



Committee on City Services and the Northampton City Council

Committee Members:

*Chair: Councilor Karen Foster
Vice-Chair: Councilor Jamila Gore
Councilor Marianne LaBarge
Councilor Garrick Perry*

Meeting Minutes

Date: March 7, 2022
Virtual Meeting

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 4:01 p.m., Chair Karen Foster called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilor Foster, Councilor Jamila Gore, Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge and Councilor Garrick Perry were present. Also present was Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING

Councilor Foster announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ezekiel Baskin asked if it would be possible for members of the public to ask questions of Arts & Culture Department Director Brian Foote.

Councilor Foster informed those present that Director Foote injured his back and, unfortunately, was not able to attend today's meeting. As chair of the committee, her intention would be to allow questions and to facilitate a back and forth if he were present, she confirmed.

4. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE - ARTS & CULTURE DEPARTMENT

Deferred to next meeting.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A. Minutes of 12/2021 and 2/7/2022 Organizational Meeting

Members decided to defer approval of the minutes to the next meeting since they had not been uploaded.

6. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 22.028 Appointment to the Board of Health, referred to City Services - 2/3/2022 Board of Health

Dallas Ducar, 330 Elm Street, Northampton

Term: January 2022-June 2025

To fill a vacancy

Councilor Gore said she talked to Dallas. They had a great conversation in which Dallas told her she sees public service as a sacred duty and a meaningful way to effect change. She thinks about being on the Board of Health (BOH) as an opportunity to gain access and trust and think about all stakeholders. She's always thinking about access and messaging and has a passion for local government. She is on the faculty of Columbia University where she taught Gender-Affirming Healthcare and Psychiatry and is on the faculty at the University of Virginia (UVA). She is 29, so she's young and brings a young perspective to the BOH. She is the founder and executive director of Transhealth of Northampton and has over 1,000 patients. She is on many different boards, including the LGBTQ Federal Policy Roundtable, the LGBTQ Primary Care Alliance and GLAD, among others.

Dallas is more than qualified to be on the BOH and she thinks she would be a great asset, Councilor Gore said. **She moved a positive recommendation. Councilor LaBarge seconded.**

She knows filling the vacancy on the BOH has been a real priority since currently it has only four members and this has made votes challenging, Councilor Foster noted. **The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

B. 22.029 Appointment to Arts Council and Human Rights Commission, referred by City Council - 2/17/2022

Arts Council

Pete Olsen, 380 South Street, Northampton

Term: February 2022-June 2025

To fill a vacancy

Human Rights Commission

Chelsea Sunday Kline, 42 Cherry Street, Northampton

Term: February 2002-June 2025

To fill a vacancy

Councilor LaBarge read an email from Peter Olsen in which he shared the details of their recent conversation. Among other things, he and Councilor LaBarge discussed some of the recent issues with the Arts Council and the effect it had on Northampton, he recounted. Mr. Olsen thought the recent issue should have been turned into a teaching and healing moment for the whole community. Had he been on the council, he might have suggested a forum where people could talk about their experiences and have a dialogue about the complicated issue of racism. He thought shutting down the show shut down discussion and made it seem like racism and other complicated issues should be swept under the rug. To him, the point of art is to express ideas and to discuss those ideas openly. He wants to experience the arts in Noho the way he did in other cities where he was more connected to the arts scene. He'd like

to encourage up-and-coming artists and support a vibrant art scene and help non-artists experience art in a fun and educational way. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of New Mexico and has shown his work at various Arts Nights Out in Northampton as well as a few other places.

Councilor LaBarge moved to forward the appointment of Peter Olsen to the Arts Council to the full City Council with a positive recommendation. Councilor Perry seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

CHELSEA SUNDAY KLINE

Councilor Perry said he had the pleasure of talking to Chelsea Sunday Kline. It turns out they hang out in concentric circles but really haven't had chance to have a deep conversation. She is well-qualified; she has worked for reproductive rights and social justice for years, is a professional writer and contributes a column to the Daily Hampshire Gazette. She is very interested in this work and says it is a natural progression of other things she's done. She happens to know a number of the other members and feels it would be a good fit personality wise. They talked about some ideas she had for increasing the impact and visibility of the commission. After a period where everyone's focus has been primarily on the pandemic, she very much looks forward to pushing this to the forefront.

Councilor Perry moved to positively recommend Chelsea Sunday Kline to the Human Rights Commission. Councilor LaBarge seconded.

Councilor LaBarge said she knows Chelsea Sunday Kline very well and thinks she will be huge asset to the Human Rights Commission. **The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.**

7. SET MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2022 – 2023

Members discussed the proposed schedule. They decided to plan on taking the month of July off unless there are pressing appointments. Mrs. Krutzler said she would adjust the schedule to indicate this.

Councilor LaBarge said she won't be able to meet in August but noted that only three members are needed for a quorum, so members decided to keep the August meeting.

Councilor Perry moved to approve the 2022 – 2023 meeting schedule. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion of Process for Appointments

For the benefit of the newer members, Councilor Foster briefly reviewed the appointment process. People interested in serving apply through the mayor's office. The mayor's office interviews and vets candidates and makes recommendations for appointment, which are then forwarded to the City Council for referral to the City Services Committee. City Services Committee members have historically made recommendations by assigning individual councilors to interview those applying for the first time. They don't typically interview reappointments.

Members discussed. Councilor LaBarge indicated she is satisfied with the existing process. Councilor Gore said she was under the impression that the mayor makes a recommendation and that the committee's interview process is mainly a formality to make sure there are no red flags.

The committee serves as a check and balance to mayoral appointments, Councilor Foster clarified.

Councilor LaBarge said the only time in recent memory that a councilor voted against a mayoral recommendation was when one councilor voted against appointing an applicant to the Planning Board. The applicant was still approved by a split vote. That is the first time she ever saw that, she said.

Councilor Foster recognized Ezekiel Baskin. They asked how many applicants the mayor's office gets and whether some are rejected at the mayoral level and don't move forward or if people aren't applying.

Councilor Foster said she doesn't know but knows that there are an unusually high number of applicants. There are 128 opportunities to serve and 28 vacancies on city boards.

Ezekiel also asked if a mayoral appointment had ever been turned down.

Councilor Foster said she has not seen it happen, but it is within the committee's authority not to approve a mayoral appointment.

FACIAL SURVEILLANCE ORDINANCE

Councilor Foster reminded members that the City Council is revisiting the ordinance on facial recognition technology and that this ordinance was referred to City Services. She said she would like to hear from committee members how they would like to approach looking at this ordinance.

Councilor Perry noted that it is a big topic and something he thinks will have a learning curve. He proposed the idea of a joint meeting. There are likely to be some overlapping questions and they will need to familiarize themselves with the technology, so it might behoove them to combine forces.

Councilor LaBarge said she liked the idea of a joint meeting, and Councilor Gore agreed. She said she thought it would also be good to hear from an expert on facial recognition technology and surveillance.

Councilor Foster asked if members felt comfortable with the two committee chairs getting together and working out the details, and they said yes. She thinks it might be helpful to hear from more than one expert. If councilors have constituents or sources they think would be helpful in delving into this topic, she asked them to email them to the administrative assistant.

Councilor Foster asked the administrative assistant to reschedule with Brian Foote for the April meeting.

9. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Councilor Perry moved to adjourn. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion carried 4:0 by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.

Prepared By:

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