



CITY COUNCIL

Administrative Oversight and Land Use Committee

Monday, March 17, 2008
Meeting Report

Attendance: S. Marmarou, M. Baez, J. Waltman

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, L. Churchill, C. Younger

ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

I. Interviews

Dale Gresh (Appointment - Shade Tree Commission)

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Gresh about his interest in the Shade Tree Commission. Mr. Gresh indicated that he was acquainted with Mr. Slifko who is involved in the planting of the shade trees. He noted that he is a resident of the Penn's Commons Neighborhood Group and has seen an improvement in the neighborhood due to the addition of new shade trees. He noted he would like additional neighborhood groups to encourage the planting of shade trees in other neighborhoods.

Mr. Waltman noted the 1/10th mil tax increase earmarked for trimming shade trees. He noted the importance of trees to the City. Mr. Gresh noted his desire to publicize information on how residents can obtain a shade tree.

Mr. Waltman noted his interest in an inventory of all City shade trees. He noted this could then be used to determine the need for trees in certain City neighborhoods.

The Committee thanked Mr. Gresh for his time and indicated that Council staff would be in contact as the appointment process moves forward.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment Mr. Dale Gresh to the Shade Tree Commission.

O. Christopher Miller (Reappointment – Historical Architectural Review Board)

Mr. Waltman questioned what the current issues with HARB are. Mr. Miller noted that the Board has come a long way during his tenure. He noted that property values in historic districts continue to increase. He also noted problems with miscommunications between property owners and the Codes Department when a property is located in an historic district.

Mr. Marmarou noted the desire of the College Heights Community Council to become an historic district. Mr. Waltman noted his desire to see more of the City protected by historic districts. Ms. Baez questioned if HARB rules on interior projects. Mr. Miller noted they deal with exterior improvements only.

Mr. Waltman questioned if there were any concerns with the recent action of Council regarding the Housing Permit process. Mr. Miller noted that property owners will need additional education.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. O. Christopher Miller to the Historical Architectural Review Board.

Brian Sands (Reappointment – Plumbing Board)

Ms. Katzenmoyer informed the committee that Mr. Sands had to cancel. The interview will be rescheduled for an upcoming Committee meeting.

Michele Swigart Uhrich (Appointment- Library Board)

Ms. Katzenmoyer informed the committee that Ms. Uhrich had to cancel. The interview will be rescheduled for an upcoming Committee meeting.

Laura James (Reappointment – Historical Architectural Review Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. James about her interest to be reappointed to HARB. Ms. James noted she believes Reading is making a comeback and wishes to be involved in that process. She noted her involvement in the Penn's Commons Neighborhood Group. She believes in the restoration of grand homes and in historic districts. She noted her astonishment at things property owners want to do. She enjoys guiding and teaching property owners.

Mr. Waltman questioned if churches should be protected even if they are not specifically in an historic district. There was discussion of the church at N. 5th and Elm Sts. regarding the stained glass windows. Ms. James thought this should be investigated.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Ms. Laura James to the Historical Architectural Review Board.

LAND USE

I. Goals

The Committee established three goals for 2008:

- Review the feasibility of the Zoning Hearing Board hearing all cases rather than the Zoning Administrator granting zoning approval in certain circumstances
- Zoning enforcement
- Review the Zoning Ordinance

II. Car Tech Proposal

Car Tech has approached the City regarding several land issues.

- Car Tech is proposing to close a walkway beginning April 1. They have cited liability issues with this throughway. It is not a public right of way and is used only by authorized personnel. They will run a shuttle service to continue serving those residents and personnel. They noted that the public cannot have access to this area as it would be a threat to public safety.
- Car Tech has encroached on City property for the past 18 months. The City acquired this property in 1981 to construct a bike path. It is no longer feasible for the City to use this area for biking. Car Tech wishes to acquire this property from the City.
- Car Tech wishes the City to vacate six sections of streets still showing on City maps that run through their property. They have not set a timeline for this action.

The Committee was also informed that Car Tech has purchased the Northwest Swimming Pool. They have not yet disclosed what they will be doing with this property.

An appraisal of the properties in question will be performed. The Committee will be updated on progress once the appraisal has been performed.

The Administrative Oversight Committee adjourned at 6:45p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Shelly Katzenmoyer, Deputy City Clerk