



CITY OF WILLIAMSPORT

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DEREK J. SLAUGHTER

I am saddened to hear that the 25th Annual “Set the Night to Music” 4th of July fireworks display has been moved from the viewing area of Williamsport. This was a decision made by the sponsor: Backyard Broadcasting.

After it was clear that PennDOT would not grant a permit for the fireworks at the usual bridge location, I worked with Backyard Broadcasting to find another reasonable location. We thought we had found the right spot before it was realized that an occupied Bald Eagles’ nest was nearby. Federal law requires a 1/2-mile radius buffer around an active Bald Eagles’ nest for anything such as a fireworks display.

I reached out to Backyard Broadcasting to inform them I needed to contact the state and federal government for written permission from them to ensure that the state and federal government had no concerns related to the fireworks display disturbing the active Bald Eagles’ nest. The display would have just been outside of the required 1/2-mile radius.

However, the 1/2-mile buffer went onto the property from where the fireworks were slated to be shot off. As Mayor, I requested and was waiting for written confirmation from the federal government that we had the “go ahead.” Tonight, I have just learned — via social media — that Backyard Broadcasting decided to move the fireworks.

I did not make the final decision to move them as I was still awaiting the confirmation from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. I will most likely hear back from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service tomorrow. If they have no issues with us having the fireworks at this location, I would have gone ahead with it. Backyard Broadcasting has made their own decision without waiting for the official clarification which would have informed my decision.