the zipper we can do some milling on our own and right now I think our Public Works has about 5 streets prepared and they are going to come out and just pave them all at once as they prep them and then we have more to go. He probably has 15 to 20 streets in mind, plus what our contractor from last year is doing, you know Soles, part of Versailles, Soles from Jenny Lind to Bailey. They are up on Grandview Avenue right now. This upcoming year we are probably going to look to do a bid next month to include Evans and a couple others which come out of the CD end of things. So, we are trying to utilize all of the resources that we can get that are available to us to help continue with the improvement of our infrastructure. So, we are glad, I think this Budget can help out in a lot of things that we are trying to accomplish. Mr. Tedesco said I also have Brandon Wills with Urban Design, our Consultant, if you guys have any other questions or any questions for him.

President Dellapenna asked for any other questions and there were none.

### **Council Reports**

Mrs. Nesbit – I don't have anything at this time.

Mr. Evans – Nothing.

Mr. Soles – I have nothing.

Mr. Brown – Nothing Mr. President, Sir.

Mrs. Filotei – nothing.

Mayor Cherepko said if we can, Mr. President, since we have 15 minutes, I'm not going to ramble you will be glad to hear that, but Jennifer if we can, I was going to bring Jennifer up to talk a little bit about the report that we did on the Penn McKee so we have an official report that's going to be released but I thought Council should get some highlights of it first and the loyal individuals that attend our meetings can get a little information on it and then we are going to have a panel discussion of some sort some time at the end of June. So, that will be before the next meeting. So, at this time I will turn it over to Jennifer if that's ok with you Mr. President.

President Dellapenna said yes.

Jennifer Vertullo said hello. I guess on behalf of the McKees Point Development Group I just want to say thank you for letting us come in and speak today. I'm up here today all by myself without my humans but we are a newly formed 501C3. We got approved for that status last two weeks ago. So, that's good but you will see a lot of familiar faces in our group. I'm joined today by A.J. Tedesco, our Community Development Director who is on it, Jason Togyer from Tube City Community Media who is on it and Angela Christina from the Housing Authority. Some of the other Board Members are Michelle Matuch who is the former Executive Director of the McKeesport Hospital Foundation, Marco Herne who is the President of UPMC McKeesport, Shawn Kennedy from Barrier Protection Services, and James Miller who is an attorney who grew up in McKeesport. He doesn't live here now but he's interested in being involved in the City. As you are aware, under the direction of Mayor Cherepko and with your authorization as City Council, the Young Preservationists of Pittsburgh they contracted a complete environmental assessment and a market study of the former Penn McKee Hotel and the report, which you guys received that summary in April, but now today you have the full report and like the Mayor said he wanted to make sure that you guys had it prior to us discussing it in public at this event, at the Heritage Center, which is on, what date, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the 29<sup>th</sup>, sorry, it's a Saturday. So, the report, which the Young Preservationists refer to as a "Visioning" of the Penn McKee has a strong focus on retail and hotel service for area residents as well as specialty population, visitors from the folks who are on the Great Allegheny Passage, people who visit the marina at McKees Point, the Palisades, and even folks coming in to UPMC McKeesport and Penn State Greater Allegheny. It outlines the potential cost of various phases of renovation, with the intent of attracting potential developers and generating interest in the Penn McKee as a potential center piece for the downtown and other riverfront developments and if you have questions about any of those figures I would refer to you, maybe sort of, anybody, but as the Mayor said on several occasions, Fifth Avenue is an area that often gets forgotten whenever we talk about the strides that we are making in Economic Development and now that we have an increased interest in downtown property with you know Tube City Center in the former Daily News building and

the Peoples Building and several vacant parcels that are coming up for development in the very near future, that kind of frames an opportunity for us to look at the Penn McKee. The Penn McKee visioning itself ties into the McKeesport Rising Project that the Mayor introduced in early 2018 and that's his, as you all know, it's his mission to reduce blight, improve infrastructure, increase public safety and build community. Matthew Craig from the Young Preservationists he really latched onto that concept of McKeesport Rising in his visits to McKeesport and it's part of the reason that his organization is so enthusiastic about the Penn McKee and kind of walking us through the steps of being able to make something happen there and they named it their Number 1 Preservation Opportunity in 2018. So, as you guys take time to review this visioning like in the coming weeks please feel free to contact any of us you know to get more information about some of the stuff that you might be reading. What else? Concerts, hey, so, down at the recently renovated amphitheater at Gergely Park, our organization is co-sponsoring the Summer Concert Series down by the River, which is separate from the Lions Concerts but we are learning a lot from them as we make this happen and the next one is this Friday. We actually have a national artist, Mark Rose is going to perform at 7 p.m. and prior to that a local guy, Johnny Cardo, who is a recent graduate from Serra Catholic High School, he is opening up at 6 p.m. So, join us, yea, it's free, it's fun. We had about 175 people at the last one, probably more than that. So, that's all unless somebody has questions.

Because some citizens in the audience could not hear, Mayor Cherepko reiterated and said ...they probably had roughly 200 people at the first concert, there's one Friday down at the amphitheater so we are hoping to get a bigger turn-out. Pretty good band. Jennifer said this week it's Mark Rose and Johnny Cardo.

It's open by Johnny Cardo who is a Serra Catholic graduate, one kid that just graduated this year, local guy, and he does some playing. We are excited to have a local gentleman there as we did last week, that band was pretty local. They were made up between McKeesport, White Oak area, so we are excited about that and looking forward to Friday.

The Penn McKee, we did this study, it was a marketing study done by the Young Preservationists of Pittsburgh, and they are pretty much just saying that it is

feasible, it's something we should pursue and move forward with and we are looking at it for the use of commercial, maybe some hotel rooms, things like that. Housing is not an option down there. As I said a few months ago, we actually had someone come in and said alright I will commit 13-14 million into it and they wanted housing down there and it's no longer zoned in downtown McKeesport and it's not part of our vision moving forward but we are still very optimistic that something will come from this. The study will help market it as well as let someone know it's extremely feasible but we still have the beginning presentation as well. Jason Togyer put together a packet probably two years ago now, time flies, I was going to say a year ago, probably two or three years ago, but I think it gives people a lot of historical end of things, but as I said at prior meetings, we have people knocking on our door now as well. It's very encouraging, it's exciting, but there's a lot of things in the pipeline. Some things are still up in the air 50/50 and some things are going to happen here in 2019.

We have some development interest and we have people looking at it.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

President Dellapenna said that concludes the Work Session portion of the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette James  
City Clerk and Clerk of Council

APPROVED:

Richard Dellapenna  
President of Council

*das*