

CITY OF MCKEESPORT
WORKSHOP MEETING

MONDAY

6:30 P.M.

MARCH 2, 2022

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 #7 - Introduced by Keith Soles – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Enter Into a Contract with Kraken Chemicals for Weed & Vegetation Control for a One Year Term.

Mayor Cherepko said that's the company that has been doing our vacant lots. They have not increased their prices for a few years now. They do an incredible job. They communicate with Steve and we are just asking to extend the contract.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for any questions but there were none.

Bill #8 –Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Enter Into a Contract with DTI Development, Incorporated for a One Year Term for Grant Applications.

Mayor Cherepko said this is the company that has been working with us for a couple years now. They were very instrumental in the MPP with matching funding partners, things like that. So, we are just looking to extend that for another year.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked if anyone had questions and there were none.

Bill #9 –Introduced by Jill Lape – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Providing for the Appointment of Members to the McKeesport Recreation Commission.

Mayor Cherepko said this is just an update to the Board. We are going to start, when we do updates to the Board, putting them as Resolutions. It seems like

sometimes things get lost in translation. This Board already existed. They just had expired terms. In the City of McKeesport if anyone has expired terms they continue to operate until replaced. The only two members on this Board are Ed Ed Moslander who runs a lot of baseball tournaments, does a lot of volunteering, pictures, things with the REC Board already and I don't have it in front of me but I want to say Jordan Harper. Jordan Harper is a new addition as well. All the other ones were already members and these are just their new terms. So, if they had an expired term, like if it expired two years ago and they are three year terms we just go that's how we do these appointments.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for any questions or comments and there were none.

Bill #10 –Introduced by Jim Barry – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Approving a Reverse Subdivision Request from Valerie Polka, 1415 Patterson Avenue to Combine Lot & Blocks 381-G-368 and 381-G-366. The Property Exists in a R-4 Zoning District.

Mayor Cherepko said this is just a normal reverse subdivision. I believe this particular person may want to put a fence up so when you do purchase these properties you can't put fences up, you can't put buildings, until they are combined in one lot and that's what we are looking at.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions but there were none.

Bill #11 –Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Awarding a Bid for the McKeesport Rising Paving Project Phase III to El Grande Industries, Inc., and Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute all Documents Necessary to Enter Into an Agreement with El Grande Industries, Inc. for an amount Not to Exceed One Million Eighty-two Thousand Six Hundred Thirty-Six Dollars and Ten Cents (\$1,082,636.10).

Mayor Cherepko said Tommy ran over to the office to get the list of streets so you do have them. They should have been part of this packet. Steve is here with me too he could probably help me. We are very happy with the bid. We wanted to do a bid somewhere around a million. When we put it out there, we actually thought we went way too far. So, to come in just a little over a million almost a little under 1.1 is very good. If you remember McKeesport Rising, we said we are going to do a million, contract out, so that's where we are at. That won't count

our in-house paving that we do. Some of the ones that jump out in my memory on this is basically every part of Versailles that is not finished at this time will be done, except for Evans to Union Street because of the bi-duct it wouldn't make any sense. So, you will have the part up top from like Ohio Street up to Grandview then there's another section from Pearl down to maybe Scott and another one whatever the sections are it will complete Versailles. It will also take Evans Avenue as one of the streets from Versailles Avenue all the way up to Bailie. It will take Bailie Avenue from Evans to Soles. Most people when they are traveling through that part they turn left at Bailie, go up Soles. We paved Soles last year or two years ago. We did Riverview. Actually, it will go all the way, we are also doing the section from Jenny Lind to Riverview. So, basically you will have new paving roads going from Versailles Avenue all the way out to Patterson through Meyer Park. So, you try to focus on those main thoroughfares which they will all be within the last year or two, three years tops. So that will complete that. There's a section in Fawcett Street, from Schultz Street to O'Neil Boulevard. Last year we did CD paving below the bottom part of Fawcett, this will complete Fawcett. Oh man, I am drawing a blank Steve. We also have paving that was not completed last year to do Huey Street, come off Versailles now you will have Huey all the way down to Shaw, which will get you down into downtown area. There are other ones on there as well. I will rehash before we break from Executive Session. Steve, in-house, some of these we put out bids for millings only. So, they are going to mill the roads and our guys will end up doing the paving. Beach Street, from Grant Street to Bailie; Freeland Street from Pearl to Ohio. Tommy has it here. Highland Avenue Extension from Lawrence to Height Alley. Jimmy Beaumont Boulevard is right next to the bandshell. Maplewood is the street coming into Peterson Plan off of Route 48. These top sections are milling only which means that our guys in-house will be doing the paving there. Then we get into milling and paving, I said Bailie from Evans to Soles, Beckman from Diehl up to the bend, we are just getting that one straightaway for now up there like when you turn right on Beckman and start heading to Diehl, like along where Serra High School is. Duquesne Avenue, all of Duquesne will be done, from Morelock all the way down including Chauncey Circle as well. Also, Park Street, Park Road is what connects Meyer Boulevard to Duquesne. So that will be complete which will really complete the Meyer Park area because we have done some work on Meyer Boulevard prior to that and Duquesne is a mess. Evans

Avenue, I said from Versailles to Bailie. Fawcett I mentioned. Fifth Avenue, it's time we did something on Fifth Avenue from Joe Bendel Way all the way to Locust Street. We are going to stay off the block of City Hall. We are actually supposed to go to Sinclair and then stay off the block of City Hall because of the demo that has to be done yet. Grandview Avenue, we did a large part of Grandview Avenue a few years ago, now we are going to go from Steele Street all the way from the end of Grandview down to York. Once again, main thoroughfares where we can. Jenny Lind, I said from Soles to Regina. No I didn't say that one. That's from Soles all the way going to Jenny Lind going up the other way towards GW School. Macintosh, there's a part that we did not do when we fixed the wall so we are going to get that up around the first set of houses. Park Road I mentioned. Wesley Street when you come up from the park, we did a few years back. Steve and they did an incredible job in-house on Wesley. We are going to go from the top where the Y is all the way up to Mayfair and then there's some other ones where the City will be doing where we don't feel like we need to mill. Barnsdale Street to the end. Martin Alley from Shaw to Sixth. Riverview from Flagler to Willow. Roy Street from Street from Peterson to Hillview. Roy is a cobblestone road that I don't think anyone drives up and down on anymore, right next to the roller rink, and Dunn Street from Parkland to Dalton. So, when Steve gets down with all those as quickly as he can, because he made that promise to me, I'm sure we will be adding some other projects that aren't major to his list as well. We do plan on continuing a full paving season. We do have a new paver ordered. It will be here in time. We did lose our paver during the fire. So, we are fortunate to be able to get that piece of equipment and a roller to go along with it as well for our in-house paving. Last year's paving was Huey Street, which I mentioned from Versailles all the way to Sixth and then all the other parts of Versailles, oh no, that was the part of Versailles you are not voting on that tonight, that was what we voted on last time the Versailles Avenue stuff.

So, it's exciting. I mean there's a lot of paving going on and we will still focus on the alleys and the neighborhoods as well when we can get to them but to be able to do this through McKeesport Rising, the new Phase, it's exciting, the price was fantastic I think for what we are getting done. There's a large amount of paving getting done.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions but there were none.

Bill #12 –Introduced by Jim Barry – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Awarding the Bid for the McKeesport Rising Demolition Project Phase 5 to Minniefield Demolition Services, LLC, and Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute all Documents Necessary to Enter into an Agreement with Minniefield Demolition Services, LLC for an Amount Not to Exceed One Hundred Twenty-four Thousand (\$124,000) Dollars for Phase 5.

Mayor Cherepko said this was we just put out two contracts. This was a smaller contract, 23 homes, because we wanted to give the opportunity for some smaller demolition companies to make it competitive. Some of them just can't knock out the 50 or 75 houses contracts. Unfortunately, a smaller one didn't get it. I shouldn't say unfortunately, it drove the bid incredibly low on this. We did the reverse bidding that we've done a couple times. So, it drove this price way down on this contract. This particular list is all houses within the 7th Ward. You know, some of the ones that we've been focusing on. So, these 23 houses were one of the bids. The other bid will come later, which was a larger contract, we'll talk about that. I will be coming to Council, probably not next month, next month's April, so May, by May we are going to come probably with a few different contracts anywhere up to another 150 houses. So, and those will all be focused in the 7th Ward on down. So, we are really trying to put a big dent into this blight and once again it's a strategy that's not taken lightly. So, I will tell Council if you have anyone complaining that we haven't heard about or whatever to just let me know. Any of the public that have something, you know I hate to say it but often times the squeaky wheel gets the grease. We do address our residents' concern within reason. Unfortunately, if you live on a block that needs six houses torn down, we can't always go on one block and take six houses down but we can most certainly take the one right next to your house and things like that. So, it helps people's living conditions a little bit better. Do whatever we can to improve that and the health concerns that come with it as well.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions but there were none.

Bill #13 –Introduced by Keith Soles – An Ordinance of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Amending Section 545.03 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of McKeesport to Change the Parking Enforcement Days and Hours.

Mayor Cherepko said that was the public hearing we had. They will be tagging it downtown from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We do believe that there's a lot of good things happening downtown. We believe there's going to be some life beyond 5:00 p.m. and for the most part, not for the most part, as of now, it would be free parking in downtown area after 5:00 p.m. so that would encourage any businesses coming in that night, stop and eat, whatever the case might be and also the weekends too.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions but there were none.

Bill #14 –Introduced by Jill Lape – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Requesting a Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant from the Commonwealth Financing Agency.

Mayor Cherepko said we are applying for a Million Dollar Grant. We feel extremely confident we are going to get it thanks to the support of Senator Brewster. I can't remember if this was in the meeting last month or not, oh my goodness I have been in so many meetings. The bottom line is, let me just rehash. If you are hearing a second time, I apologize. Parking garage estimates to reopen the garage came in way higher than what we anticipated early in the project. A lot of that is delay, a lot of it has just gotten in worse condition. The COVID, the cost of materials, all of that, good stuff, bad stuff I guess I should say in this case. So, within that case, we will put in addition to the Grant we already have which was about \$600,000, allocated for the parking garage, we are estimating to really have the whole thing up and running from the condition we need it in, about another \$900,000 or so, so we reached out to Senator Brewster and we feel pretty confident with his support we will secure this Million Dollars and we look to go out to bid very, very soon on that parking garage and also on that other part which is the bike trail. Remember, the bulk of that was for the bike trail. So, we are hoping to get that bike trail all fixed up, come down along

the river. We have to work with Dura-Bond, make sure that's still an option, if not, we will just make it look much prettier, much more lighting and everything as far as what it is now. So, either way we look at it we will be enhancing the bike trail. The whole vision of going around the point is still something we feel pretty confident that can happen it's just a matter of making it work, but we will be going out to Grant for that, out to bid for that probably in another month or so, maybe even this month and award it next month. That's the plan, but the parking garage is a good problem to have. For a lot of the people to say what are we doing over the parking garage for. These are people that just truly are not aware of what's going on downtown right now. There's a lot going on. We don't realize a lot of the stuff going on. Some people, no matter how much we put it out there, they don't really get a grasp. But, you know, I don't know if you saw the most recent "Invest Pittsburgh" magazine but we are a very nice location, pretty much to the front of that magazine talking about McKeesport Rising, talking about some of the things we are doing, with the Pittsburgh region. So, a lot of good things happening, there's going to be a need for that parking garage. There's a need now but, it's growing very quickly. When the park and ride is done, transportation center, there should be a ribbon cutting this month and we are hoping that some of the people that want to come here, there's not enough room to park, they go 70 yards down and cross one building they can park in our garage and do the same thing. Between that and the Tube City Building, the Peoples Building, the Executive Building, and all the things happening downtown, there's definitely a need for it. It's a good problem to have and we are definitely very fortunate to be able to secure funds to get the garage open. I don't want to say we are getting the Grant, we are applying, but we feel pretty confident thanks to Senator Brewster.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions on Bill 14 but there were none.

Bill #15 –Introduced by Brian Evans – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute All Documents Necessary to Enter Into an Agreement with Gregory & Martin, Inc. for an Amount not to Exceed One Hundred Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred (\$115,400) Dollars.

Mayor Cherepko said this is the HVAC work and the upgrades, clean air, part of the whole COVID thing, we came to Council last month in regard to reallocating some money for the LaRosa Youth Club. This money will be spent out of the CARES money, not the American Rescue Plan Money, the CARES money that we reallocated. That was the first group money that came out early in the pandemic. That was really very difficult to spend but that will be updated on that.

President Dellapenna asked for any questions on Bill 15 but there were none.

Bill #16 –Introduced by Timothy Brown – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Providing for the Appointment of Members to the McKeesport Housing Authority.

Mayor Cherepko said this is just an update. Not to alarm anyone. There were like 3 or 4 that have expired terms. Bill Craig is still on this list. His term has not expired. I will probably be coming to Council for a replacement within a couple months. Bill served on our Housing Authority I want to say for almost 27 years. Don't quote me exactly on that year but it was somewhere under 30, somewhere up over 25 and under 30, so it's a long time to serve on the Housing Authority and we just thought it was more fit to keep him on there until I believe the Housing Authority has something planning, whether it's a plaque or some sort of memorial for him, before he is officially removed on the Board. So, we are going to keep his name on there for now. Other than that, we just updated, I think Jim Brewster's term was up, Steve Hranics was up, Solarczyk's was up and Jim Brewster's was up. So, those were the three being upgraded.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions on Bill 16 but there were none.

Bill #17 –Introduced by Jim Barry – A Resolution of the City of McKeesport, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Awarding the Bid for the McKeesport Rising Demolition Project Phase 4 to Minniefield Demolition Services, LLC, and Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute all Documents Necessary to Enter into an Agreement with Minniefield Demolition Services, LLC for an Amount Not to Exceed Three Hundred Eighty-Six Thousand One Hundred (\$386,100) Dollars for Phase 4.

Mayor Cherepko said this is the larger one. The first one that we just talked about the same contractor, Minniefield, got it, great contractor. We worked with them

on the 300. There were issues, at the time, just for the sake of transparency, you know, some of them took a lot longer to come down, part of it was there was a break in the business. It was owned by two brothers, and they went their separate ways, so this is one of the brothers of that original group that bid on this and he's been doing great job finishing the contracts they had. He was awarded one of the other contracts, he finished up, when we did all the houses, there's still a couple that need to be done, from 9th Street to 13th Street, up on the hill side. The first contract we did tonight we mentioned was all 7th Ward houses. This contract will pretty much address almost every ward from the 8th Ward up. So, at that point, that's where I was telling you earlier, that when we come in next month, we are going to be really hammering out all of these 7th Ward, 6th Ward, to everything we can to stretch out the money as far as we can and obviously whichever is most efficient with the strategy. This will allow us to really narrow down the Wards. We really did a lot of progress with the 3rd Ward, 7th Ward, of course we had a contract last year where we did a couple dozen, I believe it was, or around 20, here's another couple dozen on this one and then the next one we come there's probably going to be if we do a 50 house contract, 75, I see, it will probably pretty much all be from the 7th Ward to go in addition to the first 7th Ward contract. So, it's exciting, I don't know what else to tell you. It's going to really help out a lot. I will tell you between doing this, we are also keeping a lot of houses on the tax rolls because there are several people buying houses through the VPRC Program, more than ever. We are having people come in and houses that are dilapidated, that we would get stuck tearing down, they are coming in and purchasing. The last number, I don't know even how many of them were houses, I think she had a round of like 80, so I mean there's a lot of activity with the VPRC right now. We do make sure anyone that purchases a house through VPRC that they are in good standing with the City. It's that simple. I know that's probably a question I know Council's asked me the question before several of you, if not all of you, at one point or another, but if you are not in good standing with the City you cannot VPRC a house, it's that simple. So, it's been pretty successful at this point, very successful I think, and between that and the demolition I think we are looking really, really good here to get these contracts out this year, within the next 18 months or so, a lot of this blight is going to not be there and we know what that does to the neighborhoods, it picks up that moral and helps other people get encouraged and want to do things to their own

property. We just got to hope that we don't continue to have more that pop up. That's a key component as well. I will tell you our Ordinance officers, Code Enforcement, are doing an incredible job, obviously with the Courts over the last year and half, that's been a struggle getting Court dates and things, but I pretty much have a lot of the hearings that they have in my schedule so I could see them as well and they are doing a lot of running to these hearings and it's just a matter of following the process. There is a process we have to follow and people need to understand that. Sometimes you have to be patient but, we talked about kicking off this phase for a few months and this is an incredible start between the paving and demolition and you are going to see the paving we started last year and the demolition we are going to come to Council, I would say by May, by May's meeting, probably not April it might be pushing it but if I can get a small contract in April. I can probably get a small contract on April if I could do that, we will do that. But, by May I would think we come here with no less than 50 to 75 more houses and my goal will be to have at least another 100 at May's meeting. If we could get them condemned to go to the process quick enough. If not, we will be here in June, by June I feel very comfortable you will have another 150 houses between now and June that you will be presented with to Council. So, you put that 150 with the 100 we basically just did and another 22 we are going to do, put you up over 250 houses and that's in addition to all the commercial that you see coming down thanks to funding on many of that. You will see if you have been down by Minerva's you see that block coming down the block across City hall, half of that is going to be started or just put out contracts and bid, we just put out emergency bid for two commercial buildings on Shaw, right at the corner of Sinclair and Shaw, and another one on 6th Street where the neighbor actually, where the roof was starting to cave in. Those are in the downtown area. I mean, so, we are getting rid of the blight in those commercial areas as much as we can now. Obviously, seeing the pressure across the street we put on Mr. Stein. That was just to show you this doesn't happen overnight. That was probably a year and a half to two year process just trying to get him pressure to tear that down. I think I am being conservative it might have been longer than that. I think we were after him before the pandemic but you can see that's finally down. So, the excitement of people coming is it's incredible, literally, today, two people called, one needs 3-4,000 square feet for a mattress business retail, they are already established, and another was, what was the other one, another one is a business

that's going to be coming in down next to the Getgo. It's too early to talk about that. We talked about once that Getgo comes in that will create an opportunity and there's already an opportunity created that's a private developer but they met with us and it looks like it's going to be, it should work out, and that will clean up that entire corridor coming into East 5th Avenue. Once again, I just caution people and tell people please be patient. You know, the traffic down in that area is a little congested at times when we have one lane and things but it's a short term inconvenience for a long-term reward. So, just be patient with that. It's exciting.

Some of you may have seen, it's been a very long journey but if you haven't seen, the old Lemon Tree, I don't think they are open to everything yet, but they are getting there and the people that have gone out to Tube City Brew. I have seen nothing but positive reviews, from the food to the service to the environment. I don't think I need to tell anybody up here what kind of battle that has been. I'd be one to tell you over the last three years that I didn't think it was going to happen. But it looks like that is coming to fruition but I am anxious to get out there and experience it myself as well.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mayor and asked for questions on Bill 17 but there were none.

President Dellapenna then asked for Council Reports.

Council Reports

Mr. Evans – nothing.

Mr. Barry – nothing.

Mr. Soles – nothing thanks.

Mr. Brown – Mr. President, we are starting the Spring basketball league. We were at the high school last week, where we had about 45-50 kids there. Another clinic will be held tomorrow at 6:30 at Founders Hall and we are trying to start the league off for Grades 4-8.

President Dellapenna said thank you Mr. Brown.

Ms. Lape – nothing.

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

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