

M I N U T E S
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
July 7, 2022
5:30 PM
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor King. Council Members Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Jason Baskin, Michael Postma, Joyce Poshusta and Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert and City Clerk Ann Kasel

APPEARING IN PERSON: Varinh Van Vugt, Laura Helle, Herve Idjidina, Kristi Beckmann, Steve Barrett, Geoff Baker,

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Moved by Council Member Fischer, seconded by Council Member Waller, approving the agenda. Carried.

The Council heard presentations from the three candidates for the first ward council seat.

Varinh Van Vugt stated she applied for the vacant council seat because she cares about the City. She is a parent of young children and is active in the community. She comes from a diverse background and is interested in learning how the City Council works. She stated she applied because her neighbors encouraged her to try for the seat and she felt a duty to her neighbors to continue Oballa's voice on Council.

Council Member Baskin asked about her experience with budgets or contracts.

Ms. Van Vugt stated she has experience with budgets from her board experience. She would consider how a budget would impact city residents.

Steve Barrett stated was born in Austin, worked at the Hormel Plant in college, and recently moved back to the City upon his retirement. He stated his careers experience and non-profit experience qualify him for the council seat. He is dedicated to making programs for diversity, equity and inclusion. He stated he has always had an interest in politics and public service. Mr. Barrett's priorities include the waste water treatment plant project and housing.

Geoff Baker sated he is interested in serving on the council to promote economic growth and increase housing stock in the city along with embracing diversity. He stated he has lived in Austin for 23 years and is the owner and manager of McFarland Truck Lines. He stated he is well qualified for the position because of his business experience and community knowledge.

Mr. Baker noted he was appointed to City Council as an appointed seat for two years and also served on the Austin Utilities Board. He noted he would like the City to get back to the level of 25 new single family homes being built every year.

The Council discussed the candidates.

Council Member Fisher noted each candidate had different perspectives on what they have to offer and goals.

Council Member Postma stated that Geoff had experience and a good fiscal background, Steve had a business background and a heart for Austin and Varinh had a broad resume and serves in different capacities in the community.

Council Member Baskin stated there are three great candidates for the position. He noted he likes the diversity and Varinh represents, he liked that Steve was community minded and Geoff was very knowledgeable of City operations. He noted that Geoff had the strongest presentation.

Council Member-at-Large Austin was impressed with all the candidates. He stated it's the Council's job to choose the best qualified person to hit the ground running and serve the community.

Council Member Waller stated the candidates are all very impressive. She appreciated the fact that all three applied.

Council Member Poshusta stated that it would be nice to have a candidate that could be well versed in budgets and City function.

Mayor King noted this is a rare opportunity for a Council seat appointment and the City has three quality candidates. He stated he would like to replace diversity with diversity on the Council. He noted it would be an easy out for the Council to choose since every candidate spoke about diversity.

After additional discussion, moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Waller, to appoint Geoff Baker for the first ward vacancy seat. Carried 4-2 with Council Members Postma and Fischer voting nay.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member Baskin, adjourning the meeting to July 18, 2022. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:31 p.m.

Approved: July 18, 2022

Mayor: _____

City Recorder: _____