



To: Human Relations Commission, City of Palo Alto
From: Palo Alto Mediation Program Bylaws Subcommittee
Date: May 10, 2021
Re: 2021 PAMP Bylaws Update

As the members of the The Palo Alto Mediation Program (PAMP) Bylaws Subcommittee, we have concluded our review of the current PAMP Bylaws (2003). We are pleased to present our updated Bylaws (2021) to the Human Relations Commission (HRC) for its approval.

Our Process

PAMP's current official Bylaws indicate they were last adopted and approved in 2003 (18 years ago)! With that in mind, the PAMP membership has been discussing updating them for the last couple of years, and this year we finally decided to take it up. As our current Bylaws require approval by the HRC for amendments, we began by raising our intention to update the Bylaws with our HRC Liaison and the City. Our goal was to bring them into alignment with other city groups. We then started in earnest by convening a Bylaws Subcommittee composed of the following PAMP volunteer mediators:

Martin Eichner - Emeritus Member, previous Director at Project Sentinel, 20+ years mediation experience

Karen Michael - Previous PAMP Co-Chair, previous Case Manager at Project Sentinel, 10+ years mediation experience

Aruna Bellary - Current PAMP Co-Chair, 10+ years mediation experience

Marleta Young - Current PAMP Co-Chair, 3 years mediation experience

Christie Ma - President of her condo association, brand new PAMP Mediator

The Bylaws Subcommittee was tasked with reviewing the current Bylaws and looking for areas that were out-of-date based on our current processes or had potential for improvement. The Subcommittee met multiple times and collectively reached consensus on an updated version for review. The first step in our review process was to obtain the input and approval of the Director of Dispute Resolution Services at Project Sentinel. The PAMP Co-Chairs then took the updated version to the City and the HRC Chair and Vice-Chair to discuss the proposed changes and get their input. The Bylaws Subcommittee then reconvened to discuss and incorporate their feedback and produced a final updated version. On April 15, the PAMP voting members unanimously approved that final version which is included here as “PAMP Bylaws 2021.” We have also included the current (2003) version here as “PAMP Bylaws 2003” so that you can review them as necessary, since the last step in our process is to seek HRC approval for these changes.

Summary of Changes

Here are explanations for the most important changes we made to our Bylaws.

1. Diversity & Inclusivity

As an update for 2021, the Bylaws Subcommittee wanted to include more specific language to highlight our values around diversity and inclusivity where appropriate.

2. Earlier and Ongoing Involvement of HRC Liaison in PAMP Recruitment in Place of HRC Vote

This past year we had significant involvement of our HRC Liaison in determining selection criteria, creating interview questions, reviewing all applications received, determining who to interview, and then finally voting on the candidates to recommend. The inclusion of our HRC Liaison from the beginning enriched the process overall and helped bring an HRC voice and HRC priorities into each phase of the process. Going forward, our desire is to ensure this early and ongoing involvement, rather than waiting for HRC input at the end of the process. The new Bylaws include the following areas to address this:

- HRC Liaison has 1 out of 5 votes on the Selection Committee and is able to vote on each candidate individually
- New language was added to require Selection Criteria for candidates (with HRC Liaison input from the beginning)
- HRC vote on candidate slate at the end of process is no longer included
- Presentation of candidates to HRC as a whole remains unchanged

3. Emphasized Project Sentinel's Management of and Involvement in PAMP Recruitment and Outreach

In light of its expertise in tenant-landlord relations, our program administrator, Project Sentinel, is also critical to the success of our recruitment and outreach. In our new Bylaws we wanted to emphasize its leadership of these processes, and so the new Bylaws include the following areas to address this:

- Project Sentinel has 1 out of 5 votes on the Selection Committee and is able to vote on each candidate individually
- New language was added to require Selection Criteria for candidates (with Project Sentinel input from the beginning)
- New language was added to explicitly mention the recruitment process being managed by Project Sentinel
- New language was added to ensure outreach focuses on improving accessibility for underserved communities

4. Change to the Amendment Process

The new Bylaws require amendments to be reviewed by Project Sentinel, approved by the City, and reported to the HRC. The intent of this change is to streamline the process while keeping oversight and HRC visibility. This change also brings our process into alignment with other city groups.

5. Other Miscellaneous Changes

There are a handful of other content changes that we wanted to briefly mention.

- For voting, we changed the requirement for approval from "at least half" to "a majority" in order to ensure that votes must have more members in favor than not in order to pass.
- We included language to allow members to vote electronically.
- We removed the Mayor from having to appoint or reappoint our members.
- We included the potential for PAMP members to facilitate or collaborate with other city groups.

Please find attached files both the current and new proposed Bylaws:

PAMP Bylaws 2021
PAMP Bylaws 2003

We look forward to your response to these changes as we move toward finalizing our new Bylaws.