



City Council Staff Report

Report Type: SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

Lead Department: City Clerk

Meeting Date: May 12, 2025

Report #:2504-4600

TITLE

Review List of Applicants and Select Candidates to Interview for the Architectural Review Board (ARB) Vacancies; CEQA Status: Not a project

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council to review the list of applicants from the Architectural Review Board Extended Recruitment and select candidates to interview. An interview selection process for Boards, Commissions, and Committee (BCC) candidates will be considered by the City Council at the City Council Regular Meeting scheduled for May 5, 2025. A supplemental report will be published on May 8, 2025 with an update regarding City's Council's decision.

BACKGROUND

The Spring 2025 recruitment cycle for the Architectural Review Board aimed to fill Seats 1, 2, and 5, with terms beginning April 1, 2025, and ending March 31, 2028. The initial recruitment resulted in three (3) applicants, two (2) of whom were incumbents.

At the Regular Meeting on March 10, 2025¹, the City Council voted to interview all three applicants. In addition, City Council directed staff to report to the Policy and Services Committee with a revised BCC interview selection process for all future BCC recruitments. The City Council is scheduled to consider the Committee's recommendation at its May 5, 2025 meeting and will use whichever process is adopted to select interview candidates for this ARB recruitment.

The three (3) initial candidates were interviewed at the City Council Special Meeting on March 24, 2025.² City Council expressed a desire to expand the applicant pool and directed staff to

¹City Council, March 10, 2025; Agenda Item #1:SR #2502-4136
<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=149099&repo=r-704298fc>

²City Council, March 24, 2025; Summary Minutes
<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=162462&repo=r-704298fc>

reopen the recruitment for the Architectural Review Board. The extended recruitment period was launched on March 27, 2025, with a revised application deadline set for April 30, 2025.

Total Applications Received (12):

- Ashutosh Gupta
- Bei Xu
- Daniel Benas
- Danny Cao
- David Hirsch (Incumbent) *
- Grace Lee
- Khelan Bhatt
- Martin Jojarth
- Matthew Kelly
- Naveen Govind
- Sema Yavuz *
- Yingxi Chen (Incumbent) *

**Interviews completed March 24, 2025*

Simultaneously, staff presented a range of options to the Policy and Services Committee on April 8, 2025³, aimed at addressing the City Council direction to improve the overall interview selection process. The Committee approved the recommendation below, which will be brought to City Council for consideration at the May 5, 2025⁴ meeting

MOTION: Vice Mayor Veenker moved, seconded by Councilmember Lu, to recommend the City Council adopt the following procedure to select BCC candidates to interview:

The number of candidates to interview varies based on the number of vacancies. Councilmembers will vote on whom to interview, getting twice the number of votes as there are openings. The top vote getters are interviewed.

- Interview all candidates if there are 6 or fewer applicants
- Interview up to 6 candidates when there 1-2 openings
- Interview up to 8 candidates when there are 3 openings
- Interview up to 10 candidates when there are 4 openings

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

³ Policy and Services Committee, April 8, 2025; Summary Minutes
<https://portal.laserfiche.com/Portal/DocView.aspx?id=161075&repo=r-704298fc>

⁴ City Council, May 5, 2025; Agenda Item #11; SR#2504-4537
<https://cityofpaloalto.primegov.com/Portal/viewer?id=0&type=7&uid=5a4dda36-269d-432b-bbed-f8e2e51aeff0>

Membership Requirements

At least three members shall be architects, landscape architects, building designers or other design professionals (PAMC 2.21.0102). This requirement is currently satisfied by Commissioners Mousam Adcock, Kendra Rosenberg, David Hirsch and Yingxi Chen. David Hirsch and Yingxi Chen's terms are expiring, and their applications are included in this recruitment.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

City staff publicized the recruitment through the City's Uplift Local community e-newsletter, City Clerk's Office e-newsletters, the City's website and the City's social media channels. Recruitment information was also posted at Palo Alto libraries and City Hall and distributed by email to community-based organizations, businesses, individuals, and City subscription-based notification lists. The recruitment was also advertised in both print and online advertisements in Palo Alto's local newspapers.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Council action on this item is not a project as defined by CEQA because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Architectural Review Board Initial & Extended Recruitment Applications - Redacted

APPROVED BY:

Mahealani Ah Yun, City Clerk