



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

**Monday, April 1, 2013
Meeting Report**

Attendance: S. Marmarou, R. Corcoran

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

I. Interviews

Dan Luckey (reappointment – Redevelopment Authority)

Mr. Marmarou questioned how long Mr. Luckey was a member of the Redevelopment Authority. Mr. Luckey stated that he has completed one term.

Mr. Marmarou questioned what Mr. Luckey would change. Mr. Luckey noted that better cooperation between the Redevelopment Authority and the City Community Development Department is needed. He stated that it is better but has a long way to go. He stated that the Redevelopment Authority has more abilities than Community Development but there are frustrations moving forward. He stated that the Redevelopment Authority recently completed the Market Value Analysis and is working on an investment study.

Mr. Corcoran questioned the Redevelopment Authority's role in land banking. Mr. Luckey stated that he is not familiar with the process. He stated that the Redevelopment Authority's ability to participate would be determined by financial issues. He stated that he is scheduled to meet with Mr. Murin and Mr. Kromer but was unsure of the topic of the meeting.

Ms. Reed arrived at this time.

Mr. Corcoran questioned if cooperation and communication have improved since Mr. Agudo joined the City. Mr. Luckey stated that this has helped.

Ms. Reed stated that Mr. Luckey is also the Redevelopment Authority representative to the Blighted Property Review Committee.

Mr. Luckey stated that the Blighted Property Review Committee certifies properties but that the Redevelopment Authority can only assist at a certain point in the process and that there are funding issues.

Ms. Reed questioned the involvement of Mr. Murin. Mr. Luckey stated that he was unsure of the topic of the meeting.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that if the meeting is regarding land banking that Ms. Kelleher should also be in attendance. Mr. Luckey again stated that he is unsure of the topic of the meeting.

Ms. Reed questioned Council action necessary on the investment study. She noted her displeasure that Council was not informed more timely at the conclusion of the market value analysis. She stated that the City includes Council and that all are partners in issues together. Mr. Luckey stated that he did not know why there was a delay in bringing this information to Council.

Ms. Reed noted her hope that there is better cooperation in the future. Mr. Luckey stated that Mr. Auman is a great chair.

Mr. Marmarou questioned who determines the amount of money given to residents for relocation during development projects. Mr. Luckey stated that there are standards and explained that there is a Uniform Relocation Act. He stated that the worth of the property is determined by an appraisal and if there is disagreement it is taken to the Court of Common Pleas. He stated that many factors are considered during relocation. He stated that if the parcel is important to the development the owners may be offered a higher amount to encourage relocation.

Mr. Corcoran explained that private development would be handled through the developer and not through the City.

Mr. Marmarou noted the issues that occurred during the redevelopment of Penn St in the past. Mr. Luckey stated that this redevelopment was done through an old UDAG program and that higher amounts were paid.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Dan Luckey to the Redevelopment Authority.

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Murin arrived at this time.

William Thompson (appointment – Diversity Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Thompson was interested in serving. Mr. Thompson stated that the President of the NAACP should ensure equal opportunity for all. He stated that he is honored to serve in this capacity and noted the importance of all people and the need to celebrate Reading's diversity.

Mr. Corcoran questioned what the City can do better to encourage minorities to apply for positions. Mr. Thompson stated that he is familiar with the City's consent decrees and stated that he will be very mindful of them during his tenure. He stated that it is difficult to appeal to adults and he recommended exposing youth to the idea of public service. He suggested an Explorer post and courses at the Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (CTC). Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that there may be courses available for EMS at the CTC.

Mr. Thompson noted the need to break the welfare cycle. He stated that the City offers good paying jobs.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Council has been told that recruiting is occurring but that minorities are not responding. Mr. Thompson stated that residents may be unsure of their skills and afraid they do not have the ability to pass the Civil Service test.

Mr. Marmarou described his hiring as a police officer and the discrimination he faced. Mr. Thompson stated that discrimination still occurs in many places. He stated that he works with a program called "Blueprint for Leadership" which aims to bring minorities forward to volunteer and serve community organizations.

Mr. Marmarou noted the importance of increasing the involvement of minorities in the City.

Ms. Reed and Mr. Corcoran thanked Mr. Thompson for stepping forward to serve.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of William Thompson to the Diversity Board.

Eddie Moran (reappointment – Recreation Commission)

Mr. Marmarou questioned how the work of the Commission is proceeding. Mr. Moran stated that things are proceeding well. He stated that the Commission is doing many great things and noted his hope that he has the opportunity to continue in his role. He stated that there are many ideas in the community and that they need to be heard by the Commission members. He stated that he is honored to serve as the Vice Chair of the Commission and that the Commission is productive and has good synergy.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the Commission's work with playground associations. Mr. Moran noted the Commission's hope that each park and playground be modernized and increase activities. He stated that the Commission has given direction to the Executive Director and that all members of the Commission are passionate about their work. He stated that he has been a Reading resident for five years and has been blessed to be involved in the community. He stated that he has noticed a positive turnaround and that more youth are utilizing the recreation centers. He stated that the Commission is trying new events such as a hayride.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for new ideas.

Mr. Moran stated that his top concern is always for the children of the City. He stated that he is not afraid to speak his mind and would love the opportunity to continue with the Commission.

Ms. Reed voiced her support of Mr. Moran.

Mr. Corcoran expressed his support and thanks to Mr. Moran.

Mr. Moran stated that he works to ensure that no child gets short-changed if they are unable to pay for programs. He stated that the Commission recently acted to charge for the use of facilities to increase revenue but that he was unaware that this would affect some long-standing organizations. He stated that this issue will be discussed at the next Commission meeting and that he will suggest that these groups continue to provide their in-kind services.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how Mr. Moran plans to address this issue. Mr. Moran suggested that the Commission could vote to rescind the fees or offer community service in lieu of payment.

Ms. Reed noted the need to be fair to all who use facilities. Mr. Moran agreed but stated that this would be a great way for groups to get involved in their communities.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Reading American Little League cannot afford to pay the extra fees.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Eddie Moran to the Recreation Commission.

Ann Sheehan (reappointment – Citizens Advisory Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Ms. Sheehan is committed to the Citizens Advisory Board. Ms. Sheehan stated that she is.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the number of members lost during the transition issues. Ms. Sheehan stated that she believes it is five.

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Ms. Sheehan felt they left. Ms. Sheehan expressed the belief that there was much frustration and differing expectations. She stated that some members felt they would have more input than reality.

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Ms. Sheehan is interested in continuing to serve in this role. Ms. Sheehan stated that citizen input is very important.

Mr. Marmarou questioned suggestions to move the Board forward. Ms. Sheehan suggested that the mission of the Board be better defined and that concrete guidance is needed.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Ms. Reed attended meetings in the past. Ms. Reed stated that her impression was that the Board was dysfunctional. She stated that Ms. Snyder has been working to amend the Board legislation.

Mr. Corcoran stated that the Board did not have a clear mission in the past.

Ms. Reed stated that Mr. Mann from PFM was helpful in the past. Ms. Sheehan agreed and stated that Mr. Lloyd was also helpful.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for a strong chair. Ms. Sheehan agreed.

Ms. Reed stated that Board members were on too many paths.

Mr. Corcoran questioned the direction that Ms. Sheehan would like to see this Board move. Ms. Sheehan noted the need for input to the City and also to inform residents of information given them by the City. She stated that the City needs to hear what residents are saying about programs and issues. She stated that this is a grass-roots committee.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Ann Sheehan to the Citizens Advisory Board.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that Ms. Sheehan should not be involved as she is the Executive Director of BCTV and they have news programs. She stated that she may not support this reappointment for this reason.

Mr. Corcoran stated that he supports Ms. Sheehan in this role but not as a member of the Charter Review Commission.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:54 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk