



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: July 25, 2022

Time: 5 p.m.

Via Teleconference

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

At 5:02 p.m., Councilor Karen Foster, Chair, called the meeting to order. On a roll call, Councilor Foster, Councilor Jamila Gore, Vice Chair and Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge were present. Councilor Garrick Perry was absent. Also present were prospective Senior Services Director Appointee Kimberly Park and Council President Jim Nash.

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

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A. Minutes of 6/13/2022 City Services Committee Meeting

Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of June 13, 2022. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

4. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

A. 22.142 Appointment of Kim Park as Senior Services Director, referred to City Services Committee - 7/14/2022

Councilor Foster took the appointment of Kim Park out of order as Ms. Park and Councilor Nash were present.

Councilor Foster read aloud a letter from Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra recommending Park's appointment.

Ms. Park thanked councilors for their time tonight. She is absolutely honored to be considered for the position of Director of Senior Services here in Northampton, she shared. Northampton is near and dear to her heart and, as they heard in the letter from the Mayor, she has 16 years of experience working with older adults in a variety of settings.

After the challenge of the worldwide pandemic, what she's looking forward to most is working to rebuild a welcoming environment at the Northampton Senior Center where older adults in the city and neighboring towns can come and participate in engaging programs. She referred to the amazing staff already in place, reiterating that she is honored to have the opportunity to join them.

Councilor Nash commented that, as a member of the hiring committee, he felt fortunate to be able to choose from a well-qualified pool of applicants and three terrific finalists. Hiring committee members were especially happy to see Kim put her name forward because of her familiarity with the senior center from working there for a number of years. She well-knows the particular concerns and issues among staff and patrons and will be ready to facilitate any healing needed as a result of past controversies and help them find a successful way forward, he suggested.

Ms. Park responded to questions and comments from councilors. She cited supporting existing staff, creating a welcoming environment and doing a lot of listening to peoples' past experiences as priorities right out of the gate. She also mentioned her hope of bringing and contributing positive energy to the department and the importance of collaboration with other city departments, agencies and community groups such as Northampton Neighbors.

Councilor LaBarge shared her experience of having received complaints from some residents after the City Services Committee unanimously confirmed Mayor Narkewicz's appointment of Marie Westburg as senior services director in 2018. She expressed enthusiasm to hear Ms. Park talk about her desire to make people feel welcomed again, "because they did not feel welcomed at all, at all."

"I think you might have a good beginning at the senior center when they're gonna know that you are saying you want them to feel welcomed," she observed.

With regard to the fact that some of her experience has been in the private rather than public sector, the heart of what she has done in each setting is build relationships, Ms. Park stressed. This has been done by showing respect, listening and making an effort to recognize the gifts each and every individual offers to the community.

Councilors offered comments and asked additional questions. In response to the question of how she intends to engage seniors, including those who used to attend and those who are underserved, Ms. Park said she definitely intends to schedule listening sessions and invite residents to share their experiences and perspectives and what they would like to see in terms of programs and services. She thinks the director's visibility within the senior center on a daily basis is critical, she added. The office, as they know, is kind of tucked down a back hallway and it is important that she not stay there. She expressed confidence that the staff will be able to assist her by providing some history of who's no longer attending and who may be missing.

After additional appreciative comments, **Councilor LaBarge moved to positively recommend the appointment of Kim Park as Senior Services Director to the full City Council. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed unanimously 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.**

B. 22.136 Appointments to Various Committees, referred to City Services - 6/16/2022
Arts Council

Eamonn Edge, 2 Conz Street, #86, Northampton

Term: July 2022-June 2024

Reappointment

Board of Registrars

Robert Boulrice, 127 Hinckley Street, Florence

Term: April 2022-March 2025

To fill a vacancy

Councilor Gore moved to positively recommend the reappointment of Eamonn Edge to the Arts Council. **Councilor LaBarge** seconded. The motion passed unanimously 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

Councilor Foster noted that, due to an oversight and not immediately recognizing that he was a new appointment, she did not assign a councilor to interview Bob Boulrice.

Members discussed that they know Mr. Boulrice well because of his recent work on ranked choice voting and on the Charter Review Committee and agreed they would be comfortable making a recommendation on his appointment without a formal interview.

Councilor Gore moved to positively recommend the appointment of Robert Boulrice to the Board of Registrars to the full City Council. **Councilor LaBarge** seconded. The motion passed unanimously 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

C. 22.144 Appointments to Various Committees, referred to City Services - 7/14/2022 Historical Commission

Dylan Gaffney, 23 Marshall Street, Northampton

Term: July 2022- June 2025

Reappointment

Parks and Recreation Commission

Jeffrey Dawson, 539 Westhampton Road, Florence

Term: July 2022- June 2025

To fill a vacancy

Planning Board

Janna White, 28 Hancock Street, Northampton

Term: July 2022-June 2025

Reappointment

Zoning Board of Appeals

Elizabeth Silver, 67 Willow Street, Florence

Term: July 2022- June 2025

Reappointment

Councilor LaBarge reported on her interview with Jeffrey Dawson, the only candidate of the four who was being appointed for the first time.

Mr. Dawson grew up participating in and benefitting from the recreation department's many programs and facilities and has fond memories of summer camp at Look Park, playing youth sports and enjoying the different parks and playgrounds throughout the city, Councilor LaBarge recounted. He says he now gets to see his children benefitting from and enjoying many of the same programs as they grow up.

One of the things he will bring to the commission is his own experience with the recreation department throughout the years. He was a camper, an athlete, a CIT for the summer camp at Look Park and assisted his brother as a counselor with his lacrosse skills and drills camp. He has coached Girls' Youth Lacrosse and is the parent of two campers and athletes.

Professionally, he works as an ecological designer for a local landscape architecture firm, where he has worked on a diversity of projects throughout New England and New York and engaged with various stakeholder groups to create places for people to enjoy and recreate. He also has worked on projects designing parks of all sizes, streetscapes, accessible playgrounds and trails all through a collaborative, inclusive approach.

He has worked on projects of varying scales and all phases of design from master planning to construction oversight and understands what it takes to find funding for a project. He is very passionate about the Parks and Recreation Department's important mission and knows firsthand the positive impact it can have. The department's programs and facilities provide opportunities for all of Northampton's residents and reach beyond to others who visit Northampton to enjoy its parks and facilities, play on its sports fields and explore its trails.

His own personal and professional experience gives him a unique perspective to share with the commission. He envisions his role to be a critical thinker and advocate to make sure the city's offerings and facilities are funded, maintained and managed as they should be to provide a diverse set of

opportunities for residents. He is excited for the opportunity to serve the community and help support and strengthen the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Councilor LaBarge moved to positively recommend the appointment of Jeffrey Dawson to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

As the other three appointments are reappointments (the appointment of Dylan Gaffney to the Historical Commission, the appointment of Janna White to the Planning Board and the appointment of Elizabeth Silver to the Zoning Board of Appeals), Councilor Foster suggested taking them as a group.

Councilor LaBarge moved to positively recommend the three reappointments as a group. Councilor Gore seconded. The motion passed 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

There will be no regular meeting in August, and the committee's next regular meeting falls on Labor Day, so it has been rescheduled to Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 5 p.m., Councilor Foster advised. This will be the next chance for committee members to revisit the ordinance on facial recognition technology with folks from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Councilor Dwight. They may also have a recommendation on a new planning director to consider at that meeting, she noted.

6. **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, **Councilor Gore moved to adjourn. Councilor LaBarge seconded. The motion carried 3:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent. The meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.**

Prepared By:

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