

**Lancaster City Council Committee Special Meetings,
August 9, 2016, 6:00 p.m.**

**COMMISSION ROOM, CITY HALL ANNEX
120 NORTH DUKE STREET**

CALLING ROLL OF MEMBERS

Present – Mr. Reichenbach, Mr. Roschel, Mr. Soto, Ms. Williams, Ms. Wilson and President Graupera – 6

Excused – Ms. Sorace

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. Nomination of John McGrann to the Public Arts Advisory Board. Ms. Williams made a motion to move Mr. McGrann’s nomination to the full Council at the regular meeting later in the evening. Mr. Soto seconded the motion and it was approved by the committee.

Mr. McGrann did not arrived at the meeting until later. Committee members opted to recommend Mr. McGrann’s nomination be moved forward based on his submitted resume.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

1. Administration update on City broadband network. No Council action needed.

Pat Brogan, Mayor Gray’s chief of staff, said the first discussion of making Lancaster a “smart city” with a high-speed broadband network occurred a decade ago, soon after Mayor Gray took office. At that time, the mayor and his administration decided to focus on more pressing priorities. Four years ago, after some of the administration’s goals had been met, discussions about a broadband network resumed. She credited the inter-departmental cooperation within City Hall for making the project possible.

She then introduced the principals of MAW Communications, of Reading, the City’s partner in this public-private-partnership. The presentation was live-streamed on facebook online by City Communication Specialist Amber Strazzo.

Brian Kelly, MAW’s specialist in human integration, stated the goals of the project. They sought to build a smarter city, invest in tomorrow’s infrastructure today, break down the digital divide and ensure that all school-age children and their families have equitable access to affordable, fast internet service, attract and retain businesses and keep Lancaster on the cutting edge of innovation.

The answer to those goals is LanCity Connect, the City’s residential, fiber optic network. LanCity Connect will bring gigabit connection throughout the City. The network is being presented by the City and powered by MAW Communications, under a unique partnership.

The network promises to deliver internet connectivity to homes and businesses at speeds of up to one gigbit per second. One gigbit equals 1,000 megabits per second.

Preliminary research has found that communities with gigabit service have experienced higher wages, more jobs, increased property values and other economic benefits.

High-speed internet usually refers to speeds of 20 or more megabits per second. LanCity Connect promises to deliver data 50-times faster than that. He said that is the difference between waiting 30 minutes for a standard movie to download, or 30 seconds.

For comparison, Mr. Kelly said City residents who receive high-speed internet access through cable-provider Comcast likely have a data speed of 20-50 megabits per second. Some very high-speed service is delivered at 150 megabits per second. The cost for that service is \$50-\$82 per month.

LanCity will be offered in four tiers, with monthly pricing ranging from \$35 to \$90 per month. The data speeds for the four tiers will be 50, 150, 300 and 1,000 megabits per second.

Subsidized rates for low-income families will also be offered. Business service will be offered in the second half of 2017, but the focus will be on residential service.

Starting today residents will be able to sign-up for service.

Between now and December 31, installation fees will be waived for those who register for the service. Registration does not bind the property owner to actually receive the service, but it allows the property to be connected. It is hoped this process will encourage the wiring of many of the City's homes. That is important in a City where nearly half of all properties are rentals.

Installations will start early next year. An early adopter program will begin in October. Selected participants in that program will be offered free service for the first three months in exchange for their testing of the service. The early adopter test group will be geographically and economically representative of the City, Ms. Brogan said.

The public-private-partnership in gigabit communities is rare and the LanCity Connect is the first of its kind in Pennsylvania. It offers several public policy goals, including:

- Local control
- Municipal cost reductions
- Revenue sharing arrangement
- Commitment to local purchasing

The network will be built and operated by MAW Communications. The City retains access rights for the next 100 years. The network is being constructed to produce long-term cost reductions for City operations. It will largely pay for itself in cost-savings for traffic signal integration, automated meter reading, and the safety coalition cameras migrating onto the network.

Phase I of the project is complete. More than 3,000 strand-miles of fiber is in place with 98 access points throughout the City. Now, two-thirds of the City is within the service area.

The underground portion of Phase II will start this fall. The aerial portion will begin in May 2017. That will take the network to 6,000 stand-miles of fiber optic cable.

When Phase II is complete, the traffic and camera network migration will begin as well as the deployment of wifi hotspots in public spaces and parks. When complete, all residents and businesses within the City proper will be included in the coverage area.

President Graupera asked about the how the internet service would actually reach into homes and whether existing routers and equipment would be compatible. Mr. Kelly responded that fiber optic cable will go directly into homes. An existing router should work with the network. LanCity will also offer preferred network routers to customers.

In response to a question from a live-stream viewer, Mr. Kelly said workers in LanCity's Lancaster-based customer service center will be private-sector employees. MAW workers are not unionized, Frank Wiczowski said.

President Graupera asked Mr. Kelly about LanCity's relationship with the School District of Lancaster. Mr. Kelly responded that MAW's initial focus is on bringing high-speed internet to the homes of students and their families. The school district and other institutions will be able to join the network later.

Public wifi hotspots will be installed after the Phase II deployment of the project has been completed, he said.

Asked about plans to expand the network to areas surrounding the City, Mr. Kelly said MAW anticipates a later, third phase of expansion into areas around the City. That would include areas of Manheim Pike and other areas that were annexed into the City, as well as areas outside the City. Phases I and II have focused on the four-square miles which cover most of the City, although a fiber optic line will follow Harrisburg Avenue in Phase II. That line will allow for remote water meter reading of Park City properties.

Ms. Brogan, responding to a question from a viewer, said that neither the Community Safety Coalition nor the City Police will monitor internet activity through the network.

Ms. Brogan noted that Lancaster could have moved forward with the installation of a high-speed fiber network solely for the purposes of improving the City government's operating efficiency, but, that would have been self-defeating and short-sighted. Rather, the attempt was made to broaden the benefits to residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

John E. Graupera, President

Attest:

Bernard W. Harris Jr.
City Clerk