



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**CITIZENS COMMITTEE OF RECOGNITION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, November 29, 2018 | 10 a.m.  
Fort Lauderdale City Hall, 100 N. Andrews Avenue  
City Commission Conference Room**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Former Mayors:

Mayor John “Jack” P. Seiler, Chair

Mayor James Naugle

Former Commissioner:

Commissioner John Aurelius

Former Award Winners:

Courtney Crush

Mary Fertig

Fort Lauderdale Council of Civic Associations Representative:

Michael Albetta

**STAFF**

Alain Boileau, City Attorney

D’Wayne Spence, Assistant City Attorney III

Chaz Adams, Strategic Communications Manager

Monique J. Damiano, Senior Strategic Communications Specialist/Staff Liaison

Safeea Ali, Administrative Assistant II

Carla Foster, Administrative Assistant

**COMMUNICATION TO THE CITY COMMISSION**

Chair Seiler requested that the City Commission ensure a full Committee has been appointed by the time of the February 7, 2019 meeting.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this meeting was for the Citizens Committee of Recognition to discuss nominations for the 2018 Citizens Recognition Awards and make their final recommendations to the City Commission.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Seiler called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. It was noted a quorum was present, including two former Mayors, one former City Commissioner, two former award winners, and one representative of the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations.

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Committee members introduced themselves at this time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

It was noted that this Item included discussion of the proposed 2018 honorees. City Attorney Alain Boileau explained that the list of names will be sent to the City Commission at their next meeting, or members may attend that meeting in person. If the Committee would like to make any changes to this list, they may recommend changes via a communication to the City Commission or may do so in person at the Commission meeting.

Mr. Naugle advised that following the most recent City Commission meeting, a City resident had contacted him regarding a past incident in which the nominee for Distinguished Citizen was involved. For this reason, he felt the City Commission may wish to have additional options from which to choose the 2018 honoree. He explained that the selection of an individual who recently ran for office may be perceived as a political decision, and that perhaps additional time should pass before that individual is selected.

Mr. Naugle continued that another individual, Gale Butler, had been discussed as the potential nominee for Distinguished Citizen at the October 9, 2018 meeting. Because there had been some support for Ms. Butler by the Committee members, he suggested that her name be submitted as an option for the City Commission.

Ms. Crush pointed out that there are new Committee members who have not had the benefit of reviewing applications and hearing previous discussion and recommendations made at previous meetings. Chair Seiler stated, however, that if the Committee did not intend to reopen discussion on this award, there was no procedural reason to fully discuss the previous vote. He recommended that the members comment on Mr. Naugle's recommendation to add another nominee in this category before entering into further discussion.

Chair Seiler continued that it may establish an unwanted precedent for the Committee to submit names to the City Commission, then later reopen discussion of those names when new Committee members have been seated. Ms. Crush stated that while she was happy to have additional discussion of the nominee, it might be preferable that the entire slate of nominees be reviewed and discussed in order to hear input from the new members.

Mr. Aurelius observed that the Committee had arrived at a final recommendation for nominees at their previous meeting, and pointed out that in order to reconsider those names, one of the Committee members who had voted on the prevailing side at the October 9, 2018 meeting would need to make a motion to reconsider. He recalled that multiple candidates were discussed, along with the appropriate categories into which their names might be placed for nomination. He was not in favor of reopening this discussion, as this could result in re-advertisement of the meeting for additional potential applicants.

Chair Seiler clarified that the candidate in question is former City Commissioner Tim Smith, who was nominated in the category of Distinguished Citizen. He reviewed the list of nominees voted upon at the October 9, 2018 meeting, which were as follows:

- Citizen of the Year: JoAnn Smith
- Distinguished Citizen: Tim Smith
- Honored Founder: Ramola and Ramesh "Bob" Motwani
- Exemplary Former City Employee: Former Police Chief Frank Adderley

Chair Seiler recalled that the vote to nominate Mr. Smith as Distinguished Citizen had been a 3-2 vote, while the votes in the remaining three categories had been unanimous. There are no criteria limiting nominees for Distinguished Citizen from continued political activity, although previous nominees have not held or run for office at the time of their nomination. According to the description, nominees in this category must have contributed to the development of Fort Lauderdale over a number of years.

Ms. Fertig advised that she has reviewed minutes from the October 9, 2018 meeting, as well as the Ordinance governing the Committee and a list of previous award winners. She agreed with Ms. Crush that it would be appropriate to reconsider all nominees rather than only a single category. She also pointed out that another potential nominee, former City Commissioner Carlton Moore, was not nominated for Distinguished Citizen because the members felt he was deserving of permanent recognition by the City Commission in a more substantive manner than a Citizens Recognition award.

Ms. Fertig proposed that the Committee consider establishing a fifth category for prior elected officials who have represented the Fort Lauderdale community. Chair Seiler cautioned, however, against expanding the categories in order to recognize a single individual or issue, as he felt this could set an unwanted precedent by introducing political considerations into the process.

Mr. Aurelius commented that he did not wish to discourage the nomination of City activists who decided to run for election or reelection. Ms. Crush stated that while she agreed with Chair Seiler that it may be best to avoid political consideration, she also understood Mr. Naugle's concerns based on the presentation of additional facts.

Chair Seiler advised that eight former elected officials have been nominated for Distinguished Citizen in the past 40 years. Ms. Fertig asserted that it may be preferable

for the Committee to address this issue rather than allow it to proceed to the upcoming City Commission meeting at which the nominees' names will be presented.

**Motion** made by Mr. Aurelius, seconded by Chair Seiler, to leave the recommendations "as is." [The **motion** was not voted upon.]

Attorney Boileau clarified that no additional action is necessary to leave the existing slate of nominees in place. He added that the draft minutes from the October 9, 2018 have not yet been approved by the Committee for publication.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Motion** made by Mr. Naugle, seconded by Ms. Crush, [for] the new Commission to approve Gale Butler as an additional nominee to be presented/communicated to the City Commission.

It was noted that two names were transmitted to the City Commission for consideration in the category of Honored Founder in 2016. The Commission ultimately elected to honor both nominees in that category. It was also pointed out that the Committee has not taken a position on the priority of either nominee for Distinguished Citizen, meaning there is no recommendation for a first or second place in this category.

Mr. Aurelius expressed concern with the proposed **motion**, which he felt would subvert the process by which the Committee had already selected a nominee. Mr. Naugle asserted that he would be willing to communicate the Committee's desire for both potential nominees to be named Distinguished Citizen. Mr. Aurelius agreed that he would also express this sentiment if the **motion** passes.

It was pointed out that there may not be sufficient time to amend the City Commission Agenda on which the current slate of nominees appears, as this Agenda would be published today. Another consideration was the establishment of a precedent by which slates of nominees in later years might be subject to change at the last minute, based on concerns raised by individuals who are not Committee members.

It was confirmed that while the proposed action is unprecedented, there is no language in the Committee's enabling legislation that would preclude it. Chair Seiler suggested that the Committee may wish to schedule an earlier meeting in 2019 in order to prevent concerns related to time constraints.

There being no further questions from the Committee at this time, Chair Seiler opened the public hearing. He clarified that discussion would be limited to the addition of Ms. Butler's name as a potential nominee.

Ina Lee, private citizen, stated that she was named Citizen of the Year during the 1980s. While she felt Ms. Butler would be a deserving nominee, she shared Mr. Aurelius' concern

that consideration and discussion of two potential nominees by the City Commission could cast a shadow over the selection of one individual as Distinguished Citizen.

Fred Stresau, private citizen, advised that he was named Distinguished Citizen in 2012. He stated that the Committee has considered and selected a slate of nominees that should be forwarded to the City Commission without addition of another name, as submitting multiple names in any category could dilute the importance of the award.

Laura Croscenco, private citizen, spoke in favor of the addition to the slate of nominees.

Vicki Mallory, private citizen, agreed with Ms. Lee's earlier comment, expressing concern that the presentation of two nominees could diminish either individual's selection for the award.

Abby Laughlin, private citizen, stated that adding another nominee's name so close to the end of the process could result in that individual feeling s/he was awarded a "consolation prize." She did not feel the award of Distinguished Citizen should be diminished for its eventual winner or winners.

Mark Hartman, private citizen, asserted that the deadline for nominations should be respected, and added that during his tenure as chair of a City advisory entity, he could not recall that entity reconsidering decisions made at a previous meeting. He added that he had proposed Mr. Smith's name for nomination as Distinguished Citizen.

Steve Jacobson, private citizen, did not feel the Committee should change its slate of nominees at the last minute.

Tim Schiavone, private citizen, advised that he was named Citizen of the Year in 2002. He did not believe the Committee should deviate from its regular process for discussion and nomination of individuals for awards, as he felt this would damage the integrity of the award process.

Katherine Barry, private citizen, stated that the Committee should respect the integrity of their process and not reconsider a previous vote.

Three additional members of the public also expressed their concerns:

- One individual agreed with Ms. Barry's comment
- One individual stated that reconsidering the nominees would set an unwanted precedent for the Committee
- One individual indicated she was not in favor of adding a second nominee for Distinguished Citizen

As there were no other individuals wishing to speak on this Item, Chair Seiler closed the public hearing and brought the discussion back to the Committee.

Ms. Fertig commented that she did not feel the importance of the Distinguished Citizen award would be diminished by adding the name of a second nominee, pointing out that both Ms. Butler and Mr. Smith have done tremendous work on behalf of Fort Lauderdale, as have all other nominees in the various categories.

Mr. Aurelius advised that while he agreed both potential nominees for Distinguished Citizen are qualified, he felt the Committee should not establish an unwanted precedent that would apply to future nominations. He did not feel political considerations should be introduced into the nomination process.

Chair Seiler agreed that while both nominees are well-qualified, it would be a mistake to allow the tone of the nomination process to become political. He was not in favor of submitting more than one nomination per category.

Ms. Damiano restated the **motion** as follows: **motion** by Mr. Naugle, seconded by Ms. Crush, to amend the recommendation to add Gale Butler to the Distinguished Citizen category.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 4-2 (Chair Seiler and Mr. Aurelius dissenting).

Chair Seiler asked if it might be possible to amend the number of Committee members, pointing out that an even number presented the possibility of a tied vote. It was noted that a former Mayor had declined membership, which resulted in an even number. The members agreed to discuss the Committee's composition at a subsequent meeting.

Ms. Fertig suggested that the Ordinance be amended so appointments to the Committee are made at a specific time of year. This would prevent new appointments from being made while the nomination process is ongoing. She also proposed that the submission deadline for nominations from citizens be amended as well.

Ms. Fertig recommended that the Committee meet in early 2019 in order to discuss procedural issues, such as the next year's meeting schedule, composition of membership, possible addition of new categories, and other business. It was determined that the Committee would meet at 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 7, 2019, to review these issues.

Ms. Damiano advised that the slate of nominees would go before the City Commission at their December 4, 2018 meeting. Based on the outcome of that discussion, an event to recognize the honorees will need to be scheduled in 2019.

**Motion** made, and duly seconded, for approval of the October meeting minutes, with the correction that Chair Seiler will serve as Chair for the 2018-2019 term. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Seiler requested that a communication be sent to the City Commission advising

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them of the need to ensure that a full Committee has been appointed in time for the February 7, 2019 meeting.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]