

FRANK BURNS, MEMBER
72ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

DISTRICT OFFICES:
535 FAIRFIELD AVE.
JOHNSTOWN, PA 15906
(814) 536-8400
FAX: (814) 533-2368

123 WEST HIGH ST.
EBENSBURG, PA 15931
(814) 472-8021
FAX: (814) 472-1965



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

HARRISBURG OFFICE:
332 MAIN CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 202072
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2072
(717) 772-8056
FAX: (717) 772-9965

COMMITTEES

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE, CHAIRMAN
NORTHWEST DELEGATION

May 2, 2024

Mayor Frank Janakovic
401 Main Street
Johnstown, PA 15901

RE: Reconsideration of spending \$6 million to \$8 million to completely redo Central Park

Dear Mr. Janakovic:

With the recent resignation of City Manager Ethan Imhoff, I am asking city council to reconsider plans to overhaul Central Park. Imhoff often caused confusion among council members and the public as to how this project would be funded. He blurred the lines between a federal RAISE grant awarded to the city and separate federal funding provided through the COVID-19 American Rescue Plan.

To clarify, the RAISE grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation. I've confirmed that federal transportation funding cannot be used to pay for things inside the park, such as a splash pad, pavilion, landscaping, etc. Therefore, the funding to redesign Central Park must come from the city's remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that was provided to help communities and businesses recover from the COVID-19 disaster declaration. I think it's telling that city council has chosen to allocate \$6 million to \$8 million on Central Park, which is more money than the city allocated to the non-profit sector, the business community or emergency services – the entities most affected by the pandemic.

We represent the same people and I assure you the majority of the people do not think Central Park should be the city's top priority. I'm writing to ask that city council reconsider the decision to spend \$6 million to \$8 million on Central Park and reallocate those funds to removing blight in city neighborhoods, building a new police and fire station and/or providing incentives for a grocery store to locate downtown.

I realize the city has already spent some of the community's money hiring Thad Pawloski's firm to create drawings of the park's redesign. True leadership is showing the courage to change direction. I'm sure the public would be satisfied with some minor upgrades to the park – maybe lamp post lighting, replacement of old trees, picnic tables, etc. – but spending \$8 million when the city has so many other pressing needs seems ridiculous to the average person in Johnstown.

While I support investment in downtown Johnstown and believe there are opportunities to strengthen our community, it is also crucial to ensure that these investments meet the needs of the public and are sustainable in the long-term. As such, I respectfully ask that city council listen to the public and make a motion to reconsider spending \$6 million to \$8 million to completely redo Central Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank Burns".

Frank Burns
State Representative
72nd Legislative District