

Allegheny County Council

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Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 21, 2006

4:00 PM

Conference Room 1

Special Committee on Government Reform

Rich Fitzgerald, Chair -- Committee of the Whole

REVISED

I. Call to Order

Summary: *The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM*

Invited Guests:

Senator Jay Costa
Representative Harry Readshaw
Representative Marc J. Gergely
Jim Flynn, County Manager or Designee
Joe Brimmeier, CEO of Turnpike Commission

Bob Full, Director, Emergency Services
Mayor Raymond Bodnar, Munhall Borough
Mayor John Andzelik, West Mifflin Borough
Mayor John Dindak, West Homestead Borough
Mayor Betty Esper, Homestead Borough

Jay Lucas, Pennsylvania American Water
Dan Hufton, Pennsylvania American Water
Dan Ireland, Pennsylvania American Water
Robert Rosenthal, Pennsylvania PUC

Gregory Tutsock, Executive Director of PWSA
Jeanne Clark, Penn Future
Andrea Boykowycz, Penn Future

Summary: *Invited Guests in attendance: Senator Costa, Jim Flynn, Joe Brimmeier, Bob Full, Mayor Bodnar, Mayor Andzelik, Robert Rosenthal, Jeane Clark, Andreey Boykowycz*

Recognized Attendees: City Councilman Doug Shields, Representative Elect Bill Kortz

Council Staff in attendance: John Mascio, Jennifer Liptak, Stephanie Buka

II. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, John DeFazio, Matt Drozd, Bob Macey, Michael Finnerty, Brenda Frazier, Chuck Martoni, and Chair Rich Fitzgerald
Absent: Susan Caldwell, Dave Fawcett, Vince Gastgeb, Jan Rea, William Robinson, and Council Member William Lestitian

III. Agenda Items

Resolutions

2906-06

A Resolution of the Council of the County of Allegheny urging the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to declare a moratorium on the acquisition of right-of-way properties until the Commission has identified a guaranteed funding source to cover the remaining costs of design and construction of the S.R. 51 to I-376 section of the Mon-Fayette Toll Road, and further urging the Governor to support such a moratorium.

Sponsors: Rich Fitzgerald, John DeFazio and Brenda Frazier

Summary:

The Chair said that this body is on record as supporting the expressway but has concerns about a shortfall in funding. He said they are also concerned that properties will be taken and leave holes in the community, so they would like the funding to be in place before they start acquiring properties.

Mr. Brimmeier said that a study was done that points out that there are indeed shortfalls in funding for many projects, and the expressway funding is even less clear. He said that until it is clear where the funding is coming from, they will not proceed with any property acquisition. He said they have not plans to proceed with any types of right of way purchases. He said that they recommended to the turnpike commission not to proceed until the funding is identified and in place.

Ms. Frazier asked him to keep Council informed on the progress of this project. He said that he would.

Action:

Released from the Committee

2605-06

A Resolution of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, urging the Chief Executive to explore the use of renewable energy sources, specifically solar energy, invest in photovoltaic technology and consider procurement practices that give preference to sustainable energy sources, systems, products and designs within Allegheny County.

Sponsors: John DeFazio, William Russell Robinson, Michael Finnerty, Matt Drozd, Jim Burn, Joan Cleary, Bob Macey and Rich Fitzgerald

Summary:

Chair explained the purpose of the bill. He said that this resolution would request that the Chief Executive investigate the use of photovoltaic energy in County facilities, either as primary energy sources or as supplements to existing sources, and relying upon local industry to the greatest extent practicable. The resolution also includes a request that the Chief Executive explore other means of increasing the County's renewable energy use.

Ms. Clark said that they have around 188 million dollars to build renewable energy which consists of private and public money. She said that there is more drive in the market for renewable energy. She said they negotiated 6 million dollars over 4 years to be invested in Duquesne Light Company. She recommended that Council consider a project to be built within a year. She said that there would be no County money involved. She said they have relationships with vendors and they could write the contract. She said that the County would get savings by not having to pay Duquesne Light. She explained the program in detail. She said that Penn Future would administer and implement the program but they would need to obtain \$500,000 from the Clean Air

fund.

The Chair said that they would need to know more details on how this would benefit the county.

Mr. DeFazio said they would like to look at a plan or a proposal.

The Chair said that the proposal should include financial analysis regarding benefits to the county.

Ms. Clark said that she would give Council a tour. The Chair said again that he would like to see the financial study of the project.

Action: Held in Committee

Discussion Topic:

Discussion on the water main break in Lincoln Place

Summary: *The Chair said that Pennsylvania American Water Company (PAWC) was not able to attend the meeting and that he was disappointed they were not in attendance. He said that various elected officials from that area requested the Pennsylvania Utility Commission (PUC) to investigate the problem in detail. He said that PUC needs to investigate this at a higher level and they need to find out to what extent PAWC is maintaining their water lines.*

Councilman Shields wanted to point out that Representative Reedshaw has been working very hard on this issue. He said that he and Council Member Macey sent a letter to the PUC asking them to investigate this. He said that they expect reliability and investment in the infrastructure.

Mr. Rosenthal said that the PUC has been asked by a State Motion to examine their operations not only here but in the northeast. He said that they have a number of ongoing issues with this company. He said they assigned 2 engineers and an attorney from his office to investigate various aspects of PAWC operations. He said that want to examine how they responded to the outage and whether they properly maintained their materials.

The Chair asked if this investigate would be public. Mr. Rosenthal said that it is an internal investigation and that part would not be public. He said that they would however, release information regarding the investigation. He said that a petition was submitted requesting a formal investigation which would be independent from the internal one.

Mr. Macey asked him to keep Council informed.

Mayor Bodnar said that the break presented a problem to the Senior Citizen high rises in Munhall. He said his biggest complaint was the procedure the company used for notification. He said he would like a review of communications and notifications between officials and residents.

Mayor Andzelik said that his concern was that the break was disruptive to the educational system since some schools were closed over 4 days. He also said that pumps to refill the tank were not functioning.

Mr. Full said that they will be in full cooperation with the PUC's investigation.

Senator Costa asked Mr. Rosenthal if there was a way to assess the system to see if it is on the verge of collapse or subject to potential problems in the future. He asked him at what point is it determined that the company is not investing in their infrastructure. Mr. Rosenthal said that they have the authority to require them to address these issues.

Mr. Martoni said it would be interesting to find out if these breaks happen more with private or public water companies.

Representative Elect Bill Kortz said that they need to ask the company to show them their plan from 2000 to the present regarding their infrastructure. He said they need to get to the root of the problem in order to implement a long term fix.

The chair said that he hopes that the public is kept informed on the progress of the investigation.

Councilman Shield said that the PUC should make sure that PAWC is in compliance with safety codes regarding fire hydrants and water pressure. Mr. Rosenthal said he would do that.

The Chair said that they will bring this up at a future Committee meeting.

IV. Adjournment

Summary: *The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM*