



# CITY COUNCIL

## **Nominations & Appointments Committee**

**Tuesday, February 18, 2014  
Meeting Report**

**Attendance:** S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Sterner

**Others Attending:** S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:44 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

### **I. Interviews**

#### **Anthony Spadafora (reappointment – HVAC Board)**

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Spadafora was interested in continuing to serve on this Board. Mr. Spadafora stated that HVAC is his livelihood and that he is excited to see the trade become more technologically advanced.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Spadafora's understanding of the mission and purpose of this Board. Mr. Spadafora stated that it is to ensure that systems are installed safely and to City code. He noted the need for the inspector to approve all systems after installation before they are functional.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what major issues this Board is facing. Mr. Spadafora stated that many residents are transitioning from oil systems to gas systems and not all contractors understand and/or follow the City code. He stated that this can be very dangerous.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz gave an example of a property in her neighborhood that converted from oil to gas and removed the oil tank but did not close the outside oil intake. She stated that an oil company pumped oil through the intake directly into the basement. She stated that the oil remains and the property has been vacant ever since. She stated that this has decreased the quality of life of the entire block.

Mr. Spadadora stated that he knows many installers. He noted the need to educate all in the trade.

Mr. Murin arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the primary responsibilities of this Board. Mr. Spadafora stated that safety is the primary responsibility. He noted the need to educate all on the City code and to keep the City safe.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Spadafora would have a conflict of interest if he served in this capacity. Mr. Spadafora stated that he did not as all issues are brought forward by the inspector.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there were potential conflicts. Mr. Spadafora stated that contractors who are unfamiliar with City codes do not pull the necessary permits.

Mr. Marmarou questioned what actions Mr. Spadafora would take to prevent conflicts. Mr. Spadafora stated that he would contact the inspector for follow up.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how contractors could be better educated on the City codes. Mr. Spadafora stated that many contractors believe they do not need to follow the code.

Mr. Daubert arrived at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Mr. Spadafora had any personal conflict serving in this position. Mr. Spadafora stated that he had no conflict.

Mr. Marmarou asked Mr. Spadafora to describe his public service and community involvement and the skills that he would bring to the Board. Mr. Spadafora stated that he is currently a member of the HVAC Board and has many years experience in the trade. He stated that he is a great communicator and that this is integral to working with the tradesmen and the inspector.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how much time Mr. Spadafora could devote to the work of the Board and any other commitments he had. Mr. Spadafora stated that he is semi-retired and also teaches HVAC courses. He stated that he is available when needed.

Mr. Marmarou described a situation in the past when his neighbor was performing work without permits and caused problems with his water line.

Mr. Sterner noted Mr. Spadafora's involvement in education. He questioned if contractors are made familiar with City codes. Mr. Spadafora stated that not 100% of contractors are familiar with the City codes. He stated that when contractors are contacted for work, they should research the municipality when they are preparing the bid. He stated that those who go through the local four year apprenticeship program are taught the local codes.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz commended Mr. Spadafora for the detail of his responses. She noted her concern with the capacity of the gas lines in Reading. Mr. Spadafora stated that as long as gas prices remain low people will continue to install gas systems.

### **Jim Washington and Otis Smith (Recreation Commission)**

The Committee interviewed these candidates together as they are both current members of the Recreation Commission.

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith were interested in continuing to serve in this capacity. Mr. Washington stated that he resigned from the CRIZ to remain a member of the Rec Commission to stay within the City Charter. He stated that the Rec Commission has done much good work and is moving in a promising direction. Mr. Smith stated that there is much work left to be done. He stated that he would like to continue to see this work continue and the Commission to stabilize. He stated that he has been involved in the Commission since its inception. He stated that recreational programs and opportunities are important to families who are relocating to Reading.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the mission of the Commission. Mr. Washington stated that he was also involved in the Rec Commission since its inception. He stated that the agreement between the City and School District is unique and that PA DCNR views it as a model. He stated that if Reading is successful, PA DCNR will use our model statewide. Mr. Smith stated that PA DCNR has been very supportive. He noted the need to keep the Commission moving forward and that it is a viable option for City recreation but that the support of the City and School District are vital to its continuation.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the major issues facing the Commission and what the Commission provides to the community. Mr. Washington stated that a major issue is funding. He stated that the agreement is key along with the public's perception and demand for recreational services. He stated that the public perceives that there are no recreational opportunities and that must change. He noted the appropriate use of facilities must also be studied. Mr. Smith agreed that a major issue is financial. He stated that there has also been a revolving door of members and a lack of attendance at meetings and events. He noted the need for committed members to stabilize the Commission. He stated that the executive director has started a new program geared toward female leadership.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if the Commission has reached out to other schools for their involvement. Mr. Smith noted the need for the Commission to become more organized before they expand. He stated that he is open to this in the future. Mr. Washington agreed. He used the City tennis program as an example of one that expanded beyond the City limits causing City participation to drop. He noted the need to focus on City youth first.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the Commission receives funds from other sources besides the City and School District. Mr. Washington stated that the Commission is currently working on its annual report and that this is discussed within the report. He stated that the Commission also utilizes grants. He stated that since the Rec Commission is a 501C3 there are many who are willing to donate directly to youth programs.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the Commission has reached out to the County for their involvement. Mr. Washington stated that they have not done so to this point.

Mr. Sterner stated that increased funds will allow the Commission to grow and expand. He stated that profits from the Hillside events were shared with the Commission. He stated that the City also recently took action to allow the Commission to control Egelman's baseball field and that this could also increase revenue. Mr. Washington stated that the executive director understands that she is responsible to generate enough revenue to cover salaries.

Mr. Sterner questioned who assisted with grant writing. Mr. Washington stated that grants are written by the executive director. Mr. Smith stated that she is assisted by the City's grants coordinator. He noted the need for the Commission to begin a major fundraising campaign. He stated that when organizations/people are approached they are much more willing to donate knowing their donation is used directly for recreation programs.

Mr. Acosta arrived at this time.

Mr. Smith stated that the Commission's agreement is only for a five year term. He stated that it is important to keep the City's and School District's support moving forward including financially and asked that this conversation begin shortly as the agreement has only two years remaining.

Ms. Reed arrived at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned who Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith represent while serving on the Commission. Mr. Smith stated that he feels he represents all citizens of Reading. He stated that the Commission uses taxpayer money and must be able to show the citizens how it is being used. He noted his hope that adult programming begin in the near future. Mr. Washington stated that he represents the community.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the primary responsibilities of the Commission. Mr. Washington stated that recreational opportunity is the primary responsibility. He noted the need to be frugal with tax money and to keep the community informed of recreational opportunities.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if there were any conflicts of interest in serving in this position. Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith stated that they had none.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith well represented the Commission this evening. She questioned what changes they would like to see in the future. Mr. Washington stated that this will also be covered in the annual report. He stated that the report is an excellent opportunity to review the work of the Commission. He explained that the Commission has reserved funds to allow them to have funds needed for grant matches but that PA DCNR has waived the match requirement for the Commission. He noted the need to renew the agreement and the possibility for a tax millage to specifically support recreation. He also suggested that the City and School District reduce their contributions slowly over time rather than abruptly.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Washington's and Mr. Smith's community involvement and whether they would have enough time to devote to the Commission. Mr. Smith stated that he has no other commitments at this time. He stated that he has been active in the recreational community for many years. He noted his hope that the Commission plays a more vital role in recreation and that they partner with other recreational organizations to increase the opportunities to all residents. Mr. Washington stated that he is very active in the Reading community. He noted his strength of understanding the economics of Reading and that he has demonstrated his work. He stated that the eleven members of the Commission each bring their own strengths.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith for their diligence and work with the Commission.

Mr. Washington and Mr. Smith were appointed/reappointed to the Commission at the January 10, 2014 regular meeting of Council.

### **Brian Miller (appointment – Plumbing Board)**

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned why Mr. Miller was interested in serving on this Board. Mr. Miller stated that he grew up in Reading and his business does much work in the City. He noted his passion for the trade and wanting to help improve the City.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Miller still lives in the City. Mr. Miller stated that he lives just outside City limits.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned Mr. Miller's understanding of the mission of this Board. Mr. Miller stated that it is his understanding that the mission of the Board is to ensure that permits are issued for plumbing work done in the City, to discuss the Plumbing Code and to oversee licensing.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Miller sees as major issues facing the Plumbing Board and what service it provides to residents. Mr. Miller stated that a major issue is contractors who do not pull permits. He noted the need to protect contractors who do pull permits. He

stated that many times these contractors lose bids because of the cost of permitting. He also noted the need to protect the residents of Reading.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned who Mr. Miller would be representing on this Board. Mr. Miller stated that he would be representing the citizens of the City.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Miller's understanding of the primary responsibilities of this Board. Mr. Miller noted his understanding that it was to ensure that permits are pulled and to oversee licensing.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Mr. Miller would have any conflicts of interest. Mr. Miller stated that he has none and simply wants to help the community.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Miller's community involvement. Mr. Miller stated that he does much volunteer work and described incidences when he performed work for the cost of materials only in the case of frozen pipes. He stated that he especially enjoys working with seniors and offers them discounts and payment plans.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Miller would have the time needed to devote to the Board and his other commitments. Mr. Miller stated that he tries to stay as active as possible. He stated that he is also current president of the plumbing apprenticeship program at BCTC. He stated that the commitments do not overlap and he will be able to attend meetings.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Miller could work to diversify the trade. Mr. Miller stated that his tenure as president has just begun. He noted the need for the community to work together.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed her appreciation for the community service Mr. Miller performs.

### **Jim McHale (appointment – Water Authority)**

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. McHale was interested in serving in this capacity. Mr. McHale noted his wish to serve the community. He stated that serving on the Water Authority board is a great opportunity and that he brings the right skills. He stated that he is interested in the mission and goals of RAWA and has the time to commit. He stated that RAWA is run like a business and that he has a background in information technology, project management and finance.

Mr. McHale stated that he is active in the community and has organized clean-ups and serves as a cross country coach. He stated that he is self employed and can arrange his time as needed to meet the needs of the RAWA board.

Mr. McHale stated that partisan politics have been forced into the appointment process and if that continues applicants will decline. He stated that he remains interested in serving.

Mr. McHale stated that RAWA has a clearly defined mission and that board members should guide decisions and be responsible to ratepayers, taxpayers and the City. He noted that prudent decisions are needed and that the lease agreement issue will be a major decision. He noted that a strong board during transition is key to the success of the transition. He stated that he is enthusiastic and would add value to the RAWA board. He stated that RAWA is facing many decisions.

Mr. Marmarou questioned who Mr. McHale would be representing as a member of the board. Mr. McHale stated that he would be representing the ratepayers and the City.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. McHale's understanding of the primary responsibility of the members of the board. Mr. McHale stated that he likens it to a board of directors and stated that they should be making strategic decisions and guiding the work of RAWA.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there would be a conflict of interest. Mr. McHale stated that he is a ratepayer and that there would be no conflict.

Mr. Marmarou questioned any future conflicts of interest. Mr. McHale stated that he does not anticipate having any conflicts.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. McHale's community involvement and the skills he would bring to RAWA. Mr. McHale stated that he was a founding member of the South of Penn community group and served as their treasurer. He stated that he has organized clean-ups, done tree plantings and serves as a cross country coach.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. McHale would have the time needed to devote to the work of RAWA. Mr. McHale stated that his time is very flexible as he is self-employed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned Mr. McHale's experience and skills. Mr. McHale stated that he brings a broad skills base. He stated that he has a business background and is very analytical. He stated that a board can never have too much of these types of skills. He stated that he has worked on large projects which included large financial implications, many employees, and a large geographical area. He stated that he owns a business consulting firm which analyzes procedures to fix what's broken. He stated that he has excellent problem solving skills.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned Mr. McHale's opinion on the lease issue. Mr. McHale stated that it is too early to tell what will happen. He stated that this issue has many moving parts. He stated that he would be concerned with communication with employees through the process to allay their fears and keep RAWA's great customer service.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked Mr. McHale to describe a lease and a sale. Mr. McHale stated that selling is a much simpler process as there is a top dollar paid and there are no take-backs and fewer terms and conditions. He stated that a lease will bring fewer dollars as there is a take-back at the end of the agreement. He stated that lease agreement calculations are complex and need to be vetted very carefully for safeguards. He stated that experts are needed.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. McHale would prefer a lease or sale and how he would determine which is better. Mr. McHale stated that he would put himself in different roles at different times. He stated that as a RAWA board member, he would not be involved in the issue but must be aware of it to address any concerns. He stated that he would analyze any agreement based on the objective of the transaction.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. McHale would keep an open mind for the best opportunity. Mr. McHale stated that he has personal opinions but stated that a strategic plan is needed first. He stated that Bristol, PA used their funds for an ice skating rink which was not a successful project whereas West Chester, PA used their funds for capital projects and infrastructure improvements that were very successful. He noted the need not to use the funds for general expenses. However, he stated again that as a Board member he would not be involved in these decisions.

Mr. Acosta agreed that the Board members would not be involved in these types of decisions.

## **II. Other Matters**

There were no other matters.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 5:58 pm.

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