

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the City of Lebanon, Pa., was held in Council Chamber of the Municipal Building, Lebanon, Pa., this evening, Chairperson Parker presiding.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present--Mr. Carey, Mr. Matula, Mr. Wertz, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Parker, Chairperson.
Absent--none.

Also present were Mayor Sherry L. Capello; Donna Long Brightbill, City Solicitor; Debra J. Gates, Director of Administration-Assistant to the Mayor; Robin L. Getz, Director of Public Works; Melissa Quinones, Community and Economic Development Administrator; Duane Trautman, Fire Commissioner; Daniel Wright, Chief of Police; 41 persons in the audience; and 2 members of the news media.

The minutes of the February 1, 2016, City Council meeting were presented by the City Clerk. There being no corrections, deletions or additions, the minutes were approved as presented.

Chairperson Parker announced that Council received a budget report for the period January 1-31, 2016.

Chairperson Parker announced that Council received the following communications:

- a. Lebanon Valley Chamber of Commerce, encouraging Council to approve and adopt the ordinance establishing a Downtown Lebanon Business Improvement District
- b. Community of Lebanon Association, supporting the establishment of a Downtown Lebanon Business Improvement District
- c. Leslie Richards, Secretary, PennDot, transmitting notice of the 2016 Road Turnback Annual Maintenance payment in the amount of \$37,240.00

Chairperson Parker called up Bill No. 1 on final reading, the title of which is as follows:
"AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A DOWNTOWN LEBANON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT IN THE CITY OF LEBANON".

Mike Kuhn, 428 Chestnut Street, Lebanon, representing the Lebanon 2000 Foundation Board, extended support of the BID. He explained that the Lebanon 2000 Foundation has been selected to serve as the NIDMA for the BID and he encouraged Council to adopt the plan. He explained that the Lebanon 2000 Foundation was established in 1999 because people in the downtown were committed to improving the area. He added that initially, the Lebanon 2000 Foundation provided oversight of a program that provided low interest loans for property owners for façade improvements. Mr. Kuhn stated that the establishment of the BID is another opportunity to move the city forward.

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Councilmember Matula read a prepared statement. He reported that since he did not vote in favor of the ordinance at its introduction, he had an opportunity to talk to property owners who objected to the BID, as well as, members of the Steering Committee. Mr. Matula stated that he is 100 percent in favor of improving the Business Improvement District; however, he is opposed to the voting process. He added that most of the property owners who objected to the BID are in favor of the City, but the voting process was offensive and angered many of the property owners.

Mayor Capello replied that the Steering Committee was very transparent during the entire process. A consultant was hired to assist with the preparation of the BID to insure that the requirements of the statute were met. She reported that some BID plans required property owners to show the property deed when filing an objection. She added that the Steering Committee acted in good faith and set reasonable conditions for filing objections.

Councilmember Wilson read a prepared statement. He thanked the constituents who met with him to discuss their concerns. Councilmember Wilson apologized for the disrespect shown at the February 1 meeting. Mr. Wilson stated that at that meeting he voted no because he feels it is unfair that business owners did not have an opportunity to vote if they do not own the property. Councilmember Wilson stated that he hopes those property owners who objected to the BID will get on board and work with the Downtown Manager. He also expressed his hope that the appointments to the NIDMA reflect a true representation of the community.

Mayor Capello responded that the Lebanon 2000 Foundation will serve as the NIDMA. She explained that the Lebanon 2000 Foundation has bylaws which set forth who can serve. Mayor Capello added that when she established the Steering Committee, she worked very diligently to have representation from different groups.

Tom Morrissey, Richland, stated that he served on the Steering Committee. He added that he was opposed to the BID; however, at this point, he encouraged everyone to work together to make this a success.

Jim Cassel, Mt. Gretna, stated that he is a business resident of the city for the past 44 years. He explained that he and Tom Morrissey coordinated the efforts to file objections. He explained that there were many issues of perception of security. He has met with Mayor Capello and members of the Steering Committee and requested to move forward with the study for security cameras. He encouraged Council to establish a committee to evaluate the adequacy of lighting in Downtown Lebanon and report back to Council with recommendations.

Mr. Cassel told Council that although the process to disqualify objections was legal, there was a real disconnect with city officials and those property owners who filed an objection. Chairperson Parker explained that Council had no role in the process of validating objections that were filed. He added that Council heard the concerns about security cameras and provided funding for a study during preparation of budget for FY 2016.

Laura Putt, Lebanon Valley Designated Marketing Organization, offered support of the BID and encouraged everyone to work together.

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Ed Schock, 936 Cumberland Street, Lebanon, distributed his testimony on the BID. He argued that based on the law, only benefited properties may be assessed. He stated that based on that provision, only 112 objections were needed to defeat the BID Plan. Mayor Capello replied that the consultant provided advice that all properties within the BID boundaries would benefit from the services.

Scott Church, a business owner in Downtown Lebanon, stated that many of his clients are thrilled to visit Lebanon. He added that Lebanon has a lot to offer and everyone needs to work together to improve the Downtown.

Jeff Usner, 104 East Walnut Street, Lebanon, stated that he recently purchased the properties at 815 Cumberland Street and Brasenhill. He added that he moved his family and business from Texas to Lebanon and he feels this is an amazing city. He offered his support of the BID and encouraged property owners and business owners to be unified.

George Horn, 315 S. First Avenue, Lebanon, offered his support of the BID.

Cindy Heisey, Chairperson of the BID Steering Committee, stated that she is happy that those who opposed the BID are willing to work together to move forward with this project.

Jerry Kalinoski, 412 Weidman Street, Lebanon, stated that he owns a small business on the northside of the city. He encouraged everyone to work together to promote the City of Lebanon. Regarding Mr. Cassel's suggestion that a committee be formed to study the lighting issues, he urged Council to include representation from the Planning Commission on the committee.

Jack Cantwell, stated that he believes the BID will make a positive impact on Lebanon and he supports the BID.

Cliff Olson, 527 Spring Street, Lebanon, stated that he feels the BID Plan needs to be tweaked and he urged Council not to vote on the ordinance at tonight's meeting.

Council Chairman Parker thanked everyone for attending the meeting and sharing their thoughts.

Bill No. 1 was passed finally on motion of Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Carey. Yeas--Mr. Carey, Mr. Matula, Mr. Wertz, Mr. Wilson, and Mr. Parker, Chairperson--5; nays--none.

Councilmember Wilson announced that, to date, the Making a Difference Foundation has raised more than \$4,000 for the purchase of playground equipment for Beautex Park and Southwest Park. He added that the goal is \$25,000.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

CHERYL J. GIBSON, Clerk