

Newark nominates 5 for state Jefferson Awards

City Council's anticipated vote on hikes in water rates removed from agenda

By ROBIN BROWN
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NEWARK — The mayor and City Council on Monday night honored a Newark High School student and four adults for their service to others.

Student Min "Sharon" Song, and adults Joyce Tannian, Maria Velasquez, George Krafchick and Maureen Feeney Roser officially became the city's nominees for the Jefferson Awards for Public Service.

The news of the Jefferson Award nominations brightened

a meeting many expected to give bad news to city water users.

Instead, a second reading and final vote on a proposed water rate hike of 15 percent in the city and 30 percent for municipal water users outside Newark were removed from the agenda.

The reason for the delay? Not all city water customers have been notified, said Dana Johnston, the city's community affairs officer.

In other business, members discussed adding sexual orientation, gender identity and ex-

pression to the city's nondiscrimination policy. More than a dozen people offered support, with one voicing opposition because of the potential cost of additional employee benefits. City staff is to research the issue and report to the council by April 13.

Council also heard first reading of a proposal to limit for-rent signs in residential areas to one wall or ground sign, banning other types and requiring a 15-foot setback, maximum area of 4 feet and maximum height of 5 feet.

Mayor Vance A. Funk III said the city's Jefferson Award nominees make the city proud. "Newark is fortunate to have so many residents who give back to their own community and

give hope to others around the world," he said.

Student Sharon Song was praised for volunteering more than 200 hours at Christiana Hospital over two years and teaching music through an outreach program to middle school students. She also is active in her school's Key Club and National Honor Society chapter.

While Song was honored for helping youngsters, nominee George Krafchick was praised for helping senior citizens.

His 10 years helping the Newark Senior Center, off Marrows Road just outside city limits, include managing volunteers who sort and mail more than 3,000 copies of the center's monthly newsletter and run-

ning the Kitchen Korner at center flea markets. His work saves the center money and motivates members, city leaders said.

Joyce Tannian was honored for volunteer work with the most distant impact. She led a fundraising effort at Newark Community Day to bring safe water to the drought-stricken village of Maasai, Kenya. Her effort, spurred by a 2005-06 visit, raised enough to provide a well and help another nearby village.

Maria Velasquez's efforts aim to prevent diabetes among children in Latin America. Velasquez, active in University of Delaware's Hola Latino Community, recently helped set up a diabetes camp in Bolivia for identification and education of

at-risk children and their families. She also motivated UD students to raise more than \$3,700 for education and prevention.

Maureen Feeney Roser was said to go "above and beyond the call of duty." She works as the city's assistant planning and development director, but uses her own time to help the Downtown Newark Partnership, its board and committees. She also has come up with new ideas, programs and policies "to enhance the community's economic well-being," Johnston said.

The nominees are entered for state awards, which qualify winners for national competition.

Contact robin brown at 324-2856
or rbrown@delawareonline.com.