

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**February 3, 2020**  
**East Conference Room**

**Present:** Councilmembers Bullock, Litten, Neff, O'Malley, Rader, Shachner

**Also Present:** Clerk Bach, Deputy Clerk Lascu, at-large applicants and several members of the public

**Call to Order:** 6:05 p.m.

President O'Malley called the meeting to order and introduced the agenda, which consisted of candidate interviews for the vacant at-large Council position. The interviews were conducted as follows:

**Emily Christescu Interview**

Ms. Christescu delivered an opening statement remarking on her 20 years of experience managing food and beverage operations. She stated that she can apply her customer service skills to working with the public as an at-large councilmember. She expressed a commitment to listening to residents and digging deeper into their problems. She spoke about her experiencing managing budgets, being an entrepreneur, and volunteering. She highlighted her location in Birdtown as an asset to her candidacy.

In response to a question from Councilmember Rader about what cities should do to become more sustainable, Ms. Christescu demonstrated knowledge of what other cities are doing and suggested continuing to research the best practices of other cities. She mentioned adopting organic pest management and looking at other practices that could impact the waterways.

In response to a question from Vice President Litten asking if she will run for election if appointed and what she believes Council's priorities should be, Ms. Christescu stated that she would run if appointed. Regarding Council's priorities she cited remaining a leader on environmental issues and supporting a diverse and inclusive community.

In response to a question from President O'Malley regarding how Council can make the community more welcoming, Ms. Christescu responded that Council can do this by ensuring that all voices are heard and providing opportunities.

In closing, Ms. Christescu highlighted her collaborative approach and asked councilmembers to describe what they are looking for in a candidate.

President O'Malley responded that he is looking for an individual who can be an advocate for residents and also provide broad oversight and offer a different perspective.

Councilmember Rader responded that he is seeking someone with an independent spirit and who can represent people and keep an eye on how the government is running.

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### **Susannah Selnick Interview**

Ms. Selnick delivered an opening statement highlighting her experience as nonprofit manager and MBA graduate with a breadth of experience. She stated that she relocated to Lakewood 10 years ago and has been trying to find a way into involvement with the City ever since. She expressed that she has experienced challenges in getting a foot in the door due to her lack of lifelong networks, like some. She acknowledged that others may in fact experience even greater challenges and that it is important that all residents are represented.

Councilmember Rader referenced an article he saw online that Ms. Selnick wrote on the topic of medical marijuana. He asked Ms. Selnick what cities can do to prepare for changing rules and regulations.

Ms. Selnick explained the context of the article and her role in it. She stated that cities must be responsible in how they roll out programs like medical marijuana to ensure that only credible, legitimate businesses will be authorized to do business in the City. She stated that the City must maintain high standards to discourage less reputable enterprises.

In response to a question from Councilmember Rader about what cities should do to become more sustainable, Ms. Selnick responded that cities should not bear the responsibility alone and must look to partner with residents, businesses, and schools. She added that solutions and programs can only be as effective as the messaging and education provided by the City.

In response to a question from Vice President Litten asking if she will run for election if appointed and what she believes Council's priorities should be, Ms. Selnick expressed interest in running for office. Regarding priorities, she advocated strengthening the City's partnerships with businesses and suggested initiatives such as incentivizing businesses to hire residents and reaching out to landlords more to ensure all voices are heard.

Councilmember Bullock noted that Ms. Selnick's interview demonstrates a candidate with great attention to detail and with complementary strengths of vision and implementation.

In closing, Ms. Selnick stated that through her professional role she learned the importance of "no money no mission," and would apply that as a councilmember. She concluded that projects won't take hold if people can't access them or they are not reasonable and responsible.

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### **Jeff Wise Interview**

Candidate Jeff Wise provided an opening statement discussing the important role of Lakewood in his life from an early age. He stated that he always felt that people could be who they are in Lakewood. He spoke about working in the statehouse for legislators representing Lakewood and learning a great deal about the community. He stated that his experience in the legislature combined with his perspective on the City's housing stock will bring a unique perspective to Council.

It was positively noted that Mr. Wise attended a conservative college where he learned to make friends with people from different backgrounds and beliefs.

In response to a question from Councilmember Rader about what cities should do to become more sustainable, spoke about his role staffing the Alternative Energy Committee in the Statehouse and the breadth of knowledge he gained from that experience. He spoke about his role, participating in very early discussions about the plastic bag ban. A lesson from both is that good ideas often take a very long time to succeed, but that they can through incremental progress and collaboration.

In response to a question from Vice President Litten asking if he will run for election if appointed and what he believes Council's priorities should be, Mr. Wise expressed a commitment to running if appointed. He stated that Council's priority should be to reduce the poverty rate in Lakewood to make measurable change in people's lives and to implement the Community Vision in an actionable way.

Councilmember Bullock expressed confidence in Mr. Wise's capability to serve well and thoughtfully, noting his background as a state house staffer and realtor.

Councilmember Shachner referenced a political forum in which Mr. Wise was asked if a losing candidate should be appointed and asked him to explain his answer. Mr. Wise replied that at the time he interpreted the question to be related to the Mayor's race. He stated that he thinks his experience running a campaign is an asset because he earned the trust and respect of many voters.

In closing, Mr. Wise stated that the City's best days are ahead and that he would appreciate the chance to be a colleague on Council to work with everyone to make the City proud.

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### **Kyle Baker Interview**

Mr. Baker delivered an opening statement in which he outlined his experience and qualifications including professional experience at the state house and state Supreme Court. He discussed representing the City of Akron in their lawsuit with the EPA over the City's sewers and how this would provide an important perspective to Lakewood. He spoke about his current professional role working for the Metroparks and service as Chair of the Planning Commission.

Councilmember Bullock noted that Mr. Baker's service on Planning Commission is consistently thoughtful and courteous and that he has experience handling the feedback and criticisms of residents. He engaged Mr. Baker in discussion regarding the sewer lawsuit ongoing in the City of Akron and possible lessons for Lakewood.

In response to a question from Councilmember Rader about what cities should do to become more sustainable, Mr. Baker suggested that when the City bids projects that it sets standards for environmental sustainability. He also discussed the Public Works operations of the City taking a sustainable approach and provided examples from the Metroparks.

In response to a question from Vice President Litten asking if she will run for election if appointed and what he believes Council's priorities should be, Mr. Baker stated his intention to run for the at-large seat whether appointed or not. Regarding Council's priorities, Mr. Baker mentioned the City's sewer issues, managing development, healing divides and providing a vision for the future.

In closing, Mr. Baker stated that if appointed he will be ready to go on day one. He noted that he has reviewed the committee appointments and feels that he would fit in well to the committees where there are openings. He stated that he would complement Council well.

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### **Jen Pae Interview**

In an opening statement, Ms. Pae characterized herself as a Lakwoodite through and through. She discussed her education and early career which eventually landed her in the State Auditor's Office helping municipalities improve their financial performance. She was on staff as Assistant Finance Director with the City for one month when she moved into the Director role under Mayor Tom George. She expressed pride in being part of teams that turned the City's finances around to where they are today.

President O'Malley asked Ms. Pae to discuss her thoughts on the role of a councilmember regarding the City's finances. Ms. Pae replied that the City will not function without Council passing a budget. She expressed that she can bring her experience to help guide Council in its financial decisions and discuss with them if financial statements need further questioning.

In response to a question from Councilmember Rader about what cities should do to become more sustainable, Ms. Pae noted Council's leadership on alternate fuels and solar and that these efforts should be continued. She recommended looking to the past for what has already been done, such as a 2007 Energy Audit. She stated that the City needs to "walk the walk" and be sure it is doing all the things it advises residents to do.

In response to a question from Vice President Litten asking if she will run for election if appointed and what she believes Council's priorities should be, Ms. Pae stated that she will run if appointed, or if not appointed. Regarding Council's priorities, she referenced the Council budget priorities process and ensuring that Council's priorities are in step with the administrations. Among other priorities, she discussed housing, structurally balanced budgets, park improvements, and messaging to reach the one-third of the population that is moving in and out.

Councilmember Bullock complimented Ms. Pae on her work over the years on the City's Finances and LEAN initiative, among other things.

Ms. Pae asked Council how it will prioritize its work and if it will hold a retreat. President O'Malley replied that he intends to hold a retreat after the vacant member is appointed. He stated that he has been meeting individually with members to hear their priorities and that he will not stand in the way of any member's priorities.

Motion by President O'Malley to enter executive session for the purpose of considering the appointment of a public official. Council staff and Law Director Corrigan were invited into executive session. Motion was seconded by Vice President Litten. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas: Bullock, Litten, Neff, O'Malley, Shachner, Rader  
Nays: none

Motion passed. Committee of the Whole entered executive session at approximately 7:20 p.m.

At approximately 7:40 p.m. Committee of the Whole reconvenes in the Auditorium.

Motion by President O'Malley, seconded by Vice President Litten to exit executive session.

A roll call vote was taken as follows:

Yeas: Bullock, Litten, Neff, O'Malley, Shachner, Rader  
Nays: none

Motion passed. Committee of the Whole exited executive session.

Motion by President O'Malley, seconded by Vice President Litten to adjourn Committee of the Whole at approximately 7:40 p.m.