



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

Monday, February 1, 2021
Meeting Report

Attendance: M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, (electronically) S. Marmarou (via telephone)

Others Attending: S. Smith, J. Long, F. Denbowski

The meeting was called to order at 4:15 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

I. Interviews

• M. Angella Singletary – Reappointment – Board of Ethics

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. Singletary's thoughts on her position with the Board. Ms. Singletary stated that the Board is necessary. She expressed the belief that the members are not biased and treat people fairly.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. Singletary's experience with the Board. Ms. Singletary stated that the Board handles complaints fairly.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the Board is doing its job well. Ms. Singletary stated that it is.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there was a way that Council could assist the Board. Ms. Singletary stated that there is not but that the Board solicitor is currently looking at a way for the Board to enforce the issuance of subpoenas.

Mr. Marmarou asked Ms. Singletary to explain. Ms. Singletary stated that during a complaint hearing subpoenas were issued to a witness but the witness refused to appear at the hearing.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how the Board was educating residents. Ms. Singletary stated that the Board follows the Code of Ethics. She noted her willingness to discuss educational opportunities with the Board. She expressed the belief that the Code is very clear. *(Note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board was unable to hold educational sessions for newly elected and appointed officials.)*

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Ms. Singletary for her service. She agreed that the Board solicitor should research the enforcement of subpoenas and suggested that he also discuss the issue with the City Solicitor. She questioned if there was anything that could be done to improve the Board's functionality. Ms. Singletary stated that one of the hearings was extensive and stated that hearings should be more streamlined. She explained that the focus of the hearing was expanded and should remain more focused. She stated that the Board has addressed this through a new complaint investigation policy. She stated that the Board is cohesive and works well together.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed her belief that this Board is important.

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz thanked Ms. Singletary for her service. She questioned if the Board had goals for 2020 and how Council could support those goals. Ms. Singletary stated that no goals have been established. She stated that the Board handles complaints and advisory opinion requests. She stated that she is proud of the work the Board does. She stated that the members are fair and trustworthy.

Mr. Marmarou agreed that this Board is important. He questioned if regular meeting dates are needed. Ms. Singletary stated that regular meeting dates are not needed.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Angela Singletary to the Board of Ethics.

- **Thomas Lynam – Reappointment to the Fire/Building Code Board of Appeals**

Mr. Marmarou questioned how long Mr. Lynam has been on this Board. Mr. Lyman stated that this will be his third term. He stated that service on this Board is not demanding and meets approximately 2 – 3 times per year. *(Note: Mr. Lynam was first appointed to this Board in 2000.)*

Mr. Marmarou thanked Mr. Lynam for his contribution and service. He questioned the work of the Board. Mr. Lynam stated that the Board is very productive and is willing to work toward practical solutions.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the Board currently meets as needed. Mr. Lynam agreed and stated that they meet when appeals need to be heard.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Council can assist. Mr. Lynam stated that the Board works well together and there is nothing that the Board needs from Council at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how the Board can educate residents on the City's building codes. Mr. Lynam expressed the belief that the Fire Marshal does a great job with education. He stated that the City's building codes are complicated but that clients are generally informed about the issues at hand.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned ways to educate those who speak Spanish. Mr. Lynam stated that to date all those who have appealed have spoken English.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that many residents speak English as a second language and these are complicated issues. She thanked Mr. Lynam for his service.

Mr. Marmarou noted his support of diversity. He suggested that the Board recruit a member that speaks Spanish. He questioned if there were vacancies on this Board. Ms. Smith stated that there are vacancies.

Mr. Lynam stated that he has contacts that can assist with recruiting a Spanish-speaking member. He stated that he will follow up on this issue. He noted the need for the member to have the proper qualifications as well.

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz suggested that Mr. Lynam recommend changes to improve. Mr. Lynam stated that he is happy with the Board's performance. He stated that they are very productive.

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz questioned if the City's Codes are up to date. Mr. Lynam stated that municipalities are generally slightly behind because of the lengthy approval process. He expressed the belief that Reading is on par with other local municipalities. Ms. Smith stated that the Law office and Building/Trades has begun working with a consultant to update the City's Codes.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Thomas Lynam to the Fire/Building Code Board of Appeals.

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz stated that she was impressed with Mr. Lynam's years of service. She questioned if the City recognizes its volunteers. Ms. Smith stated that Council recently issued a commendation to a Plumbing Board member who is retiring after serving the City for over 30 years.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Council office held recognition events in the past and suggested that this be revisited after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended. Ms. Smith stated that the event ended because of financial considerations and Act 47.

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz suggested that long-time volunteers be recognized at Council meetings. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz agreed.

II. Youth Commission

Ms. Cepeda-Freytiz questioned the start of the Commission. Ms. Smith stated that she is currently working with an applicant to be interviewed but that she plays basketball and is having problems scheduling the interview. She explained that she needs to receive the background

clearances from the moderator and a few applicants before appointments can be made. She stated that the start of the Commission will depend on the receipt of the clearances.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk