



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

**Monday, July 20, 2015
Meeting Report**

Attendance: D. Sterner, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

Others Attending: B. Rivera, F. Denbowski

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz.

I. Interviews

Steven Symons (appointment - RAWA)

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned why Mr. Symons is interested in serving on this board. Mr. Symons stated that he currently sits on the Plumbing Board and has served there for the past five years. He stated that because he sits on the Plumbing Board, he has experience with how boards conduct business. He stated that he was a resident of the City for many years and expressed the belief that no one who has served on the RAWA Board has had a plumbing background. He believes that his skills as a plumber will be beneficial to the RAWA Board.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Symons encountered any situations while serving on the Plumbing Board involving the tampering of meters. Mr. Symons stated that he has not had any experience with that and he credited Mr. Montgomery, the City's Plumbing Inspector, for keeping those issues from getting to the Plumbing Board.

Mr. Symons stated that most of the business of the Plumbing Board consists of homeowners and tenants trying to do their own work without following the code and obtaining permits.

Mr. Symons stated that he has been involved in the plumbing trade for 35 years and was formerly a UGI supervisor when he retired with 20 years of service. He expressed the belief that he would be an asset to the RAWA Board.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Symons's understanding of RAWA is and how it operates. Mr. Symons stated that he understands RAWA to be their own entity, operating on their own.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that though they operate on their own, the water system is still owned by the City and must comply with the Authorities Act.

Mr. Sterner questioned if Mr. Symons had an opinion about the recent discussion regarding the billing issues at RAWA. Mr. Symons stated that he believes RAWA should focus on their line of expertise which is water; it is what RAWA does well.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Symons believes RAWA does exceptionally well. Mr. Symons stated that his dealings with RAWA have always been positive.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Symons believes RAWA could improve. Mr. Symons stated that it wouldn't be fair to answer that question not fully knowing all the pertinent information.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned if Mr. Symons would be available to attend RAWA meetings. Mr. Symons responded that his commitments would not interfere with attending meetings as necessary.

Mr. Sterner and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Symons for his time and his interest in serving on the RAWA board.

William Harst (reappointment – Zoning Hearing Board)

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how long Mr. Harst has been a member of this Board. Mr. Harst stated that this would be his second term.

Mr. Sterner questioned why he is interested in a second term. Mr. Harst stated that he really enjoys serving on the Board and he was also a former educator.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what Mr. Harst thought works well with the Zoning Hearing Board and what could use improvement. Mr. Harst stated that Mr. Peiffer is a terrific administrator and that Mr. Price is a great solicitor for the Board. He stated that new codes are being revised to replace those that are outdated which he views as a positive. He stated that the City needs to bring in more businesses to improve economic conditions. He stated that parking in the City could also be improved. He stated that though there have been improvements made in center City surrounding the Santander Arena and Performing Arts Center, there are other areas in the City that are extremely congested and that parking is a big enough issue to deter outsiders from visiting the City.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the Zoning Hearing Board has contacted the Parking Authority. Mr. Harst stated that there has been no contact with the Parking Authority; however, he agreed with the need for conversation. He also stated that contact should be made with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Harst stated that another problem is that residents make changes to their properties without first seeking approval. The property owners then look to have the changes approved after the work has been performed.

Mr. Sterner questioned if the Board then denies approval. Mr. Harst stated that it depends how beneficial the modifications may be to the City in general but the person seeking approval would still have to pay a penalty for not going through the process properly.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Harst.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of William Harst to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Heminton Urena (reappointment – Blighted Property Review Committee)

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this Committee is of special interest to her and asked Mr. Urena why he would like to be reappointed. Mr. Urena stated that he has been on the Committee since its inception and has seen many positive changes throughout that time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned what works well with the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC) and what could be improved. Mr. Urena stated that at the start of the Committee's work everything was extremely time consuming and, fortunately, there have been improvements in that area. He stated that tracking required modifications/changes that need to be made to each property on the blighted list would be helpful.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked Mr. Urena.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Heminton Urena to the Blighted Property Review Committee.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Bea Rivera,
Legislative Aide