



# CITY COUNCIL

## **Nominations & Appointments Committee**

**Monday, February 2, 2015  
Meeting Report**

**Attendance:** S. Marmarou, D. Sterner

**Others Attending:** S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

### **I. Interviews**

#### **Craig Poole (appointment – Main Street Board)**

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Poole's understanding of the purpose of the Main Street Board. Mr. Poole stated that he is very familiar with the Main Street concept. He stated that he has been attending DID and Main Street Board meetings. He noted the need for these two entities to be aligned.

Mr. Sterner expressed pleasure that Mr. Poole has already become involved in the downtown.

Mr. Sterner questioned Mr. Poole's background in relation to working with Main Street. Mr. Poole stated that he is a native of Pittsburgh and has lived in many cities working at what he called marginal hotels. He stated that he began his career in 1970 and formerly owned a business in an area similar to Penn St. He stated that the business became a world famous jazz club. He stated that at this location he began his work assisting local youth to stay away from gangs. He noted his philosophy that if you change the people and the businesses on Penn St it will make a big difference.

Mr. Poole stated that he has begun walking downtown and meeting business owners to build trust. He stated that the Doubletree Hotel has the potential to draw large amounts of people to the downtown area. He noted the need to create the perception of safety. He stated that business owners are receptive to him. He expressed the belief that bad people are transient and will move to other areas.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Reading has four types of Latinos. He stated that they do not interact well with one another. Mr. Poole stated that he has a relationship with Mr. Toledo and Mr. Colon and he takes a neutral translator along with him.

Mr. Marmarou noted that Mr. Poole is not a City resident. Mr. Poole stated that he is currently renting but that he and his wife are looking to purchase a home in Reading.

Mr. Sterner noted his agreement with Mr. Poole's approach of meeting the business owners in the downtown and working together. Mr. Poole described one such meeting. He stated that he questioned the owner about why he sells the products available. He questioned if he had a marketing plan. The owner took Mr. Poole to the apartments on the upper floors. He stated that they were top rate and that the owner has a plan for the rental portion of his business. He stated that he was very excited because as the downtown improves people looking for walk to work housing will be very interested in residing in the downtown.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for the downtown to be cleaned up and new businesses to open. Mr. Poole stated that property owners are now calling him before opening businesses or leasing space for his opinion on what businesses to open. He noted that this type of approach is what is needed.

Mr. Sterner noted the need for people with vision to be part of Main Street.

Mr. Marmarou recalled how, in the past, 23 families worked together to open businesses on Penn St and the downtown area.

**The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of Craig Poole to the Main Street Board.**

**Sean Devine (appointment – Historical Architectural Review Board)**

Erin Weller, current member of HARB joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Mr. Devine's understanding of the purpose of HARB. Mr. Devine stated that it is to preserve the history and architecture of Reading.

Mr. Marmarou stated that his neighborhood is a conservation district.

Ms. Weller stated that HARB meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Devine was interested in serving on HARB. Mr. Devine stated that he has fallen in love with the architecture in Centre Park. He stated that his passion

has grown and noted the need to increase education to residents about their need to preserve their properties and he noted his willingness to get involved.

Mr. Sterner noted the importance of education as people move into historic districts because some claim they didn't know about the need for preservation.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Devine had ever applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). Mr. Devine stated that he did. He stated that he has done several projects, including his porch and his roof, which needed COAs.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Devine had professional experience relative to HARB. Mr. Devine stated that he does not. He stated that his experience is personal. He noted his experience getting approval for his projects and the need to educate others about the process.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Devine understands the importance and value of historic preservation. Mr. Devine stated that he does as there is quite a lot of history in Reading which needs to be preserved.

Mr. Sterner stated that HARB is guided by the Secretary of the Interior's standards. He stated that Council has heard several appeals in the past in relation to newer materials that are available. He questioned if the Board has addressed this issue. Ms. Weller explained that the Secretary's standards are very broad and the Board sets more specific standards through its policies. She stated that HARB does consider new materials and allows them when they are able.

Mr. Marmarou noted an appeal where the applicant used his religious beliefs during his presentation. He stated that he always asks about the means of the purchase and if the person was informed that the property was located in an historic district.

Mr. Sterner stated that many times Council remands the appeal back to the Board for compromise. He expressed the belief that HARB works well with residents.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he purchased his current home in 1970 and needed to paint the exterior trim several times. He stated that he has now replaced it, and the porch columns, with vinyl to reduce necessary maintenance.

Ms. Weller was granted permission to participate. She questioned Mr. Devine's profession. Mr. Devine stated that he works in the office at Berks Cardiology. He volunteers at the Centre Park artifacts bank and is participating in the Leadership Berks program. He stated that he is also Holy Spirit Church's Council President and owns several properties in Centre Park.

Ms. Weller explained that the meetings are very interactive. She suggested that Mr. Devine get comfortable during the first meeting or two and begin to increase his level of participation.

Mr. Sterner questioned if HARB had a solicitor. Ms. Weller stated that it does not.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there was one in the past. Ms. Weller stated that she is unsure but that she would love to have access to an attorney.

Mr. Sterner questioned if HARB has quorum issues as they are short several members. Ms. Weller stated that it does not.

**The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of Sean Devine to the Historical Architectural Review Board.**

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to appoint Mr. Hatt to the Water Authority. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that Council recently approved the addition of two members but that the ordinance has not yet been signed by the Mayor. She stated that at this time all five seats are filled.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he will speak with the Mayor about signing the legislation and with Mr. Acosta about bringing this appointment forward.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:47 pm.

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