The regular monthly meeting of the Borough Council of Lewisburg, Union County, Pennsylvania, was held on **Tuesday, December 17, 2013** in the Council Chambers, 55 South Fifth Street. Present: Council President Bergonia; Councilmembers Baker, Casimir, Cox, Mahon, Morris and Strosser; Mayor Wagner; Solicitor Lyons, Manager Smith and Secretary Garrison. Also present: Erin Jablonski, Brandon Vogel, Dan Femley, Lauren Koch, Tom Egan, Randy Srenkle, Elizabeth Burke, Phil Reedy, Amanda August, Martha Barrick, Jodie Bryant, Evamarie Socha, Mark Spiro, Tera Unziker-Fasero, Mary Brouse, Kathy Swope, Judy Peeler, John Peeler, Mark DiRocco, Fred Scheller, Nada Gray, Alex Wilce, Angelo Giunta, Susan Warner-Mills, Brian Auman, Samantha Pearson, Matt Farrand, Mike Molesevich and Stacy Richards.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Bergonia called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Motion was made by Councilmember Morris, seconded by Councilmember Mahon, to approve the minutes of the regular Council meeting held November 19, 2013. Motion was unanimously approved.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** Mark DiRocco, Superintendent, and Kathy Swope, Board President, were present representing Lewisburg Area School District. Dr. DiRocco provided numerous handouts to Council regarding the timeline for construction of the new Lewisburg Area High School, noting the new high school should be ready for occupancy in August of 2016. He handed out a power point presentation showing the current standing of the site plan for the new school, as well as the schematic design itself, a document showing the composition of the High School Repurposing Committee. Also a document outlining the Request for Proposal (RFP). Now that the timeline has been activated, it is time to establish a Repurposing Committee to explore/review options and proposals for the current high school. Ms. Swope stressed we are truly committed to ensuring that building is a protected gateway for our community. Whatever we proceed to do, the Board has no intention of simply selling it off to someone who will put an ugly eyesore at that location. We will look at including a deed restriction that gives the district right of first refusal if the building is ever sold in order to protect what happens to it. If we were to lease the building, we would maintain control of that building to ensure its protection in this community. Dr. DiRocco interjected that they have no intention of allowing that building be abandoned and fully intend on having something ready to go when they vacate the building. Ms. Swope offered to answer any questions of Borough Council.

Councilmember Strosser said the biggest mechanism we have is our zoning ordinance and it doesn’t appear that was acknowledged as part of the RFP or during discussions. That property is zoned mid-level residential and light office use only, so any other uses proposed would require variances or other mechanisms. Ms. Swope said that is why the various individuals are being recommended to serve on the Repurposing Committee, as they will bring this type of information to the table.

Councilmember Morris asked if there have been discussions on using the building as an ongoing educational structure by Bucknell University and Lewisburg as a satellite or charter school. Dr. DiRocco commented the RFP is out, so if Bucknell University is interested in using the building, they could submit a proposal. There has been one proposal, which is the YMCA, and there were discussions about maintaining district offices in the building also. Whether there would be school programs there has yet to be decided.

Councilmember Mahon said this is a gateway to our community and she would not want to see the building vacant. However, if that did happen, will the school be budgeting to maintain that building? Ms. Swope said we would take care of the upkeep of that building, but we want to see a seamless transition from us to whomever. And, we are looking to still use that building as a drop off and pick up point for all the students in the Borough. Dr. DiRocco said we have no intention of allowing that building to be abandoned; we fully intend to have something ready to go as soon as we move out. Mayor Wagner said that is good to hear because abandoned buildings can decrease property values by as much as 20%. She reminded everyone the Borough had adopted Resolution No. 10-03 indicating our official position of wanting to keep the high school where it is now.

Councilmember Casimir said what we are opposed to is the school itself moving, as the building isn’t some type of Holy relic. And, it might be better for the Borough if this plan proceeds. His hope is that the Repurposing Committee will be open to all kinds of possibilities, because by no means is the only good outcome a recreation center at that location. Ms. Swope said she totally agrees and is looking for lots of options to consider. Councilmember Strosser stressed our own Recreation Authority is in the process of trying to build a Recreation Center; so, the idea of a YMCA at that location is not something we are excited about. Ms. Swope interjected that after meeting and seeing the recreation proposals by BVRec and the YMCA, she feels there are complimentary plans and not competitive plans out there with regard to recreation. Dr. DiRocco commented that things are not unfolding as either group planned, so maybe a cooperative effort would be beneficial to everyone.
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Councilmember Casimir indicated he has served on many, many committees and how an RFP is written is really meaningful; so before the committee comes the RFP, and it is jaunty that it is being requested now, when the meaningful part of the process has already occurred. Dr. DiRocco said he is sorry if anyone sees it that way. It was thought the appropriate way to handle this would be to have ideas walking into the first meeting of the committee. He is sure there are different ideas of how this committee should be run, the manner in which an RFP should be written, or the manner in which a timeline should be constructed, but this is the way we decided to do it and this is the way we are moving forward. It is appropriate and we are willing to make adjustments to the timeline if needed. He has been in this business 35 years, has been to more committee meetings than probably anyone here, and this is a very appropriate way to handle this committee as he is a veteran of many of them. He indicated representation on this committee would be: Borough Council, Borough Planning Commission, the LDP, Bull Run Neighborhood Committee or now he believes it is called the Lewisburg Neighborhood Corporation, Bucknell University, a realtor, a high school administrator, a high school teacher, three School Directors and eight members at-large. Ms. Swope stressed most school districts do what they want to do and we are frustrated because we are engaging the community and have since day one. We are reaching out for participation so when she hears the negative comments she is confused. Mary Brouse, a School Board Director, indicated she has been on the board for 24 years and voted this time to relocate the school. She stressed she has a vested interest in that building, but the curriculum is changing so much and to bring that building up to Code would cost an enormous amount of money. We can spend just a little more and we will be able to build a new building and that seems only logical. Ms. Swope commented we are doing this community a great justice in creating this Repurposing Committee for this building. Dr. DiRocco clarified that the easiest thing for the district to do is put that property up for the highest bid and help us pay for our new building; that could easily be done with no input from anyone and there are people that have pressed us to do just that. We have chosen to not do that as we do not think that is good for the Borough or good for the greater community. We are here to work with you and want you to work with us. We understand there will be disagreements about this final decision as we realize people feel very strongly and emotionally about this. We have explained where we are and we are moving forward with this process. We are attempting to engage everyone the best way possible, so we are looking for your help and cooperation to find the best reuse for that building. That is our purpose for being here.

Note: There was very much discussion, as many individuals in the public had questions for both Dr. DiRocco and Ms. Swope. It was pointed out that all information pertaining to this issue can be found on the School District’s website.

Ms. Swope said the RFP’s are due by February 1st, the committee convenes on February 6th, and all the proposals will be thoroughly analyzed. Our hope is to have an idea in a short period of time and maybe even by the end of this school year. Councilmember Strosser commented on this committee there are 12 listed members and 8 members at-large, making 20 members, and we get just one person. Ms. Swope said Council can select their representative.

Council President Bergonia thanked Dr. DiRocco and Ms. Swope for coming before Council this evening.

Susan Warner-Mills, President of the LNC, provided a very detailed 2013 Annual Report for Council review. She indicated the LNC has done a lot of work over the last number of years on the South Sixth Street Project and the Bull Run Neighborhood, and we are hoping to be as successful in the North Ward Neighborhood. There are many exciting projects and we are building a sense of civic pride. We want to continually remind you of the important role we have played as we care about this community. We want to have a closer relationship with Council as we would like to depend upon the Borough to support us moving forward. So, we will continue to communicate on a regular basis.

Samantha Pearson, 200 North Third Street, stated she wanted to share that another school is being shown on the Newman property in the drawing handed out; it is being shown as a school that might be needed in another 100 years. There is time for a good site planning process, but it will be complicated if there is a Repurposing Committee acting as if there will not be a school in town anymore. Not everyone lives downtown, but everyone goes to school downtown, so every student has walkable access to their place of education. We need to address the question of how we want the district to work and who we want it to work for.

CONDITIONAL USE/PUBLIC HEARING:
Council President Bergonia adjourned the regular order of business to conduct conditional use hearing for the properties known as 638A Market Street/Case #CU13-05. He called the public hearing to order at 8:10 PM.
Council President Bergonia indicated Matt Sauers, our Zoning Officer, is absent this evening, but we have a memo dated December 12, 2013 indicating his recommendation that this property be considered for approval to be converted into a rooming or lodging house.

Stacy Hinck, Chairwoman of the Planning Commission, stated she was told by Matt Sauers that the Borough Solicitor indicated the number of parking spaces determines the number of people that can live in the rooming/boarding house. So, our understanding was that you couldn’t approve the site for 6 or 7 people even though that is a condition in the zoning ordinance. The approval is for a rooming/boarding house period, so Matt would determine how many could live in the house based upon the number of parking spaces.

Solicitor Lyons said he never had a discussion with Mr. Sauers concerning the use of the property, but only a discussion about parking. He doesn’t know how many people are going to be in the dwelling, but he would assume Mr. Sauers has addressed that. The only issue he knew about was parking.

Nada Gray indicated we were questioning the off-site parking. We were told we could not, not approve the boarding house, because the application was only for the change to be converted into a boarding house. We could not consider the fact there was not enough parking on the lot or that the place they were going to put parking was not a legal parking lot.

Solicitor Lyons said there are two different issues here. The issue he was addressing was that of parking. There was parking on the property and also parking off the property. Whether the parking off the property was legal or not legal is not the issue. Right now that is being used as a legal, conforming parking lot, so the parking is, in fact, available.

Ms. Hinck said a requirement of the ordinance is that there be a parking spot for every bedroom, so we were able to consider the parking, but had questions about the off-site parking.

Solicitor Lyons asked if you were questioning the legality of this property using the parking lot or if you are questioning that parking lot being used for parking. Ms. Hinck said that parking lot being used as parking. Solicitor Lyons said that is a different issue and it is not before us. No one has addressed that and maybe you could do that in a different forum. But right now it is a legal parking area and has been used as one. Ms. Hinck said in the zoning ordinance it reads, if you change a use to a rooming or boarding house from a single family house. Solicitor Lyons said this property is currently a multiple use. Ms. Hinck said ok, but if you are changing a use, all grandfathering is off, so that property does not meet the requirements for parking. Solicitor Lyons stated there are four spaces on the property and there are four spaces off the premises. That is before Council for consideration and that is why we are having a conditional use hearing. Mrs. Gray asked if we can talk about parking. Solicitor Lyons said the issue of whether that off street parking is legal is not the subject we are discussing tonight. He stated Mr. Sauers has already agreed it is legal parking and it has already been approved as legal parking. Again, you could address that in a different forum. Mrs. Gray said we would like to address the separation of parking and zoning because the parking has become a strong issue with regard to other rooming/lodging housing being developed. Specifically when you take a private parking lot and rent all the parking spaces on it. Does it then become a commercial parking lot which isn’t permitted in an R-1 Zone. Solicitor Lyons said you can talk to the Zoning Officer or the Planning Committee of Council. But, as far as the use of that lot right now, he doesn’t see that it is not a legal use. The issue tonight is whether you can have four parking spaces on the premises and four off the premises and that is subject to a conditional use hearing and why we are here. If that off-premises lot would be determined to be an illegal lot, then the condition placed on the use of this property can no longer be met and it would have to come back before Council. Dan Remley interjected that he doesn’t want the students to be the victims here. If we said it is ok for eight and leases are signed, then we come back because of a lack of parking and say there can no longer be eight people... Solicitor Lyons said he agrees this would be problematic. He commented if four additional spaces could be found elsewhere, meaning they could still meet the requirements, it would still have to come back before Council so we would amend the condition on the basis of where the four new parking spaces would be. The problem would be if there were no additional four spaces to be found anywhere. Councilmember Casimir asked if this could be continued. Solicitor Lyons said no. Councilmember Casimir said parking was one of the major concerns when creating rooming and lodging houses and it is not our intent to create a bunch of little commercial parking lots in residential districts in the Borough in order to provide parking for rooming and lodging houses.

Mrs. Gray said there is a need to address, with Council, the problems we have created; we need to withdraw and/or rewrite the rooming house section in the ordinance as it is onerous to the neighborhood. Solicitor Lyons indicated Council certainly has heard what you have just said.
Jody Bryant, Coldwell Banker Realtor, said with regard to the parking, the owners have the plans that were approved previously, where the garage had burned down, and there were four spaces. It is my understanding as long as there are eight parking spaces we can have the rooming house. Solicitor Lyons said that is correct.

Ms. Hinck indicated one of the Planning Commission’s concerns about this entire category is if the off-site parking isn’t relieving the congestion, because people are not using it, we question the value of the rooming and boarding houses. Solicitor Lyons said the fact is, you are providing parking and you hope the tenants are using it, but you can’t force it.

Tom Egan said he is on the Planning Commission and voted against this approval. The properties are looking run down and this doesn’t improve them. An example, Mr. Gardner has put money into the South Second Street property and it is much nicer looking. So we now have decrepit onsite parking, as well as sidewalks at this property; could we make the improvements to these things a condition of this approval. Solicitor Lyons said you can make recommendations to Council for things to be done in this Borough if it is in the ordinance and it is allowed to be established as a condition. We do have code enforcement.

Councilmember Casimir asked where the off street parking is located. Council President Bergonia said 21 South Seventh Street.

Mrs. Gray complained that there is not good communication between our Zoning Officer and our Planning Commission; we do not always get the information in a timely manner, it is not always complete, and sometimes it is conflicting. Councilmember Casimir said he is confused why our Zoning Officer would even consider allowing rental of off-site parking spaces in a residential neighborhood; it is not a permitted use. Solicitor Lyons said this has been done numerous times and it is done all over this town. Manager Smith said that is accurate.

Council President Bergonia asked if there is anyone else that would like to speak. No one wished to speak. Council President Bergonia declared the conditional use public hearing closed at 8:45 PM. He reconvened to the regular order of business.

Councilmember Strosser made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cox, to approve Case No.CU 13-05, 638A Market Street, to convert this duplex into a rooming or lodging house with eight bedrooms provided that eight parking spaces are provided, four on the premises and four off the premises, that conform to the Zoning Ordinance. Motion was approved, with one dissenting vote. Councilmember Casimir voted no.

COUNCIL (WARD II) VACANCY ON COUNCIL (WARD II) TO BE ADVERTISED

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Mahon, to review and comment.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Strosser, to approve HARB application a, as submitted and recommended by HARB. Motion was unanimously approved.

PLANNING COMMITTEE: Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Strosser, to approve HARB application a, as submitted and recommended by HARB. Motion was unanimously approved.

An application was submitted to and reviewed by HARB for a fence. A motion was made by Steve Snook, seconded by Robert Cook, to recommend approval of the fence, as submitted in the HARB application under project description and as shown in the attached drawing, with the condition this fence be painted and/or stained within one year. Motion as unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Mahon, to reappoint Paul Mauger to the Zoning Hearing Board to serve a three year term 01/01/14 through 12/31/16. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to approve the use of the three-globe light standard depiction, as requested by CrossFit of Lewisburg. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir indicated there is a need for an executive session at the end of this meeting to discuss personnel matters.

Councilmember Casimir reported the Zoning Hearing Board intends to appoint Robert E. Benion to be the Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor effective 01/01/2014.

Councilmember Casimir reminded Council that there are current vacancies: Ward II Councilmember, Vacancy Board, Planning Commission; Vacancies effective 01/01/14: CATV Advisory Committee.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Mahon, to advertise that there is a vacancy on Council, specifically in Ward II of Borough, ON THE QUESTION: Manager Smith suggested that all applications/letters of interest be due January 14th, giving Council a week to review, allowing Council to make an appointment at their regular monthly meeting January 21st. Motion was unanimously approved.
FINANCE COMMITTEE: Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Baker, to approve payment of bills from 11/16/13 through 12/13/13 in the amount of $225,639.82. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Strosser, to approve the 2014/2015 Rate Schedule for Larson Design Group as the Lewisburg Borough Engineer. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to issue a letter of support to the Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority (BVRec) for pursuit of a United States Tennis Association (USTA) Grant with financial consideration to be determined based upon the Borough’s future financial situation. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Casimir reported the LNC had requested a financial advance prior to receipt of the fifth year funding, as approved by DCED, and the committee opted to postpone this decision until January.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Council President Bergonia reminded everyone that the Reorganization meeting of Council will be held at 7 PM, Monday, January 06, 2014.

SOLICITOR: Councilmember Morris made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Casimir, to adopt the final 2014 Budget (Millage rates as follows: General Fund 8.93; Street Light Fund 0.34; Fire Protection Fund 0.50; Shade Tree Fund 0.04; Recreation Fund 0.34) as presented to Council dated 11/19/13 and 12/17/13, and to direct the Solicitor to advertise as required. ON THE QUESTION: Manager Smith clarified that the two budget documents referred to are identical. Motion was unanimously approved.

Kevin Gardner, a member of the public, interjected that he would like to see Council announce these increases in percentages. The average person doesn’t know what a mill is. He stressed this Council is passing a 28% tax increase. Councilmember Morris indicated she would like to see the percentage in dollars as opposed to millage. Mr. Gardner said you could provide both. This Council must realize you are going to reach a point where Lewisburg is going to be for the real “haves” and that is it. Something must be done, as you can’t keep doing this. Mr. Gardner offered his assistance to the Borough.

Mayor Wagner said the Finance Committee meeting is on Monday, January 13th at 4 PM and invited Mr. Gardner to attend.

Solicitor Lyons presented Ordinance No. 1025, an ordinance levying a total real estate tax on real estate assessment within the Borough for fiscal year 2014 at the rate of 10.15 mills (General Fund 8.93; Street Light Fund 0.34; Fire Protection Fund 0.50; Shade Tree Fund 0.04; Recreation Fund 0.34) to Council for consideration.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to approve Ordinance No. 1025, an ordinance levying a total real estate tax on real estate assessment within the Borough for fiscal year 2014 at the rate of 10.15 mills (General Fund 8.93; Street Light Fund 0.34; Fire Protection Fund 0.50; Shade Tree Fund 0.04; Recreation Fund 0.34). Motion was unanimously approved.

Solicitor Lyons presented Resolution No. 13-11, a resolution adopting the same/current tax rates for the realty transfer tax, the earned income tax, the local services tax, the business privilege tax, and the per capita tax for 2014, to Council for consideration.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Baker, to adopt Resolution No. 13-11, a resolution for the realty transfer tax, the earned income tax, the local services tax, the business privilege tax, and the per capita tax for 2014. Motion was unanimously approved.

Solicitor Lyons said next is an ordinance that repeals Chapter 179, the old Flood Plain Management from the Code of Ordinances, as the Floodplain Management Ordinance has been incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Strosser, to enact Ordinance No. 1026, an ordinance repealing Chapter 179, Floodplain Management, from the Code of Ordinances, as the Floodplain Management Ordinance is now included within the Zoning Ordinance. Motion was unanimously approved.
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MANAGER: Councilmember Morris made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Casimir, to adopt Resolution No. 13-12, a resolution authorizing the filing of an application/proposal for funding with the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) in an amount up to $250,000.00 for the reconstruction of St. Louis Street from South Sixth Street to Hawn Alley (also known as the South Sixth Street/Phase I Project). Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Mahon made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to adopt Resolution No. 13-13, a resolution recognizing Councilmember Casimir for his invaluable services to the residents of this Borough. Motion was unanimously approved. Councilmember Casimir was also presented with a Certificate of Appreciation. Mayor Wagner stated she has a proclamation; she proclaims every day until the end of this year to be Trey Casimir day in the Borough of Lewisburg and urges all citizens to thank him for his services.

OTHER COMMITTEES: Council President Bergonia reported Buffalo Valley Recreation Authority (BVRec) is continuing to organize pamphlets for distribution on all events, work on the Rail/Trail, and on various grants. Manager Smith announced that BVRec was successful at getting matching funds from DCNR, bringing the total to approximately a million dollars, to finish the Rail/Trail to South Fifth Street, not including Route 15. Councilmember Casimir reported a meeting was held with an individual considered to be a tennis court expert, and it looks like we do not have to totally redo our tennis courts; if we simply resurface and clean them at a cost of approximately $30,000.00, these courts could last another 7 to 12 years.

Borough Council discussed, in great detail, their continuing concerns over the relocation of the Lewisburg High School, as well as ideas relative to the potential reuse of the existing building. There was much discussion. It was the sense of Council that it is extremely important for the Repurposing Committee to consist of Borough residents and Borough Council, because it is the Borough residents and Borough Council that have a vested interest in this property.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion to direct the Mayor and Council President to send a letter to the Lewisburg Area School District requesting that the Repurposing Committee be made up solely of Borough residents and School Board Directors. Motion was unanimously approved.

Mayor Wagner reported she, along with Councilmember Morris, attended the Town and Gown Committee meeting, and updated everyone on South Sixth Street and the proposed party and social hosting ordinances. There is an extremely good relationship between the Police, the Dean of Students, and Bucknell University’s Chief of Public Safety.

Councilmember Morris stated the LNC presented their annual report this evening and as they stated, they are really trying to maintain their existence.

Mayor Wagner indicated there was a Traffic Advisory Committee; however, there is nothing to report at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

WRITTEN REPORTS: Councilmember Strosser made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Casimir, to acknowledge receipt of the Budget Index; Parking Report, Zoning Officer Report, and Code Enforcement Officer Report. Motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Strosser said he heard if you serve on the Zoning Hearing Board, you cannot be on anything else. Solicitor Lyons said he believes that is correct; the Zoning Hearing Board members serve in a judiciary capacity, so they cannot serve on the boards, commissions or authorities created by Borough Code, Statute, or Ordinance. Manager Smith said that is why Dan DeFebbo, who is on the ZHB, can serve on the LNC; the LNC is not a Borough board, commission or authority.
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WORK SESSION: Council President Bergonia indicated at this time it appears there will not be a work session in January.

Council President Bergonia called for a five minute recess at 9:45 PM. Council returned at 9:50 PM.

Councilmember Casimir made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Mahon, to hold an executive session to address personnel matters. Motion was unanimously approved.

Council entered executive session at 9:50 PM. Council returned at 10:00 PM.

There being no further business, Councilmember Mahon made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Morris, to adjourn the meeting. Motion was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Garrison
Borough Secretary