



MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

City of Northampton

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Mayor Sciarra Appoints Carolyn Misch as Director of Planning and Sustainability

NORTHAMPTON – Today, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra announced that she has appointed Carolyn Misch, the current Interim Director of Planning and Sustainability, to fill the role permanently. The opening was created in June by the retirement of former Director Wayne Feiden after serving Northampton for 33 years.

Recognizing that the position of Planning Director is of critical importance to the city's future, Mayor Sciarra conducted a national search for qualified candidates. Subsequently, she convened an advisory screening team composed of city councilors, city department heads, a neighboring city's Planning Director, and community members with experience working with planning, sustainability and disability issues. After reviewing all applicants and conducting interviews, the advisory team unanimously recommended a single candidate - Carolyn Misch - to the Mayor.

"Carolyn was the best and most qualified candidate by far," shared Mayor Sciarra. "She has the vision, the experience, and the temperament to guide Northampton as it implements its progressive planning agenda and as we work to meet our climate change goals. I look forward to working with her to continue the important work of the Office of Planning and Sustainability."

The mission of the Office of Planning and Sustainability is to identify and implement a community vision for a sustainable and resilient future with a healthy and equitable economy and environment. Nearly every facet of the Northampton government interfaces with the department, including with work on climate resilience, adaptation, regeneration, and mitigation; open-space planning, conservation, and agriculture; mobility issues such as bicycle and pedestrian and transit policies; equity in housing, community development, economic prosperity and accessibility; and placemaking design, design of the built environment, and historic and community preservation.

"I am honored to serve my home community as Director of Planning and Sustainability," said Carolyn Misch. "For the last 22 years I have enjoyed working with community members and representatives to develop and implement a variety of data-driven plans and projects through a comprehensive approach. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead this department as we continue this work to implement the community's vision for a sustainable future."

Misch brings nearly 30 years of experience in the planning field, working at the state, regional and local levels to implement community goals, improve quality of life, and address the impacts of climate change. She has spent the last 22 years working for the City of Northampton, as the Senior Planner and Permits Manager, and then as the Assistant Director of Planning and Sustainability since 2020. Before that, she worked as a planner in the cities of Raleigh and Cary, North Carolina, and the State of Colorado. Carolyn has a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of Rochester, New York, and a Masters of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado, Denver, with a concentration in Economic Development. Carolyn is an American Institute of Certified Planners member, and was named Professional Planner of the year (2014) by the American Planning Association, Massachusetts Chapter.

Mayor Sciarra will submit her appointment to the City Council for confirmation in accordance with the Northampton Charter, Article 2, § 2-10, and it will appear on the agenda for the City Council meeting on August 18, 2022, for a required committee referral. Ms. Misch is currently the interim director of Planning and Sustainability and will continue in that role as she awaits final confirmation by the City Council.

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at 413-587-1249 or mayor@northamptonma.gov.