



City of Sonoma COMMISSION APPLICATION

Received Date: November 2, 2017

Application Type: Planning Commission

NAME: Richard Pollack
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LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: Sonoma **REGISTERED VOTER:** Yes

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Retired

REASON FOR APPLYING: I am currently a commissioner on the Community Services and Environmental Commission and believe that my architectural background would be a benefit to the Planning Commission (I would not continue on CSEC if appointed to the Planning Commission).

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute - engineering studies
Pratt Institute - Bachelor of Architecture 1973

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: I founded Pollack Architecture in San Francisco in 1985. Prior to my retirement in 2012, the firm grew to 50 professionals with offices in SF and LA.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- Tamalpais Design Review Board, Mill Valley, CA - board member 1994-1997
- City of Sonoma Mentoring Alliance - current mentees at Hanna Boys Center
- Sonoma Bicycle Coalition - board member 2014-2015
- After School All Stars - advisory board member 2009-2012
- Congregation Shir Shalom in Sonoma - president of the Men's Club
- San Francisco Architectural Foundation - past board member

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission to which you are applying? If so, how many?

Yes, 2

What is your understanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission?

Per the website description: The Planning commission prepares, revises and implements the comprehensive long-term General Plan for the physical development of the City and surrounding areas. It conducts hearings and makes decisions and/or recommendations on a variety of land use applications.

The noted responsibilities are in sync with other municipal planning commissions and the commission can benefit from the expertise of an experienced architect.

What would be your goal(s) as a Commissioner?

I intend to contribute to the Planning Commission's effective deliberations. I am aware of current concerns related to the Commission as reported by the Sonoma Index-Tribune and my architectural experience working with other planning departments and commissions, along with the skills of leading a professional services firm for almost 30 years, will be an advantage in helping move the Planning Commission forward. Sonoma is a great place to live, and as a Sonoma Valley resident I want to see the Commission continue to serve all populations effectively - residents and visitors alike.

Specific goals are to work with my colleagues on the Commission to help analyze development plans to be in sync with the General Plan, while simultaneously addressing current issues.

What do you feel you could contribute to see these goals realized?

Combining the key ingredients of being a local resident, along with my architectural and management experience, will be of benefit to the Commission and City of Sonoma. I am effective at understanding plans and submissions, and working with applicants and colleagues to find planning adjustments that are in keeping with the General Plan, while taking into account our current times. I fully understand a collaborative approach that leads to appropriate compromises and continues to improve our lovely City.

Have you previously served, or do you currently serve, on a Sonoma Commission or Committee? If yes, which one(s) and for what period of time?

I joined the CSEC in 2016 and am a Commissioner currently.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS:

If appointed, you will be required to fill out a disclosure statement, which identifies certain details of your financial interests beginning with the immediate twelve-month period prior to your appointment and annually on or before April 1 of each year thereafter. Please confirm that you have read Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Form 700 Reference Pamphlet and the City's Conflict of Interest Code agree to file the required FPPC Form 700 Statements of Economic Interest, as required by the Political Reform Act and/or the City's Conflict of Interest Code.

I AGREE

Do you own property in the City of Sonoma? No

Do you rent property in the City of Sonoma? No

Please identify any organizations, associations, corporations, or entities by which you are employed or with which you are associated that might be affected by decisions of one or more of the Commissions, and the positions you hold in these entities.

None. I am providing occasional business consulting services for architectural firms in San Francisco, Oakland and Marin - nothing in Sonoma.

Do you have a defined idea about, or have you taken a public stance on, any current or pending projects in the City? If yes, please explain (This includes social media, speaking to a Commission or the Council, letters to the editor, signed a petition etc.)

N/A

Is there anything else you would like us to consider when reviewing your application?

Please review the attachments that provide an in-depth overview of my experience and capabilities which include the paperwork submitted for my appointment to CSEC. The document named "CNG Service Provider 2015 Submission" was my awards submission for a recent significant award from CoreNet Global. CoreNet is a worldwide association of the heads of corporate real estate departments, and I was thrilled to have been selected as the 2015 Service Provider of the Year and received my award at the annual dinner in San Francisco with over 700 professionals in attendance.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted. I also agree that if appointed, I will serve on the Commission/Committee for which I have submitted this application.

I AGREE

Richard N. Pollack

November 2, 2017

City of Sonoma, CSEC Qualifications: CoreNet Global 2015 Service Provider Award Nominee

Richard N. Pollack, FAIA, FIIDA
Managing Principal, Pollack Consulting

CoreNet Global Service Provider Award Criteria:

Recognizes individuals whose performance and client interactions provide a uniquely valued experience to those with whom they work and evidences actions that transcend the expected. The Chapter seeks to recognize:

1. Demonstrated ability to consistently deliver to and exceed client expectations	25%
2. Effective leadership and contributions to promoting the practice of corporate real estate	20%
3. Demonstrated experience, contribution or encouragement of professional advancement	25%
4. Applies new solutions and innovative approaches to solve familiar and emerging challenges	25%
5. Consistent involvement and achievement in community, active CoreNet Chapter membership and participation	5%

Richard Pollack's Qualifications for the Award Criteria

1. Demonstrated ability to consistently deliver to and exceed client expectations

Pollack Architecture

Richard moved to California from New York 36 years ago and joined EPR, an interior architectural firm focused on corporate office design. He rose to become a vice president and shareholder in only three years, and founded Pollack Architecture, previously Richard Pollack & Associates and MMAP, in 1985. Pollack Architecture (that name for the firm will be used throughout this document) grew into a multi-office interior architectural organization that steadily ascended the list of the country's largest architectural interiors firms under his leadership. That ranking is conducted annually by Interior Design magazine, and the firm continues to climb the listing.

Pollack Architecture is committed to providing the highest quality of design services that supported clients' business objectives. It should be clear from this overview that Richard understands business, and his firms' consistent service delivery is to develop workplace that fully supported clients' business needs and exceeded their expectations. It is that philosophy that guaranteed the continuing relationships the firm built for over 28 years.

Repeat Clients

Pollack Architecture's corporate repeat clients include Schwab, Citibank, Fair Isaac, Merrill Lynch, BofA, Wells Fargo, Autodesk, Blue Shield, Google, Apple, Comerica, Delta Dental, Fireman's Fund, Grant Thornton, Pillsbury, Informatica, North Face, Jansport, Levi Strauss, Lucas, Morrison & Foerster, Pillsbury, O'Melveny & Myers, RCM, Recology, Salesforce, SAP, Teknion, Warner Bros., Williams-Sonoma, AT&T, Barclays and many, many, others.

First Filter

Richard has always been an architect who tries to understand and provide support for the challenges faced by his corporate clients. One of the innovative new solutions he created, and then used with all clients, is called *First Filter*. It mandated that a C-level or similar senior executive had an initial meeting with Pollack Architecture at the start of a project – without discussing architecture or the specific project – and following is the agenda outline sent prior to the *First Filter* meeting:

“You'll recall from our conversations leading up to this meeting that Pollack Architecture believes the best approach to developing an effective workplace is through our *Listen, Challenge and Champion* methodology. The 'Listening' component begins with a *First Filter* conversation where you will present your business to us as if we're a potential client, customer or investor – allowing us to better understand the passion of your organization. At the end of that *First Filter* we will move into project initiation and subsequent detailed programming discussions.”

This meeting would provide Pollack Architecture with all the passion of the business, along with its goals and aspirations. It was not a discussion about numbers of workstations and file cabinets. It was named *First Filter* because the knowledge from that meeting prevented the architectural design process from being skewed by line manager personalities, preferences and empire building. Many architects make the noise that they're supporting the clients' businesses, Pollack Architecture's approach, developed by Richard, guaranteed success.

Listen, Challenge, Champion

Along with the First Filter, Richard implemented another strategy to better focus on clients' business drivers. The Listen, Challenge, Champion methodology improved the architectural programming process significantly, and added greater value to the data sets. Specifically, the Pollack Architecture team would ask client reps key programming questions and then really listen to the responses – without laying down preconceptions. Next came challenging, using the Socratic method to question what the client actually meant. Last, when the team fully understood the clients' business / facilities goals, they would become the clients advocates to ensure a design solution which supported the business goals.

An actual example is listening to a tech client state that all engineers need a private office because writing code requires really deep thinking. The design team would ask if the client recalled seeing Pollack Architecture's studio, and if they had a sense of how the space worked. The client would say they remembered it, and it was very open, light, airy with drawings, conversation, joy. The team would then ask the client if they thought designers did deep thinking – and then the truth would come out. The client might say, 'Well, we promised all engineers would have a private office in the new space and to use that as a recruiting tool'. The design team had listened, challenged, and could now more effectively champion those business drivers in order to create a supporting workspace.

Design Work

It's also important to note that Richard and Pollack Architecture are not just about business drivers, strategies and tactics. The end result is a space that fully supports business – but also looks great! The firm has produced many award-winning projects and will continue to do so.

Summary

These strategies helped ensure highly successful projects by dramatically minimizing any potential detours caused by architects designing what they wanted vs. what the client needed. This philosophy that Richard engendered in his firm helped lead to on-budget, on-schedule projects which led to continuing, repeat client relationships – which continue to this day.

Pollack Consulting

After transitioning Pollack Architecture (now Rapt Studio) to its next generation of leadership in 2012, he founded Pollack Consulting. Through Pollack Consulting, clients across the nation are taking full advantage of Richard's in-depth, proven experience in growing a multiple award-winning professional services firm, his industry leading sales and presentation expertise and his knowledge of successful ownership transitions. Pollack Consulting is dedicated to assisting companies and leaders in Architecture, Engineering, Contracting, Furniture, and allied professions, grow their businesses – with revenue, size, geographic location, project types, revenue and profit.

2. Effective leadership and contributions to promoting the practice of corporate real estate

Richard is a strong presence in the real estate community, including strong relationships with Corporate Real Estate executives, brokers, contractors and allied professions. Having failed Architect Ego 1.0 in architecture school, he believes that it's a team that delivers a great project – and a knowledgeable team does it even better.

Collaboration

Richard believes that the best way to promote and improve the practice of commercial real estate is through collaboration of the strategic and tactical teams. That means understanding the strategic goals from the CRE community, and then working with the expanded tactical / implementation team to deliver a solution that supports the drivers. The latter team includes client, broker, architect, engineers, contractor, furniture and all other specialty contributors. In support of that collaboration, Richard has been instrumental in educating the implementation team.

Workshops, Seminars, Writings

To support that viewpoint Richard has made dozens of presentations, workshops, seminars, writings – including for IDRC / CoreNet Global. His first 2-hour workshop at an IDRC / CoreNet Summit was in San Antonio in 1998 titled *Increasing Knowledge Workers' Productivity Through Workplace Change*. That research came out of another of Richard's firms, PDK Consulting, which is focused on analyzing workplace to determine if it could be proved that design can actually pay – as in improve effectiveness and performance and improve a clients' bottom line.

In the workshops that Richard presented for IDRC / CoreNet Global the focus was on developing stronger connections between architects and corporate real estate executives. In fact, one of the seminar titles was *How to Speak Architect* for the 2010 New Orleans Summit with the goal of improving communications between architects and clients. Regarding collaboration, Richard did all the research and developed the presentation, but was stuck in Europe by an Icelandic volcano – so other CoreNet colleagues collaborated to give the workshop. His CNG workshops were approved for continuing education credits.

He trained his staff to understand that the client is the boss, and it is the architect's job to translate the clients' business goals into a physical environment that supports them – and which is on time and on budget – what a concept! It is not for the architect to create a design solution that gets the designer on the cover of an architectural magazine (although that's always nice) – it is to get the project on the cover of a magazine about the client's business!

Columns

Richard recently completed a two-year assignment from Contract Magazine where he wrote a monthly column on how to improve architectural and interior design practice. Some examples of monthly columns:

- Professional Development & Mentoring
- Choosing a Focus in Interiors Project Management
- Strategic Planning for the Design Firm
- How Young Practitioners Can Present Themselves As Leaders

US Resiliency Council

Richard was also involved with the recent founding of the US Resiliency Council. The mission of the US Resiliency Council is to be the administrative vehicle for implementing rating systems for buildings subject to natural and manmade disasters, and to educate the building industry and the general public about these risks. The USRC's vision is to move the real estate and construction industry towards a world in which building performance in disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and blast are more widely understood, and USRC is the leading organization for the implementation and dissemination of ratings systems for buildings.

3. Demonstrated experience, contribution or encouragement of professional advancement

One of only a handful of people to ever be elected by his peers to both the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the International Interior Design Association (IIDA), Richard is an experienced statesman of commercial interior architectural design as well as one of its enlightened futurists. He believes passionately in the need for experienced practitioners to give back to the profession and has presented dozens of practical workshops for architectural and interior design practitioners. He has presented numerous times at NeoCon in Chicago, and his most current workshop will be presented at NeoCon in Chicago on 16 June and is titled *Networking is Not About Computers and Cabling*. All of his workshops are approved for CEU credits for the various design associations and state licensing requirements.

Richard also served as International President of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) in 1999.

Scholarship Program

Richard also created a scholarship program through Pollack Architecture to identify at risk, minority and women high school design students to help fund their college-level studies at the institution of their choice. Tens of thousands of dollars were provided to students and administered through the Architectural Foundation of San Francisco, of which Richard is a past board member. Each of the students who won the annual scholarship were given a paid summer internship at Pollack Architecture, and one of those kids continued as a paid intern through until receiving his architectural degree from the California College of the Arts (CCA) – and then continued for several years as a full-time employee.

Mentoring

A great satisfaction for Richard is seeing his colleagues / employees take on other roles, including starting their own firms or moving into senior roles at other firms.

Pollack Architecture also encouraged staff to sit for interior design and architectural licensing exams and paid the costs for that effort along with paying for staff time while taking the exams. The firm also requested that staff become LEED accredited, and Richard paid all related costs including time and expenses.

Client Relationships

While it's abundantly clear that having the best-educated and knowledgeable staff is key to the success of the business, it's also about professional and personal relationships with clients. Richard has had a number of client relationships that have moved from one company to another.

New Leadership and Ownership Transition

Another example of Richard supporting the growth and advancement of colleagues is shown through the ownership transition of Pollack Architecture. Richard researched various strategies for retiring from his firm and settled on an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) in 2000 with a planned horizon in 2012. The ESOP resonated with Richard because all staff became owners of the firm based on sweat equity, and since many young people don't plan for eventual retirement, this program "forced" staff to readily aggregate dollars – very much in sync with Richard's financial conservatism and his liberal social attitude.

With this ownership transition plan, it was clear that new leadership needed to be identified, both within and without, and then they had to learn how to run the firm. Richard recruited and promoted, and over the twelve-year period brought the identified new leadership into firm management, banking relationships, client connects, opening a new office in LA, and developed a new business development strategy.

The business development component was critical since Richard was responsible for bringing in over 80% of firm revenue. The original plan was to recruit another major rainmaker, but it became clear that a professional like that most likely already had his or her own firm. So Richard changed the plan, identified locally headquartered companies doing consistent architectural work, and then included the firm's new leadership in connecting with key CREs. As proof that all the strategies worked, the firm was 50 people and approx. \$11M in revenue when Richard left and is now a few more than 50 and a bit more in revenue.

4. Applies new solutions and innovative approaches to solve familiar and emerging challenges

In addition to the strategies and approaches used to exceed client expectations detailed in Section 1 additional innovative efforts follow.

Autoprogram

Some of the innovations have been described previously, specifically *First Filter* and *Listen, Challenge, Champion* – yet another new solution is around a project's initial budgeting and programming – called Autoprogram. Autoprogram was a web application developed by a Chicago friend and colleague of Richard. Autoprogram enables an architectural firm to input all the project's hard programmatic information, e.g. number of conference rooms, meeting spaces, workplace, offices, etc. With that level of information along with preliminary discussions about design level, budget using local Means construction cost data, and project schedule, Pollack Architecture could present the client with a detailed preliminary program showing usable and rentable area, cost and schedule – all within a week or so. While the information wasn't fine-tuned to the level needed to actually affect the project, it provided all project participants with a viable foundation – not just throwing out costs/square foot or other guesstimates. It is this level of innovation that allowed Pollack Architecture to grow and prosper – and to exceed client expectations to the maximum.

Brown Bag

As has been noted elsewhere, Richard understood many years back that the key to successful business, projects and intellectual growth was communication. He realized that various colleagues in corporate real estate – CREs, brokers, contractors, engineers – might not have the best grasp of architectural terms. The larger issue was that there was no easy face-saving mechanism to provide that education, so Richard hit on the concept of scheduling a Brown Bag lunchtime program at Pollack Architecture to help fill that void.

The invitation was printed on an actual paper lunch bag and mailed out. The preparation was to put labels on all the architectural elements in Pollack Architecture's studio, i.e. soffit, mullion, fascia. Another component was blowing up portions of construction documents to highlight various symbols and typical abbreviations and to explain how they are read. Attendees were blown away, loved the camaraderie engendered by their fellow attendees not knowing architectural minutia either, and walked out with a significantly better understanding of terms and having a better ability to read drawings.

One unexpected outcome was an attendee pointing at a door swing on a floor plan and asking what the quarter circle meant. Richard explained that it was the swing of the door shown on the floor to make it clear that clearances worked, and which direction the door swung. Many attendees started laughing, and Richard learned that a significant percentage of professionals didn't know why a door was drawn in that specific manner. In addition to the great business development benefit, it educated Richard and his team about how to better explain certain drawing components and not immediately expect that the client knows what they're reading. All of that led to appropriate similar discussions with new clients to help break the ice and dramatically improve communication.

Presentation Training

A key principle of business development in the architectural space is that the proposal gets you to the interview and at the interview you win the work. Richard realized in the mid-1990s that in order for his firm to grow and succeed it needed to up its "win" percentage. The strategy he adopted was to dramatically improve the firm's client presentations and more effectively include all Pollack Architecture team members during the interview. Richard researched training options, and learned of a Professor of Rhetoric (who knew there was such a thing) at a local college who was known for training local politicians to better present themselves in public meetings.

The firm hired the professor, the entire professional staff was trained, and the win ratio went from 35% to over 60% within 12 months. Part of the process was learning that Richard shouldn't be the person talking the most; it should be the actual project team, with Richard adding the benefit of his experience. One new approach was that the Pollack Architecture project manager opened the meeting, introduced the team, and closed the meeting. Richard spoke for no more than 7 or 8 minutes and the rest of the team was able to create a strong chemistry with the potential client. It was also calibrated to last no more than 25 minutes and answer all potential questions before they were asked. The innovation this brought to the firm had competing firms asking Pollack Architecture staff if they were taking acting lessons!

5. Consistent involvement and achievement in community, active CoreNet Chapter membership and participation

CoreNet Global

Richard has been a member of IDRC / CoreNet from the mid-90s – over 20 years. He was pleased to serve as Chair of the NorCal Chapter Membership Committee where he implemented new strategies and tactics to help grow the chapter, and also served the Board in that role. Richard helped improve membership statistic reporting and graphics making it easier for the Board to see membership trends. He continues to encourage his Pollack Consulting clients to join and become active in the Chapter, and several have done so (owing to confidentiality Richard does not reveal the names of Pollack Consulting clients).

Richard signed on early as a CoreNet Global business sponsor and the firm has done so for a number of years, along with hosting some CoreNet committee activities at its offices. He has attended many Summits and has built national relationships with service providers and CREs and always promotes membership in CoreNet Global to professional colleagues and treasures his relationships that have developed over time. One great story was standing around in a large circle at a Summit with a number of colleagues from the Bay Area, and David Mourning right next to him. Richard suggested that everyone introduce himself or herself around the circle, even though many knew each other. When it was David's turn, just before Richard's, David introduced himself as "David Mourning with IA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pollack Architecture." It took me 5 minutes to stop laughing – what could be better?

Another strong component of CoreNet Global is the interactivity that is occurring between the various professional associations. Richard fully supports continuing joint events and programs that include AIA, IIDA, IFMA, BOMA since that connecting will be of great benefit to all, and definitively CoreNet Global.

Personal Biography

Richard studied engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Pratt Institute after which he escaped from Brooklyn and headed west with Sandy, his wife of 38-years. Both of their daughters are native San Franciscans and the younger daughter is in the construction world, initially with Turner, now PlanGrid. And a most personal pleasure is playing with grandsons James (4) and Ben (2) who live close-by in San Francisco – YAY!

"All work and no play makes Richard a dull boy" is a truism, so Richard's other activities include bicycling, tennis, bocce and the Marin Men's Chorus. Richard has been a baritone with the chorus for over 15 years and has actually worked up to several solos – even with all his public speaking the solos still make him sweat.

He also co-founded PdK Consulting, whose proprietary research and metrics gauge the impact of design on workplace performance optimization. Richard holds an NCARB Certificate from the National Council of Architectural Registrations Boards, and is a licensed architect in a number of States including California and New York.

Among other publications, Richard has been featured in *Contract* magazine, *Interior Design* magazine, *Perspectives* magazine, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The San Francisco Business Times*. He is an invited design juror for a number of competitions sponsored by AIA and IIDA and the industry, and his awards include IIDA's Leadership Award of Excellence, which was presented to him by Julian Bond, ex-mayor of Atlanta among other efforts.

Community and Community Board Involvement

Richard believes that a successful business owner is responsible to give back to the community in which they live. This philosophy was integral to Richard long before he became a business owner. In fact, while working at another firm before starting his own, Richard's tax accountant said that Richard didn't have to give that much money to charities for an appropriate tax benefit. Richard recalls being dumbfounded and replying that the giving had nothing to do with tax relief.

He has served on the boards of Architectural Foundation of San Francisco, Tamalpais Design Review Board, Congregation Rodef Sholom, Congregation Beth-Israel Judea, Sonoma Bicycle Coalition, After School All Stars, among others, and not including his service for AIA, IIDA, IFMA and CoreNet Global.

Currently Richard is involved with the Hanna Boys Center in Sonoma. Serving troubled boys between the ages of 13 and 18, with an average resident population of 100 boys, Hanna has been providing a "haven of hope" for struggling young men since 1945, and provides its students with full-time residential treatment and educational services through its high school, along with health care, physical education, sports and recreational opportunities. Richard is mentoring three boys, ages 13, 14 and 17, and working to help them overcome past challenges. He absolutely loves it!