

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Special Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland
Monday, March 09, 2020**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a special study session on **Monday, March 09, 2020** at 5:02 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the plenary meeting chambers of the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana. The study session was called for the purpose of conducting interviews of prospective candidates for appointment to Boards and Commissions.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Mark Herak, Mark Schocke, Thomas Black, Roger Sheeman and Councilor Bernie Zemen arriving at 5:10 p.m., were present. The Clerk-Treasurer, Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

Additional Officials Present: Dawn Diamonoupolous of the Main Street Bureau was present.

Guests: Matthew A. Thomas, 8605 Liable Road, Highland; Toya P/ Smith, 8822 Fifth Street, Highland; and Bradley Neal, 7908 Glenwood Street, Highland were present as prospective appointees for Boards and Commissions.

General Substance of Matters Discussed.

1. *Interview with Matthew Thomas.* The Town Council indicated that Mr. Thomas was being considered for appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Thomas revealed that he ran with his father Thomas Irrigation of Schererville. Mr. Thomas stated he was interested in giving back to the town. He has been a resident of Highland since 2001.

The Town Council President disclosed that he did not interact with Mr. Thomas but that Thomas Irrigation did perform work on his home irrigation system.

Mr. Thomas indicated that he was able to attend the meetings of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and did not expect a regular conflict with his schedule that would preclude his attendance.

The Town Council presented several scenarios that could be placed before the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and asked for Mr. Thomas to respond and present his impressions. The scenarios explored the issues of what a "hardship" was under the current code and what would be necessary as part of his consideration when determining to grant a variance to a petitioner.

Mr. Thomas indicated that his application expressed interest in serving on many boards and commission and had been considered for the Board of Waterworks Directors.

While not relevant for an appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals, Mr. Thomas indicated that he voted Republican in the most recent Primary election.

The Town Council President thanked Mr. Thomas for attending.

2. *Interview with Toya Smith.* The Town Council indicated that Ms. Smith was being considered for appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals.

Ms. Smith revealed that she was an employee of the Lake County Board of Elections and Voter Registration. She has been a resident of Highland since 2009. Ms. Smith further revealed that she organized and manages a non-profit that assists “at-risk” young persons with school completion and application to college.

Ms. Smith indicated that she was able to attend the meetings of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals. She further indicated that she was interested in the possibility of serving on other boards or commissions.

The Town Council presented several scenarios that could be placed before the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and asked for Ms. Smith to respond and present her impressions. The scenarios explored the issues of what a “hardship” was under the current code and what would be necessary as part of her consideration when determining to grant a variance to a petitioner.

While not relevant for an appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals, Ms. Smith indicated that she voted Democratic in the most recent Primary election.

The Town Council President thanked Ms. Smith for attending.

- 3. *Interview with Bradley Neal.*** The Town Council indicated that Mr. Neal was being considered for appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Neal revealed that his father is a retired employee of the Public Works Department of Highland. Mr. Neal stated that he was the Chief Financial Officer for a major Non-Profit Organization that is located in Chicago. He commutes each day to work.

Mr. Neal indicated that he was able to attend the meetings of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and did not expect a regular conflict with his schedule that would preclude his attendance.

The Town Council presented several scenarios that could be placed before the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals and asked for Mr. Neal to respond and present his impressions. The scenarios explored the issues of what a “hardship” was under the current code and what would be necessary as part of his consideration when determining to grant a variance to a petitioner.

Mr. Neal indicated that his application expressed interest in serving on the Plan Commission but was interested in serving on the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals as well.

While not relevant for an appointment to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals, Mr. Neal indicated that he could not recall if he was able to vote in the most recent primary owing to work, but that in 2018 he would have voted Democratic in that Primary election.

The Town Council President thanked Mr. Neal for attending.

- 4. *Consideration of the Candidates.*** The Town Council discussed the three candidates just interviewed and considered the merits of each for the possible appointment to Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals.

It was noted that the position on the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals was one of two citizen appointments of the Town Council President as municipal executive. The appointment would be to vacancy that would fill the unexpired term left when Bill Leep was appointed to the Redevelopment Commission.

The Town Council also discussed the remaining vacancies on the Community Events Commission.

No final determination was announced or emerged at the meeting.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the special study session of the Town Council of **Monday, March 09, 2020**, was adjourned by the Town Council President at 5:59 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/CPFIM/CMO
Clerk-Treasurer