



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

**Monday, March 17, 2014
Meeting Report**

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

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

I. Interviews

Ellen Horan (reappointment – Main Street Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned if it was correct that there were six openings on this Board. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that this was correct. Ms. Horan stated that a dedicated core is needed.

Mr. Marmarou noted the importance of the downtown and the importance of filling these positions. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that a quorum must be met before official business can take place. She noted the need to outreach for additional members.

Ms. Horan stated that part of the issue is the Charter restriction that a person can only serve in one City capacity. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the Charter Review Commission recommended allowing a person to serve in two capacities. She stated that it is now up to the voters.

Ms. Horan stated that Mr. Broad does an excellent job as Main Street Manager. She stated that the Board is anxious to move forward. She stated that they did discuss appropriate candidates. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she has not received any applications for membership.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there are many groups focusing on Reading's downtown and the Penn corridor. Ms. Horan stated that all the groups are cooperative and work together through committee.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Mr. Spencer also be asked to recruit additional members. There was a discussion about the pole baskets on Penn St.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Ellen Horan to the Main Street Board.

Jared Barcz (reappointment – Zoning Hearing Board)

Mr. Marmarou thanked Mr. Barcz for his service to the City. He questioned why he was interested in continuing to serve. Mr. Barcz stated that he tries to be proactive but that the Board is reactive depending on the issues before them. He stated that it is a great place to learn regulations and that the other members have a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Barcz for bringing a fresh look to the City. She stated that this Board is very important and sets the outline for development in the City. She stated that the City is full of illegal conversions and questioned Mr. Barcz's opinion of this issue. Mr. Barcz expressed the belief that if the City denies the request to convert the property that the owner does it anyway. He stated that this reduces City oversight of this property and funds paid to the City in fees. He expressed the belief that some of the rules are too rigid.

Mr. Sterner questioned which rules Mr. Barcz was referring to. Mr. Barcz stated that he is a contractor by trade and that the use of copper and cast iron piping is a big issue. He stated that the City's continued insistence that these be used in properties is very expensive and leads to increased thefts and decreased water quality.

Mr. Sterner questioned if other local municipalities continue to require copper pipes. Mr. Barcz stated that Reading is the only one that he is aware of. He stated that this rule is archaic and described the advantages of using PVC and pex.

Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that copper and cast iron has been required because many Reading homes do not have proper electrical grounding and many are bound to the internal piping system. Mr. Barcz suggested that the City revisit this issue.

Mr. Sterner stated that Council would follow up on this issue. He stated that this is not a business friendly requirement.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that the Zoning Hearing Board make a presentation at an upcoming Council meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the progress made on the backlog of zoning applications for unpermitted conversions. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Peiffer will be making a presentation on this issue at this evening's Standards of Living Committee.

Mr. Barcz noted the need to get more stakeholders involved in City affairs.

There was a discussion of how good landlords feel when they are issued quality of life tickets. Mr. Marmarou described how effective they have been on absentee landlords and those who do not care for their properties.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Jared Barcz to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz left the meeting at this time to attend the Finance Committee meeting.

Tom Fox (reappointment – Zoning Hearing Board)

Mr. Marmarou thanked Mr. Fox for this service to the City. He questioned why Mr. Fox was interested in continuing to serve. Mr. Fox stated that he is a life-long City resident. He stated that he has knowledge in this area and that he enjoys working with this great group of people.

Mr. Marmarou noted that he requested a report from the Board at an upcoming Council meeting. Ms. Katzenmoyer noted the need to have Mr. Peiffer involved with the report.

Mr. Fox requested that the City come before the Board if they object to a project. Mr. Sterner stated that it does when necessary.

Mr. Fox noted his confusion with many overlapping redevelopment groups which also have overlapping responsibilities – CRIZ, Redevelopment Authority, DID, Community Development, Berks Economic Partnership and others. Mr. Sterner stated that the City is working on this with their new CDC rather than having many autonomous groups.

Mr. Fox stated that he has questioned many people about who pays Ed Swoyer. He stated that he has never gotten an answer. He stated that he was told that very few of those hired at the Berks Park 78 are Reading residents.

Mr. Sterner stated that Mr. Fox has gotten off topic.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Tom Fox to the Zoning Hearing Board.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 5:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk