

3/29/2021

ITEM 4

Genevieve Yip

From: diane@dianesdreamdestinations.biz
Sent: Sunday, March 28, 2021 2:03 AM
To: Mayor and Council
Cc: Teresa O'Neill; Sudhanshu Jain; Kevin Park
Subject: Governance & Ethics Committee Meeting 29Mar - Item 4

Dear Governance & Ethics Committee,

I would like to comment on a portion of the staff report, 3/4 of which I strongly disagree with. The relevant section begins at the bottom of page 23 and continues to the middle of page 25 of the packet.

Item 1 - I'm ok with staff recommendations.

Item 2 - The "controversy", as staff terms it, was entirely brought up by the chair who has shown her dislike for activist members who challenge staff, so she created the "controversy" and entirely new election procedures to ensure that Ken Kratz would not be re-elected. There was no controversy "amongst the (rest of) the group". BPAC members have consistently chosen candidates who demonstrate a commitment to improving conditions for cycling and walking and who are willing to challenge staff, where needed, since staff members do not live in Santa Clara and do not use a bicycle as their primary form of transportation. The majority of council members, while living in Santa Clara, also do not use a bicycle as their primary form of transportation and so would likely prove to be a less knowledgeable judge of BPAC member effectiveness than members themselves.

Item 3 - Staff's opinion on this reflects the bias above. They would prefer BPAC members who go along with all staff's recommendations and question nothing, suggest nothing. (Trained monkeys could be those sort of members.) The vote was decisive that we need to choose our own chair due to recent Trumpian autocratic moves of the current chair. Were our prior chair, Teresa, or even most of her predecessors still occupying that position, I expect the issue would not have even come up. But, instead of running meetings in an orderly manner, the current chair has created a toxic environment with seething resentment. And in two cases in 2020, her overbooked schedule and her power outage affected our agenda and our time as she felt that nothing could happen without her presence. I feel like she sees herself as queen and us as her subjects. Staff, on the other hand, like her because she shows them a strong favoritism over BPAC members.

Item 4 - The reasoning is flawed. The meetings are so long precisely because they are so infrequent. We also want shorter meetings with shorter agendas, but that can only be accomplished with more meetings. There are simple solutions to staff workload, and they have been proposed, but ignored.

POST MEETING MATERIAL

1. There are a number of staff members at each and every meeting, even the Zoom ones. They could easily divvy up the meetings among themselves so that each staff member only has to attend from 1/3 to 1/2 of the meetings. Since they are also preparing agendas and since expertise probably differs, it might simply be a matter of arranging each agenda for the staff members who will be attending. (Worst case - an item might have to be tabled for lack of all the facts, but with good planning, that should be rare.)
2. Many of the agenda items are suggested by members. But then, staff completely takes them over, writing the report, presenting the item, etc. Sometimes the staff report even misses the point of the item. It would save them considerable time were each member to prepare their own report and present their own items. (Staff could still add additional information where needed.) I have created a modified agenda topic form that would make this easier and would reduce the need for items to be carried over to the next meeting. (Currently, all our items are considered 'information only' with motions not allowed, so if action is needed, we have to re-visit the item. It would be better to have the option to 'accept the report', 'recommend a specific action, of staff or council', or 'create a sub-committee to further study the issue'.) In the case of the member having become an ex-member, that person should be given the option of presenting the item or having staff do it.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Diane Harrison (current BPAC member)
3283 Benton St.
Santa Clara, CA 95051 (land of the Ohlone and
Muwekma Ohlone people)
408-246-8149
diane@dianesdreamdestinations.biz

3/29/2021

IFM H

Genevieve Yip

From: Raj Chahal
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 11:25 AM
To: Genevieve Yip
Subject: Fwd: quitable Representation in City Boards and Commissions

Hi Genevieve,

Can you please include the following email as post meeting material for today's Governance meeting for following agenda item:

4. 21-64 Review Formalization of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Raj Chahal

Councilmember
City of Santa Clara
1500 Warburton Ave.
Santa Clara, CA 95050

From: Atisha Varshney <aatishavarshney@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 2:31:04 PM
To: Raj Chahal <RChahal@SantaClaraCA.gov>
Subject: quitable Representation in City Boards and Commissions

Dear Raj,

Many Congratulations!

I am a resident of district 1, recently appointed to Santa Clara BPAC and Downtown Community Task Force. I am writing you as a fellow law-abiding tax-paying immigrant resident of Santa Clara. I am a legal immigrant and female under the age of 40. I am an urban planner and architect consultant by profession and would love to continue to contribute towards building my own community. At the BPAC meeting on Jan 26th, I was made aware of the policy and guideline changes to the BPAC structure proposed by the Governance and Ethics Committee of our City. One of the key proposals was to change the **eligibility of members requires BPAC members to be qualified electors, hence US citizens**. Last night BPAC voted against the proposal by Governance and Ethics Committee and supported allowing more diversity to serve on BPAC and represent the true users of Bike and ped infrastructure in the city.

Proposed Eligibility: Members must be qualified electors of the City, defined as a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, and living within the city limits of Santa Clara. An appointee may not hold any paid office or employment in the City. The person does not need to be a registered voter.

Current Eligibility: People who live or work in Santa Clara and above the age of 18. This allows many of us who are on H1B or green card to participate in governance, also represented a big population of working parents.

Our City has over 42% foreign-born population (<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/santa-clara-ca#demographics>) with a median age of foreign-born is 39 years. About 76% of our City's population have US citizenship. Also about 42% of our residents are Asian. We comprise a significant population of working families in and around the city. I am sure you are well aware of immigration delays impacting Asians, which has restricted our ability to have a voice building our communities.

POST MEETING MATERIAL

We all know our boards and commissions are underrepresented by people of color, middle age group member, and people who work in the city. I request you to revisit these recommendations from Governance and Ethics Committees for all City Boards and Commissions and allow a greater representation of our demographics mix at all advisory positions with the City. Such participation is important for us to feel the belongingness to a place we are living and contribute intellectually. For reference, San Francisco recently passed Measure B in 2020 supporting a larger representation on City Boards([https://ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco,_California,_Proposition_B,_Public_Works_Commission_and_Sanitation_and_Streets_Commission_Charter_Amendment_\(November_2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Francisco,_California,_Proposition_B,_Public_Works_Commission_and_Sanitation_and_Streets_Commission_Charter_Amendment_(November_2020)))

I can be easily reached for further discussion.

Thanks,
Atisha

--

Atisha Varshney,