



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

SUMMARY

District 1 Interviews

March 30, 2022

5:00 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Reed, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, W. Butler, J. Cepeda-Freytiz, J. Waltman – in person and – M. Ventura - virtually

OTHERS PRESENT:

M. Gombar, L. Kelleher – in person and S. Smith - virtually

Mr. Waltman called the session to order. He explained that due to a resignation, the District 1 position was advertised and applications from District 1 residents were submitted. The applicants will be interviewed this evening. City Council will use a rating sheet with the following categories: Presentation, Commitment to the City, Cooperative Spirit, Training & Experience, Knowledge of City Affairs and Other. Council will provide a 1-5 rating under each category (with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest score). Afterwards the scores will be tallied to identify the applicant with the highest overall score.

Mr. Waltman stated that while the interviews are open to the public, applicants who are not being interviewed are asked to take a seat in the hallway outside of Council Chambers. He stated that Council will make a decision on the appointment as quickly as possible.

I. Interviews

- **Ray Baker**

Mr. Baker stated that he has been a District 1 resident since 2018 and he noted his passion for the revitalization of Reading. He noted the great projects championed by the 18th Wonder and noted the need for similar initiatives to occur in the south of Penn area. He stated that there needs to be more recreation opportunities for the youth such as a dirt bike park and other initiatives that are not the run of the mill basketball court or park. He stated that if appointed he would run for the District 1 seat in the election next year.

- **Chris Daubert**

Mr. Daubert stated that he has been a District 1 resident since 2009 and he was elected to fill the seat between 2014-18. He stated that he has a good understanding of the City's current issues and a work together attitude. He stated that he did not run for the seat in 2021 due to the pandemic and the challenges of teaching high school both virtually and in-person. He stressed the need for fiscal prudence as the City moves out of Act 47. He recognized the work of the 18th Wonder and noted the need for a similar initiative on the south of Penn area which could start through multiple community meetings. He suggested expanding the Youth Commission and working with the Commission to identify the programs needed to support and involve the City's youth. He stated that if appointed he will run for the seat in the election next year.

- **Steve Yarnell**

Mr. Yarnell stated that he was born and bred within Reading. He stated that his father is a former Reading mayor. Mr. Yarnell stated that he participated in prior government study commissions. He noted his long experience working on civil rights issues. He noted the need to reduce the inequity of services and provide better opportunities for all Reading residents. He stressed the need to be fiscally responsible while supporting the funding of the Police Department. He noted the strengths of the 18th Ward community and how that differs from the Oakbrook Development. He suggested restarting River Fest and building activities that suit residents in the 18-25 age bracket. He described his work on various initiatives and boards. He stated that if appointed he will run in next year's election.

- **Lou Perugini**

Mr. Pergugini stated that he decided to apply for the seat as he was the runner-up in the 2021 election. He spoke about his background and educational achievements. He state that the Lancaster Avenue area is a strong point for District 1, noting that the food store in the former AW Golden building has become a Wawa. He noted the importance of Schlegel Park and Pool. He took issue with the lack of respect from the youth and the dangers associated with aggressive driving. He stated that he has a congenial attitude and is open to all ideas. He stated that he does not see the color of people's skin and that he once bailed a young African American man out of jail. He stated that his strength is in the financial area. He stated that he is unsure if he would run for the seat next year.

- **Ermete Rafaelli**

Mr. Rafaelli noted the poor lighting in the room. He described the health problems he had that appear to be under control. He noted his strong volunteer service and his desire to continue to volunteer and to help solve problems. He noted his participation on the project to decommission the Navy Marine Center. He noted the need to apply the financial lessons learned during Act 47 to prevent financial hardships moving forward. He noted that District 1 is the only District that has not has a representative for longer than one (1) term. He suggested offering summer camps in the elementary schools.

Mr. Waltman and Ms. Kelleher tallied the ratings on the score sheets. All agreed with the results. Mr. Waltman asked Ms. Kelleher to contact the applicants tomorrow to advise them of the decision to be made at the Special Meeting that will be scheduled for Monday, April 4th at 5 pm in Council Chambers.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 pm.

*Respectfully Submitted by
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk*