



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

**Monday, May 4, 2015
Meeting Report**

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

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer, B. Rivera

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

I. Interviews

Charles Milch (appointment – CRIZ Authority)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Milch was interested in serving on the CRIZ Authority and if he understood its purpose. Mr. Milch stated that he has attended CRIZ Authority meetings. He stated that he has been a resident of Reading for 16 years and is also a business owner. He stated that the City's prosperity depends on economic growth and he stated that CRIZ will help bring new businesses to designated areas of the City. He stated that this will provide many opportunities for local entrepreneurs and will increase job opportunities for residents and improve their quality of life.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Milch would bring to CRIZ. Mr. Milch stated that he is a business owner and also teaches economics and finance. He stated that he understands how financial packages impact the business and the economy. He stated that he has served on many professional boards in the past and he is the CEO of his own company so he can see opportunities from many perspectives.

Mr. Sterner questioned the types of economic development projects that should occur. Mr. Milch expressed the belief that finding a large company to employ thousands of people is very difficult. He stated that he is partial to small businesses as they also bring many jobs. He explained how he is currently working with the owner of "Off the Wall" (a business located on Penn St) to advance through the process to appear on the TV show "Shark Tank".

Mr. Sterner agreed with this approach and noted that it is difficult to attract large companies. Mr. Milch stated that Reading's lack of good highway connections adds to this difficulty. He highlighted the growth in the area of 8th & Oley Sts.

Mr. Sterner stated that he reviewed Mr. Milch's resume and he has experience in this area and that he is very suitable for this position.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she agrees that many small businesses can become multi-million dollar companies.

Mr. Milch stated that he chose to move to Reading. He stated that Reading has beautiful architecture, a river, minor league baseball and hockey teams, the arena and performing arts center, excellent restaurants, a symphony, and an art museum. He stated that Reading needs to promote these things and people will flock to Reading.

Mr. Marmarou described how 23 Greek-owned businesses were on Penn St in the 1920's.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of Charles Milch to the CRIZ Authority.

Andrew Molteni (reappointment – Environmental Advisory Council)

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Molteni attended the meetings regularly. Mr. Molteni stated that he does. He stated that most members attend and that there is one vacancy.

Mr. Marmarou questioned how City Council could assist the EAC. Mr. Molteni noted the need for more dialog. He stated that he has a science background but that many people cannot see beyond the science. He stated that there are no certainties and that things are always changing. He noted the need to use best practices and to err on the side of safety. He expressed the belief that humans have abused the Earth and that water wars are in the near future. He stated that the world cannot produce enough food due to bad farming practices. He noted the need for all to change self to improve these conditions.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the EAC's greatest accomplishment. Mr. Molteni stated that they have addressed light pollution and he has helped to save many trees from being taken down.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned future projects of the EAC. Mr. Molteni noted the need for Reading to become a fun, safe, and viable community. He noted the need for development to have better architectural design.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned future projects specific to the EAC. Mr. Molteni noted the need to expand green space. He suggested that Reading remove bad housing to allow for more open spaces.

Mr. Marmarou questioned what would be happening with the property at 3rd & Washington Sts. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this is unknown at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the new Doubletree hotel will have green spaces. Mr. Molteni was glad to hear this but stated that the development of the parcel did not leave room for street trees.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she is proud of the work of the EAC. Mr. Molteni thanked Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and stated that all the members enjoy the work.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that PA DEP will continue to request dam removals. Mr. Molteni stated that safety is a concern but that nothing is 100% safe.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Andrew Molteni to the Environmental Advisory Council.

Michael Fiucci (reappointment – Berks County Convention Center Authority)

Mr. Marmarou questioned attendance at the 7 am meetings. Mr. Fiucci stated that he does not have problems attending but noted that this is very early. He stated that Mr. Boscov never attends meetings. He stated that Mr. Adams has health issues and is currently unable to attend. He noted his disappointment that Mr. D'Amico was not reappointed by the Commissioners.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if a quorum is reached. Mr. Fiucci stated that it is. He stated that the City positions on the Authority are full.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Boscov would be reappointed. Mr. Fiucci stated that he is appointed by the Commissioners.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the impact of the Doubletree hotel. Mr. Fiucci expressed the belief that this would be a great asset to the arena and would increase the number of conventions held in Reading.

Mr. Marmarou described problems when handicapped patrons are dropped off at the arena and receive violations. Mr. Fiucci stated that the Authority has worked with the Police Department to address this issue. He noted the need for the Parking Authority to have more understanding for people who need handicap access during drop off and pick up before and after events.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that this situation may improve after the hotel parking lot is accessible by all.

Mr. Fiucci stated that he suggested some time ago that Penn St be one way between 4th and 9th Sts to help with traffic flow for events. He stated that Allentown uses this practice at their arena and it works very well.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Mr. Marmarou put his concerns in writing and discuss them with the Parking Authority executive director.

Mr. Sterner stated that Penn St is a state road and any changes would need to be approved by PennDOT. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Johnson would also need to be involved and a traffic study would need to be conducted.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that issues are magnified when trains go through at event times. She suggested waiting until after the hotel opens to address this issue as the hotel traffic is unknown. She stated that traffic flow will also be affected during the construction project on the Penn St Bridge and that people have bad directions when coming to events from areas outside Berks County.

Mr. Sterner questioned the direction of the Authority over the next five years. He questioned the financial state of the Authority. Mr. Fiucci stated that the Authority lost money when it bought the Royals. He stated that this purchase was made to ensure the team remained in Reading. He stated that now that the team has been sold the Authority is more financially sound. He stated that the team has recently become affiliated with the Flyers.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Allentown based their baseball stadium and hockey arena on the projects done in Reading.

Mr. Fiucci stated that the buildings will need some capital improvements in the near future. He stated that new lighting was recently installed.

Mr. Sterner questioned upcoming events. Mr. Fiucci stated that the new general manager is very aggressive and has many events scheduled.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Skate America would be returning. Mr. Fiucci stated that it would not be this season. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Nancy Kerrigan's Halloween skating show was recently announced.

Mr. Sterner questioned how the WWE shows sell. Mr. Fiucci stated that they were great at first but attendance is down. He stated that Berks County basketball events are growing and the Authority is trying to get District and State games scheduled.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Michael Fiucci to the Berks County Convention Center Authority.

Barbara Waller (appointment – Code and License Appeals Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Ms. Waller was interested in serving. Ms. Waller stated that she has some time and this would be a great opportunity. She stated that she is very active and has broad based experience.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Ms. Waller had any personal violations of City regulations. Ms. Waller stated that she received a QoL ticket for visible trash cans along the side of her home.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned Ms. Waller's opinion of the QoL ticket program. Ms. Waller stated that she paid the ticket and corrected the issue but that she does not feel the program is administered consistently.

Mr. Marmarou questioned when the ticket was received. Ms. Waller stated that it was five years ago. She explained that the back of her home is very dark and so she has hidden her trash cans with plantings so that they are no longer visible. She does feel that the program has merits.

Mr. Marmarou stated that a neighbor received a ticket when someone dumped a 50" TV in the alley behind her home.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she also received a ticket for an abandoned TV.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of Barbara Waller to the Code and License Appeals Board.

II. Other Business

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Comprehensive Plan meeting at Pendorf Park is on Monday, May 11. She stated that she will not be attending the Committee of the Whole meeting that afternoon but will be at the regular meeting.

Mr. Marmarou noted the locked gates at Baer Park not allowing access to the bleachers for spectators. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that Mr. Marmarou speak with Ms. Klahr.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Baer Park field house is not accessible due to a boxing program being held there. Ms. Katzenmoyer reminded all that the boxing program does not have a formal agreement with the City.

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

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC
Deputy City Clerk