

March 14, 2016, Vacancy Board Meeting
Minutes

The duly advertised meeting of the Vacancy Board was held on March 14, 2016, in the Clarion Free Library. The meeting was to be held in the Assembly Room; but due to a conflict with another group being located there, it was posted on the door and moved to the Literacy Room. Vacancy Board Chairman Tim Magrini called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were Mr. Zerfoss, Ms. Roberts, Dr. Sanders Dédé, Mr. Aaron, Mr. Noto, President Lapinto, and Chairman Magrini. Secretary Hall, Solicitor Marshall, and Ms. LaVan were also present.

Chairman Magrini introduced himself to everyone and announced he will be conducting this meeting along with the Councilmembers that are present. The procedure for this meeting is as follows: Each candidate that the Borough received a letter of interest and resume from for the position of Councilperson will get an opportunity to express to the members of the Vacancy Board their reasons for wanting to become a member of Council. Each candidate will get 3 minutes to speak to the Vacancy Board members about their reasons and give information that they believe is relevant for the members of the Vacancy Board to know. Chairman Magrini stated this is timed and will be limited to 3 minutes as mentioned earlier. The Vacancy Board Members will then have an opportunity to ask any follow-up questions to the candidate before the Board moves on to the next candidate. The order of the candidates will be as follows: first, Keaton MacBeth; second, Karen Grosch; and, third, Kristin Clark. After this is completed, Chairman Magrini will take nominations or a nomination from the Vacancy Board Members. Hearing no questions, Chairman Magrini asked Mr. MacBeth to begin.

Mr. Keaton MacBeth informed everyone he has lived in the Borough since 2011, rented an apartment on East Eighth Avenue, and owns property in the Borough since June 2015. The reason for submitting his name in consideration for this position, is because he has covered Clarion Borough meetings as a writer for the paper and has learned a lot. As someone that lives in the Borough and someone that is young, Mr. MacBeth feels that he can help to make the Borough a place where young people like himself want to move, live, and raise a family. Walking and driving around town, he sees people in the Borough. Clarion Borough needs to get more younger people who want to live here, work here, and raise a family here. Mr. MacBeth commented young people like himself benefit the town, the school districts, and may send their kids to college here later. Being 25, Mr. MacBeth feels that he can bring his younger ideas/perspectives on certain issues and stated he doesn't have anything more to add.

Chairman Magrini asked for any questions for Mr. MacBeth?

Mr. Noto inquired what are some of the issues that Mr. MacBeth sees as a young man facing the Borough now?

Mr. MacBeth stated housing is a big one. There are a lot of college and senior citizen housing, which is not a bad thing, but people aren't building small houses for a young family to start out

in. This is something the Borough could use. As a person drives around and sees all the for sale or for rent signs, most of them are college housing, which is obvious since this is a college town. But for a young couple that just got married, Mr. MacBeth feels they need some place to live and they can't rent an apartment that a bunch of college kids have had parties in. It would be nice to see more housing for someone like himself in the Borough or just a landlord that is willing to fix up their property and rent it to not just a college student but a young family.

Dr. Sanders Dédé questioned what Mr. MacBeth thinks would be something immediate Council could do to improve the community?

Mr. MacBeth stated a clean-up of the town. As you drive around town and up Fifth Avenue, it's evident where college housing is and sometimes the properties are not maintained. If you can encourage a homeowner/landlord to get the brush and the dead trees away from their house or to take a little pride in their property, it would make the community look appealing. Mr. Macbeth feels this is the first step.

After checking with the Solicitor, President Lapinto disclosed Mr. MacBeth works at C & A Trees, which her son and daughter-in-law own.

Chairman Magrini asked if she will abstain?

President Lapinto doesn't believe she has to abstain?

Solicitor Marshall understands it's not an actual conflict.

Hearing no further questions, Chairman Magrini called on Karen Grosch.

Ms. Karen Grosch thanked everyone for considering her letter of interest to serve as a representative for Council. When she returned to the Clarion area 38 years ago, Ms. Grosch stated the community of Clarion was vibrant, because that was the era of C & K Coal, Ancient Sun, Glacier Minerals, Owens-Illinois, Sealy, and Crawford Furniture. There have been a lot of changes within the community; some good, some not so good. Ms. Grosch believes in the residents and the leaders of Clarion Borough and feels she would make a good contribution as a representative on Borough Council by helping to identify a positive, progressive vision for the Borough. Ms. Grosch looks forward to working with each Councilmember to make that vision possible. Volunteering for many community events throughout her tenure in the community, Ms. Grosch enjoyed every minute of it. Currently, she is the secretary for the Clarion Borough Planning Committee. Ms. Grosch again thanked the members for consideration.

Chairman Magrini asked for any questions for Ms. Grosch?

Dr. Sanders Dédé asked what is one thing Ms. Grosch would do to improve the community?

To improve the community right now, Ms. Grosch thinks it's necessary to work cohesively with all the organizations, both downtown and county-wide, to really promote the area and Clarion as a whole to encourage, like Mr. MacBeth stated, young people to come, stay, and settle here.

Mr. Noto asked what Ms. Grosch sees as the biggest challenge for the Borough of Clarion?

Ms. Grosch sees the loss of employment opportunities as the biggest challenge for Clarion right now, which has had a severe impact on the community and county as a whole. Again, Ms. Grosch feels Clarion Borough and all borough councils in the county need to work collectively for the enrichment of the entire county not just this community.

Just so there's full disclosure, Solicitor Marshall informed Council Ms. Grosch works for him part-time. She worked full-time for him for quite a number of years, then retired, and came back about 6 months ago on a part-time basis.

Mr. Noto asked if that would continue if she were on Council?

Solicitor Marshall expects so but noted she would have to abstain on any votes relating to him as to Solicitor. But Ms. Grosch would be a Councilmember that would be able to ask questions and instruct him just as all Councilmembers do. Solicitor Marshall doesn't think it would be a distraction, but Council would have to decide that.

Chairman Magrini called on Kristin Clark.

Ms. Kristin Clark thanked everyone for their time and having a special meeting. There are two reasons why she's interested in being appointed to Council. First, Ms. Clark loves the Clarion area and choose to move back here as an adult and has been here almost 8 years now. She grew up on Fourth Avenue but on the township side. Throughout her career and when in graduate school, Ms. Clark always studied about local government and worked for local government. Truthfully, it's what she wanted to do for her career. As her resume indicated for many years, Ms. Clark stated she worked in local governments in State College Borough, as manager in Harris Township (similar in size of Clarion), and in Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority. Local government impacts everyone most every day in his/her lives, whether it is a fire at their house, needing police services, or simply walking out on their street/sidewalk; it's local government that's providing those services. It has a huge impact on people's lives. While in Newport News, Ms. Clark worked with community development block grant money and homeownership funds for the redevelopment and housing authority and feels she has a lot of knowledge that would benefit the Borough. She has a lot of resources and can reach out to former coworkers or managers. She earned many large grants from various organizations and received a large check in Virginia from the governor and in Pennsylvania from Governor Ed Rendell. Ms. Clark offers her knowledge and feels it is a benefit to the Borough. Currently, she serves as a human resource director of a non-profit company, where she does union contract negotiations. Part of the job every day is listening to all sides of an issue,

knowing what the rules are, and determining the best way to deal with that issue and in a fair and consistent manner. Ms. Clark thanked everyone for consideration.

Chairman Magrini asked for any questions for Ms. Clark.

Dr. Sanders Dédé asked what the one thing that Ms. Clark would do to improve the community?

Ms. Clark thinks one of the things that needs done is to focus on what is great about Clarion. Some of the issues Clarion Borough is facing is a loss of people coming here and owning homes. There are a lot of homes for sale; and instead of people owning them, they are turned into rentals. Obviously, Council can't totally control this issue but zoning needs looked at to see what those properties are being allowed to be used for. Ms. Clark feels promoting and maintaining recreational facilities that are available is very important for families today when they are looking for a place to live. Also, it's important to provide public safety and enforcing the codes and the ordinances that are on the books to keep the town looking nice.

Hearing no other questions, Chairman Magrini asked the Board for a nomination.

Ms. Roberts nominated Kristin Clark, which was seconded by Mr. Noto.

Chairman Magrini asked for discussion.

Dr. Sanders Dédé asked if this could be a silent vote?

Solicitor Marshall reported no.

Dr. Sanders Dédé verified it has to be open?

Solicitor Marshall stated yes.

President Lapinto asked if someone else can be nominated?

Mr. Zerfoss asked if there can be more than one at the same time or how it works?

Mr. Noto questioned how this is done; because if it's just one nomination and the vote is taken, it may be done without considering anyone else.

If somebody nominated is not his/her candidate, Solicitor Marshall commented then he/she would want to vote no. If the person doesn't receive a majority of the vote of Council, then the nomination fails.

But if they do, Mr. Noto confirmed it's done.

Solicitor Marshall agreed.

Personally, Chairman Magrini understands he's not on Council but agrees with Mr. Noto that there should be more nominations than just one.

Mr. Noto added it's not really a choice if Council is picking one person.

Solicitor Marshall pointed out it's not like Council is electing internal members, such as the President. In this instance, Council is voting as a Vacancy Board to elect a member to Borough Council so he/she have to act by a majority vote.

Mr. Noto commented there's no other mechanism to do it?

If each of the candidates were nominated, Solicitor Marshall reported it could end up 3, 2, 2, and there is not a majority vote to put somebody in.

Mr. Aaron looks at it as each member would vote yes for who he/she wants and no if that is not the one person that he/she would have chosen throughout this process.

Solicitor Marshall stated if the nomination doesn't get the four votes then there are additional nominations or it will pass to the judge to make that decision if one can't be reached.

Secretary Hall asked Solicitor Marshall if Chairman Magrini votes just like the Councilmembers do?

Solicitor Marshall stated absolutely.

Mr. Zerfoss noted Chairman Magrini doesn't break a tie; he's acting as the seventh Councilmember.

Solicitor Marshall reported he is the seventh member of the Vacancy Board. If you would have had a full Council and there was another position with a vacancy, Chairman Magrini would have sat with the rest of Council, meaning a total of eight people on the Vacancy Board. In this instance, it is a member of Council so the Vacancy Board is composed of Council plus the one member of the community, which Council appointed at the beginning of the year, which was Chairman Magrini. Solicitor Marshall stressed there is no Mayor-like person to break any ties.

Chairman Magrini stated there is a nomination on the floor and asked for a roll call vote.

The motion failed after the following roll call vote: Mr. Zerfoss, no; Ms. Roberts, yes; Dr. Sanders Dédé, no; Mr. Aaron, no; President Lapinto, no; Chairman Magrini, no; and Mr. Noto, yes.

Solicitor Marshall stated the motion failed and now it is open to any additional nominations?

Mr. Aaron made a motion to appoint Keaton MacBeth as the seventh Councilmember. Ms. Lapinto seconded the motion.

Hearing no discussion, the motion carried after the following roll call vote: Mr. Zerfoss, no; Ms. Roberts, no; Dr. Sanders Dédé, yes; Mr. Aaron, yes; Mr. Noto, yes; President Lapinto, yes; and Chairman Magrini, no.

Solicitor Marshall reported Mr. MacBeth is the new Councilmember and this concludes the nominations.

On a motion by Mr. Aaron with a second by Ms. Roberts, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Mark E. Hall, Borough Secretary