



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

Chair: Councilor Maureen T. Carney

Vice-Chair: Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge

Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

Councilor James B. Nash

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 3, 2019, 4 p.m.

Location: City Council Chambers

212 Main St., Northampton, Massachusetts

Present: Councilor Maureen T. Carney, Chair
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge, Vice Chair
Councilor James B. Nash

Absent: Councilor Dennis P. Bidwell

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 4:02 p.m., Councilor Carney called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilors Carney, LaBarge and Nash were present. Councilor Bidwell was absent with excuse, she said.

Councilor Carney announced that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There being no members of the public present, there was no public comment.

3. MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2019

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of May 6, 2019. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed with 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 absent (Councilor Bidwell).

Councilors decided to report individually on the group of candidates interviewed by each member and then to entertain recommendations on the entire batch as a group at the end.

Councilor LaBarge was assigned to interview Donna Park of 205 Prospect Street, a candidate for reappointment to the Council on Aging. She talked with Donna Park on the phone on May 13th, she reported. Ms. Park stated she has been active on the Council on Aging (COA) and is trying very hard to be supportive and helpful in any way she can. She works in the kitchen and volunteers and really enjoys it. As a COA member, she is very happy to be contributing to the community. The COA programs have been expanded, with more seminars and gatherings being offered. As an example, a seminar was put in place in May for seniors to learn all about Medicare 7 Essentials of Life. She is happy to continue serving.

Councilor LaBarge said she had a lengthy talk with Mason Maronn, the candidate for reappointment to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Maronn has served on the commission since July of 1976 and is trying for 50 years of service. He graduated with a wildlife degree and being on the Conservation Commission comes very close to using his knowledge. The commission believes in his knowledge and he is very happy to work with such knowledgeable members himself. He loves the community and wants to give back to it.

"Mason sure does want to be placed back on the Commission," she confirmed.

Councilor LaBarge had a very good conversation with Tom Dunphy, a candidate for reappointment to the Parks & Recreation Commission. He has been on parks and recreation since June of 2012 and has been chair since 2016. The commission is highly involved in the 4th of July fire-works, with parents and youth, and is getting involved in a new sport – pickle ball - half tennis and badminton, half ping pong. The schools are offering it as an elective, and the commission is working very closely with the School Department and fields. He enjoys being chair and feels they are all working together to make Northampton what it is.

Councilor LaBarge read an email from Linda Morley, a candidate for reappointment to the Community Preservation Commission. Her background is in the field of affordable housing, and she served as in-house council to Wayfinders, Inc. (formerly HAPHousing) for many years, through which she obtained a solid grounding in the issues of affordable housing, Morley shared. Community housing is one of the allowable uses of CPA money, she noted. Many of the housing proposals that come before the committee are quite complex and she thinks it is helpful to have someone with relevant expertise to help in the review of those proposals.

While she is informed about and committed to furthering community housing, she does not believe she is overly partisan, Ms. Morley wrote. In her personal life, she highly values open space and preservation, other allowable uses of CPA funds. Her husband is by profession a historical archeologist, so she has learned at the dinner table the importance of historic preservation. It has been a treat to participate in CPA activities and to learn from and appreciate other members, as well as the project proponents and their supporters. She said she would be pleased to continue on the committee.

Finally, Councilor LaBarge reported on her communication with Alex Jarrett of 8 High Street, a candidate for reappointment to the Housing Partnership. Mr. Jarrett wants to be reappointed because he has lived in cooperative housing most of his life and assisted others in purchasing multi-family properties cooperatively. He has developed facilitation and cooperative governance skills in his 15 years as a worker-owner at the Pedal People Cooperative.

Affordable housing is important to him. Many people he knows struggle to remain in Northampton due to rising rents and housing costs. He brings energy to empower people with skills and legal structures that will help them stay here and help them to organize to fight for their rights. He wants to create more opportunities for home ownership through cooperative housing and community land trusts and help the city pursue every option for affordability, including alternative tax strategies, incentives and programs to encourage landlords to rent units at lower than market rate, and zoning changes that permit lower cost housing.

Councilor Nash said he took a long trip and made phone calls from different states. While in Jersey, he spoke to Craig Della Penna, who is up for reappointment to the Historic Commission. Mr. Della Penna spoke of how he loves the make-up of development in the valley. He owns a bed & breakfast in Florence and loves the idea that he can be in a historic downtown and out in farm fields minutes later just walking. One of the Historic Commission's projects he is most proud of is its partnership with the Cooley Dickinson Hospital to recognize people who have gone above and beyond in historic preservation. These are things he wants to continue to work on.

Tess Perrone Poe is up for reappointment to the Planning Board and will be filling a Planning Board seat on the Housing Partnership, Nash advised. Ms. Perrone Poe is highly qualified for both positions. She currently serves as chair of the Planning Board and has been on the board for roughly a decade. She is really interested in serving on the Housing Partnership because her main interest around planning and development is to be involved around affordable housing. One of the things she appreciates is that the Planning Board is about setting limitations; often not about thinking creatively and big ideas. She is really looking forward to serving on the Housing Partnership to use that part of her training.

Patrick Boughan, another candidate for reappointment to the Housing Partnership, has been before the council several times. He is very thoughtful and dedicated and has been instrumental in a number of initiatives, including the study to barriers to affordable housing in Northampton. They had a long discussion about interesting things – sometimes little things like certain websites needing to be in Spanish as well as English. He is completely fascinated by this. Clearly, he's dedicated to this committee and this cause. (He spoke to Mr. Boughan in Illinois and Tess Perrone Poe in North Carolina, he said.)

Councilor Carney read Councilor Bidwell's report. (See attachment to original minutes.)

Councilor Bidwell reported that Terry Culhane informed him that he has withdrawn his application for reappointment to the Planning Board, Councilor Carney noted. She asked the administrative assistant to confirm whether Mr. Culhane still wished to be appointed with the Mayor's office. Members decided they would include Mr. Culhane in their recommendations in case he is still interested in appointment.

Councilor Carney said she served with Gordon Shaw, who is being recommended for reappointment to the Housing Partnership, when she served on the Housing Partnership. Mr. Shaw has been on the board at least as long as she was. From her experience, he is very committed, very active and certainly an important representative because he is an attorney with legal aid and specializes in housing law.

Michael Quinlan, a candidate for reappointment to the Whiting Street Fund, has enjoyed his two years on the committee, Councilor Carney related. He finds Mr. Street's philanthropy very admirable and has been honored to work with other members in seeing that the money is well-used. He has a passion for working with the less fortunate and so thought it was a good fit for him. She knows Denny Nolan, candidate for reappointment to the Board of Assessors, as a long-time realtor. He brings that experience to the Assessors, whose job is to assess the value of properties. She thought his experience warranted a positive recommendation, she shared.

Councilor Carney said she had known Sara Northrup for decades in the city before she became a construction supervisor and engineer. She brings incredible experience to the Zoning Board of Appeals, which is important since it is often involved in controversial decisions.

Karen Bellavance Grace has been a very active member of the Human Rights Commission since her initial appointment, Councilor Carney said. She is a long-time city employee and activist.

David Cronin is being recommended for reappointment to the Parks & Recreation Commission, she continued. He is still very interested in serving. He is a life-long resident and has been very involved in sports as a coach and adult leagues as a participant. The commission continues to provide first-class service to Northampton and he looks forward to continuing to serve.

Councilor Carney said she would read the list of names and accept a positive recommendation. She read the names as listed on the agenda, omitting the names of candidates whose names had been removed.

4. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 19.065 Appointments to Various Committees - referred by City Council 5/2/2019

Arts Council

Courtney Hummel, 320 Elm St., #2R, Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Board of Assessors

Denny Nolan, 319 Elm St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Board of Health

Joanne Levin, 40 Columbus Ave., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Council on Aging

Donna Park, 205 Prospect St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Benjamin Capistrant, 48 High St., Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Community Preservation Committee

Brian Adams, 36 Arlington St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Conservation Commission

C. Mason Maronn, 18 Ellington Rd., Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Randy Krotowski, 171 Emerson Way, Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Disability Commission

Emma Cornwell, 35 Holyoke St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Historical Commission

Martha Lyon, 313 Elm St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Craig Della Penna, 62 Chestnut St.

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Housing Partnership

Tess Perrone Poe, 32 Masonic St., #4, Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

To fill a vacancy as representative from the Planning Board

Human Rights Commission

Karen Bellavance-Grace, 19 Church St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Parks & Recreation Committee

Thomas Dunphy, 6 Chesterfield Rd., Leeds

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

David Cronin, 103 Pioneer Knolls Ext., Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Planning Board

Terry Culhane, 5 Stearns Court, Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Christa Grenat, 492 Elm St., Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Zoning Board of Appeals

Elizabeth Silver, 67 Willow St., Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Sara Northrup, 147 Hinckley St., Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward appointment of the candidates as a group with a positive recommendation to their respective commissions and committees. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed with 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 absent (Councilor Bidwell).

B. 19.079 Appointments to Various Committees - referred by City Council 5/16/2019

Community Preservation Committee

Linda Morley, 244 Prospect Street, Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Housing Partnership

Patrick Boughan, 95 Straw Avenue, Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Alexander Jarrett, 8 High Street, Florence

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Gordon Shaw, 582 Haydenville Road, Leeds

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Planning Board

Tess Perrone Poe, 32 Masonic St., #4, Northampton

Term: July 2019-June 2022

Reappointment

Whiting Street Fund Committee

Michael Quinlan, 712 Bridge Road, Northampton

Term: July 2019- June 2022

Reappointment

Councilor Carney read the names of the next group of appointees and offered to entertain a motion to forward their appointments as a group with a positive recommendation to their respective committees and commissions. Councilor LaBarge so moved. Councilor Nash seconded. The motion passed 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 absent (Councilor Bidwell).

Councilor Carney commented favorably on the 'incredible qualifications' of the volunteers.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

6. **Adjourn**

Upon motion made by Councilor LaBarge and seconded by Councilor Nash, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Prepared By:

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