

# ***CITY COUNCIL***

## ***Nominations and Appointments***

### ***Committee***

**Monday, May 16, 2016**  
**4:00 pm**  
**City Council Office**

The Nominations and Appointments Committee will meet as needed to address nominations and appointments to the City's boards, authorities and commissions.

*Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the Committee Chair.*

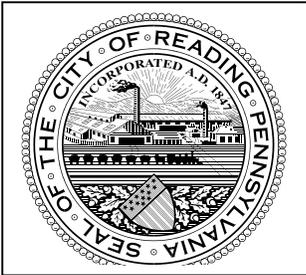
*All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012*

#### **I. Interviews**

**4:00 - Valerie Phelps-Robinson - reappointment - Human Relations Commission**

#### **II. Appointment Recommendations**

#### **III. Review Pending Applications Memo & BAC Openings**



# CITY COUNCIL

## **Nominations & Appointments Committee**

**Monday, May 2, 2016  
Meeting Report**

**Attendance:** S. Marmarou, J. Slifko, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

**Others Attending:** S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

### **I. Interview**

#### **Lee Olsen (reappointment – Blighted Property Review Committee)**

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) was functioning and to describe its successes. Mr. Olsen stated that the appointees have remained consistent but that the Council representatives have changed. He stated that the BPRC always has a quorum.

Mr. Olsen stated that the BPRC had been holding hearings on a monthly basis but that it was slowed down during the Spencer Administration. He stated that once a property gets on the BPRC's radar it is sent a letter warning them to get into compliance or the BPRC will certify it blighted and that they could lose the property. He stated that if the property is not improved, it enters the hearing process.

Mr. Olsen stated that taking a property by eminent domain is very difficult. He stated that due to changes in State law the BPRC now has more options. He stated that it is frustrating that the BPRC doesn't receive follow up information on the properties after they have been certified. He expressed the belief that the City doesn't take more

properties because the City and the Redevelopment Authority do not have the funds to maintain them, rehab them and get them revitalized. He expressed the belief that the City should work with NHS, OCR and Habitat to revitalize them more quickly. He stated that the BPRC now conducts only two hearing cycles per year.

Mr. Olsen stated that in the past, Mr. Kromer noted his hope that the City issue a \$10 million bond to address blighted properties. He stated that he is committed to the process but that he often wonders when he will see improvement.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz invited Mr. Olsen to visit the revitalized homes in her block. She noted the need to ensure there is follow through.

Mr. Olsen stated that he has researched the amount of non-owner occupied properties in other PA cities. He stated that they average 26%. He stated that Reading averages 56% which is too high. He stated that most hearing agendas contain 15 – 18 properties but only 5 – 6 owners appear to testify. He stated that most times the owners argue that their property should not be blighted because they are only two years behind on taxes and utility payments instead of five years. He stated that staff now shows current photos of the properties as they are being addressed. He stated that these owners ignore their bills and their violation notices.

Mr. Slifko questioned if Mr. Olsen supported the land bank concept. Mr. Olsen stated that he does. He stated that this would give the City immediate control of properties.

Mr. Slifko requested clarity on the function of the land bank. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Council has been given inconsistent information. Mr. Olsen stated that Philadelphia's land bank is the best example. He stated that property ownership is transferred to the land bank. He stated that they build an inventory for new, large development or rehabilitate individual properties. He stated that the properties need to be maintained until they are developed and he's unsure why Reading has not yet created a land bank. He suggested that the land bank would be governed by an independent board similar to the Water Authority.

Mr. Marmarou stated that a property in his block has been vacant for 10 years. He stated that the property is susceptible to vandalism and that this is an otherwise stable area. Mr. Olsen stated that if the taxes and utilities are being paid and the property is in stable condition it would not be addressed by the BPRC.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the land bank issue be added to Council's Strategic Planning agenda. She stated that there are many loose ends with blighted

properties and she would like an overview of the entire process. She expressed the belief that more and more properties are being abandoned by its owners and that it destroys neighborhoods.

Mr. Slifko agreed with the need to discuss this at Strategic Planning. He expressed the belief that the BPRC is doing everything it can and that there needs to be follow up.

Mr. Olsen stated that it was the Community Development Department Director that requested that the BPRC slow down. He claimed that staff could not keep up with the many properties and that the BPRC is only one link in the chain.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to have all stakeholders come together. She stated that Council is being asked to consider an amendment to the CDBG budget that would divert City demolition funding.

Mr. Slifko noted the need to develop and use additional tools.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that some agenda topics can be removed as they are being pursued so that there is time for new topics.

Mr. Olsen requested action on the land bank issue. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Council has not received an update since the administrative transition. She stated that it is time to revisit this issue.

Mr. Olsen stated that the City is full of row homes. He stated that some are good and some are not. He expressed the belief that if those that are not good are not addressed it will lead to spreading damage to those that are good. He stated that they also become health hazards.

**The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Lee Olsen to the Blighted Property Review Committee.**

Mr. Olsen stated that he wished the work of the BPRC could be more effective. He noted his support of Mr. Kromer's plan for a bond issue to address blighted properties. He expressed the belief that the Redevelopment Authority also needs funds and personnel to address blighted properties.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that this fits the Mayor's platform of addressing neighborhoods.

Mr. Slifko expressed the belief that revitalized properties pay for themselves quickly. He stated that the City should look at this as an investment in itself.

Mr. Olsen stated that a meeting will be held tomorrow to look at the Pagoda and the mountain as a whole to make it sustainable. He stated that two grants have been received and that there are many stakeholders.

Mr. Marmarou stated that these properties should not be turned over to anyone, including the County. Mr. Olsen stated that nothing would be sold or turned over.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there is good energy with this project. She noted that the use of the mountain has increased and that there must be a plan before this asset is damaged.

Mr. Olsen noted his hope that the Pagoda be open more often.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she will be giving Council an update on this initiative at today's Strategic Planning Committee meeting.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
*Shelly Katzenmoyer*, CMC  
Deputy City Clerk



CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor  
**FROM:** Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk  
**DATE:** February 25, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Appointment Application

The Council office has received the attached BAC application from Valerie Phelps-Robinson. Ms. Phelps-Robinson is reapplying for membership to the Human Relations Commission.

Please let the Council office know if you will endorse the reappointment of this applicant.

OK

RECEIVED  
3-25-16





CITY OF READING  
BOARDS AUTHORITIES & COMMISSIONS  
APPLICATION FORM

Article X of the City of Reading Home Rule Charter encourages the participation of citizens in their government through the establishment of Boards, Authorities and Commissions to carry out City business. Broad citizen participation is encouraged in the recruitment of appointees and in making appointments.

No appointee of any board, authority, or commission shall hold any other elected public office or any compensated position for the City. No person may serve concurrently on more than one board, authority or commission. The Charter requires all appointees to be residents of the City of Reading. At the discretion of Council, persons not residing in the City may be appointed if they have a significant property holding or business interest in the City.

Name: Valerie Phelps-Robinson  
Address: 500 Walnut St. Apt 24 Reading, Pa. 19601  
Years living at this address: 6  
Date of Birth: 5/10/62  
Occupation: Home maker  
Place of Employment & Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: Day 610-374-2327 Evening 610-374-2327  
E-mail: v.phelps@ymail.com

*contact via email only*

If you need more space for any of the questions below, please use the back of this form.  
If you have a current resume, please attach it to this completed application.

1. What Board, Authority or Commission are you interested in serving on? Why?  
Reading Human Relations Commission. (I am  
still committed to the Human Relations Board.

2. In your opinion, what is the primary purpose of this board?

I feel the primary purpose of this board is to help & inform all residents of the City of their rights to fair housing, employment.

3. What skills, abilities or other characteristics do you have that will help the Board successfully achieve its purpose?

I believe my 19 years of working in housing for those with disabilities, & services has given me the opportunity to learn first hand the needs and ability to help those in need of compassion who may experience problems in housing/employment.

4. Have you had any previous experience with this particular board? If yes, please describe.

Yes I have served on the Human Relations Commission Jan of April 9, 2012.

5. Have you served in any other volunteer roles in the community? (e.g. youth organizations, church, etc.) Please list.

I serve as Clerk of Elections for 9<sup>th</sup> Ward Precinct City Hall since 2010.

6. Have you ever been employed by the City of Reading? If so, please list.

Yes in the 90's as telecommunication.

7. In a business relationship, have you ever provided goods or services for the City? If so, please describe?

No

8. Have you served previously on any other City of Reading Board, Authority, or Commission or in any other advisory capacity? If yes, please list the position and date(s) of service.

No

9. Are you currently a registered voter? Yes  No

10. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? Yes  No

11. Do you own any properties or businesses in the City? If so, please list?

No

---

---

---

12. Do you have any water/sewer bills, property taxes, codes violations, or fines which are delinquent for 6 months or longer? If so, please list and provide explanation.

No

---

---

---

I verify that the statements made in this application are true and correct. I understand that any false statements herein are made subject to penalties of 18 PA.C.S. 4904, relating to unsworn falsification of authorities. I consent to and authorize, without reservation, the City of Reading to obtain information relating to my law enforcement record, convictions for other than Summary Offenses, my tax payment record (including all applicable taxes payable to the City of Reading), and my utility payment records. Convictions or tax delinquencies will not automatically disqualify the applicant. I authorize each applicable agency to which this form is presented to release any results, upon request of the City of Reading, as described above. Copies of this consent that show my signature are as valid as the original signed by me. This consent is valid until the termination of my application process or my affiliation with the City of Reading, whichever is later.

I hereby irrevocably release and discharge each agency to which this form is presented and such agency's representatives and agents from any and all liability of any nature whatsoever in any way arising from or relating to disclosure of information of any nature about me and I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless each such agency from any and all loss, cost, damage, expense, or liability of any nature (including, but not limited to, attorney fees and criminal penalties) incurred by such agency or its representatives and agents in association with, or as a result of disclosure of information about, me. I further agree each agency to which this form is presented and such agency's representatives and agents are third-party beneficiaries with direct standing to enforce the release and indemnification provisions set forth herein.

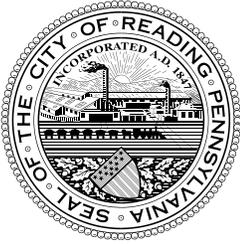
Valerie Phelps Robinson  
Printed Name

  
Signature

1/13/16  
Date

Please return the completed form to the

**City Clerk's Office  
Office 2-24  
815 Washington Street  
Reading, PA 19601**



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Nominations and Appointments Committee  
**FROM:** Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk  
**DATE:** May 16, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Pending Applications

---

The following persons have applications for Boards, Authorities, and Commissions pending:

**Redevelopment Authority** - 2 openings

- **Roberto Campitelli** - appointment - sent to Mayor February 2016
- **Mary Ann Ciarlone** - appointment - will need Mayoral approval

**Planning Commission** - 4 openings

- **Melvyn Jacobson** - appointment - has Mayoral approval
- **William Cinfici** - reappointment - will need Mayoral approval

**Human Relations Commission** - 3 openings

- **Valerie Phelps-Robinson** - reappointment - has Mayoral approval

**Environmental Advisory Council** - 2 openings

- **Chris Kern** - appointment

**Fire Civil Service Board** - 2 openings

- **Michael Leifer** - reappointment

**BOARDS, AUTHORITIES & COMMISSIONS**  
**OPEN SEATS**

MAY 16, 2016

Board, Authority & Commission	Mayor appointment w/ Council approval	Mayor appointment	Council appointment
<b>BOARDS</b>			
Electrician's Examining Board			2 openings
Plumbing Board of Examiners	2 openings		
Reading HVAC Board			5 openings
Zoning Hearing Board			2 alternate openings
Police Civil Service Board			Board full
Fire Civil Service Board			2 openings
			1 application pending
Board of Historical Architectural Review			3 openings
Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library			City seats filled

Board of Health			1 opening
			1 alternate opening
Board of Ethics			
	1 opening		
Building/Fire Code Board of Appeals			
	1 opening		
	2 alternate openings		
Animal Control Board			
	3 openings		
Charter Board			
	2 openings		
Code & License Appeals Board			
	3 alternate openings		
Minority Business Board			
	7 openings		
City-wide Diversity Board			
			Board full
Main St Board			
	Board full		
Pagoda Foundation		2 openings	2 openings

**AUTHORITIES**

Reading Area Water Authority			
			Board full
Reading Redevelopment Authority			
	2 openings		
	2 applications pending		
Reading Housing Authority			
	Board full		
Reading Parking Authority			
		Board full	
Convention Center Authority			
			Board full
Downtown Improvement District Authority			
	1 opening		
City Revitalization Improvement Zone Authority			
			3 openings

**COMMISSIONS**

Planning Commission			
	4 openings		
	2 applications pending		
Reading Shade Tree Commission			
	2 openings		
Stadium Commission			
	Board Full		
Reading Human	2 openings		

Relations Commission	1 application pending		
Blighted Property Review Committee	Board full		
Environmental Advisory Council			2 openings
			1 application pending
Recreation Commission	Board full		
Audit Committee			
			Board full