

Baumb, Nelly

From: Satomi Okazaki <satomi.kabocha@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2020 10:54 AM
To: Council, City
Subject: Palo Alto City Human Relations Commission and Steven Lee

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Dear Honorable Members of the Palo Alto City Council,

We recently learned of the City Council's decision to reduce the size of the Human Relations Commission. We understand that this group is comprised of volunteers, and it must be difficult to find people who are able to commit to giving up their time. But this group is in a position to do very important work in Palo Alto, especially now.

Given this difficult time we are living through, with the Coronavirus and associated biases as well as racial justice issues and job/housing losses and inequality, it is a time when the city should especially look for more diversity in a group such as the Human Relations Commission. We also need someone who can be a champion for these important issues facing Palo Alto. We are deeply disappointed to lose someone like Steven Lee, who has shown himself to be proactive in reaching out to the community to hear the concerns of residents and working hard to allay these concerns. We have personally seen him advocate passionately and effectively for so many groups of underrepresented and disadvantaged people in Palo Alto.

There should be more than enough room on the Human Relations Commission for someone like Steven Lee, who is willing to volunteer his time and work hard for the people of Palo Alto. Please reconsider and do not reduce the size of the Human Relations Commission of Palo Alto.

Sincerely yours,

Eimi Okano, Satomi Okazaki, Kim Shimazaki, and Rika Yamamoto

Baumb, Nelly

From: Harriet Stern <jacobearice@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2020 1:32 PM
To: Council, City
Subject: Reducing the number of Commissioners of Public Art and Human Relation Commission

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Dear City Council,

Please do not reduce the number of Commissioners of the Human Relations and Public Art Commissions, respectively.

They both need more diversity of opinion not less.

Now especially, with the country and Palo Alto reeling from social justice issues reducing the number of Commissioners at this moment in time would be an error. Palo Alto has its own systemic issues relating to public safety, diversity and inclusivity, You have many interesting and qualified candidates as potential commissioners. Please allow their voices to be heard.

The Public Art Commission handles a significant budget. As long as the 1% for art initiative is in place, we need more commissioners not fewer. I am an applicant this time around and have observed that you have many qualified candidates including two incumbents, one who is seeking a third term. This is my second time applying to be a Public Art Commissioner. Just after I settled in Palo Alto, ten years ago I applied. At that time the other four candidates were also well qualified. What has changed entirely though since then is the Public Art Program.

It has grown into a professional organization with a big budget, two full-time and one part-time administrator, a growing permanent collection, a master plan, outside consultants, and high profile and high budget installations and activities. It is imperative that you maintain the number of people overseeing this program. If you contract the eyes and ears of the Public Art Commission who becomes the checks and balances of the way this budget is spent and who decides how Palo Alto's creativity is publicly expressed? It is extremely important to keep this commission at seven commissioners.

The 1% for art program is culturally and historically significant and should continue. Right now, in the midst of economic, human relations and health crisis, please do not reduce the roles of our volunteer commissioners. Their work is vital to our multi-cultural community.

Thank you for your continued hard work on our behalf and for your time and attention to this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Harriet Stern
Middlefield Road