



# CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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## ANN ARBOR HOUSING COMMISSION

ANN ARBOR HOUSING COMMISSION  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING HELD  
PURSUANT TO NOTICE  
AUGUST 31, 2011

*Manildi* called the meeting to order at 2:17 p.m., in the Miller Manor community room, 727 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. Roll was taken:

*Woods*, present  
*Black*, present  
*Greden*, present  
*LaBarre*, present  
*Manildi*, present

Also present were Sharie Sell, City of Ann Arbor Human Resources department serving as staff for the Search Committee; Kevin McDonald, City of Ann Arbor City Attorney's office; and members of the public.

*Manildi* asked if any member of the public wanted to address the Committee on a subject related to the Agenda of the special meeting. No one had comments.

*Manildi* moved to the business item of the agenda, the review and consideration of applications received for the position of Executive Director of the Commission. *Manildi* invited Sell to provide background on the search process so far.

Sell began with a review of the search process. The position of Executive Director was openly posted for applications beginning July 23, 2011, and ending August 20, 2011. The position was posted on the websites for the City of Ann Arbor, NAHRO, Michigan NAHRO, and Career Building, at a salary range of \$80,000 - \$100,000. The Commission received a total of 69 applications. Applicants filled out an on-line application and a "candidate assessment" consisting of additional questions specifically geared to this position. The questions were weighted for importance for this job and the applications were scored. Six applications were in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile of the data assessment; 19 applications were in the 71<sup>st</sup> percentile; and the rest were below that. Sell conducted telephone screens of 19 applicants, including all six who were in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile. Based on this information, she narrowed the applicant pool to a total of eight candidates who qualified for further review by the Search Committee. Of the eight, one withdrew, leaving a total of

seven. Sell presented the Committee members with a notebook of Tabs numbered 2 through 8 (the Tab 1 candidate having withdrawn).

*Manildi* stated that the process to date was a staff process. In this public meeting, the Search Committee would now review and consider the content of the qualifying applications and would reduce the number to finalists for in-person interviews by the Board of Commissioners. She stated she would entertain a motion to go into closed session for the limited purpose of reviewing and considering the contents of the application(s) of any candidate(s) requesting confidentiality at this stage. *Sell* stated she had polled each of the qualifying candidates to determine who was requesting confidentiality, and only one candidate, whose application materials are at Tab 6 of the notebook, requested confidentiality, and would therefore be referred to as Candidate A.

The Committee then proceeded to consider the applications of the other candidates in open session.

*Woods* asked if any aspect of the non-confidential applicants could be discussed in closed session. Attorney *McDonald* explained that all discussion of such candidates was required to be public, and he read aloud Section 9(f) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act for clarification. *Woods* thanked him.

*Greden* commented that 7 candidates were too many for the Board to interview and suggested the Committee narrow the finalist list to 3 or 4 candidates, which would require excluding 4 or 3 candidates.

The first candidate discussed was Nicholas Coquillard, whose application materials are at Tab 2 of the notebook. *Manildi* commented on the relevance of his experience with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, his familiarity with HUD processes and requirements, his good working relationships with HUD, and a demonstrated capacity for team building with staff. His work as Deputy Director at the AAHC has been strong and he is known to the Commission. *Greden* added that Coquillard also has relevant education and strength in the area of social service, and *Greden* sees the fact that he is local as an advantage, although not determinative. *LaBarre* agreed and noted Coquillard has shown a commitment to this Commission and to his job. He also noted that he has less Executive Director experience than some of the other candidates. *Black* stated she was looking for something that this candidate would bring uniquely to the Commission to move it forward. *Black* would like to ask each candidate: "What do you bring to the table? What distinguishes you from other candidates?" *Woods* stated that he saw in Coquillard a range of experience that has touched on a number of agencies, areas of service that we are concerned with, and perhaps an awareness of the broader playing field that would be helpful to the Commission going forward.

Next the Committee discussed Anthony DiBiase, whose application materials are at Tab 3 of the notebook. *Greden* noted that he has relevant experience, but questioned why DiBiase is not currently an incumbent housing authority employee. *Greden* found the candidate's stated reasons for going into and out of consulting unsatisfying. *Black* expressed concern about his salary expectation, as he would

have to take a pay cut to come to the Commission. *Woods* stated he is willing to accept that an individual may be willing to take less pay in order to do work that he or she is drawn to. *Manildi* stated that the application did not seem self-revealing to her, and she found DiBiase hard to assess based on the paper alone.

Next discussed was Damon Duncan, whose application materials are at Tab 4 of the notebook. *Greden* stated that although Duncan lacks executive director experience he does have extensive public housing experience in Southeast Michigan. Duncan also has extensive experience working with HUD, and has an appropriate educational background. *Black* agreed he has relevant experience, but would want to ask how he would handle his current consulting business. She noted he has a large range, and has worked consistently in the field. *Woods* agreed with *Black* that "range" was a good word to describe Duncan's background. In his professional work he has maintained a consistency of emphasis on housing and affordable housing, and he seems to have a deep awareness of the component parts involved. *Woods* would like to tease out more of his executive level experience in an interview. *Manildi* added Duncan has budgetary and Hope VI Development project experience, and thinks experience with grant resources.

Next the Committee discussed Jennifer Hall, whose application materials appear at Tab 5 of the notebook. *Greden* began by saying he knows this candidate from his past work on City Council, when he worked directly with her. She has extensive experience in housing in both Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County. She lacks Executive Director public housing experience, but works extensively with HUD and has a good understanding of how to work with that agency. He has received favorable comments about her from others including her current boss in the City. *Black* stated Hall seems to work well with a lot of different people. *Manildi* stated she also knows Hall a little, as they were in Leadership Ann Arbor together a few years ago, and had an impression of Hall as down to earth, capable, and hard working. *Manildi* commented Hall would have a good perspective on housing policy broadly in the County, but appears to lack significant supervisory management experience. *Greden* agreed that this was a concern for both Duncan and Hall. He would like to ask in the interviews or written supplemental questions to have candidates provide the exact extent of their experience supervising both union and non-union individuals, and perhaps to ask what they have learned or what philosophy or approach they have developed growing from their experiences. *Woods* said he saw a certain distinct "gravitational pull" in Hall's background, focused on the state and the county, more than the federal focus of some candidates.

The Committee then discussed Marc Starling, whose application materials are at Tab 7 of the notebook. *LaBarre* noted that Starling has broad relevant experience. *Greden* agreed he has relevant experience, but questioned the approach to organization that may be reflected in some responses to the telephone screening questions. *Greden* questioned whether an apparent focus on firm discipline might not be wholly consistent with Ann Arbor's style and approach. *Black* noted Starling grew up in public housing and was a union shop steward. *Woods* raised a question whether consideration of Starling's public housing background would be legally permitted. No one on the Committee knew the answer. *Manildi* commented the candidate had good experience and might have an insightful perspective.

The Committee turned to consideration of William Ward, whose application materials are at Tab 8 of the notebook. *Greden* pointed out Ward's extensive experience with a major public housing organization, and noted that that experience was significantly in areas of compliance and capital improvements. Ward's background including education appears relevant and useful. *Greden* noted he is also local to Michigan and would know the landscape and have a vested interest in working here. *Woods* commented that he too saw Ward as a very strong candidate.

*Greden* moved to go into closed session to review and consider the application of "Candidate A", whose application materials are at Tab 6 of the notebook and who requested that his or her application remain confidential at this phase of the search process. *Woods* seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

*Woods*, yes

*Greden*, yes

*Black*, yes

*LaBarre*, yes

*Manildi*, yes.

The Committee adjourned to close session. Minutes of the closed session were made on a separate record that has been sealed and will be maintained in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

The Committee returned to open session. *Manildi* reported the Committee had considered the application of Candidate A in closed session.

*LaBarre* stated that the entire applicant pool was strong, but he felt four applications rose to the top: Coquillard, Duncan, Hall, and Ward. He would have the committee move those four forward as finalists for in-person interviews. *Manildi* agreed with those four and stated she also thought Starling's application was strong and suggested the committee consider 5 finalists, the interviews to take place over two days.

*Black* raised the question of incurring travel costs for more candidates. This led to a discussion of the extent to which the Commission should cover travel costs for out of town applicants. *Sell* reported that typically at the executive hiring level, the City of Ann Arbor does pay for transportation for out of town candidates. After discussion, *LaBarre* moved that the Commission will reimburse finalist candidates coming to Ann Arbor for interviews as follows: Human Resources will do hotel bookings and the Commission will pay for one night's stay (companion expenses will not be paid); applicants will book their own flights and the Commission will reimburse flight costs upon submission of receipts; applicants will rent a car and the Commission will reimburse upon submission of receipts; no incidentals will be paid; the Commission will provide a \$35//day or actual, whichever is lower, for food, upon submission of receipts. *Greden* seconded and offered a friendly amendment that the President be authorized to resolve any subsidiary reimbursement issues that may arise. *LaBarre* accepted the amendment as friendly. The motion passed on a voice vote, all Commissioners voting yes.

The Committee returned to a discussion of the candidates. *Manildi* stated she found Starling's personal background including military, public housing, and union steward experiences to be potential strengths, coupled with Starling's housing experience. *LaBarre* agreed it was impossible to know everything about a candidate based on the paper submission. *Woods* said his experience stacks up very well. *Black* noted that his statement of "Objective" and "Goals" are not geared to this position. She also was concerned about some answers to the phone screen questions. *Sell* clarified that the phone screening notes are ones she makes during the telephone interviews, and involve some rapid and contemporaneous decisions on her part about what to type as she conducts an interview. The phone interviews should be treated as one tool but not fully representative of the candidate's comments. *LaBarre* noted that the Committee appears to have reached ready consensus on the other four finalists, and the lack of it with respect to this candidate may indicate something. *Woods* said he liked this candidate and would favor inviting him for an interview.

*Woods* moved that Nicholas Coquillard be invited as a finalist for interview. *Black* seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

*LaBarre* moved that Damon Duncan be invited as a finalist for interview. *Woods* seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

*Greden* moved that Jennifer Hall be invited as a finalist for interview. *Black* seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

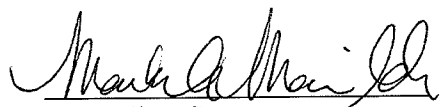
*Woods* moved that William Ward be invited as a finalist for interview. *Greden* seconded. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

*Manildi* moved that Marc Starling be invited as a finalist for interview. *Woods* seconded. *Woods* and *Manildi* voted yes. *Greden*, *Black*, and *LaBarre* voted no. The motion failed.

*Manildi* invited additional public comments at this time. *Curtis Morris* (*member of the public attending*) asked whether candidates would be given tours of the Commission's facilities. *Manildi* replied that tours would be offered to candidates but not required, and that in addition private interview with senior staff would be scheduled, in addition to the public interviews and a final, public reception at which residents, staff, and any other member of the public would be invited to meet and talk directly with the candidates.

*Black* moved to adjourn the meeting. *Woods* seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. Approved 5-0.

  
Marta A. Manildi, President

  
Recording Secretary