

City's head of business development leaves for law firm job

By Chris Baker
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Ben Walsh will leave his job as the city's deputy commissioner for neighborhood and business development in two weeks.

Walsh — a mayoral appointee — leaves after six years with Mayor Stephanie Miner's administration. In his place, Miner has appointed Honora Spillane, who currently works in Onondaga County's economic development office.

Walsh was in charge of business development for the city. That role included serving as executive director of the Syracuse Industrial Development Agency. The agency has been the center of a dispute with COR Development's project at the Inner Harbor.

Last year, Walsh earned \$71,766.89.

Walsh said Monday he has taken a job as business development director at Mackenzie Hughes law firm. His last day at the city is March 24. Spillane starts on March 21.

The change, Walsh said, gives him a chance to "round out his resume" and explore a new challenge.

"Recently I'd been thinking about what was next in my career," Walsh said. "I've absolutely loved my job at the city... It just felt like the right time to me."

Walsh praised Miner as a boss and a leader. He said the current dispute between SIDA and COR Development Co. had "absolutely nothing" to do with his decision to leave.

During his six years with the city, Walsh said he's most proud of the success of the Hotel Syracuse redevelopment project.

"I'd be hard pressed to find a project that's been more



Syracuse Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood and Business Development Ben Walsh speaks at a Common Council meeting. (David Lassman /

dlassman@syracuse.com, 2013)

significant than the hotel Syracuse redevelopment," he said. "That's been an all-encompassing project that I've been involved in since I walked through the door."

Walsh's replacement, Spillane, has served as an economic development specialist for the Onondaga County Office of Economic Development. She has also worked as a law clerk for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and as a staff assistant for then-U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Spillane is a 2009 graduate of Syracuse University College of Law and has a master's degree in public administration degree from SU's Maxwell School and a bachelor's degree from Boston University.