

2/4/16

To Bloomsburg Town Council Members:

We are providing this statement so that our collective position on your plan to change parking enforcement on Main Street in Bloomsburg is clear. We recognize that you have already approved changing the meter fee from 25 cents per hour to 25 cents per half hour at your January 25th meeting. It is our understanding that you are scheduled to vote on an ordinance amendment at your February 8th meeting that would change enforcement times. As proposed, the new enforcement times would be 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday. We oppose these changes as they are very limited in scope, are being proposed with unclear data, and could discourage customers from coming downtown.

Polls recently conducted by WHLM Radio and The Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce show significant opposition to these changes from both the general public and the business community. Of over 500 respondents to the WHLM poll, 77 percent were opposed to the fee increase. In the Chamber's poll, opposition to both the fee increase and the enforcement time changes was over 90 percent. Doesn't this feedback warrant further consideration of your plan?

Several of you have stated that the reason for changing meter enforcement times is to deter residents of downtown from parking in public spaces, thereby keeping those spaces available for customers. However, there are many aspects to consider in parking management; metered spaces, permit spaces, on-street parking, off-street parking, customer usage, resident usage, and people who work in the downtown. Past Councils have also made changes to parking management that have been limited in scope. Often times those changes had unintended negative consequences. Several studies and current customers all echo that the rules for parking in the downtown are confusing. Providing long-term solutions that balance the needs of all stakeholders and encourage vibrancy require a comprehensive approach.

It is our understanding that a parking sub-committee has been created by the Town's Community and Economic Development Committee and is to include representation from the business community. We applaud this action, and appreciate the opportunity to have representation on the committee. In addition to the knowledge and experience of those representatives, there is considerable data from parking studies conducted in 2009 and 2015. A revitalization plan is currently being undertaken by Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc., with funding provided in-part by the Town. It is logical to give this committee time to review all of this data, gather input from stakeholders, and develop comprehensive plans before making any changes to parking management. This committee should also remain permanent, to evaluate the impacts of any changes, monitor ever changing dynamics, and suggest additional changes to Council as warranted.

We share the same goal as Council of wanting downtown Bloomsburg to be a place where people want to gather, and do business. A healthy, vibrant downtown is important to the residents and businesses of the entire Town and surrounding area. The public response to this issue shows us that people do care about downtown and want to be there. We therefore ask that

you not implement these changes and that together we focus on better, long-term strategies to strengthen downtown Bloomsburg. Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Fred Gaffney
President, Columbia Montour Chamber of
Commerce
CEO, Columbia-Montour Partnership for
Community Development

David "Otto" Kurecian
Executive Director, Columbia-Montour Visitors
Bureau
COO, Columbia-Montour Partnership for
Community Development

Robert Stoudt
Board President, Columbia-Montour Partnership
for Community Development

Sherry Aungst
Owner/Operator, Sherry's Hair Co.

Sara Baker
Co-Convener, Artspace Gallery

Michael Barletta
Owner, Infinity Vapes

Michelle Beaver
Uncle Paul's Stuffed Pretzels

Hans W. Bottesch II, DC
Owner, Bloomsburg Spine & Sport

Bruce Bowman
Owner, Sneiderman's Jewelry Store

Leane Coladonato
Owner, The HeadQuarters

Vince DeMelfi
Owner, Susquehanna Realty
Landlord, 102 West Main Street
Board Chair,

Peggy Dildine
Owner, Peggy's Massage
Allure Hair & Body

Zabrina Finn
Executive Director, The Women's Center

Duane Greenly
Benefactor, The Greenly Center

Helena Griffith
Owner, The Phillips Building &
Phillips Emporium

Oren B. Helbok
Executive Director, The Exchange

Angela Dawn Hess
Administrative Director, Box of Light

Kim Angelo Keck
Owner, Exclusively You

Lydia Kegler
Director, Bloomsburg Public Library

Jeff Lylo
Owner, J. Lylo Jewelers

Kayla McCready, LMT
Owner, Healing Through Touch Massage
Therapy

Susan McGarry, RA, LEED AP
Owner, ArchCentral Architects, Inc.

Nick McGaw
Owner, Endless Records

Catherine McLaughlin
Catherine McLaughlin, MEd, Licensed
Psychologist

Douglas Michael
Owner, Bakers' Guild Café

Quincey Morton-Swartz
Kirsten Swartz-Morton
Owners, Wanderlust Café

Rose Neiderhiser
Owner, Lil Kids Stuff
Jim Nemeth
Human Resources Director, Autoneum North
America

Marc Nespoli
Owner, Xtreme Row

Pat O'Connell
Owner, The Law Office of Patrick O'Connell

Ashok Patel
Owner, Bloom Tobacco
Ready Go Burrito
YoChoice Frozen Yogurt

Deanna R. Pealer
Owner, Deanna R. Pealer, Attorney-at-Law
Property owner, 128-130 West Main Street

Dennis R. Peters, P.E.,
President, Peters Consultants, Inc.
President, Criterium Peters Engineers, Inc.

Kirk Pfaff
Assistant Manager
Ready Go Burrito

Paul Reichert
Caldwell Consistory

Joseph Reilly
Owner, President and General Manager,
Columbia Broadcasting Company
Co-owner, 124 East Main St.

Nancy Reilly
Owner, VP and Treasurer, Columbia
Broadcasting Company.
Co-owner, 124 East Main St.

Mary Jo Skjoldal
Owner, Family Balance Acupuncture

Jared Snyder
General Manager, Ready Go Burrito

David L. Soltz, Ph.D.
President, Bloomsburg University

Harry Strausser, III
President, Remit Corporation
John Thomas
President, Columbia County Historical &
Genealogical Society

Frans Verstraeten
Owner, Dutch Wheelman

Tim Wagner
Owner, Wagner's Trophies & Engravables
Sarah Walzer
Toby Diltz
Owners, The Blind Pig Kitchen

Jon White-Spunner
Managing Director, Bloomsburg Theatre
Ensemble

Linda L. Woodward, SRA
Owner, Lynwood Real Estate Appraisal Co.

Mike Zarrett
Owner, Towne Camera
Property owner, 152-154 West Main Street &
160 West Main Street

Matt Zoppetti
Sunset Holding, LLC