

## MIDDLETOWN

## New laser firm to light up July 4

By CHRIS ENGLISH COURIER TIMES

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It's not real fireworks, but Middletown officials figure a laser light show is the next best thing to provide residents with some July 4 excitement.

Township Parks and Recreation director Debby Lamanna said next year's show should go a lot smoother after the supervisors, at their Tuesday night meeting, approved a \$15,000 contract with a Minnesota company.

This year's first laser light show, done by a Philadelphia firm for about \$5,000, presented various problems, she said.

"The [Philadelphia] company was new at this and we had to give them a lot of help," said Lamanna. "We had to provide the screen the lasers are projected on, a sound system and technician, and our parks and recreation staff put in a lot of overtime helping out. This new company does all of that. It's all inclusive."

With all the extras, this year's costs probably came close to \$15,000 anyway, she said. A large part was covered with business sponsorships, and Lamanna expects sponsorships to fund all of next year's show without the need to dip into the township budget.

Supervisors Robert McMonagle, John J. Kelly III, Jasper Caro and Diane Marseglia voted 4-0 to approve the contract with Lasertainment Productions International of Blaine, Minn. Board Chairwoman Lisa Pflaumer was absent from the meeting.

Another advantage of the new company is it will put on the show July 5 if there is rain July 4, said Lamanna. The Philadelphia firm did not provide a rain date and the laser show went on during a "monsoon," she said.

When asked by Supervisor Jasper Caro about the possibility of real fireworks, Lamanna said she and her staff had investigated the idea but it presented problems with both expense and safety.

"The township doesn't really have the kind of big open area that would be good for a fireworks show," she said. "Our fire marshal's office and insurance company don't say no but they've always discouraged it. When we looked into prices, about the cheapest we could find was \$25,000 for seven and a half minutes of fireworks."

The half-hour laser show is accompanied by music. Next year's July 4 celebration and laser light show, like the first one this year, will be held at the Middletown Community Park on Langhorne-Yardley Road, Lamanna said.