



*Town council meeting  
May 4, 2026*

Present: Mayor Chris Lelle; Councilmen, Sally Brown, Eric Dailey, Sharon Johnson, and Doug Koestel; Kathy Bridges, clerk, Jack Samuels, attorney

The meeting opened at 7:02 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor opened the public hearing for the rezone application of LJA Engineering, Inc. to rezone 14 W Star St, 12 W. Star St., 767 Christmas Ave., 8 W Star St., 775 Christmas Ave., and 781 Christmas Ave. to C-1 (neighborhood commercial); a special use permit for fuel pumps as an accessory to retail sales and a concurrent variance to permit a reduction of the required zoning buffer from 50 to 25 feet.

Sarah McQuade of CPL spoke about the application. There is a gas station (Citco) on the site and the property owner wanted to redevelop the parcels under a C-1 zoning, she said. The update included adding a specialty food market allowable in C-1 and an accessory fuel pump as a special use permit. Staff recommended approval on all the requests.

Marissa Bridges with LJA Engineering spoke next representing the applicant. A slide show was presented highlighting the development.

The Mayor said there were slight revisions to the UDC (Unified Development Code) to allow four of seven criteria identified in the requirements of Specialty Food Stores.

Several citizens spoke including: Scott Morgan who inquired about the future land use map of the area; Sandy McNab who was in favor of the development; and Dan Wages who also was in favor stating the town should work with developers and allow sales of anything.

The public hearing closed at 7:50.

Sharon Johnson made a motion to add 742 Manger Ave. to the agenda, Doug Koestel seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Sally Brown made the motion to accept the UDC amendments section 89-187 as written for specialty food stores with the addition of a section K that would give council the authority to grant variances and with qualifying use being rewritten from 4 to 3 in section B. Sharon Johnson seconded and the vote was unanimous. Brown also made the motion to accept the additional amendments, section 89-231, 1315, 1316 and 1387. Eric Dailey seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Brown also made the motion to accept the additional amendments sec 89-231, 1315, 1316, 1387. Eric Dailey seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The council considered the rezone application, and Sally Brown made the motion to approve allowing 5 gas pumps and Sec 89-231 items 2 and 3. Doug Koestel seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Third on the agenda was Rich Atkinson of RevolutionPlanning who spoke about his business as a planner.

Next Robin Martinelli spoke against the town of Bethlehem using Alex Ward, a Barrow County Commissioner, as a municipal judge

Attorney Jack Samuels said the best practice to find a judge was to post the job. Eric Dailey made the motion to post the position, Sally Brown seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

Doug Koestel presented a slideshow on playground equipment. Dailey made the motion to allocate \$75,000 towards the playground, Brown seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The council reviewed the financials and approved the April 6 minutes with a motion by Brown, a second by Doug and a yes vote by Sharon Johnson. Johnson made the motion to approve the April 27 minutes, Brown seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Sharon Johnson opened the discussion about the 724 Manger Ave property by vetoing the Mayor's veto (from the last meeting) and made a motion to get the property in shape to rent. Dailey seconded the motion, Koestel voted yes and Brown no. The Mayor was firmly opposed to the plan.

The Mayor said the new code enforcement officer had yet to be sworn in for Bethlehem.

Citizen Dan Wages asked to speak and with a motion by Brown, a second by Koestel the motion carried unanimously. Wages said he thought the carnival was a good idea-just not beside his house since the noise kept him up half the night.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.