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Banners are proposed for Bloomfield Center

By Al Sullivan
Staff Writer

BLOOMFIELD—In an effort to spruce up Bloomfield's business district, the Bloomfield Center Steering Committee has proposed placing banners on utility poles in and around Bloomfield Center.

Steering committee members Raymond McCarthy and Richard Bzdek came before the township council caucus March 23 seeking permission to hang the banners, saying they would provide an attractive street scape at a relatively low cost to the merchants, and would be produced at no cost to the township.

McCarthy said the banners would create a friendly sense of seasonal change for those visiting Bloomfield, those living here or those coming to do business here.

The banners would stay up for three months at a time, with designs indicating each season. Four different types of banners would be scheduled each year. Sponsors could pay a fee to cover three months, or sponsor banners

for each season up to three years.

The committee envisions 100 banners in total. The estimated cost to remove and put up each banner is \$10, which would be covered by each sponsor.

Bzdek said several businesses are already interested in sponsoring banners.

The Bloomfield Center Steering Committee is the result of an effort by local civic, business and government leaders to set up a Special Investment District to revive business in the center. In early March, the committee moved ahead with a parking study in and around the central business district. The committee started working on the banner proposal in February, Bzdek said. The committee wants to have the banners up by June or July.

The committee will oversee all aspects of the project, McCarthy said, from installation to maintenance, and will have liability insurance to cover the operation. But the committee needs the blessing of the township council to use the utility poles. PSE&G would be more receptive if the committee

could use the town's name in asking permission and could cut months off the approval process, McCarthy said.

The committee is also trying to get the township's approval for the concept, and plans to return later with the designs intended to be displayed along Bloomfield Avenue and Broad Street. Mayor James Norton, however, raised concerns over the extent of the banners, saying he did not want to create conflicts between various area business groups by displaying the banners too far from Bloomfield Center.

Councilwoman Martha Skinner suggested the township use the banner to advertise its annual Harvest Fest.

McCarthy said the steering committee was looking for a more general seasonal theme, seeking images that will represent each season best. But he noted that Verona has used banners to highlight Project Graduation in June.

Norton appointed Councilman Timothy Kane as liaison to the committee.

