

*City of Fort Lauderdale – Citizens' Committee of Recognition
City Commission Conference Room
January 10, 2008– 8:30 a.m.
Minutes*

Committee Members Present

Robert O. Cox
Eugenia Ellis, Chair
E. Clay Shaw, Jr.
E. Birch Willey

Also Present

Petula Burks, Staff Liaison
Judy Johnson, Administrative Assistant
Julie Cobb
Richard Mancuso
Georgia Cox

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair, Genia Ellis. Chair Ellis announced that Mayor Dressler had telephoned her to advise that he was ill and would not be attending the Citizens' Committee of Recognition meeting this morning.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Cox/Willey. Motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2006 meeting. Passed unanimously.

Cox asked chair to recognize him to speak to members of Committee regarding the future of the Committee and its current structure. Chair Ellis recognized him to speak. Cox stated that although ex-Mayors are automatically appointed to Committee, the number of ex-Mayors available for participation is now very low compared to when the Board was originally established. He said currently the Committee was down to three Mayors and two appointed members. Discussion followed regarding some of the members no longer being as active or current with individual's participation in the growth, structure, building, and future of the City of Fort Lauderdale. Chair Ellis stated this concern was discussed at the Committee's last annual meeting and she did write a letter to the Commission expressing the member's desire to have its membership increased. She stated at that juncture the Commission opted not to do so. Chair Ellis said that perhaps the more appropriate thing to do is to offer the Commission specific recommendations; naming specific organizations or groups. Mayor Shaw stated the longer an individual is out of office, they know fewer and fewer of the nominated individuals. Members agreed the Committee could be expanded to include members of organizations who would more than likely recognize and be familiar with the individuals nominated for the various categories. Discussion concluded with a recommendation to the City Commission to expand the membership of the Committee by three members; the expansion to include: 1) Head (or designee appointed by Chamber Board) of Chamber of Commerce, 2) Member of Downtown Development Authority and 3) the Citizen of the Year recipient automatically becomes a one year member and participates as a member of Committee at the upcoming annual meeting.

MOTION: Cox/Willey. Motion was made to ask City Commission to add three members to the Committee. Passed unanimously. (Discussion above stated three members to include: 1) Head (or designee appointed by Chamber Board) of Chamber of Commerce, 2) Member of Downtown Development Authority and 3) the Citizen of the Year approved recipient automatically becomes a one year member and participates as a member of Committee at the upcoming Annual meeting).

Chair Ellis requested Committee members allow her to write a letter/email to City Commission regarding the motion to expand the membership of Committee rather than waiting for the minutes to be approved by Committee at their next annual meeting. The Committee unanimously agreed that Chair Ellis move forward with the motion by writing a letter/email to City Commission.

Citizen Recognition Awards

Chair Ellis asked if any of the Committee members would like to re-categorize a nomination at this point. Chair Ellis stated that with no Committee member requesting a nominee be moved to another category, the Committee will begin with the 1st category, Distinguished Citizen.

Distinguished Citizen

Chair Ellis asked if there was anyone from public who wished to speak in support of any of the nominations in this category. Chair recognized Julie Cobb. Ms. Cobb stated she would like to support the nomination of Courtney Crush. She spoke of Courtney Crush's accomplishments, various Committee and Board involvement, particularly with Habitat for Humanity and her positive impact in the community. Ms. Cobb stated Courtney is a person who stays behind the scenes when offering her expertise; she is not looking for recognition and is an outstanding Fort Lauderdale citizen. Chair next recognized Richard Mancuso who stated he also would like to support the nomination of Courtney Crush. Mr. Mancuso reiterated Ms. Cobb's statements. He stated Courtney has recently (during the past year) worked with and had a positive affect in regards to the needs of community and businesses. He stated the Committee may want to think about moving Courtney Crush to the category of Citizen of the Year.

MOTION: Shaw/Cox. Motion was made to move the nomination of Courtney Crush from the Distinguished Citizen category to Citizen of the Year category. Chair Ellis stated the committee had discussed moving of nominees to other categories at prior meetings and the committee had decided a motion was not required. She said committee consensus was all that was required and in Courtney Crush's case, she would remain in Distinguished Citizen category as well as be added to Citizen of the Year category.

Birch Willey thanked Julie Cobb for coming to the meeting to support the nomination of Courtney Crush. Committee discussion followed regarding the category of Distinguished Citizen having a number of strong candidates.

MOTION: Cox/Shaw. Motion was made to recommend John Aurelius as Distinguished Citizen of the year. Passed unanimously.

Citizen of the Year

Committee discussion of this category included support for Virginia Miller and Courtney Crush. Chair Ellis stated she would like to remind the Committee that the recommended individual should be a nominated individual whose accomplishments/achievements have been over the past year. Discussion followed with all members supporting Courtney Crush nomination. Chair Ellis stated committee consensus is to recommend Courtney Crush as Citizen of the Year and requested vote. Passed unanimously.

Additional discussion on subject of requesting a 2-page limit on nomination summaries from individuals nominating. The Committee instructed Public Information Staff to place a statement reflecting a summary limitation on next year's nomination form.

Honored Founder

Robert Cox declined his name from list of nominations and stated he is in support of Tom and Bill Maus. Discussion followed regarding the nominations and how they all had made contributions to the City. Committee members, other than Cox, agreed Robert Cox has been an exceptionally strong leader/founder and advised Cox they would like to have him be the recipient of the honored founder category, with the stipulation that Tom and Bill Maus be carried forward to next year.

MOTION: Willey/Shaw. Motion was made to recommend Robert Cox as Honored Founder. Cox abstained from vote. Passed unanimously.

Exemplary Former City Employee

The Committee discussed nominees Ron Cochran and Liz Holt; they decided they would like to carry forward Liz Holt and recommend Ron Cochran.

MOTION: Cox/Willey: Motion was made to recommend Ron Cochran as Exemplary Former City Employee and to carry forward Liz Holt nomination to next year. Passed unanimously.

Chair Ellis asked if members had any other names in other categories they would like to carry forward. Discussion followed regarding Committee members having authority to carry forward nominees before as well as during their Annual meeting.

MOTION: Shaw/Cox: Motion was made that any of Board (Committee) can resubmit any of names again without the vote of the Committee. Passed unanimously.

The following names will be recommended to the City Commission for its approval. The Committee selected all nominees unanimously.

Distinguished Citizen - John E. Aurelius
Citizen of the Year – Courtney Crush
Honored Founder – Robert “Bob” E. Cox
Exemplary Former City Employee – Ron Cochran

Other Matters of Interest or Concern

Date for Award Ceremony

Public Information Staff requested members allow Department to put a recommended award ceremony date in the Commission Agenda Report for the February 5, 2008 City Commission Conference Meeting. Committee was in favor and recommended the award ceremony date be April 15, 2008, prior to the 1:30 pm Conference Meeting.

Procedure for notifying recipients & Committee annual meeting date

Member Willey recognized by Chair Ellis. Willey asked those present not to disclose the recommendations made by the Committee until after the City Commission has approved them. He stated this is normal procedure and wanted them to be aware. Staff advised the recommendations would go before the City Commission on February 5, 2008. Staff asked if a January annual meeting date would suit all members in the future. Members stated an annual meeting date after the holidays was acceptable.

Selection of Chair

Member Cox stated he is in favor of Genia Ellis serving as Chair for a 2nd term.

MOTION: Cox/Willey. Motion was made for Genia Ellis to continue as Chairperson for another year. Passed unanimously.

Members of Public Attending and Speaking at Committee Annual Meeting

Committee members discussed the public attending meetings, informing public that the meeting is an open meeting, where and when notice of annual meeting is posted, if any person who attends annual meeting is allowed to speak, nominees being informed of nomination and if public has always been allowed to speak at annual meetings. Chair Ellis stated this is the third year in a row that the public has attended and been recognized by Chair to speak in support of a particular nominee. Chair Ellis stated she would contact City Attorney Harry Stewart regarding public attendance and what is permitted by public when attending Citizen's Committee of Recognition's Annual meeting. Committee agreed in favor of Ellis speaking with City Attorney.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.