



# City of Margate

5790 Margate Boulevard  
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www.margatefl.com

## Meeting Minutes City Commission Workshop

*Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz*  
*Vice Mayor Anthony N. Caggiano*  
*Commissioners:*  
*Lesa Peerman, Tommy Ruzzano, Joanne Simone*

*City Manager Samuel A. May*  
*Interim City Attorney Goren, Cherof, Doody & Ezrol, P.A.*  
*City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh*

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Thursday, April 5, 2018

5:30 PM

Commission Chambers

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### CALL TO ORDER

**Present:** 4 - Commissioner Joanne Simone, Commissioner Tommy Ruzzano, Vice Mayor Anthony N. Caggiano and Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz

**Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Lesa Peerman

### 1) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

A. [ID 2018-153](#) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION - PRESENTATION OF ATTORNEY CANDIDATES

S. RENÉE NARLOCH & ASSOCIATES, RENÉE NARLOCH opened the City Attorney search discussion. She said there were 17 applications for this position and mentioned the criteria used to select candidates. She said that the listings of recommended candidates were in Group I and II. She explained that Group I was currently practicing law and have had substantial experience in public sector law. She indicated that Group II had less experience in the public sector. She said that she always looked for people who were litigators as it brought a different skillset and toughness needed in a City Attorney. She said that she also looked for public sector experience as private sector attorneys could acclimate to public sector but it was a large learning curve. She said that her goal this evening was to narrow it down to at least three candidates to bring before the Commission for interviews which she wanted to do within the next three weeks. She said that she hoped to do full interviews where the Commission were present to interview each candidate. She indicated that the interview would take approximately 1.5 hours with each candidate. She also advised that she wanted the Commission to do 1-on-1 interviews with each candidate on an individual basis. She said that she had not worked with Rhonda Montoya-Hasan before but she was very impressed with her. She said that she was currently working as an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Fort Lauderdale and has worked there for four years. She said Ms. Montoya-Hasan served almost 17 years as the First Assistant, City Attorney with the City of Miami Beach and indicated that she also had private sector experience prior to that. She advised that Rhonda's career goal was to be a City Attorney and said that she loved government work. She said that Rhonda did not know of anyone who worked for the City but knew of Gene's reputation and thought very highly of him. She said that she thought Rhonda would get along with others and that she had done a good job for Fort Lauderdale. She said that the next candidate was Ronald Ramsingh who she had never worked with. She said that he had been a Chief Assistant City Attorney for the City of Key West since 2007. She explained that his career goal was to be a City Attorney and

also to work in this location which would suit his family needs. She indicated that he had a down to earth management style being personable and approachable. She said that he had been involved in land use, HR, environmental, bond, counsel, personal injury, litigation defense and Workers Comp defense. She referred to the next candidate, Philip Sherwin and explained that he was very solid in governmental law. She advised that he was with Polk County's Attorney's Office from 2003 – 2015 as an Assistant County III and then from 2016, was practicing in his own firm. She indicated that he loves municipal law and this would be the first City Attorney position for him. She advised that some time ago, she had worked with him and interviewed him before. She said that Ms. V. Lynn Whitfield was a candidate that they had last time and from 2016, she was terminated from the City of Hallandale Beach but was a good government attorney. She said that when she was previously interviewed, some of the Commission that she worked with gave her a glowing reference. She referred to Group II's, Joseph DiNovo and said that she had not worked with him before. She advised that for the last four years, he was working as an Assistant County Attorney with Hernando County. She explained that although he had a lot of private experience in Florida and Ohio, she appreciated the way that he had acclimated to public sector. She advised that he had a Juris Doctor degree (JD) from Syracuse University and found him to be very knowledgeable and pleasant. She indicated that he handled a lot of land use, zoning, environmental issues, labor and employment and that he did both litigation and transactional work. She advised that he was looking to get more engrained in municipal law and to be a City Attorney. She advised that he appeared to be confident as an attorney and had asked a lot of questions. She said that she had not worked with O. Reginald Osenton and indicated that he was terminated in February/March with the City of Port St Lucie. She advised that he had a JD from George Washington University and did reduce external counsel fees by approximately \$700,000 during his time at the City of Port St Lucie. She advised that candidate Janette M. Smith had withdrawn from the process prior to this Workshop.

VICE MAYOR ANTHONY N. CAGGIANO said he would prefer a law firm as a valid client to provide them with up to date legal advice versus an in-house lawyer who may get caught up in day to day politics.

MS. NARLOCH discussed the advantages of an in-house attorney and explained that a good City Attorney was very confident and very competent. She said that the private world of attorneys were cut throat and were not always connected.

MAYOR ARLENE R. SCHWARTZ mentioned applicants Vincent Brown and Michele Samaroo being from the same law firm where they managed a multitude of different Cities.

MS. NARLOCH discussed Mr. Brown and that he had other types of family businesses that he was responsible for. She explained that she had never met or worked Mr. Brown before. She said that Mr. Brown asked if the City Attorney Office was staffed properly.

Discussion ensued on Mr. Brown.

MS. NARLOCH advised about starting the process to bring candidates forward for the interview process.

VICE MAYOR CAGGIANO identified the candidates that he would be interested in seeing were from Group I being Hasan, Ramsingh and Whitfield.

COMMISSIONER JOANNE SIMONE said she was fine with Group I.

COMMISSIONER TOMMY RUZZANO questioned why Mr. Anastasia was not shortlisted.

MS. NARLOCH explained that she was focusing on people who were serving as city attorneys and/or in governmental agencies and Mr. Anastasia had more private sector experience. She mentioned she looked for attorneys with a different skillset.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO said he liked Hasan, Ramsingh and Sherwin from Group I and DiNovo from Group II.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ said she liked four of the candidates.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE said it was important for Paralegal Nancy Popick and City Manager Samuel May to be involved in this process.

VICE MAYOR CAGGIANO said it should come down to the City Commission to make the decision.

MS. NARLOCH discussed the interview process and salaries.

Discussion ensued regarding the candidates and CRA experience.

VICE MAYOR CAGGIANO mentioned losing the services of the current law firm representing the City of Margate.

MS. NARLOCH confirmed that she had consensus for candidates Hasan, Ramsingh, Sherwin and DiNovo being selected by the City Commission to move forward.

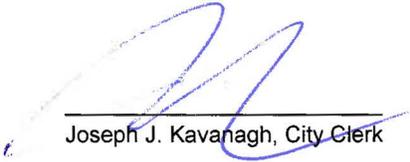
Discussion ensued on what questions could be asked during the interview process.

MS. NARLOCH discussed trying to schedule interviews with the candidates within two weeks and how the process moves forward from here.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Salene E. Edwards

  
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Joseph J. Kavanagh, City Clerk

Date: 6/7/18

#### ADJOURNMENT

PLEASE NOTE:

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, the person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Anyone desiring a verbatim transcript shall have the responsibility, at his/her own expense, to arrange for the transcript.

[Appendix A – Zoning – Section 3.3] Any representation made before any City Board, any Administrative Board, or the City Commission in the application for a variance, special exception, conditional use or request for any other permit shall be deemed a condition of the granting of the permit. Should any representation be false or should said representation not be continued as represented, same shall be deemed a violation of the permit and a violation of this section.

Any person with a disability requiring auxiliary aids and services for this meeting may call the City Clerk's office at (954) 972-6454 with their request at least two business days prior to the meeting date.