

A special meeting of the Borough Council of Lewisburg, Union County, Pennsylvania, was held at 6:30 PM on **Monday, December 03, 2018** in the Council Chambers, 55 South Fifth Street, Lewisburg. Present: Council President Morris; Councilmembers Comas, Derman, Frederick, Heayn, Mahon and Yohn; Mayor Wagner, Solicitor Lyons, Manager Lowthert and Secretary Garrison. Absent: Councilmember Medina. Also present: Peter J. Bergonia, Jr., Teri MacBride, Matt Schumacher, Tom Egan, Matt Farand, David Rowe, Ellen Ruby, Char Gray, Scotta Magnelli, Thomas Hess, Grace Mahon and Jody Horn.

Council President Morris called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Manager Lowthert said we are here tonight to talk about the Holiday lights in the trees downtown. An agenda has been provided and there are copies available.

SUMMARY OF PAST: Mayor Wagner said Council had decided to take a year to develop a long term plan for our Holiday tree lights downtown because they had deteriorated and were in a state of disrepair. As a result of the huge response from the community, we are going to review some new information. Mayor Wagner shared the history of this town's Holidays noting we no longer have the Victorian Day Parade or the wreaths. Because of the partnering being offered, *by so many people*, it appears we may be able to have Holiday tree lights downtown this year. She suggested the Lewisburg Downtown Partnership (LDP) be empowered to take over this Holiday tree lighting project, as this is basically where downtown Holiday decorations have been. She believes any funding that comes in for the tree lighting should go to the LDP and the LDP Design Committee can proceed with work on a long term plan.

WHERE WE ARE CURRENTLY: Grace Mahon, a resident of 35 South Water Street, introduced herself and handed out a sheet detailing her background. Knowing that Late Night Shoppers Night is coming and that our businesses downtown have been challenged this year, she explained she feels the Holiday lights are needed. People look forward to coming to Lewisburg to stroll and shop, and the lights downtown make it a magical place, not just a wonderful place to live. This past week she talked to many partners: Eric Winslow from Citizens Electric, Sam Haulman from Service Electric Cable Vision, Jamie Blount, Fire Chief, just to name a few, and they are all willing to help. She understands East Buffalo Township (EBT) extended an offer to help, along with another gentleman who has a bucket truck. A GoFundMe page was set-up by Allison Bennett who lives in California and there is about \$5,000.00 to date. She read Ms. Bennett's note explaining why she set-up the GoFundMe page. There are many local citizens offering help. Bo Cole of Cole's Hardware and Eric Winslow of Citizens Electric have helped select the best lighting for use this year. PennDOT was contacted and had no issues with this work as no road closure is necessary; they simply suggested appropriate measures for safety. Ms. Mahon shared many details about the work, the participants, the dates of the performance of this work, the lighting to be used, the provision of light snacks/hot beverages to the workers, and basically briefed everyone on all her discussions of this past week that brought her to the point of believing we can reach our goal for the installation of the Holiday lights by Late Shoppers Night, Friday, December 7th. There was **very much** discussion.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Councilmember Derman said he has heard that Citizens Electric is willing look at the trees, see if the existing lights are working, and install new lights. Ms. Mahon said yes. Citizens Electric, Service Electric Cable Vision and East Buffalo Township (EBT) will come with their crews and bucket trucks to help do this work. Manager Lowthert said he spoke with Citizens Electric and they will help based upon the availability of their crew. Ms. Mahon said Thursday morning at 8 AM all the crews will be ready to go. Councilmember Derman said someone suggested we allow this to be handled in the future by the LDP Design Committee. Mayor Wagner said she suggested that. Ms. Mahon said she agrees that seems most appropriate. There was **much** discussion. Council President Morris said she talked with Ellen Ruby and the LDP can and will receive the GoFundMe monies. Councilmember Derman clarified this Council has never been against having the lights downtown, but it was a matter of the condition of the lights, and the fact they were not particularly attractive, that led to the decision to wait until we had money to do this lighting right. If the expense of the lights and the labor is being covered, we should be able to move forward with the tree lighting. Councilmember Yohn said she would really like to see the lights downtown. Councilmember Comas thanked everyone for helping with this, noting the partnering is great. He too clarified Council never forgot the lights, were never against the lights, but simply wanted a plan to do them right. When the lights in the baskets were turned on, it wasn't what everyone was hoping for. There was **much** discussion relative to the cost of the lights, the types of the lights, etc. Manager Lowthert said there are now basket lights plugged in and there are only so many outlets. If there is a point where a decision needs to be made tree lights vs. basket lights, Council's priority should be included in the motion. Councilmember Heayn said if there is money in a GoFundMe account and Ms. Mahon said other monies have been collected, maybe we should get lights now that will last longer based on having these funds. Manager Lowthert outlined the number of trees, their locations, and noted we shouldn't count on the ones already in the trees, so his guess of the approximate cost of lights this year would be \$1,000.00, and there will be Staff time as well. If we proceed, he suggests nothing be done with the GoFundMe monies for this work now, but that the GoFundMe monies go to the LDP for the longer term plan for these tree lights. The Borough is not allowed to do any type of

ATTENDANCE

CALL TO ORDER

DISCUSSION OF HOLIDAY LIGHTS

SUMMARY OF PAST/MAYOR WAGNER

WHERE WE ARE CURRENTLY/ GRACE MAHON

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

December 3, 2018

fundraising. There was **very much** discussion regarding long term solutions of the tree lights. Councilmember Derman asked why the Borough crew needs to be involved if we have others working on this. Manager Lowthert said the Borough crew has always been involved with the tree lighting and will just be on the ground providing assistance this year. The Borough was going to try to finish collecting leaves this week, so Council will need to indicate their priority, whether it is collection of leaves vs. tree lights. Again, there was **very much** discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT(S) ON AGENDA ITEM ONLY: Teri MacBride, a resident of East Buffalo Township (EBT), said she loves the iconic look of the tree lights and is pleased to see there is a good chance we will have them this year. She asked if they could please stay on and be viewed as winter lighting vs. Holiday lighting.

Barbara Ross, a merchant downtown, shared her feelings with regard to the tree lighting downtown, noting how horrible it looks now in comparison to how it used to look. She thanked Council for this meeting tonight and this discussion.

Char Gray, a resident of EBT, asked if Citizens Electric indicated when the installation of the lights will be complete. Ms. Mahon said they will start at 7:30 AM Thursday and continue this work on Friday morning, getting as much done as they can before Late Shoppers Night. There was **much** discussion regarding where the crews should start this work.

Glen Wilson, a merchant downtown, asked which lights were decided upon. Manager Lowthert said Citizens Electric wanted to use the same lights that have always used as they are familiar with them.

A question was raised whether there would be a problem if the GoFundMe monies were not used for this year's Holiday lights? Ms. Mahon said the monies were collected for Holiday lights and if not used this year, will be used toward the longer term plan for the Holiday lights, so we *are* honoring the intentions of this fund.

Charlie North of the Pineapple Inn, said he appreciates the efforts being put forth here tonight and shared that people, from all over, consistently say how much they love the Victorian atmosphere here and everything about Lewisburg.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL: Councilmember Comas asked if we are targeting Market Street from Front Street to Seventh Street. Manager Lowthert said Second Street to Seventh Street is what he was told and they will do as much as they can within the timeframe they have to work with. Councilmember Comas shared his personal feelings with regard to the tree lights. There was **much** discussion.

Mayor Wagner thanked the community for coming together for this. Council President Morris commented when we use the word community, we are certainly talking broader than the nine blocks of Market Street and she thanked everyone for coming.

Manager Lowthert asked the LDP to remind the businesses that on Thursday parking along Market Street will be restricted intermittently, as one side will be worked on Thursday and the other side will be worked on Friday. There may be some employees scheduled to be on vacation so vacation requests will have to be pulled back. If those employees do not have the ability to use their time this year, the Borough will be buying back vacation days at the end of this year. Someone in the public offered to volunteer to do this work. Manager Lowthert clarified that he will not have volunteers doing this work as it has to be people who are trained to work along the roads and have the necessary equipment and safety training. There was **much** discussion.

Councilmember Derman made a motion to direct the Manager have the tree lights on Market Street installed and operational this Holiday season, to be paid for from Borough's General Fund, the tree lighting work to begin downtown between Second Street and Fourth Street and move out from there, and the priorities should clearly be tree lights over basket lights and tree lights over leaf collection. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Heayn clarified that our Streets Foreman, Ed Richard, will be in charge of this work and he will be the one directing any volunteers that want to help as to what they can and cannot do. No one should do anything on their own for safety reasons.

There being no further business, Councilmember Derman made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Frederick, to adjourn the meeting. Motion was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Garrison
Borough Secretary

**PUBLIC
COMMENT(S) ON
AGENDA ITEM
ONLY**
TERI MACBRIDE

BARBARA ROSS

CHAR GRAY

GLEN WILSON

CHARLIE NORTH

**ADDITIONAL
COMMENTS
FROM COUNCIL**

TREE LIGHTS ON
MARKET STREET
TO BE
INSTALLED AND
OPERATIONAL
FOR THIS
HOLIDAY
SEASON