

From: Mayor Kate <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>

Sent: Friday, June 18, 2021 1:46 PM

To: Responsible Growth Marin <info@rgmarin.org>

Cc: Rob Epstein <Rob.Epstein@cityofsanrafael.org>; Laura Silverman [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Jim Schutz <Jim.Schutz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Pam
Reaves [REDACTED] Phil Hallstein [REDACTED]; Scott Frerich
[REDACTED] Susan Coleman [REDACTED] Kim Keith-Brown
[REDACTED] Shirley Fischer [REDACTED] Claire Halenbeck
[REDACTED] Byron Kuth [REDACTED] Greg Knell [REDACTED]
Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Jay Hubert [REDACTED] Joy Phoenix

Subject: Re: Board & Commission Vacancy Process and announcements

Hi all (please note that I added additional neighborhood leaders to this response and moved the Council to bcc for Brown Act purposes) - Many of your questions relate both to Council practices and the practices of our elected City Clerk so I'd like to include her in the response. Both the Council and the City Clerk work closely with the City Attorney's Office on these sorts of issues so I will defer to the City Clerk and the City Attorney to answer your detailed letter. And after you have received this response from the City, I would be more than willing to have a live conversation about any remaining questions or concerns.

I have served San Rafael in a public servant capacity for nearly two decades and in that time, I continue to be delighted and amazed that the quality of folks who are continuing to volunteer their time and energy is only getting better. This is due to the City implementing our Resident Engagement Plan that we adopted back in 2014 and continuing to build on those efforts. Our boards and commissions are starting to finally reflect the diversity (in all aspects of the word) of our city and I couldn't be prouder.

Having said that, we can always do better and thanks to the advocacy of you and other neighborhood leaders, the City recognizes that we need professional expertise in order to bring our engagement with our community to the next level. To that end, we are in the process of hiring a professional organization specializing in community engagement. There are three aspects of resident engagement which we will ask them to include: 1) helping the City to determine how to best utilize the District structure; 2) incorporating technology in these efforts; and 3) examining how we can ensure that our community engagement is inclusive when viewed through the equity lens.

Your input will be part of this process and I look forward to working with neighborhood leaders (both copied on this email and those who aren't) to help make our engagement with our residents even better.

Warmly,
Kate

Kate Colin
Mayor, City of San Rafael



From: Responsible Growth Marin <info@rgmarin.org>
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 4:39 PM
To: Mayor Kate <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Eli Hill <Eli.Hill@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maika Llorens Gulati <Maika@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <Maribeth.Bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rachel Kertz <Rachel.Kertz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Rob Epstein <Rob.Epstein@cityofsanrafael.org>; Laura Silverman [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Jim Schutz <Jim.Schutz@cityofsanrafael.org>; Pam Reaves
[REDACTED] Phil Hallstein [REDACTED] Scott Frerich
[REDACTED] Susan Coleman [REDACTED] Kim Keith-Brown
[REDACTED] Shirley Fischer [REDACTED] Claire Halenbeck
[REDACTED] Byron Kuth [REDACTED] Greg Knell [REDACTED]
Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Board & Commission Vacancy Process and announcements

Honorable Mayor Kate,

On behalf of several community organizations I have been requested to thank you for your June 10th response and send you the attached letter because we continue to have some questions and suggestions on the overall process as well as concerns regarding the vetting process. For that reason we did our due diligence and are sharing with you and Councilmembers our findings.

We assure you we are as interested as the City in finding qualified candidates for Boards and Commissions. Let us know if there is anything we can do to help in any way.

Thank you for everything you, the Councilmembers and City staff do everyday for San Rafael and its community.

Respectfully
Grace Geraghty

June 16, 2021

Honorable Mayor Kate,

Thank you for your prompt response to our emails.

In the spirit of ongoing dialogue, and with the objective of ensuring that Best Practices are the heart of this and all selection processes, please help us to understand the following items in your June 10th response:

- 1) "Ultimately selected Camille Harris to the 4-year term." Minutes from the San Rafael City Council Special Meeting on Monday, May 10, 2021 state:
*After discussion, there was consensus to appoint Jon Haveman to the unexpired term to the end of June 2022 and recommended staff bring forward a **recommendation to appoint Camille Harris to the upcoming vacant term on the Planning Commission.***
 - a) There are no minutes for the May 17th or June 7th City Council meeting. However, neither the agenda nor video for these dates record that Camille Harris was **appointed** to serve on the Planning Commission. Could you tell us where we can find information about her appointment in the public record?

- 2) "The council was impressed to see the level of talent and expertise in the candidates." Through comparison of the eight applicants (please refer to Exhibit 1 attached), we believe the City would benefit from having much stronger and more explicit criteria to ensure the selected applicants are members of the San Rafael community and that they have the specialized knowledge, skills and experience required to make informed decisions as part of the Planning Commission, or any other body. For example:
 - a) The City does not have a minimum residence requirement therefore only four of the eight applicants have lived in San Rafael continuously more than 5 years. We strongly recommend the City establish a minimum continuous residency of 5 years to ensure the community is best served by an *established San Rafael resident*, as mentioned in our letter.
 - b) Of the eight candidates, five did not have any *previous civic engagement* experience. Ambassador for MBA program, tutor, owning my own business, SF Food Bank, military, church or law associations are not civic engagement with the City or community of San Rafael.
 - c) Of the eight candidates, two did not upload their resumes. Without a resume how can objective thorough vetting be done? Even with a resume, City Staff must do their due diligence to verify information and clarify inconsistencies:
 - i) For example, on Camille Harris' resume and application, her answer to the Residency question ("off and on for nine years") is vague. She skips the "Business Information" question on her application yet her resume states she is a principal at Symbiotic Consulting LLC, since May 2020 in Sacramento (not San Rafael). We were unable to find this company on the California Secretary of State website for LLCs. A Google search finds a company by this name in Florida, not in California. Finally, on her application, she lists MBA Ambassador (for UC Davis) under civic activities. It is unclear how this constitutes civic participation in the San Rafael community. Harris does not list membership in any civic organizations in San Rafael.
 - ii) Braydan Young does not submit a resume but lists on his application that he is a principal for Sendoso in San Rafael. A Google search finds a company by this name in San Francisco, not in San Rafael, however their website does not list Young as a principal. On his application, he lists volunteering at an unidentified SF Food bank. He is not a member of any civic organization but states he wants to start.

- iii) There are items that raise questions on Denis Avdic's application and resume as well. On the application, he lists LA Solar Group for business Information yet his resume states that from 2016 to 2019, he was working for Tesla in Burlingame as an Associate Store Manager, with no date to indicate if he is still employed with that company. For civic activities, Avdic lists tutor but does not explain whether he works through a civic or community organization. He lists only Alumni Club and Chinese Citizens Alliance in Sacramento for civic organizations.

Respectfully, your June 10th response does not address the following points in the community letters dated June 8th, 9th, and 10th:

1. Community outreach to inform San Rafael citizens of these openings needs to be broadened to include community, nonprofit and professional organizations in **all** neighborhoods. Better outreach needs to be made to our residents who don't use social media like Nextdoor and Facebook. Application opportunity should be placed in the Marin Independent Journal, the City's Snapshot newsletter and prominently on the City's website.
 - a. Your response: *We welcome your help to improve our outreach. We have been very successful usually have 3x - 4x the number of applicants. We also post them on NextDoor, the Snapshot and through the City agendas.*
 - b. Question: Will the City take our recommendation to communicate with neighborhood associations, Responsible Growth in Marin, Canal Alliance, etc. What will the City do to communicate with those not on social media? Will there be notices in the Marin Independent Journal and the City's Snapshot newsletter delivered by mail?
2. Candidates should be evaluated on length of residency that indicates a strong connection or engagement with our community, other civic engagement (not including personal business or educational activities), and truthfulness on their application and resume. Adequate vetting is important to screen applicants and ensure that all information is verified.
 - a. Please respond: Will the City establish a minimum continuous length of residency, require all application questions be answered and all applicants to submit resumes?
3. To select the best individuals to fill the positions, we urge you to consider candidates who have a strong connection to our community, relevant and verifiable professional or work-related expertise, and a demonstrated commitment to civic engagement.
 - a. Please respond: How will the City change the current process to ensure this? As we all know quantity does not equal quality.

Honorable Mayor Kate, we understand that you are dealing with a myriad of major issues: transition to districts, post pandemic planning, homelessness, diversity, climate change, just to name a few. We also understand that your ability as mayor to address these issues successfully depends on the quality of the individuals who work alongside you as staff members, Councilmembers, or as citizen volunteers on Boards and Commissions. For this reason, we urge you to act on our recommendations and desire for full transparency, which are part of Best Practices for Local Government Success (refer to exhibit 2). We want your first term to be successful so that San Rafael can be successful with a cadre of exceptional Planning Commission and Design Review Board Members.

Respectfully,

The Santa Margarita Neighborhood Association:

Greg Knell, President
Pete Martin, President Emeritus
Sara Roth, Daffodil Park Planning Group

Kurt Rossetti, Daffodil Park Planning Group

West End Neighborhood:

Clotilde Padua
Ryan Padua
Casandra Padua
Steve Thomson
Jasmin Thomson

Terra Linda Homeowners Association:

Kimberli Keith-Brown, President
Shirley Fischer, Community Development Committee
Kate Powers, Community Development Committee

Responsible Growth in Marin:

Susan Coleman, Board Member
Grace Geraghty, Board Member
Scott Frerich, Board Member
Laura Silverman, Treasurer
David Smith, President

Enc:

Exhibit 1 – Planning Commission Applicant Comparison
Exhibit 2 – Best Practices for Local Government Success

cc:

Maribeth Bushy
Rob Epstein
Maika Llorens Gulati
Eli Hill
Rachel Kertz
Lindsay Lara
Jim Schutz
RGM Team Leaders

Planning Commission Applicant Comparison

Exhibit 1

Applicant	Q.6 Yrs in SR (1)	Q.7 Business Information (2)	Q.8 How did hear about position? (3)	Q.9 Civic Activities (4)	Q.10 Member of Civic Org (5)	Q.11 Education (6)	Q.13 Conflict of (7) interest	Q.14 Resume Attach (8)
A. Psychoyos	27	Retired	Supervisor	Canal Alliance	Canal Alliance	BBA, MBA	Comm Action Marin	Yes
C. Harris	off & on 9 yr	No Answer	Lindsay Lara	MBA Ambassador	No Answer	BS, MBA in progress@ UC Davis	No	Yes
D. Avdic	4	LA Solar Group	City Council Agenda	Tutor	Alumni Club, CHI Citz Alliance	BS, MBA, Ph.D	No	Yes
E.D. Lazarre	3.2	No Answer	City Council Agenda	Tutor, SF Food Bank	Church of God in Christ	BS & partial Grad school	No	No
J. Kakinuki	10.5	P. Law firm	Mayor & City Clerk	Coaching, military, Church	Listed many Military & Vet, Bar Assoc,	BA, Law JD, EMBA	PossiblyQuail Hill THs	Yes
J. Haveman	19	Nat'l Eco ED Delegation	Newspaper	Dist budget Cmte, Colin Camp Treas	Citz Climate Lobby, Nat'l Eco Edu Del	Ph.D Economics	No	Yes
S. Roth	19	P. Carmel Software	Lindsay Lara	SR Cannabis Tax Cmte	P.E Ca, LEED AP, US Green Bldg Cncl	BSE, MBA	No	Yes
B. Young	3	P. Sendoso San Rafael	Friend	SF Food Bank	None: wants to start	BA	No	No

Notes:

- 1) All jurisdictions require registered voters within City limits. Residency requirements vary, but nearly all jurisdictions have some kind of minimum. Generally, two to five years depending on Board, Commission or Committee responsibilities.
- 2) Entering the screening process application business information ideally should match information on résumé. This information should be verified.
- 3) In order to be transparent and discuss conflict of interest applicants should be specific regarding how they heard about the position i.e., name of friend, name of supervisor, etc.
- 4) Civic activities should be civic and preferably in San Rafael or minimally Marin county. School, professional activities, tutoring, military/church activities are not civic activities engaging with the City of San Rafael.
- 5) Member of Civic organizations should be civic and preferably in San Rafael or minimally Marin County. Professional organizations (the Bar Association, Marin Realtors Association, etc.) are not civic.
- 6) Education as part of due diligence and vetting must be verified.
- 7) Question 13 and 8 need to be discussed during the screening process to determine whether conflict of interest exists. This cannot be left solely to the applicants yes or no answer on the application.
- 8) In majority of jurisdictions uploading a résumé is required to be able to do proper verification and screening. Answers on the application and the résumé need to be in sync and if not discussed openly during the interview process.

Best Practices for Local Government Success*

- General policy is that each person at the time of nomination and while serving on a Board, Commission or Committee be a resident of and/or work in the city and conduct volunteer activities or attend school within the city limits.
- Membership criteria for Boards, Commissions and Committees require that members have a special knowledge or represent certain groups as is done with the Design review Board. Some jurisdictions require members of the Planning Commission to consist of volunteers that have land use knowledge, or participated in committees such as city's general plan, housing plan, etc.
- The screening process for selection on local government Boards, Commissions and Committees should seek persons with a strong interest and willingness to contribute the necessary hours and must have the specific experience or expertise needed to accomplish that Board, Commission, and Committee objectives. Credentials of the applicants should be reviewed carefully to ensure that adequate knowledge is available to accomplish the goals and objectives.
- It's generally advisable to appoint applicants without a proven track record to a one-year term and after evaluation of that term experience, knowledge acquired, and peer assessment appoint them to four terms or don't reappoint.
- The key to attracting volunteers is being able to clearly articulate the following: the purpose of the board or commission; the types of issues the group weighs in on, and the level of commitment that is involved. Broad outreach is critical, popular ways to publicize recruitment efforts are:
 - Posting vacancy announcements on the City's website and the public cable channel.
 - Sending word out through city- or county-sponsored listservs.
 - Using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to get the word out.
 - Placing an advertisement in the local newspaper.

*Sources: Municipal Research and Services Center, City of Novato, City of Petaluma, City of Richmond.