

Street light project held

By Alex Ahmadi
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

An ongoing borough project to replace aging street light fixtures in downtown State College has been put on hold for at least a year and the funds will go to another program.

The project took a back seat when the State College Borough Council decided last spring to divert funds into the renovation of low to moderate-income housing on Kemmerer Road, Planning Director Carl Hess said.

Both projects compete for funds coming from the Community Development Block Grant — federal money that is largely intended for housing development projects, he said.

"Opportunities like Kemmerer Road don't come along too often," Hess said.

The borough has allocated money from the 2010 fiscal year toward the project, which is being led by a local non-profit organization, he said.

Despite next year's hiatus on the street light upgrade, the council intends to return to the project in the near future, Public Works Director Mark Whitfield said.

According to the council's capital improvement plan, work is set to resume in 2012 and continue through 2015, beginning with fixtures on College Avenue between Garner Street and High Street, Whitfield said.

Other areas targeted for lamp upgrades through 2015 include cross-streets between College Avenue and Beaver Avenue including Garner Street, Pugh Street and Burrows Street, among others, he said.

The plan also calls for the addition of new light fixtures as well as the reconstruction of handicapped ramps to meet standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The street light project began in 2005 and involves the replacement of light poles, fixtures and foundations — many were originally installed in the 1980s, Whitfield said. The intention, he said, is to replace all the older fixtures downtown.

"This is an ongoing project, and it will be an ongoing project for some time," he said.

Whitfield said the street light upgrades are designed to improve the safety, efficiency and aesthetics of downtown lighting.

Existing fixtures use high-pressure sodium bulbs that cast an orange glow, but the new induction fluorescent lamps are white, he said.

It is anticipated that the new bulbs will use less energy and last longer, reducing electricity and maintenance costs.

The new lights are set in a clear globe fixture and directed downward to minimize light pollution. The fixtures themselves are also more pleasant to look at, Whitfield said.

"The response has been positive," Whitfield said. The first lamps were placed on the 100 block of South Atherton Street, Whitfield said.

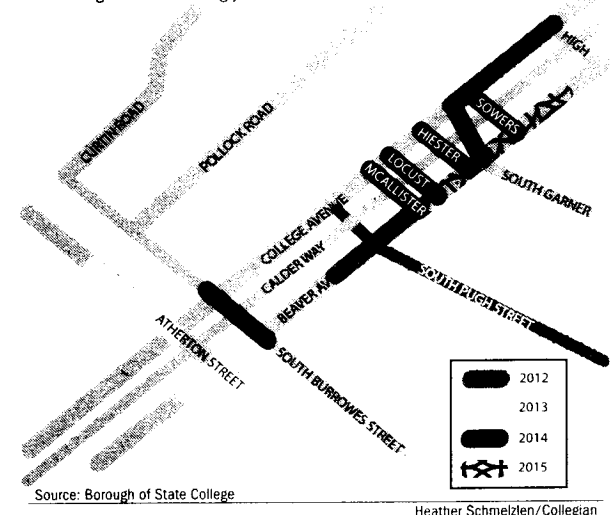
Since then, he said stretches of College Avenue, Beaver Avenue and Allen Street have seen their lights upgraded.

The housing project — currently taking precedence over street light renovation — involves the renovation of nine apartment units targeted toward the local workforce, council member James Rosenberger said.

The borough is serving in a supporting role, he said, and the development will be led by Housing Transitions, a non-profit organization based in Centre County.

Lights out

State College borough officials pulled funding for a project that would replace street lights in the coming years.



Game to fundraise for THON tonight

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

At 7:05 tonight, the Pittsburgh Pirates will face the Houston Astros at PNC Park. But it won't just be a typical baseball game.

A portion of the ticket sales will benefit Penn State's Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon.

If people cannot travel to Pittsburgh to make the game but still want to support THON, they can go to Rotelli Pizza and Pasta, 250 E. Calder Way, for a "watch party." Overall Communications Chairwoman Elaine Tanella said.

"Since a lot of people from State College can't travel to Pittsburgh, they can go to Rotelli's... you tell them you're with THON and 10 percent of your check will go to THON," Tanella (senior-bioengineering) said.

Tickets for the game are \$20 for the Outfield Box and \$45 for the Pittsburgh Baseball Club and can be purchased online at pirates.com/thon or at 412-325-4928.

Last year, a Penn State alumnus who works with the Pirates proposed the idea, and the THON overall committee thought it was a good fit for the organization, Tanella said.

"Everyone is always trying to look for ways to spread awareness for THON," she said. "It's important because it stresses that THON is a year-long event and not just October through February."

Overall Chairwoman Kirsten Kelly said she is excited for the game.

"One of the things that I was thinking about is that I love that it gives the opportunity for THON alumni and students in the Pittsburgh area to get together and celebrate our efforts for the kids in the summer," Kelly (senior-marketing) said.

Overall Public Relations Chairwoman Jony Rommel said the game is a unique opportunity.

Rommel (senior-philosophy) said there will be a table set up at the game so that people can obtain information about THON and the Four Diamonds Fund and get a gold ribbon pin.

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Art supply store Uncle Eli's, 129 E. Beaver Ave., is celebrating its 40-year anniversary this month.

Shop celebrates 40 years

By Sky Friedlander
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

During the 1970 Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, Douglas Albert was opening the doors to his tiny art supply store.

This month, the store that has become the art supply, framing and gift center called Uncle Eli's, 129 E. Beaver Ave., celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Albert started his business while he was a student of fine art at Penn State.

"I wasn't McDonald's material, but I needed a job to stay in school," Albert said. "The town truly did need, from my perspective, an art supply store."

The store started in a very small location on Allen Street, only about 150 square feet. On top of that, shoplifting was a major problem, Albert said with people just "helping themselves."

From 1970 to 1975, the store's location moved several times, finally settling in its current and larger location on Beaver Avenue, Albert said — a move that allowed him to "diversify" and expand his stock.

Despite the passage of time, Albert said he has tried to keep the atmosphere Eli's has always had.

"It's maintained its feeling," he said. "When people come back to town, they say it hasn't changed much."

The store even appeals to Downtown State College Improvement District Director Jody Alessandrine.

"The fact that Douglas has been in business for 40 years [and] has been in five locations over that time shows his commitment to downtown State College," Alessandrine said. "He's been able to survive."

But even with its long history, Eli's is not impervious to competition, Albert said, particularly from online shopping.

"The Internet is killing all small retailers," said Albert. "The cry of buying local seems to stop at people's pocketbooks."

Albert said he remains cautiously optimistic about staying in business.

"Whatever the future holds, we're going to do the best we can to fight all the forces that are making it tough on all small businesses now," Albert said.

Even in tough times, some staff members remain enthusiastic about their store. Robert Egan, an employee of the store for about a year, had only good things to say about his place of employment.

"It's one of the best jobs in town," he said.

The store hires exclusively artists, Egan said, because employees must be able to answer customer's questions, something he is able to do when confronted with artistic questions. He said he thinks the job has increased his art knowledge.

"You learn on the job," he said. Employees also create art for the store.

Anytime a customer buys something, Eli's throws in a little art — purchases are sent out in bags with one of a kind drawings on them done by Eli's employees.

Lynn Pelluso, a painter at Eli's for seven years, said she enjoys getting to see the new art supplies as they come out — something important to her as a painter.

She even recalls shopping at the store when she was a young girl. "Oh, I love this place," she said.

UPUA works with officials for a non-voting student representative

The UPUA president met with the borough manager to discuss having a student sit in on council meetings.

By Nathan Pipenberg
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Fresh from what he called a "progressive" meeting with the State College borough manager, Christian Ragland said his goal to have a non-voting student liaison sit in on borough council meetings is underway.

Ragland, the University Park Undergraduate Association president, plans to return to Tom Fontaine's office in two weeks' time with a full proposal that should reach the ears of borough council members.

But past that meeting, he said he doesn't have a scope of when the idea might be realized.

"I would love to have this in place by the fall semester," Ragland (senior-political science) said.

"But we're taking this one step at a time."

The idea has been met with support from both Fontaine and Mayor Elizabeth Goreham, who said last week that she thought the idea would benefit everyone involved.

Fontaine said his Thursday meet-

ing with Ragland was centered around the logistics of getting the proposal before council.

He said a tentative schedule might have Ragland presenting the idea to council at an Aug. 9 work session.

From there, he said that if there's a consensus among council members, the proposal will move on to another meeting, where council could vote on the issue or continue discussion.

So far, it seems like Ragland and borough officials want to hold the potential student liaison to similar standards.

Goreham said she would want the borough to have a say in choosing the liaison, who would have to attend every meeting and be well versed in borough issues.

In the same vein, Ragland said he that would be looking for a student who is passionate and knowledgeable about the student body, but also about community issues.

Last semester, hot-topic issues like the currently pending Nuisance Gathering Ordinance (NGO) caused

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Christian Ragland
UPUA President



Goreham



Ragland

tempers to flare when students and borough officials met.

"The NGO was controversial," Fontaine said.

"There were points where all of us agreed to disagree."

Ragland said the student liaison is just one of the ways he hopes to repair a damaged town-government relationship.

In the long term, he also hopes to have more students run for voting positions with the borough, sitting on various borough boards and commissions to borough council itself, Ragland said.

"History shows that we have not been successful with that," he said. "But we need to get students to support other students."

In recent years, student candidates for borough council have been unsuccessful, though students have found seats on the Human Relations Committee and Rental Housing Revocation Appeal Board.

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