

MINUTES
CITY OF HERMITAGE - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MEETING
September 27, 2017

President William J. Moder called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room in the Hermitage Municipal Building located at 800 North Hermitage Road, Hermitage, PA.

Members in attendance were:

William J. Moder, III, President
Duane J. Piccirilli, Vice-President
Rita L. Ferringer, Member
Timothy J. Ruffo, Member
Maria A. Koledin, Member

Brett W. Stedman, Solicitor

Staff members in attendance were:

Gary Hinkson	Gary Gulla	Eric Jewell
Sherry Iversen	John Flynn	Joel Ristvey
Jeremy Coxe	Brian Mertz	Don Kizak
Ed Chess	Don Cannon	Tom Darby
Neil Hosick	Amy Gargiulo	

There were twelve (12) members of the public in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Moder opened the public comments.

Mr. Robert Ference, 3245 Rosemary Lane, Hermitage had three concerns he asked the Board to address. First, he believes the sewer tax is unfair. There are homes who have 5-6 people and 2-3 bathrooms and they pay the same tax as he does. Hermitage is the only one that doesn't tax on their water rates. Mr. Moder responded that it is a sewer rental fee set by the Commissioners. The City was required to do a \$32 million upgrade on the facility and most of the fee goes toward the debt service on the facility. Mr. Darby added that his experience is that the flat rate is the most accepted way of billing for sewer now, but he will see what the other cities are doing now.

Mr. Ference's second concern was regarding a group home on Christy Road in Hermitage. He thought the area was zoned R1 - strictly residential. Mr. Piccirilli said there are three people there and a group home is allowed in that residential area. The city checked to see if it was safe for the residents living there and it is now. It is basically a group home for people with autism. We have to make sure that it is staffed right and the residents living there are safe. They can live anywhere they want as long as they live by the rules. We had several meetings with the county and the state to make sure they are abiding by the rules they have to follow and we took it very seriously. If three unrelated people wanted to buy a house and live there we couldn't say they were not allowed. Attorney Stedmann added that it complies with the zoning requirements of the City and there are federal regulations involved with these types of facilities.

The third concern expressed by Mr. Ference was regarding property on Emilie and Karen Lanes. Pine trees are growing out in to the road. When a truck or school bus goes by, they brush against the trees. Mr.

Hinkson replied that the Street Department will take a look and if branches are in the right of way we can address that.

John Lechner, Hermitage resident, addressed the concern of Mr. Ference regarding the sewer fees. He is on the Neshannock Creek Watershed Authority and sewer lines were extended to 300 new households in Mercer and Aqua does extend lines. Some houses are served by wells so there is no way to measure how much water is used. They have assigned 1 EDU to each household regardless of how many live there. That may explain why billing is done the way it is.

Diane Syphrit, 182 S. Kerrwood Drive, asked for a follow up to last month's meeting. Since the test for the Bobby Run Watershed was done was in 1997, she asked why the City decided to not use a newer test. Mr. Hinkson said that the City is complying the DEP's regulations which are to create a pollutant reduction plan that reduced the phosphorus and sedimentation in Bobby Run by 5%. That is their requirement of the City. DEP has a formula to get to that number and they have told us what we need to do to get a new MS4 permit. The City is complying fully with their regulations. Ms. Syphrit responded that she understood the focus is to check that box off to get the permit, but believes money should be spent to clean the environment.

A representative of DEP will attend a future meeting, but he wanted time to review the plan and comments from the public. In his opinion to Gary Hinkson he believed the money would be better spent on fixing the problem than on a new assessment.

Ms. Syphrit responded that she was still trying to understand why we are basing this on a test from 20 years ago. She wants to think of the environment and not just checking off a box on a form. She wouldn't use something from 20 years ago for anything.

Mr. Moder commented that after the City does this mitigation DEP will retest it.

Brian Skibo, a resident of Hermitage, stated that an environmental study group conducted tests last year and found that a cancer causing chemical (Chromium 6) is in 1 out of 2 samples of well water. Aqua PA and Shenango (?) did 8 samples and in 7 of the 8 the chemical was detected. Mr. Skibo said he was diagnosed with brain cancer and it was found that the chemical found in those samples could cause 12,000 more people to have cancer. He does not think it is good enough to say we are complying with DEP. Obviously their regulations are not doing enough to help people in our community and people are getting sick due to their outdated methodology.

Ms. Ferringer asked where they could find the study Mr. Skibo was referring to. He replied that he would forward the study to Mr. Hinkson to distribute to the Board for review.

Mr. Moder asked where the study was conducted. Mr. Skibo replied that they went into wells in the county they found it in 1 out of 2 wells, but it is much worse in Hermitage.

Michael T. Muha, 502 Sheridan Street, Hermitage stated that they live on the corner of Sheridan and Ethel Street and they have noticed an increase in stray cats. He questioned what the protocol is regarding stray cats. He believes it is potentially a safety issue and is just horrible to see. Mr. Piccirilli answered that the animal shelter should be contacted regarding strays. They are going to have a trap and release program. If

they don't release the cats after they are spayed another cat will go into their space and the population will grow. Maybe the Humane Society or Tails of Hope will go to the area to trap them.

Mr. Hinkson stated that the City will include the comments of Mr. Skibo and Ms. Syphrit to DEP. DEP and Dan Wallace of WallacePancher Group will attend a future meeting regarding mitigation of the Bobby Run Watershed.

There being no further comments, Mr. Moder closed the public comments.

AGENDA REVIEW

There were no questions or comments on the agenda.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS / OLD BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Koledin moved to adjourn the work session. Second by Ms. Ferringer. The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary P. Hinkson
October 6, 2017