

City Council Meeting March 4, 2024

City Council met in person for regular session on Monday March 4, 2024, and streamed live over YouTube and Facebook, in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Long who opened the meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll was called and present were Council Members Heather Alexander, Tami Brannan, Jeffrey Brinker, Richard Conklin, Barbara Masorti, Steve Stevenson, and Mayor Joel Long, with Ms. Alexander attending via Zoom Conference Call.

Also in attendance was City Manager Greg Wilson, Chief of Police Matthew Rickard, and Director of Community Life Kasey Campbell. Guests in attendance were Bre Reynolds, Josh Hudson, Bill Stankiewicz, Juno Olsen, Karin Sutherland, Elsa Winch, Rose Reeder, Dan Reeder, John O'Donnell, Diane Mills, Betty Brendel, Dave and Susan Rudel, Alan Black, Matthew Taylor, Bonnie Kephart, Kelly Toner, and Emily Wright of the Record.

COUNCIL MINUTES

On a motion made by Ms. Masorti, seconded by Dr. Brinker, and carried unanimously, the minutes from the February 26, 2024 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Mayor Long opened public comment period by stating that in order to change a decision, one of the members of council that voted for the decision would need to make a motion to revisit the decision and it would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Bill Stankiewicz addressed Council and thanked them for allowing the cross display in Triangle Park and to fly the Christian Flag for the month of April.

Bre Reynolds addressed Council with her concerns regarding the Christian flag, and explained what the Pride Flag stands for, and that is intended to welcome everyone to the community. Ms. Reynolds cited concerns regarding the Christian flag, and the organization associated with Faith Month, the Concerned Women for America.

Elsa Winch addressed Council with her concerns regarding the flying of the Christian flag, and that it alienates other religions and beliefs in the city and marginalizes minority groups and is not a reflection of our community.

Betty Brendel addressed Council regarding the Christian flag, and stated her concerns with the message it sends the community by flying it.

Rose Reeder addressed Council, and gave the history of the Christian flag, but cited concerns regarding flying the flag in Triangle Park, and the Concerned Women of America, which infringes upon the rights of others.

Juno Olsen addressed Council with their concerns regarding the Christian flag, and the promotion of Faith Month in the city.

Ms. Brannan read a prepared statement to council and residents regarding their decision to approve the flying of the Christian Flag, and the disappointment in the decision made by council.

Mr. Conklin addressed Mr. Stankiewicz and clarified that Mr. Stankiewicz does not speak for the entire Christian community when thanking Council for their decision.

Dr. Brinker read a prepared statement to council, explaining a similar situation in Boston, where a flag was not approved by the city, which caused a lawsuit against the city of Boston. Dr. Brinker cited Resolution 2023-14 establishing the precedence of second flags to be flown on the flagpole at Triangle Park. Dr. Brinker clarified that the Swisssdale United Methodist Church did not make the request, they were listed on the request form because they will be providing insurance for the crosses.

Ms. Brannan stated that the resolution states that it must be a federally approved flag, which is the issue with the Christian flag.

Mayor Long addressed Council and residents and explained his reasoning for voting to hang the flag. Mayor Long stated that the flag was not originally created by a hate group, and being a Christian is about loving people, and apologized for hurting those that were offended by the decision.

On a motion made by Ms. Masorti, seconded by Mr. Conklin, and carried unanimously, Council requested that in light of the information presented by Dr. Brinker, the City Manager will contact the City Solicitor, and re-evaluate the policy for flag flying in a city park.

Dave Harger of Harger Charities presented his request to relocate select memorials and the flagpole located in Veterans Park. Mr. Harger answered questions from Council regarding the project. **On a motion made by Mr. Stevenson, seconded Mr. Conklin, and carried unanimously, the request was approved, pending approval from the Lock Haven Area Flood Authority.**

Bonnie Kephart and Kelly Toner addressed Council and made a statement regarding a recent dog attack that severely injured Ms. Kephart and her dog. Ms. Kephart asked that Council evaluate the city's dog laws, and have stricter policies to keep residents and their pets safe. The City Manager explained that the city follows the state laws for animal control, and the dog warden is from Centre County. The City's law states that animals must be leashed. The City Manager agreed to check with the City Solicitor to see what laws we have the ability to change.

Council considered a request from Kasey Campbell for the use of Zindel Park on September 21, 2024 for a small wedding. **On a motion made by Ms. Masorti, seconded by Ms. Brannan, and carried unanimously, the request was approved.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The City Manager notified Council of the distribution of state Liquid Fuels tax.

NEW BUSINESS

Council considered Resolution No. 2024-07 applying to Clinton County for its share of the interchange lighting agreement costs. **On a motion made by Mr. Conklin, seconded by Mr. Stevenson, and carried unanimously, the resolution passed.**

The City Manager presented the Water section of the Capitol Improvement Plan review, and answered questions from Council regarding the plan, and explained that it will be on the city's website for review by residents.

OTHER MATTERS

Council was notified of the Station Gallery exhibit opening March 8.

Ms. Reynolds asked Council if any of the Council Members who voted to hang the flag would consider reopening the vote, with those council members unanimously

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Ms. Brannan, at 8:11 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.