

Good morning commissioners. My name is Kim Stryker. I am the vice president of the SF Arts Commission and also the Chair of the Civic Design Review Committee of the Arts Commission. We have a unique and important role, per City Charter, to review projects proposed on most of city owned property. That means projects such as libraries, airports, some streetscapes, parks, firehouses, transit buildings, etc. The review process is critical to the quality of our public architecture and landscape architecture. A high quality review means a high quality project. We review hundreds of millions of dollars worth of city projects annually. Our goal is to help city project designers do the best work possible given budget and time lines, and to keep design work at a high level appropriate to a city that promotes itself as a cutting edge place to live and work.

The city charter requires at a minimum 2 licensed architects and one licensed landscape architect. I fill the landscape architect seat. To offer high quality reviews, we need committee members who bring contemporary expertise and knowledge.

The architect seat has been empty for 10 months. We have lost quorum twice. That impacts project budgets when reviews are delayed. An empty seat also compromises quality reviews that city project designers expect. If they are not able to receive a fully-vetted review of projects, the loss is a loss for the city.

The mayor has proposed an excellent candidate, one with strong architecture credentials. He is one of the rising professionals in the San Francisco design community. He heads his own firm and also works collaboratively with top firms both in and outside the city. He is appropriately qualified for this seat.

In addition, the SF Arts Commission prides itself on its pioneering work to promote social equity. You have before you a candidate who would bring much needed diversity to CDR. Despite Blacks being 13% of the U.S. population, there are only 2% Black architects in the U.S. Mr. Askew would bring both contemporary expertise and an important perspective to our work.

As the committee chair, I am scrupulous in my oversight to meet ethical behavior by my fellow commissioners. The possibility of violation for personal gain by Mr. Askew through review of any city projects at CDR is nill. He will recuse himself at the slightest whiff of a conflict.

I ask for your approval of Mr. Askew to the Arts Commission and my committee. He should make a fine commissioner for our agency and city.

Thank you.

Kimberlee Stryker  
Vice President, Arts Commission

Hello Commissioners. My name is Abby Sadin Schnair and I have served on the Arts Commission for the last 7 years and serve on the Civic Design Review, which I will refer to as CDR in my comments.

- Arts Commission is charged, through the City charter, with approving designs for all public structures. We review a 3 phase process: conceptual design, schematic design with materials palette that we must approve, and the final phase is design development. We are not involved with construction or contracting matters. On CDR because we are not involved in the selection of the team or the budgets, there is no conflict of interest in our work.
- It is essential that we have design professionals on this committee. CDR acts as a Peer review and gives constructive commentary on the designs. In order to do this successfully, a licensed professional is required. The other commissioners on the committee have important aspects to weigh in on in terms of community building, the public, and the artwork to be created for the project. But it is the details of the design the architects focus on that is essential to the design success of the project. This is why candidates such as Mr. Askew are so important to the process.
- Consideration of a retiree to fill the position would pose a problem because usually if an architect is retired they are no longer registered. Registration fees and insurance are costly. Plus, learning credits are required to keep one's license up to date.
- The charter states that the position must be filled by a licensed California architect.
- In order to thoroughly cover the full range of projects that are reviewed, it is necessary for the Arts Commission to have both an architect from a large and small firm. A small firm does not have the capacity of staff to have another registered architect represent their designs in front of the Planning Commission or the Board of Appeals, for example.
- In conclusion, this is why it is necessary to grant a waiver to Mr. Askew so he can fill this architects position on the Arts Commission.