

President Bryan L. Rittle called the planning meeting of the Myerstown Borough Council to order at 6:32 p.m., on Monday, June 12, 2017. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers in the Myerstown Municipal Center, 101 East Washington Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a roll call was taken. Present were: President Bryan L. Rittle, Vice President Michael D. Behm, Councilmembers, Eric L. Powell, Ronald Ream, and Jeffrey L. Thomas, Mayor Gloria R. Ebling, Economic Development Manager Michael McKenna, Deputy Secretary Lisa A. Brubaker, and Assistant Manager Barry A. Ludwig. Absent were: President Pro Tem Park W. Haverstick, II and Councilmember Dana Reich.

The President opened the floor for Citizens and Visitors Comments: There was no public comments.

President Rittle turned the discussion over to CHAR CO. for the update on the branding and marketing project.

Char Newswanger, Heather Bowman, and Hailey Stoner from CHAR CO were present to provide a presentation and update on the Branding and Marketing project.

Char Newswanger stated they are presenting the brand story. This is the time for the group's discussion and feedback. A brand is more than a logo and website. A brand is all the ways people experience, the way people experience Myerstown. That is what forms the brand. It is what people think of the town and what it is known for.

Char Newswanger stated the experience should be unique to the town. A brand is formed and delivered in several key ways. Sense of place, community, reputation, dining and retail, events, on-line (social media/website), billboards, print, and signage are all key parts of creating a brand. Towns need to play an active role in designing and facilitating the experience in order to progress and grow.

Char Newswanger handed out a presentation packet for review of the "Brand Story". The story puts words and visuals around the story and efforts the Council is doing. The story also highlights the positive attributes of the town that people may not be aware of. The story will communicate to and connect the people of the town and the people you are trying to reach.

The idea is to get the Council's feedback on the Brand Story because they know the town in a way they as the consultant and citizens don't. The Council deals with the issues, they know parts that most people don't. As the consultants, they are trying to bring the outside perspective and then combine the two together to develop a really strong brand.

The Brand Story identifies seven steps;

1. Why
2. Values
3. Culture
4. Position
5. Who
6. Problem & Solution
7. Impact

Char Newswanger stated these give the framework to continue to build the experience and provide the framework to communicate accurately – what the town is and where it is headed. The result is synergy and a clear vision.

Heather Bowman reviewed the handout and the seven steps. Discussion will be held after each step is reviewed. The "WHY" is the first step and the driving force, it is the foundation the story is built upon. It sets the tone for the rest of the brand.

## WHY

In early 1730's, German immigrants created Myerstown with the intention that it would be a place people called home - a place where its citizens could live well and care for each other - a place to belong. The canal that ran through the town, the lush farmland, and the common values shared among its people allowed Myerstown to flourish. Years later, Myerstown still offers healthy farmlands and beautiful countryside and has added a diverse range of local businesses, a respected school system, and continues to be a great place that people call home. Myerstown was created to serve and host the people who live within its community and will continue to do so for years to come.

Heather Bowman asked for thoughts on the "WHY" section.

President Rittle stated the town is different than before, and the Council wants to bring that small town feeling back. To bring back the smaller community businesses and to create foot traffic again, we need to find our niche that will make us stand out. Several types of events were discussed that could be attractions.

Mayor Ebling stated the paragraph talked about farmland, but that is not Myerstown Borough.

President Rittle agreed with the Mayor, he does not believe residents believe that a farming community is what we are here in town.

Economic Development Manager McKenna stated regarding the farmland, it is difficult, because even though farmland surrounds Myerstown, for the first thing to say is, that Myerstown offers healthy farmlands and beautiful country sides, is not correct because the Borough doesn't have that.

The Borough is built out and has a different feel. If you look at old photos from years ago, there are neat downtown pictures of trees and people. It has its own feeling.

Councilmember Behm stated if they continue to describe more of what Myerstown has to offer and then say it is surrounded by beautiful farmland or countryside that may be more appropriate.

The group reviewed the types of businesses they feel would draw people and help create the atmosphere of the town.

## VALUES

We believe in the PRESERVATION of Myerstown. Preservation enables our history to guide our future.

We believe in A VALUES CENTERED LIFESTYLE. Lifestyles guided by values form strong communities.

We believe in serving the GENERATIONS. Working alongside each other and learning from one another.

We believe in INTENTIONAL SIMPLICITY. Focusing on what matters most in life.

We believe in SUSTAINABILITY. Supporting those who serve our town and community.

Char Newswanger stated with the simplicity of the small businesses as discussed, that would resonate the simple lifestyle.

President Rittle stated we do want to reach out to the younger generation with things like microbreweries and pubs. So the town will appeal to a broad range of generations. We want diversity. We need young people for the town to grow.

Economic Development Manager McKenna asked what does intentional simplicity mean?

Heather Bowman stated if you read about the millennial generation and what they are looking for, you are seeing more intentional choices in their life. They are purchasing less, purchasing local, smaller homes, and really focusing on what matters. Even from a career perspective, they are choosing jobs that allow more time for family, and more flexibility. They still want access to major roadways but want a simpler lifestyle.

President Rittle stated but they still want the services. Diversity is the key.

Councilmember Powell stated the only two things he believes are missing is that we believe in the preservation and growth of Myerstown and the sustainability; supporting those and attracting those who will serve our town.

## CULTURE

*We are investors of our town.* While honoring the rich history that made us who we are today, we cast vision for tomorrow, preserving Myerstown's past, present and future.

*We choose values organically felt in our community.* The people of Myerstown live a lifestyle rooted in honesty, generosity, humility and strong work ethic.

*We serve our community members and families.* We recognize the importance of traditions from the past while cultivating a community that provides a place for future generations to call their own.

*We know simple joys of life are the richest.* Myerstown residents enjoy wholesome family fun, annual parades, and gatherings at the local pool or parks. Vivid memories made that last for years are made here.

*We support local business.* With an entrepreneurial spirit, Myerstown is home to many new and diverse businesses that serve and sustain the community.

Heather Bowman asked if you think about the culture, is this the direction, does it align with the vision that you are looking for.

Councilmember Behm stated if we were putting a book together using this presentation, again would we want pictures of farmland, like they have now, or should the pictures be of parades, annual events, family fun, or the park, something that would tie the wording and pictures together about Myerstown. We need to concentrate on what the town has to offer.

President Rittle stated they should go and speak to Donald Brown. He is one person they should talk to if they want to know about this town.

## POSITION

Myerstown, PA offers a wholesome community to call home. Here, we make memories and appreciate life with friends and family. Parades and events bring our residents together and local businesses offer a diverse range of products and services to community members. We love our small town feel and flourishing countryside, but we also realize the importance of investing into the community so that future generations will also choose to call Myerstown 'home.'

Heather Bowman stated position really defines a place that a brand occupies in the mind of a consumer. When someone thinks of Myerstown, what is the first thing you want them to think about? They are suggesting the wholesome community, great events, the future, the shops, the downtown, and the community pool. That would bring in the generations, families, and investing in the properties and community.

## WHO

Community members have a deep value for their family. They desire a simple life within a quiet community and many settle here with the intent of raising their family and calling Myerstown home. Many have family living in Myerstown or in neighboring towns.

Residents take pride in their community and feel a sense of ownership and commitment to their town. They support local business and care about what is happening. They are content and joyful with their place in life and believe in taking care of what they have rather than striving for what others do.

With a genuine demeanor and honest work ethic, community members desire to belong to a place that they are proud of. They value wholesome family fun - afternoons at the pool, small town events, and produce from the local farm. Rather than spending money on extravagance, they spend time with loved ones.

Hailey Stoner stated the “WHO” is the target audience. They focused on the positive attributes of the people. They identified three main groups, the renters, the homeowners, and the business owners. Identifying these groups helps you to shape your messaging. So that you are attracting and speaking to people on an emotional level.

Economic Development Manager McKenna stated the only wording he is questioning is the rather than striving for what others do. It is open ended, but striving for what others do, to him is a negative contamination. You are still striving for something, maybe there is a better way to word it or do not even put a comparison.

Deputy Secretary Brubaker stated we may want some of the things others have done to make their community successful. We do not want to be them, we want to be us, but some of the things they have done has helped to make them successful and still keep the community spirit.

Economic Development Manager McKenna stated one of the things when he is driving through town is people fishing. People are relaxing, teaching their children, or just taking a break. That is a scene in his mind. We want to make it more attractive.

## PROBLEM

EXTERNAL: People need a place to live, connect with family and friends, and be a part of a community. They are looking for a place to go home to - a place to belong and call their own.

INTERNAL: Residents want to take pride in their hometown. They are looking for a place that they feel good about sharing with their friends and family. They are also searching for a place that enables them to live the lifestyle they are seeking in their current stage of life, while connecting them with people that value a similar lifestyle. Finally they are seeking a sense of place or community - a chance to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

## SOLUTION

EXTERNAL: Myerstown is the solution. It provides a place to live, raise a family, and become connected. It is a place to call home.

INTERNAL: Myerstown fulfills the internal desires of its community members to belong and be a part of something that is good; enabling them to live the lifestyle that they desire.

## IMPACT

When people feel like they have a sense of home, are part of something bigger than themselves, and connect with their community they feel like they are being served by their town. When our target audience feels like they are being served, they in turn want to give back. As residents begin to engage with the community in this way, new businesses will begin to develop, old ones will thrive again, and people will change their perception of the town. This creates a vibrant town and community with a sense of place - giving Myerstown a trajectory of growth and prosperity.

Hailey Stoner stated when people invest in the town, they are serving the community. As the town starts to grow and people see what you are doing, they are going to want to become engaged. People have a hard time buying into something when they do not feel they are getting anything from it. By the Council investing in the town, they are going to see that and want to engage by starting businesses and live here.

Heather Bowman stated this is also part of communication. The website update is important. Starting social media, Instagram and Facebook would provide more communication to the residents.

President Rittle stated communication is great, but it is having someone that can keep up with the needed updates. That is a job in itself.

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Economic Development Manager McKenna stated in Lebanon they got help from the SCORE mentor to create a communications plan. It helped to see what other communities are doing with communication and social media.

Char Newswanger stated with the Brand Story they are working on is the anchor for the communication. This is the guide behind the story.

Heather Bowman stated next month they will be showing the logo options, the tag line, color pallet, and the photo shoot vision. These will all lead to the video script and signage.

Councilmember Behm asked Char Co as business owners here in town, what would they like to see happening in Myerstown.

Char Newswanger stated the sense of place is really important to her, but she also wants to be in a town that has some energy, choices, and activities. That it feels good to come into town.

She was feeling like the town was falling backwards, but then, when they got the RFP (request for proposal) she started to understand the things the Council was working towards and the vision for it. She felt much more engaged and supportive of it and now sees it moving forward. It feels good to understand the things you are working towards and the vision for it. This is completely different then what she understood a year ago. The communication is so important.

Economic Development Manager McKenna stated any time he meets with governmental agencies and they talk about what the Council has done in the last four years they are blown away, but the target audience, the residents may not know, but they are the ones who need to know.

Heather Bowman stated that is all they have for this evening. President Rittle thanked them for coming.

The President provided a new committee's list due to the addition of Ronald Ream to Council.

The 301 S. Railroad Street property was discussed. There are at least four people who have sent in letters of interest in the property. Kleinfelter's Auction was contacted for information for a sale. They get 2% of the sale or a minimum fee of \$1,500.00, plus advertising costs. Any deed restrictions must be in place prior to the sale and any other terms would be part of the Agreement of Sale. The Council will discuss this with the solicitor at tomorrow night's monthly meeting.

Assistant Manager Ludwig discussed the sidewalk, curb, and tree at the property. As we prepare for the Railroad Street Road Project. Letters have been sent to property owners who need to replace or repair their curb and/or sidewalks. This will be needed at the 301 property and the tree needs to be removed as well. Should we complete it and then pass the cost along to the new owner at the time of the sale? The Council stated it needs to be completed now.

The Borough will need to purchase AED units for the pool and the Borough facility. The ambulance association may be willing to purchase the AED units for us and then the units would be part of their maintenance plan. Deputy Secretary Brubaker stated she does not have a price yet, but will be contacting Steve Zimmerman for more information, but we need to purchase these AED units.

Assistant Manager Ludwig stated he is reviewing the pool contract but all things indicate we have no vacuum system for the new pool. Nothing was included in the package. We will need to have one. We cannot operate without one. We received a \$2,500.00 donation from Fred Hoffman so Council may want to use that donation towards this purchase. The Assistant Manager stated he will report back once he reviews the contract.

Assistant Manager Ludwig stated July 4<sup>th</sup> is a Tuesday and he is asking Council to consider giving the Borough staff off on Monday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> as well. He believes it would be a huge gesture to staff for their hard work during this transition without a Manager.

Deputy Secretary Brubaker stated office staff came to her and asked if she felt Council would consider closing on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. She informed staff she would ask.

Deputy Secretary Brubaker stated she can only speak about the office staff, the Assistant Manager would have to speak about the rest of staff. But the office staff has really stepped up during this time without

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a manager and through all of the work needing to get done. They come in early, they stay late, they do anything they are asked to do to help herself and Assistant Manager Ludwig get done whatever is needed.

Councilmember Behm asked if the additional closure would create any backlog of work later in the week that would be a problem. Deputy Secretary Brubaker stated she does not believe that it would.

The Assistant Manager stated his departments worked during the snow emergency and feels it would be a gesture of good faith and that is the only reason he is asking. It has been overwhelming with the amount of work and he has had to ask everyone to help and everyone has really stepped up without complaints. He believes it would mean a lot to all of us. He believes President Rittle can attest that it has been rough.

President Rittle stated there is no doubt the staff has really stepped up to the plate. With the situation we were in, he is not sure if there were others in position we would have gotten through what we needed to get through. Staff has done a phenomenal job and thinks they deserve it. The Council will consider it at their meeting tomorrow night.

Emergency Services were discussed. The Mayor will discuss the issues with the Planning/Zoning/Public Safety Committee Chairman Park W. Haverstick, II.

President Rittle reminded the Council there will be a special meeting to review and possibly award the Communication Bid for the new facility on Thursday, June 22, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.

Councilmember Dana Reich entered the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Councilmember Reich asked when the weeds at the pond will be taken care of. Assistant Manager Ludwig stated it will be taken care of, but getting the pool opened was the number one priority.

Mayor Ebling stated the Women's Club planted the Christmas tree. The tree has become overgrown. They would like to remove the current tree and plant a new tree. Is that property the Boroughs or Friedens Lutheran Church property? The Council believes it is the churches.

The Mayor is asking for the Councils blessing to remove the tree. President Rittle stated he does not believe it is Councils authority to grant. Staff will review the files and report at the meeting tomorrow.

The President asked if there were any additional comments for the good of the borough. Seeing none, a motion was made by Eric L. Powell, seconded by Michael D. Behm, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. All those in favor: Motion unanimously carried.

Lisa A. Brubaker  
Deputy Secretary

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