



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

**Monday, April 18, 2016
Meeting Report**

Attendance: S. Marmarou, J. Slifko

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:07 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

I. Interviews

Lucy Cortez (appointment – Main Street Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Ms. Cortez is interested in serving on this Board. Ms. Cortez noted her desire to improve the downtown area and to attract more people downtown.

Mr. Slifko questioned how the Main Street Board differed from the Downtown Improvement District. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that the Main Street Board follows the PA DCED process and receives State funding. She stated that the Main Street Board and DID work well together as Mr. Broad oversees both agencies. Ms. Cortez stated that she also serves as a member of one of DID's committees. She noted her hope to bring some of her ideas to fruition.

Mr. Slifko questioned if Ms. Cortez was familiar with Mr. Poole. Ms. Cortez stated that she is and that they worked together on projects in the past. She expressed the belief that he is a great person.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Ms. Cortez's financial background will be helpful in her service on Main Street. Ms. Cortez stated that she also has experience with State banking regulations.

Mr. Slifko questioned Ms. Cortez's specific vision for downtown. Ms. Cortez expressed the belief that the upper floors of the businesses on Penn St must be occupied. She noted her hope to attract college students and young professionals downtown. She also noted the need for additional retail clothing stores.

Mr. Slifko agreed with these items and noted that they will stabilize the downtown and extend its hours. Ms. Cortez also suggested expanding the Main Street area and increasing funding.

Mr. Marmarou stated that occupation of the upper floors of the businesses has always been problematic. He described the 23 Greek-owned businesses on Penn St in the past. He stated that there were very diverse shops.

Ms. Cortez stated that there are 300-400 downtown workers looking for activities during their lunch break. She suggested opening an ice cream shop and a dress store. She stated that she owned a consignment shop in the past.

Mr. Slifko noted the vibrancy of Jim Thorpe. He said Jim Thorpe is very livable so this can be done.

Mr. Marmarou noted Ms. Cortez's excellent background. Mr. Slifko thanked Ms. Cortez for volunteering to serve. Ms. Cortez stated thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve the City.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the appointment of Lucy Cortez to the Main Street Board.

Sean Moretti (reappointment – Main Street Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Moretti wished to remain on the Board. Mr. Moretti stated that he has lived in the Reading area since the 1980's. He stated that his real estate business is located downtown and that he also manages 65 rental units in the City. He expressed the belief that the downtown is not served fully. He stated that has served on this Board since its inception and that he served on a DID Committee prior to that. He noted the need to improve the downtown.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Moretti is able to attend the Board meetings. Mr. Moretti stated that he has missed only two meetings during this term.

Mr. Slifko stated that Mr. Moretti is also a part of the group working on the UGI issue.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Moretti had any suggestions for Council. Mr. Moretti noted his agreement with a Trash Task Force. He stated that the current City service caps the number of bags which are picked up each week. He stated that private haulers take whatever is placed outside, including large items. He suggested that the City provide the same type of service.

Mr. Moretti also suggested that the Parking Enforcement Officer that accompanies the street sweeper should be walking on the sidewalk with a leaf blower instead of riding in the truck. He

stated that this would clear the sidewalks at the same time the streets are swept. Mr. Marmarou explained that trash and litter will clog the street sweepers. He suggested that the sidewalk debris be bagged. He also noted the need to keep the catch basins clean.

Mr. Moretti stated that the City has great opportunity. He expressed the belief that he can bridge relationships between the Mayor and the Board. He stated that Leadership Berks is currently interviewing downtown businesses to see how DID can serve them better. He stated that he has involved Dr. Peppen's group to work together with DID.

Mr. Slifko questioned if Mr. Moretti had specific projects or goals in mind. Mr. Moretti noted the need to better promote the area and its events into other neighborhoods. He noted the need for the businesses to be vibrant and suggested that chalk art be done on the sidewalks. He encouraged the safe redevelopment of the upper floors through flexible codes. He suggested that in addition to façade improvement funds, that there be funding available to rehabilitate the upper floors for use.

Mr. Slifko suggested that perhaps in addition to the HARB façade program, that a separate funding program be considered for rehabilitation of buildings.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Sean Moretti to the Main Street Board.

II. Review of Additional Council Liaisons

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed the list of boards, authorities and commissions which will allow ex-officio members. She expressed the belief that Council is involved in most of these BAC's already. Mr. Marmarou agreed and noted the need not to increase the burdens placed on Council members. Mr. Slifko suggested that not all BAC's need Council representation.

BAC's which would allow ex-officio membership where there isn't a Councilor serving:

- Animal Control Board – The Committee did not feel a liaison was necessary for this Board.
- Pagoda Foundation – The Committee did not feel this was necessary at this time as Ms. Reed and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz are very involved with the Foundation.
- Shade Tree Commission – This Commission meets on Monday and there is a time conflict.
- Human Relations Commission – The Committee feels there should be a liaison.
- Planning Commission – The Committee feels there should be a liaison.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that this will be added to an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:53 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC

