



CITY COUNCIL

Administrative Oversight and Land Use Committee

**Tuesday, April 14, 2009
Meeting Report**

Attendance: J. Waltman, S. Marmarou Chair

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by S. Marmarou, Chair.

I. Interviews

Marcia Schmehl (reappointment – Disruptive Conduct Review Board)

Ms. Schmehl was not present. Ms. Katzenmoyer will reschedule the interview.

William Keller (reappointment – Electrician’s Examining Board)

Mr. Waltman questioned how many Board members attend meetings. Mr. Keller stated that there are usually 5 – 7 members in attendance.

Mr. Waltman questioned how long Mr. Keller has served on this Board. Mr. Keller indicated that he has served since 1986.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Keller enjoys serving on this Board. Mr. Keller responded that he did.

Mr. Waltman questioned if there were any issues regarding the Board that need Council’s attention. Mr. Keller noted that the Board is functioning smoothly at this time.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the function of the Board is to grant master electrician licenses. Mr. Keller stated that the Board reviews applications for journeymen and master licenses and administers the tests.

Mr. Keller stated that there is discussion regarding the homeowners' right to perform electrical improvements and the need for professionals. He stated that he has no problem having the homeowner do their own improvements as long as the work is permitted and inspected to ensure the safety of neighbors.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Keller to the Electrician's Examining Board.

Brian D'Amico (reappointment – Convention Center Authority)

Mr. Marmarou relayed a situation in which a disabled person was injured at a Sovereign Center event. He questioned if the Authority is briefed on such situations. Mr. D'Amico stated that they do get updates from the legal staff if Authority action is needed.

Mr. Waltman noted that Mr. D'Amico has been a member of the Authority for eight years. Mr. D'Amico explained that his position alternates between the City and County for appointment.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the Authority had any issues that needed Council's attention. Mr. D'Amico stated that there were no issues. He noted that the collapse of the ceiling in the main lobby of the Performing Arts Center would be discussed at the upcoming meeting. He stated that the renovations were not done properly and that it was lucky no one was in the building when the ceiling collapsed.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how many members attend meetings. Mr. D'Amico stated that there are generally 5 – 6 members in attendance and they do not have quorum issues.

Mr. D'Amico noted his pleasure that Council President Spencer has begun to attend meetings. He encouraged the rest of Council to do the same.

Ms. Katzenmoyer noted the early meeting time. Mr. D'Amico stated his position that the meetings are too early (7 am) for meaningful public participation. He noted his belief that the meetings should be held in the evening.

Mr. D'Amico also noted his suggestion to consider other management companies occasionally.

Mr. D'Amico noted his belief that the Royals should be working with area schools and businesses with ticket give-a-ways to increase attendance and entice repeat customers.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. D'Amico to the Convention Center Authority.

Andre Grant (appointment – Blighted Property Review Committee)

Mr. Waltman noted that Mr. Grant lives within one of the communities being targeted by the Blighted Property Review Committee.

Mr. Waltman questioned Mr. Grant's professional background. Mr. Grant stated that he is a part time marketing manager and a full time student. He also owns a rental property in Pottsville.

Mr. Grant noted that Opportunity House owns the former Millennium Club property and is not utilizing it. He stated that the property is in poor condition.

Mr. Marmarou noted the vision of Mr. Grant and that it would be a positive attribute in working with this Committee. Mr. Grant noted that he is acquainted with Mr. Bealer and has attended a meeting in the past as a member of NOAH.

Mr. Grant noted that the City is over-populated and rentals are disproportionate. He noted that the elimination of blight would reduce crime and litter and assist the school district. He also noted that it would attract new business.

Mr. Waltman noted his belief of the importance of the housing issues.

Mr. Waltman noted the improvement that the sixth ward has seen in recent years. Mr. Grant noted his belief that blighted properties should be demolished. He also noted that the City should have a land development plan that focuses on making the housing stock better and eliminate row homes.

Mr. Grant noted that homeowners need to speak up against rental properties. He noted that eliminating rental properties would improve the quality of life for the City residents.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr. Grant to the Blighted Property Review Committee.

Steve Harrity (reappointment – Stadium Commission)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Harrity wished to be reappointed to this Commission. Mr. Harrity stated that he is a huge baseball fan and is proud of the Reading Phillies organization and the stadium.

Mr. Waltman questioned the impact of the Lehigh Valley team on the Reading Phillies. Mr. Harrity noted that there has been no impact on attendance. He stated that Reading has the best stadium on the east coast.

Mr. Harrity noted the Commission's work to give tickets to children in the programs at the Olivet and City recreation centers. He noted his pleasure in the increase in youth little league programs in the City.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there were any issues that need Council's attention. Mr. Harrity noted that the Commission does not have a source of revenue. He noted that promotional items and ticket give-a-ways are funded through investments but that the funding will soon be gone. He requested a \$500 per year stipend.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Harrity to the Stadium Commission.

The Administrative Oversight Committee adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk