

**WARREN CITY COUNCIL  
WORK SESSION  
AUGUST 5, 2013 – 6:00 PM**

An Executive Session regarding personnel and real estate matters was held immediately prior to this meeting.

The work session was held for the purpose of providing Staff members with an opportunity to provide Council members with updated information on matters currently being addressed by the City.

Council members in attendance were Mayor Mark Phillips, Maurice Cashman, Sam Harvey, John Lewis, Joseph Sprentz, and James A. Zavinski, Sr. Dr. Howard Ferguson was absent. City staff members in attendance were City Manager Nancy Freenock, Michael Holtz, DPW Director; David Hildebrand, Planner/Development Administrator; and Teena Leary, Assistant City Clerk. Andrea Stapleford, Solicitor, participated in a portion of the session via conference phone.

**VISITORS**

Jacob Perryman, Times Observer reporter, was present.

**TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:**

1. **Clemons Park.** Mrs. Freenock stated that it had previously been believed that the deed to this property carried certain restrictions as to the use of the land. However, recent research into the deed and documents executed at, or about, the same time indicates that no such restrictions are contained within the deed. However, an agreement which the then Borough of Warren entered into with Joseph and Barbara DeFrees providing for funding by the DeFrees' in the amount of \$25,000 for the purchase of the property does contain restrictions as to the future use of the property.

Mrs. Freenock and Ms. Stapleford each questioned the City's current obligation to comply with the referenced agreement and the manner in which the property could potentially be released by the City to a private owner. Ms. Stapleford suggested that a local individual believed to be a DeFrees heir be contacted to first determine whether he and/or other heirs has any interest in taking title to the property.

Mr. Holtz stated that maintenance costs for this park are relatively low.

Mr. Cashman and Mr. Lewis each expressed their desire to release this property and return it to the tax rolls.

2. **Holiday Decorations.** Mrs. Freenock noted that red ribbon and holiday greenery sprays were installed on streetlamp poles in 2012. Mr. Holtz displayed a snowflake ornament constructed of rebar metal and painted white (assembled and provided by volunteers approximately twenty years ago). He noted that there are a great many of the ornaments in storage and all need to be refurbished with fresh paint and new light strings. It was further noted that each snowflake weighs approximately 30 to 35 pounds and that the newly-installed vintage-style lamp posts within the Downtown Streetscape Project area do not have appropriate brackets on which to hang the ornaments. He indicated that he contacted a vendor regarding brackets and it was determined that there is a suitable style available at a cost of \$250 per pole (\$125/bracket with 2 brackets per pole required). Mr. Holtz suggested that consideration be given to the purchase of new

holiday decorations which are designed to be installed on the style of lamp posts within the Streetscape area.

Mrs. Freenock voiced concern regarding the weight of the snowflake ornaments and the City's liability in the event that one should fall and cause injury and/or property damage.

Mr. Zavinski stated that he believes the snowflakes could be mounted as in years past without issue on wood light poles that are on Pennsylvania Avenue and outside of the Streetscape area. He also stated that he believes that he can raise sufficient funds to refurbish the existing ornaments.

Mr. Lewis suggested that the lamp posts within the Streetscape area be wrapped in red, green, and white lights and snowflakes be placed on wood poles outside of the Streetscape area.

Mr. Harvey stated his belief that the City's involvement should be limited to future maintenance and installation.

Council members present concurred that refurbishment of the snowflake ornaments should be looked into with the intent to move forward with their installation for the 2013 holiday season. Mr. Zavinski will seek funding for the project and the purchase of appropriate mounting brackets.

3. **Vegetation at the Intersection of Third and Conewango Avenues.**

Mr. Holtz noted recent concerns regarding overgrown vegetation in the vicinity of this intersection. He indicated that in regard to visibility for those traveling east on Third Avenue and wishing to turn "right on red" onto Conewango Avenue (a state route), PennDOT's stance is that if the motorist does not have sufficient visibility, the right turn should then only be made with a green light. However, the same vegetation also poses a concern for southbound traffic on Conewango Avenue as the approach to the traffic signal is on a curve and the vegetation obstructs the light. Therefore, PennDOT has agreed to conduct a survey in regard to the approach and will either trim any vegetation that it deems appropriate or will direct the City to do so.